



LOUGHTON'S DEBT OF HONOUR WW1



They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them

Since 2010, the Town Council has mounted displays in the foyer of the Murray Hall helping to tell the stories of those brave young men who gave their lives for their country in the World Wars. Many of those are remembered on the Town's War Memorial on Kings Green off the High Road. As part of the 2018 commemorations marking the centenary of the end of WWI, this document lists those involved in the Great War.

Research has shown that there are still more people with Loughton connections whose names are not included on the war memorial, ranging from the Crimean War to the present day and so our work continues to honour them.

If you have any reminiscences, or photographs of anyone whose name appears on the war memorial or may have been missed, Loughton Town Council would be delighted to hear from you.



These photographs were taken at the ceremonial event held to mark the unveiling of the inaugural display in November 2010.



Those remembered on the following pages are:

Lawrence Frederick Bear	1892 – 1916	Private, 10 th Battalion, Essex Regiment
Alexander Colvin MC	1884 – ??	Captain, 1 st /5 th Battalion, Essex Regiment
Leslie Morier Evans	1879 – 1917	2 nd Lieutenant, Army Service Corps
Philip Emlyn Friend	1879 – 1916	2 nd Lieutenant, Machine Gun Corps
Charles Augustus Fry	1860 – 1918	Captain, 2 nd Garr Battalion, Essex Regiment
Frederick John Huskinson	1890 – 1916	Capt, 2 nd Batt, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
Richard Roy Lewer	1889 - 1916	Lieut, 16 th Batt, King's Royal Rifle Corps
Harold William Marsh	1898 – 1916	Rifleman, 1 st /5 th Batt, London Regiment
Henry Charles Mera	1893 – 1915	1 st Battalion, Essex Regiment
Roy Granville Money	1898 – 1917	Captain, 3 rd Bn The Buffs (E Kent Regt)
William John Patient	1887 – 1914	Private, 1 st Batt, Northamptonshire Regt
Frank Robert Pitchers	1896 – 1917	1 st /5 th Batt, London Regiment (Rifle Brigade)
Frank Reynolds	1892 – 1916	2 nd Lieut, 2 nd Bn, Sherwood Foresters, Notts & Derby Regt
James Radcliff Rosier	1893 – 1916	Lieut, 245 th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery
Leopold W Willingale	1884 – 1915	Private, 2 nd Battalion, Essex Regiment
Douglas Charles Wollen	1893 – 1917	1 st /5 th Batt, London Regiment (Rifle Brigade)

Lawrence Frederick Bear

Born: 11 February 1892
Died: 20 July 1916
Buried: Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France
Service: 26664, Private, 10th Battalion, Essex Regiment

Lawrence Bear (whose name has also been spelt Laurence and even Lawrance) was born in Warley, Essex, in 1892, the eldest son of Frederick Bear, a labourer for the Great Eastern Railway, and Emily Bear.

In the 1901 Census, he had an elder sister Grace, and younger siblings Robert, Phillip, Gladys, and Doris. He grew up in Woodman Road, Warley, then a street of neat terraced houses, and by 1912 he was working in the City for Hitchcock & Williams, a very large drapers. In that year, he followed family tradition and joined the G.E.R; beginning on 1 July 1912 as a supernumerary porter at Loughton Station, on a wage of 2/6 a day. Lawrence was soon on the staff proper, earning 17/- a week. He was promoted to the grade of shunter in 1913, working at George Lane (now South Woodford) Station. On the eve of war in 1914, he transferred back to Loughton and continued working there. His pay was now 19/- a week, enough for him to get married and rent a semi-detached house at 122 Smarts Lane.



Lawrence had little time to enjoy wedded bliss, as he was called up on 28 February 1916. He joined the Essex Regiment, and was assigned to the 10th (Service) Battalion. His battalion was already in France, having been there since 1915 as part of the 18th Division, 53rd Brigade. After a brief period of training, Lawrence went straight to the front, and almost immediately into the Battle of the Somme.

The slaughter that was the Battle of the Somme had begun on 1 July 1916. The Battle of Delville Wood, in which Lawrence Bear was to be killed, was one of the many smaller encounters intended by tidy-minded British generals to straighten the front line. In this case, the strategic town of Longueval and the high surrounding woodland were the objective. The attack began on 14 July and was one of the bloodiest in the Somme campaign. The brave men of the 1st South African Brigade took the brunt; having seized the woods they were cut off and quickly ran out of ammunition. The German artillery was merciless; on 18 July alone, 20,000 shells fell in Delville Wood. The 10th Essex went in with the Norfolks and the Berkshires, and though the battle was eventually won, it was at terrible cost. A shocked German officer described the scene; "Delville Wood had disintegrated into a shattered wasteland of shattered trees, charred and burning stumps, craters thick with mud and blood, and corpses, corpses everywhere. In places they were piled four deep. Worst of all was the howling of the wounded. It sounded like a cattle ring at the spring fair....". Lawrence Bear was killed on 20 July, the final day of battle, and is buried in the Wood.



Remains of Delville Wood, August 1916



122 Smarts Lane today

Alexander Colvin, M.C.

Born: 1884

Died: unknown

Buried: unknown

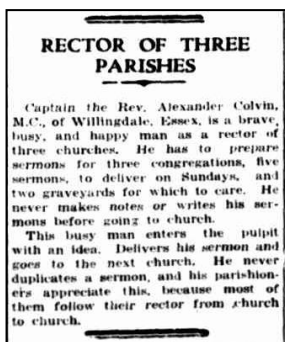
Service: Captain, 1/5 Battalion, Essex Regiment

Alexander Colvin, born in Dublin, has been described as a “genuine fighting vicar” on a website about the First World War. A Loughton resident for some years, he distinguished himself by his bravery on the battlefield.

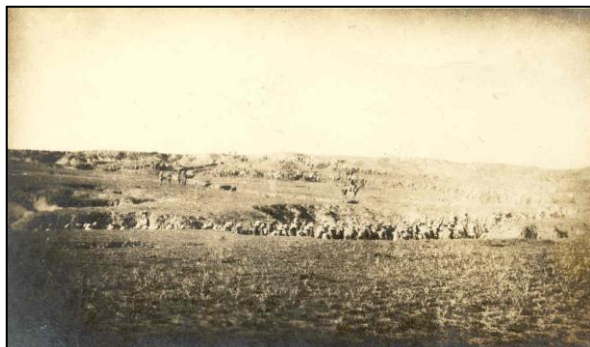
After attending Trinity College Dublin, he came to England to study theology at King's College London, graduating in 1910. He entered holy orders the same year and was posted to Loughton to serve as curate at St Mary's Church before moving on to St Michael & All Angels, Walthamstow 1913 – 1916. He appears in the 1911 census living at 2 High Beech Road, since demolished to create a car park. At the outbreak of war, Colvin volunteered immediately, joining the Artists Rifles (1/28 Battalion, the London Regiment) as 1227, Lance Corporal Colvin, before transferring to the Essex Regiment. He saw action immediately in the British Expeditionary Force, and won the Mons Star.

After transferring to the Essex Regiment, Revd Colvin received rapid promotion. He was gazetted Lieutenant in July 1915 and by 21 September 1917 was serving as Temporary Captain. The 1/5 Battalion of the Essex Regiment was originally a territorial formation raised in Chelmsford in 1908; they were soon in the thick of the Gallipoli Campaign. Sailing from Devonport on 21 July 1915, they landed at Suvla Bay on 12 August. This poorly-planned attack against well-defended Ottoman positions went disastrously wrong, and the beach-head was evacuated in December 1915. The Regiment was sent to Alexandria in Egypt, and from there into Sinai and Palestine. The Allied aim was to remove the Ottoman threat to the Suez Canal, and push enemy forces out of the Holy Land. Throughout 1916 they progressed west towards the Ottoman citadel at Gaza, but it took three set-piece battles before Gaza was finally taken in 1917 and the road to Jerusalem opened up. Colvin had already been mentioned in dispatches for his bravery at the battle of Rafa, and at the First Battle of Gaza in March 1917 he won the Military Cross. The Essex Regiment formed a defensive screen to the east of Gaza to attack outlying forts and prevent Ottoman reinforcements arriving. His citation read “For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He led his company with great dash and gallantry in an attack upon a strongly fortified redoubt, which he successfully captured, and afterwards thoroughly reorganised and consolidated the position. On the following day he displayed great coolness when in command of a portion of our front line trench”.

After the war, Colvin returned to Loughton, serving as curate at St John's Church, where he was recalled with much affection by local historian Will Francies; “The boys' clubs of both the churches flourished under the leadership of a young Irish curate. The Reverend Alexander Colvin not only preached a fiery sermon, but played football, hockey and cricket, and boxed like a professional. His boys loved him and attended church with great regularity!” After a brief stint in Chelmsford, Colvin went off to the far end of South America, serving as chaplain to the Anglican community in Punta Arenas, Chile 1924 – 1927. He returned as rector of Willingale 1927 – 1929, and was vicar of Ilford parish church 1939 – 1963. He was still alive in 1963, living at Cranham near Upminster.



Press cutting about Revd Colvin



Soldiers of the Essex Regiment at the First Battle of Gaza

Leslie Morier Evans

Born: 1879
Died: 12 November 1917
Buried: Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium
Service: 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Division Train, Army Service Corps

Leslie Evans was born in Pembury Road, Clapton, Middlesex into a life of some privilege. His father, Thomas Evans, was a successful accountant who had married well. Parts of Hackney in late Victorian times formed a well-to-do enclave bustling with wealthy men who had made money in the City and their families and servants. Leslie had a public school education and was inducted into the Stock Exchange in 1904. Here he worked as a jobber; in Edwardian times jobbers were independently wealthy traders able to guarantee deals with their own private funds.

In that golden Edwardian decade, Evans moved to Loughton, which was no doubt still convenient for the City yet close to leafy Epping Forest. He lived in a detached property, then with a substantial garden, Alpha House, today No 9 Lower Park Road. The 1911 Census shows him living alone at Alpha House, with two servants. Beatrice Nellie Reynolds, aged 26, was his cook, and 19-year-old Maud Alice Jarvis was his housemaid. Leslie soon got married, to Nora Louise Hipwell of Olney, Buckinghamshire, and they had a young daughter at the time of Leslie's death. The Hipwells were a wealthy Olney family, brewers and lawyers, and Nora's father, Arthur, was a local magistrate.

In 1916, Evans joined the National Volunteers, intended as a kind of Home Guard, but then transferred to cadet school and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in September 1917. He did not join a glamorous regiment, but instead served in the Army Service Corps (Royal Army Service Corps from 1918), described as "the unsung heroes of the British Army in the Great War". The ASC moved all the millions of tons of equipment, food, weapons and ammunition needed to sustain the war effort from Britain to the front line. He was only at the front for a couple of months before being killed by a shell outside Ypres on 12 November 1917 just after the end of the Battle of Passchendaele. Properly known as the Third Battle of Ypres, 140,000 men died for an advance of only 5 miles; one life was lost for every 2 inches of ground gained. Mud and continuous rain was almost as serious an enemy as German artillery and gas attacks. The gains were wiped out five months later in a German counterattack.

A fellow officer wrote of Leslie Evans; "Though he had only been with us a short time he had become the life and soul of the mess. His loss to us can never be made good. A mind so original and untrammelled is seldom met with and the world can ill spare such a man. I have lost a real friend and most charming companion. He made all our lives happier and was a most loyal and conscientious officer." He was buried alongside 1,812 other Passchendaele victims at Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, just outside Ypres. Evans is not named on the Loughton War Memorial, although he does appear on the Stock Exchange War Memorial and the Olney War Memorial.



Alpha House, Lower Park Road



Passchendaele, November 1917

Philip Emlyn Friend

Born: 1879
Died: 7 July 1916
Buried: Gordon Dump Cemetery, Ovillers-la-Boisselle, Somme, France
Service: 2nd Lieutenant, Machine Gun Corps

Unlike the other soldiers in the display, Philip Friend was an officer, born into a life of some privilege. He was the son of William and Maud Friend, and grew up in comfortable surroundings at Snarsbrook Lodge, Copers Cope Road, a large house in Beckenham. His father was a "colonial broker"; Philip had an older brother, Walter, who died young. Following a private education, Philip was taken under the wing of his uncle, Dale Womersley, who provided him with the necessary introduction to the Stock Exchange in 1904.

The Friend family seem to have moved round Loughton, perhaps taking yearly tenancies. In 1914 they were living in Manor Rd at the extreme south of the parish, but in 1911 Philip and his wife Gertrude were renting Pendennis, a large house in Loughton High Road close to what is now Centric Parade.

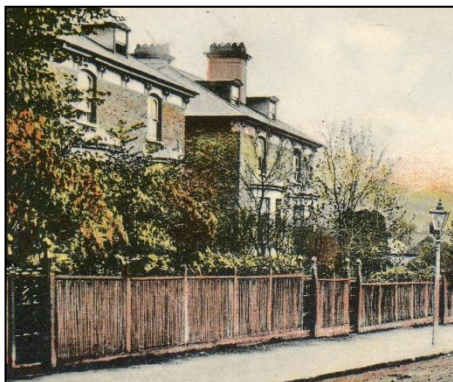


When the First World War broke out, Friend, a keen rider, joined the 11th Hussars, a cavalry regiment, but then transferred to the Royal Scots Greys for his training, which took place at Dunbar. By 1915 there was stalemate on the Western Front, and in the trench warfare that followed there was little need for cavalry, so Philip transferred to the East Lancashire Regiment, where he received his commission as Second Lieutenant. The Regiment included the tragic 11th Battalion, the "Accrington Pals", almost wiped out in the Battle of the Somme. Philip was sent to France with the 2nd Battalion in August 1915, then transferred to the Machine Gun Corps in January 1916.

The Machine Gun Corps was scarcely a glamorous fighting unit, but was a brutal but necessary response to the deadlock on the Western Front. Officers and men of the MGC could expect to be fighting in exposed positions or well in advance of the front lines, and the casualty rate was one of the worst in the British Army. The Battle of the Somme demonstrated beyond doubt the devastating power of co-ordinated machine gun fire. 20,000 men died on the first day alone as the ranks of slowly advancing allies were raked by fast and accurate German gunners.

Philip Friend himself died in the Battle of the Somme, on 7 July 1916. In a letter to his widow, his colonel wrote, "I put special value on his courage and constancy. During the heavy fighting last September, after a great part of the defensive works had been demolished by shell fire, he retained such power of command that his platoon manned what remained of the parapet with great gallantry and opened an effective flank fire which drove back every attempt to counter-attack from that quarter. He was always cheerful, and a great favourite."

A fellow officer wrote: "I wish you to know that both the officers and men of this Machine Gun Company feel his loss beyond words. I always thought him a soldier and a gentleman. I never wish to have a finer man under me." Philip Friend was buried in the Gordon Dump Cemetery about 20 miles east of Amiens, where he rests alongside 1,675 other Commonwealth soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice.



Pendennis, Loughton High Road



Machine Gun Corps in action

Charles Augustus Fry

Born: 1860

Died 2 April 1918

Buried: Les Baraques Military Cemetery, Sangatte, Pas-de-Calais, France

Service: Captain, Essex Regiment attd 2nd Garr Bn, Suffolk Regiment

Charles Augustus Fry was born in Ireland in 1860, the son of the Rev Canon Charles and Mrs Fry of Thurles, County Tipperary. Little is known of his childhood; Charles trained as a civil engineer. In 1880 he joined the North Tipperary Militia, serving as a Lieutenant. In 1887 he left Ireland for new opportunities in America, working as a civil engineer on the growing railroad network. He settled in New Jersey and married a local girl, Elsie Mabel Morse. Fry was a keen member of the Staten Island Cricket Club, the oldest U.S. cricket club still in existence. His passion for cricket made him headline news in the *New York Times* in 1895, when he captained a side of gentlemen playing against ladies; the men won.



Charles retired in 1912 and came to live in England. Together with Elsie and children Charles junior and Charlotte, they moved into *Brooklyn* in Traps Hill. This large house had been built for the Gould family in 1888; Loughton Library & Town Hall stands on the site today. *Brooklyn* was very handy for Loughton Cricket Club, and Charles joined enthusiastically.

The storm-clouds of conflict were building over Europe, and when war broke out in 1914, Charles was, despite his age, eligible for service. His time as an officer in the North Tipperary Militia meant that he was automatically a member of the Territorial Reserve. Thanks to the enormous casualty rate in the early war years, he was duly called up to the 6th Battalion, Essex Regiment in 1915. He was too old to serve in the trenches, so was attached to the 2nd Garrison Battalion, Suffolk Regiment. As its name implies, this was a formation intended for home service only.

Uniquely however, the Suffolks did send veteran and reserve battalions overseas, although only on support duties. On 4 April 1916 Fry arrived in France. He served with a company at Calais, where they guarded munition depots and supply lines. Unfortunately this was not a safe posting during the 1918 Spring Offensive. The Kaiser's last desperate gamble saw waves of poorly-armed troops attacking British trenches and bombing raids on the Channel ports. On 2 April 1918 a Gotha bomber squadron attacked Calais. The *Woodford Advertiser* told the tragic story.



Brooklyn, home of Charles Augustus Fry

"The official report has just come through that Captain Fry of *Brooklyn* was killed on April 2nd at Calais by a bomb thrown from an enemy aeroplane. In a letter just received from a brother Officer he says; "We had a raid about 3am and your husband went out to his men. I heard him come back and call out to a friend, Goodnight. A little later there was another raid and a bomb fell between his hut and mine; his death was instantaneous". Charles Fry was the oldest serviceman from Loughton to make the ultimate sacrifice. He is buried near Calais in the Les Baraques Military Cemetery, Sangatte, and is commemorated in many places which reflect his life and interests; on Loughton War Memorial, on the memorials in St. John's Loughton, St. Mary's Loughton, and Loughton Cricket Club, the Roll of Honour of Irish War Dead and the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association Roll of Honour.

Frederick John Huskinson

Born: c1890

Died 1 July 1916

Buried: no known grave. Commemorated on Thiepval Memorial

Service: Captain, 2nd Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Frederick Huskinson was a Lincolnshire lad, born in Brigg c1890, son of Charles and Georgina Huskinson. He attended Brigg Grammar School (now the Sir John Nelthorpe School), where his name is listed on the school war memorial and also on the Brigg town memorial. Frederick was a student at University College, Reading between 1910-12 where, as the shadow of war loomed, he joined the Reading University College Officers' Training Corps, before returning to Brigg Grammar School to teach art.

He also taught at The Roan School in Greenwich, and it may be in connection with this job that he and his parents moved to Loughton and were living in "The Lincolns", later No. 29 The Uplands, which had been recently built in 1911. Frederick had also married and May Huskinson was also living at The Lincolns. By 1916 his parents had moved to Orpington, Kent.

On 13 July 1912, Huskinson was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 4th Bn. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, an Irish Regiment and promoted to Lieutenant on 20 December 1913 but, after the outbreak of war, was seconded to the 1st Bn. The Manchester Regiment, possibly to see more action, as the 4th Inniskillings was a reserve battalion. He was wounded at the Battle of Neuve-Chapelle in Artois in March 1915, and again in April at the Second Battle of Ypres, where he was leading soldiers from the Indian Army. At Neuve-Chapelle the Indian contingent secured a heroic victory through their courage, overrunning the German defences and unexpectedly capturing a village behind enemy lines.

By the end of June 1916, Frederick had been promoted to the rank of Captain, and was organising the defences of Authuille, a frontline village. Frederick Huskinson was reported missing presumed killed on 1 July 1916, the very first day of the Battle of the Somme. His body was never found and he is commemorated among the 72,246 names listed as missing on the Thiepval Memorial in Picardy, which was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens to remember all those who perished on the Somme with no known grave. Frederick is also commemorated on the Loughton War Memorial, though his elder brother Charles is not. Charles Robert Huskinson was killed on 22 September 1914 when his ship, HMS Cressy, was torpedoed.



another photo of F.J. Huskinson



badge of the Royal Inniskilling Regiment



Thiepval Memorial

Richard Roy Lewer

Born: 1889

Died 21 July 1916

Buried: Heilly Station Cemetery, Méricourt-l'Abbé, Somme, France

Service: Lieutenant, 16th Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps

Richard Lewer was one of two sons born to Henry William and Florence Eliza Lewer (née Stoessiger) of Priors, a large house still standing at the top of Traps Hill. The Lewers were a prominent local family; H.W. Lewer was an author and historian and Florence was a pillar of the church. Like many sons of well-to-do families, Richard was sent off to public school, in his case to Denstone College in Staffordshire, where he was a boarder from 1898-1906, and an enthusiastic member of the Cadet Corps, followed by a spell at Wren's School.⁹

Rather unusually, Denstone had a geological museum, which may have inspired Lewer in his chosen career of geological surveyor, specifically looking for oil reserves. Elected one of the youngest-ever Fellows of the Geological Society in 1911, he travelled the world for the Burmah Oil Company, first spending time in the remote jungles of Burma before a spell in the Caucasus Mountains, and finally in western Canada. As soon as war broke out he returned home from Calgary and received commission in the 16th Bn. King's Royal Rifle Corps; this was a "pals" battalion made up of ex-members of the Church Lads Brigade.

The King's Royal Rifles took part in the attack on High Wood during the Somme offensive; Lewer was wounded in the leg and lay trapped in a shell-hole for 4 days as the battle see-sawed back and forth. Several times he was found by advancing German soldiers who gave him water, but he remained in terrible danger as British guns were continuously shelling the woods. He was eventually retrieved by a squad of Tommies and taken to hospital, but he died of his injuries on 21 July 1916, aged just 26.

Richard's bravery is commemorated in a number of places including Loughton War Memorial. A window over the main altar at St. Mary's Loughton is dedicated to him, as are (for reasons unknown) the altar rails of the parish church in St. Gennys, Cornwall, and his name is on the memorial at Denstone College. His grave in a military cemetery close to where he fell has received national attention recently, as its simple inscription "For England" featured in a book about epitaphs on Battle of the Somme war graves.



another photo of R.R. Lewer



King's Royal Rifles cap badge



The Lewer Window, St. Mary's Loughton

Harold William Marsh

Born: 17 July 1898

Died 1 July 1916

Buried: no known grave. Commemorated on Thiepval Memorial

Service: 30162, Rifleman, 1st/5th Battalion, London Regiment

Harold William Marsh was born in 1898 in Clifton Road, Loughton, the son of Elijah Marsh, a milkman, and Emily Harriett Marsh.

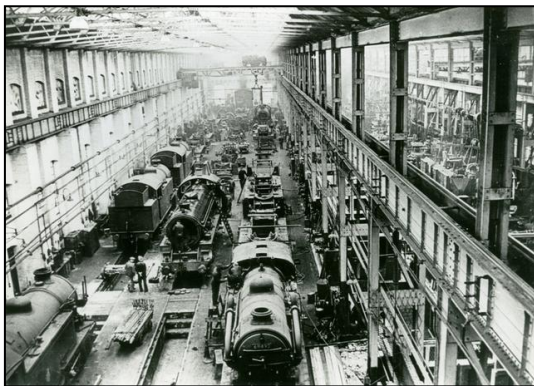
The family later moved to 6 Woodland Road, Loughton.

He attended Staples Road School, where, as the star pupil of the violin class he was nicknamed "Master" Marsh. The Headmaster, George Pearson, who later went on to find fame as a film producer, strongly encouraged musical talent at the school. While the violin class had a great reputation and gave concerts far and wide, participation meant sacrifices for poorer parents; violin lessons were sixpence a week, and the cheapest violin cost 18 shillings to buy in instalments.

Harold left school aged 14 and, like many boys of his age, joined the Great Eastern Railway. He began working as a clerk in the office of the Chief Mechanical Engineer at Stratford Railway Works on 30 September 1912.

On his seventeenth birthday, 17 July 1915, Harold took the King's Shilling and joined up, entering the army as a Rifleman in the 1st/5th Battalion, The London Regiment, which was part of the London Rifle Brigade. Described as "an absolutely fearless soldier in the trenches", he was nevertheless reported missing on 1 July 1916, on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, aged just 18. His sector to the north of the main front suffered the worst casualties, with 60,000 men killed or wounded in the first few days of fighting.

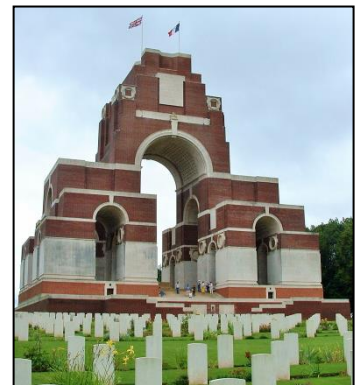
Although he was seen to fall, Harold Marsh's body was never found, and he is commemorated among the 72,246 names listed as missing on the Thiepval Memorial in Picardy, which was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens to remember all those who perished on the Somme with no known grave.



Stratford Rail Works



badge of the London Regiment



Thiepval Memorial

Henry Charles Mera

Born: 27 August 1893

Died: 14 April 1917

Commemorated: Arras Memorial, Arras, Pas-de-Calais, France

Service: 26671, X Company, 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment

Henry Charles Mera, known as Harry, was born on 27 August 1893 at the family home at 79 Capel Road, Forest Gate, overlooking Wanstead Flats. He was the third of five children of Arthur William and Frances Alice Mera. The family was middle-class and well-to-do: father Arthur worked as a stockbroker's clerk in the Stock Exchange in the City, and was one of the leading amateur lepidopterists of the day. Frances died in childbirth with the fifth child, and Arthur's widowed elder sister Phoebe (known as "Lallie") came to live with the family and bring up the children as their surrogate mother.

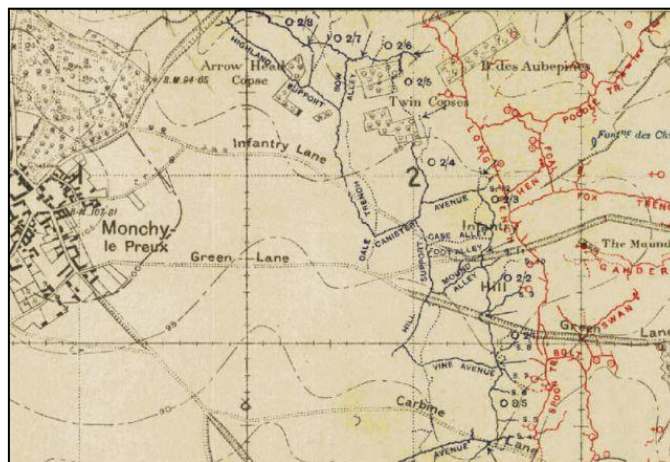
Before the war Henry worked as a clerk in the City of London. He and his brothers were fond of cycling, and they would often make tours by bicycle around the country, taking photographs of the places they visited and turning them into postcards which they then sent back home to their younger postcard-collecting sister, the delightfully named Alice Phoebe Victorie, a sickly and housebound child who would eventually die of tuberculosis aged just sixteen.

The Mera family was still living in Capel Road in March 1914, but by June they had moved from Forest Gate to "Outwood" on the High Road in Loughton. Outwood, which stood on the corner of Lower Park Road, later became the St. Olave's Hotel and then the Loughton Park Hotel, before being demolished - Collins Court now stands on the site. In 1916 or 1917 the family moved to the other side of the High Road to No 5 Park Villas, where they remained until Arthur's death in 1930. The house was demolished in the 1990s.

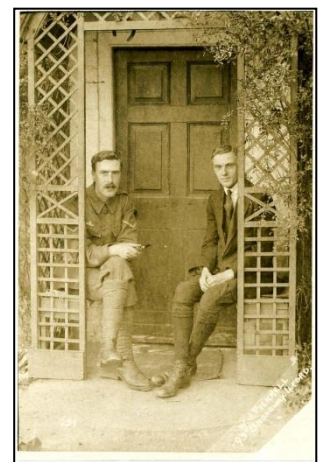
Like his three brothers, Harry joined the army to serve his country during the First World War, and was assigned to X Company, 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment. On 14 April 1917, during the Battle of Arras, X Company was detailed to form an advance scouting party in a dawn attack on Infantry Hill near Monchy-le-Preux, together with three other companies from the regiment and four companies from the 1st Newfoundland. As the soldiers moved forward, they came under fire from woodland on their left flank. X Company, on the extreme left flank, bore the full brunt of the German attack. The few survivors managed to form a defensive line, but by 7.30am all the Essex companies had been overrun. Their bodies were never recovered, but their heroic sacrifice held off the German advance long enough for Allied forces to assemble in strength and prevent them from capturing Monchy-le-Preux.



The Mera brothers; Henry is on his father's knee



Monchy-le-Preux and Infantry Hill



Henry Mera (on right) with brother Fred

Roy Granville Kyrle Money

Born: 16 April 1898

Died 9 April 1917

Buried: Feuchy Chapel British Cemetery Wancourt, Pas-de-Calais, France

Service: Captain, 3rd Bn, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)

Roy Money was one of no less than 10 children born to Sidney Wells Money and Georgette Melville Gertrude née Capadose. The Money family lived at Wood End House, a long-vanished Walthamstow mansion. Roy was educated at Cranleigh School, a much-respected public school in Surrey. The guns of the Western Front could be heard from its playing fields; almost 150 of the young men who attended Cranleigh were to fall among the Flanders poppies.

Roy had hopes of becoming a lawyer, but instead had to prepare for war as tragedy struck the family. Older brother Sydney Aubrey Kyrle Money was killed near Ypres on 16 June 1915, Undaunted, Roy a member of the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps, was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant on 7 October 1915. He joined the East Kent Regiment, nicknamed "The Buffs". Calamity dogged the family, as another brother was killed in action. Gerald Hugh Kyrle Money died on 27 July 1916 near Lille. As the war dragged on, the loss of officers was so great that, although Roy's battalion was a reserve formation based in Canterbury, he was promoted to Captain and sent to the trenches.



By the spring of 1917, British and French generals and politicians were under pressure from a war-weary public to end the stalemate on the Western Front. The allies knew that German supplies and morale were low, so a combined offensive on two fronts by Russia, Britain and France was planned which would break the deadlock. Russia had problems of its own, and could not contribute to the plan. The plan was revised. A huge French attack around Reims would smash through the Hindenburg Line and break the German will to continue the war. To draw German troops away from the scene of the attack, British, Australian and Canadian forces would mount a large-scale diversionary assault around Arras 80km to the north.

The plan was perfect on paper, and the French offensive along the River Aisne began on 1 April 1917. However, the enormous attack made no significant gains, and the British and Commonwealth diversionary assaults began on 9 April in what became known as the Battle of Arras. This was a stunning success; the British had learnt how to break through German in-depth defences and advanced almost 10km to new front lines. This created the springboard for victories later in the year at Messines, Ypres and Passchendaele.

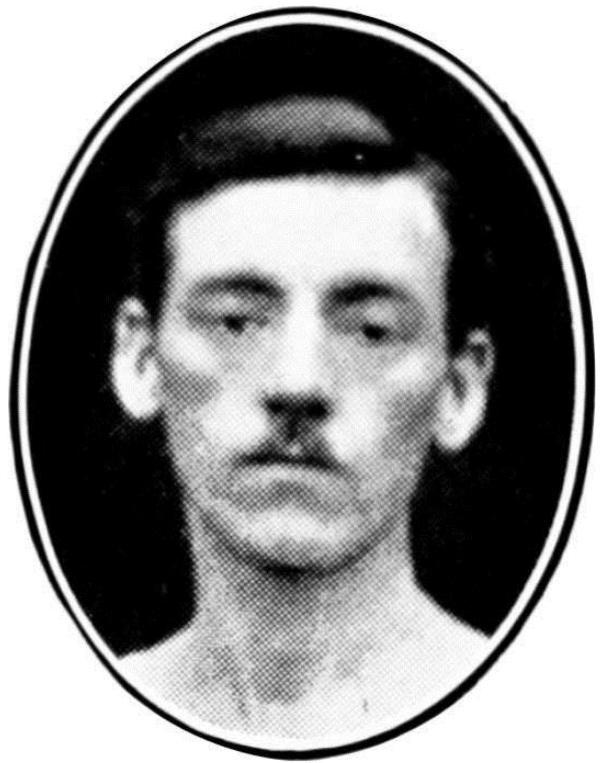


Feuchy Chapel British Cemetery, near Arras

The military gains came at a terrible cost with 158,000 allied casualties in the Battle of Arras. The poet Edward Thomas, who had lived at High Beach during his military training, was killed on the first day of battle. Roy Money, aged just 18, was also killed along with 7,000 others as they struggled through a heavy snowstorm against unending machine-gun fire. His parents, Sidney and Georgette, were living in Loughton when they received the dreaded telegram. Roy was the third of their six sons to give his life; all three are commemorated on Loughton War Memorial. He is the youngest person named on the monument.

William John Patient

Born: 29 May 1887
Died: 23 October 1914
Buried: No known grave - commemorated on Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, West Flanders, Belgium
Service: 7579, Private, 1st Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment



William John Patient was born in Loughton on 29 May 1887, the son of Alfred and Mary Ann Patient; the Patients were a large and well-known Loughton family, with other branches of the family elsewhere in Essex. In the 1901 census, he was recorded as an errand boy, living with his parents in Smarts Lane. William's first chosen profession was as a soldier. According to the *Great Eastern Railway Magazine*, "he served seven years with the Colours followed by three years in the reserve".

In 1911, while still a serving Tommy, he married Ellen Beatrice Wood, who had been born in Epping on 14 July 1888. They had two children, Beatrice and Neville. The family lived at 24 Ash Green, which was later renumbered to 24 Baldwins Hill. This was part of a row of tiny wooden cottages, and no longer exists today, having been incorporated into the house next door.

William joined the Great Eastern Railway on 13 October 1913 and worked until outbreak of war as a carriage washer at Stratford and Loughton stations. A keen runner, he was described as a promising member of the Great Eastern Railway Harriers.

As a previously-serving soldier, he was called up almost immediately when war broke out, and he joined the 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. He was shipped almost immediately to Le Havre as part of the British Expeditionary Force, landing there on 14 August 1914. As part of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, William would have been in the forefront of the counterattack against the German invasion of France. The B.E.F. and their French allies got as far as Mons, but after the Battle of Mons, they forced into a slow fighting retreat back towards Paris.

By the end of September 1914, the front lines had been established and trench warfare had begun. William Patient was killed on 23 October 1914. According to the *Great Eastern Railway Magazine* he died on the Aisne, a river east of Paris which marked much of the front line. However, by this time, most of the fighting had moved north around Ypres, where the First Battle of Ypres was raging. This may have been where he was actually killed as he is commemorated on the Menin Gate, a monument to almost 55,000 men whose bodies were never found in the Flanders mud following the Ypres battles. His name also appears on Loughton War Memorial, and on the war memorial in St John's Church. Ellen Patient, his widow, survived until 1978.



24 Baldwins Hill, now part of No 26



Northamptonshire Regt cap badge



The Menin Gate

Frank Robert Pitchers

Born: 11 December 1896

Died 16 August 1917

Buried: Hooze Crater Cemetery, Menenstraat, Ypres, Belgium

Service: 302036, C Company (Lewis Gun Section), 1st/5th Battalion, London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade)

Frank Pitchers, born in 1896 at 110 Moselle Road, Wood Green, was the only child of Robert James and Ellen Pitchers. His father James was a guard on the Great Eastern Railway, and when his base was moved to Loughton in 1903, the family moved too, to 27 Meadow Road, very close to the station.

Young Frank attended Staples Road School, which at that time comprised boys and infants only. When he left aged 14 in 1911, it was on the recommendation of Headmaster George Pearson that he, like his father, secured a job with the Great Eastern Railway. George Pearson subsequently went on to become a world-famous film producer and is commemorated with a blue plaque on the school. Pitchers began his career with the grade of "Lad Messenger" at Liverpool Street Station, and soon proved his worth. He was promoted to "Lad Parcels Clerk" in 1913 and "Parcels Clerk 5th Class" the following year.



The "war which would be over by Christmas" had become a war of attrition by 1915, and more men were needed. Large numbers volunteered enthusiastically, joining up in pals' battalions. Huge numbers of railwaymen flocked to the colours including Frank, aged 18, who enlisted on 11 November 1915. He joined the London Rifle Brigade, a formation which was in the thick of the action throughout the war, mostly around Ypres.

Following the Battle of Arras in the summer of 1917 in which fellow Loughton lad Roy Money was killed, a further advance was planned for the autumn, to be launched from the Ypres Salient. However, the weather was unusually wet, and what became the Third Battle of Ypres – better known as Passchendaele – was fought in heavy rain and deep mud. Modern historians now divide Passchendaele into a series of overlapping engagements, all of which took a terrible toll of human life on both sides. The London Rifles were deployed on a wide front east of Ypres and took part in all the major offensives, notably the Battle of Langemarck which began on 16 August 1917.

On that day Rifleman Pitchers was reported missing on the Menin Road, so battered by artillery fire and storms that



Paul Nash's painting of the Menin Road, where Frank Pitchers fell

it had almost ceased to exist. He was believed killed somewhere between the infamous Hellfire Corner and Polygon Wood. A headstone in the Hooze Crater Cemetery near Ypres stands close to where he disappeared. Passchendaele and its surrounding strategic high ground was finally captured by Canadian troops on 10 November 1917. 325,000 Allied and 260,000 German soldiers died in the battle. Frank Robert Pitchers is remembered on the family grave in Loughton Cemetery, but is not commemorated on the Loughton War Memorial.

Frank Reynolds

Born: 15 October 1892

Died 13 September 1916

Buried: Guillemont Road Cemetery, Guillemont, Somme, France

Service: 2nd Lieutenant, 2nd Bn, Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regt)

Frank Reynolds was born into a family of prosperous Woodford publicans. He was the youngest of four children born to Walter and Rebecca Reynolds née Deveson (also a family of Essex innkeepers). Frank grew up with his two elder sisters Annie and Ethel, and his elder brother Walter at the Forest Lodge, Oak Hill, Woodford. Their father Walter was also the landlord at the *Lion and Key* pub in Leyton High Road; he died at the young age of 53 in November 1904, leaving Rebecca to bring up the young family alone.

Frank and his brother Walter attended Bancroft's School; Frank was there between 1904-1909. Both boys were regarded as studious and interested in the sciences. When he left school, Walter became a civil engineer and during the First World War served in the Royal Engineers. Frank was more interested in nature (he won a school natural history prize in 1908) and chemistry. When he left school, he went up to University College London to study chemistry.

War broke out as Frank was preparing for his finals, and immediately upon completing his degree, he signed up, joining the Artists Rifles as a private. He went almost immediately to France to undergo officer training, and in 1915 he applied for a commission and was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the Sherwood Foresters, mostly made up of tough miners from the Nottinghamshire coalfields. Frank made himself the battalion expert in the use of the Stokes Mortar; this was a new weapon intended to cause devastation in enemy trenches and machine-gun nests, and so speed up the Allied advance. During the initial phase of the Battle of the Somme, Frank's battalion occupied defensive positions near Ginchy. On 13 September, B and C Companies were ordered to attack "The Quadrilateral", a German strongpoint, and by late afternoon, D Company, including Frank, were needed to support the assault. Frank was killed in the charge. His commanding officer wrote to Frank's mother; "...the chiefest consolation to you must be that he died while doing a brave action. His section of the battery went over to the attack and, as we all knew he would, he went on ahead to lead them. He was wounded in the arm almost immediately but refused to stop or have it bandaged. When the attack was delayed, he put the men in his section under cover and, although wounded, went on all alone to observe, and was killed instantaneously".

Frank may have had family connections with the large Loughton Reynolds family, whose ancestors had been at the centre of the struggle to save Epping Forest. His name appears on the Loughton War Memorial and also the memorials at St. John's Loughton, and All Saints Woodford.



St. John's memorial



badge of the Sherwood Foresters



Guillemont Road Cemetery

James Erle Radcliff Rosier

Born: 1893

Died 20 September 1916

Buried: Bouzincourt Communal Cemetery Extension..France

Service: Lieutenant, "A" Battery, 245th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

James Rosier was born in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, the son of James Henry Edmund and Rose Maria Annie Rosier née Scott. He had two sisters, Angela and Rose. James attended a number of prestigious public school: Alleyn's School, Dulwich; Weymouth College, Dorset; and St. Paul's School, Hammersmith. He went up to Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge University in 1912 to study history, receiving his degree in 1916 "by special grace of the Senate" (the university's governing body), which meant that he was already on the Western Front. James had originally intended to train for the priesthood, but nevertheless joined up enthusiastically in August 1914.

By this stage James's parents were living in Loughton, and James attended St. John's Church.

James was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery in 1915, serving as a Lieutenant in the 245th Brigade, which had originally been known as the West Riding Artillery. The creation of the Royal Field Artillery in 1899 marked a major innovation in modern warfare well-suited to the stalemate and trench systems of the Western Front. Artillery units with medium-calibre cannons were embedded with frontline troops enabling rapid deployment and response against targets difficult for infantry to deal with, such as machine-gun nests and bunkers. By July 1915, James was on the frontline.

So from the opening salvoes of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916, Lieut. Rosier was in the thick of the conflict. 245 Brigade was fighting on the northern sector of the Somme advance, which saw the hardest fighting and the greatest slaughter. 20,000 British soldiers died on the first day, but contrary to popular belief, the battle was a significant Allied victory with strategic territory captured and the German fighting capacity was radically degraded. But it was at a terrible cost to so many families, whose sons did not return.

James Rosier was killed on 20 September 1916. His colonel wrote of him, "A very valuable and good officer. I have always found him a keen gunner and a good fellow. He had any amount of pluck and did lots of first-class work as an observer. He did not know the meaning of fear, hard work never troubled him, and he was always cheerful." Lieutenant Rosier is commemorated on the Loughton War Memorial, the memorial in St. John's Church and, as his parents had moved to Westcliff-on-Sea, on the memorial in St. Alban's Church Westcliff.



War memorial, St. Alban's Westcliff



badge of the Royal Field Artillery



Bouzincourt Cemetery

Leopold Walter Willingale

Born: 13 April 1884
Died: 13 August 1915
Buried: Auchonvillers Military Cemetery,
Somme, France
Service: 12696, Private, 2nd Battalion, Essex
Regiment

Leopold Walter Willingale, born on 13 April 1884, was the son of Henry and Louisa Willingale, members of Loughton's large and well-known Willingale family.

He had grown up at No. 120 Smarts Lane, where he is recorded in the 1901 Census as a 17-year old boy, living with his widowed mother Louisa and working as a "garden boy".

In the 1911 Census he had been married for 5 years to Clara Louisa, and they had three sons: Leo George, aged 4, Ernest Alec, aged 3, and baby Thomas Cedric, aged 1. They were to have two further children before the outbreak of the First World War. Clara Louisa worked as a domestic servant while Leopold had been working for the Great Eastern Railway as a carriage cleaner at Loughton Station since 1903.

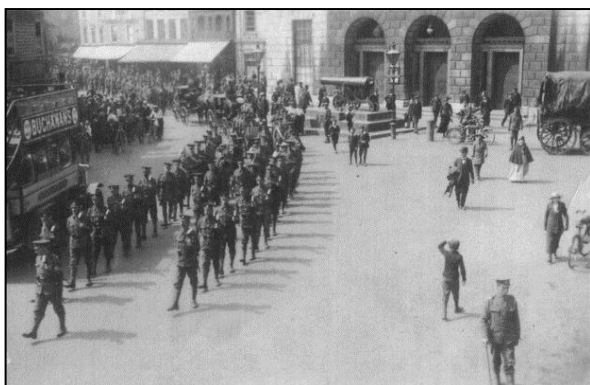
He volunteered almost as soon as the First World War broke out, joining the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment on 5 September 1914, and was in the Picardy trenches within weeks, as part of the British Expeditionary Force's 4th Division.

The 2nd Battalion was in the thick of the action, taking part in the Retreat from Mons and the Battle of the Marne. Leopold was killed in the prelude to the Battle of the Somme near Auchonvillers, between Amiens and Arras, on 13 August 1915, in an area subject to almost continuous shelling, and was buried at Auchonvillers Military Cemetery.

His cousin, Samuel Willingale, a fellow carriage washer at Loughton Station, was also killed in the war, in 1917. Tragically, Leopold's son Thomas Cedric Willingale, was killed in 1944 during the Second World War. All three men are commemorated on Loughton War Memorial. Leopold's name also appears on the war memorial in St Mary's Church.



120 Smarts Lane



2 Bn Essex Regt march through Chelmsford in 1914



Auchonvillers Military Cemetery

Douglas Charles Wollen

Born: 17 April 1893

Died 13 April 1917

Buried: Bois-Carre British Cemetery, Thélus, France

Service: 302036, C Company (Lewis Gun Section), 1st/5th Battalion, London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade)

Born in Walthamstow, Douglas was one of eight children born to Frederick James Wollen and his wife Eliza. Frederick was a manufacturer of belts and braces. The business did well, and the family gradually moved up in the world, first to 72 Poppleton Road Leyton, then to *Lismore*, Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill, and finally to *Cleveland* (now No. 7) St. John's Road, Loughton. Douglas was educated at Parmiter's, a public school then in Bethnal Green. On leaving school, he was placed with Henry Head & Co, insurance brokers of Lloyds. Insurance was his business, but cricket was his passion, and he was a member of Loughton Cricket Club, passing the ground daily en route from home to office.



Like his fellow Loughtonian Roy Money, he joined the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps, gaining a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 17th Battalion, Highland Light Infantry. This battalion was recruited from the Glasgow tenements and quite what the tough Glaswegian boys made of their young cricket-loving officer is unknown. They were sent to France in November 1915 and fought bravely in the Battle of the Somme. Douglas was not looking out at no-man's land however, but up into the sky, at the aerial dogfights of the new-fangled biplanes.

On 13 February 1916, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, and joined 25 Squadron as an Observer. The squadron flew the new two-seater FE2b, which had a propeller at the rear of the body. This gave the Observer, who sat in the forward cockpit, an excellent view, and as he also doubled up as the gunner, a very wide field of fire. Observers had to spot and record enemy positions, which had to be done standing up with no belts or parachutes; gunnery work likewise – it was extremely perilous and there were always vacancies for Observers!

Wollen was teamed up with an experienced pilot, Captain Lancelot Richardson, an Australian whose daring exploits were already well known. Their first joint success was on 17 March 1917 when they helped shoot down a German fighter near Arras. Like Roy Money, also from Loughton, Wollen fought in the Battle of Arras, although in aerial rather than ground combat. Unfortunately, this battle was also when the German air force changed tactics. British successes were beginning to mount up, thanks to accurate reporting from aircraft of enemy positions. Led by the infamous Baron von Richthofen, the Germans began mass "cavalry charges" of aircraft against British spotter and fighter planes to try and drive the Royal Flying Corps from the skies.

On 13 April, Wollen and Richardson flew with the squadron over Hénin-Liétard, where Tommies were trying to dislodge a well dug-in German position. The enemy was eventually forced out, and blew up the parish church in revenge as they left. But in the air, Richthofen's "circus" arrived, and shot down 3 British aircraft, including No. A6372, flown by Richardson and Wollen. Both were killed, and buried side by side in the Bois-Carre British Cemetery north of Arras. Douglas Wollen is remembered in a plaque at Loughton Cricket Club but his name does not appear on Loughton War Memorial.

