

# Wealdstone FC and The Great War 1913 – 1919

Roger Slater

£4



## We Will Remember Them

As always, my research into aspects of the club history continues as more information becomes available. Following the Memorial Brochure produced in 2018, this update and completed volume is a result of recent changes, as more and correct detail has been added regards Charles Bird after a contact from his wife Elsie's great grandson Andy. Others also have additional detail.

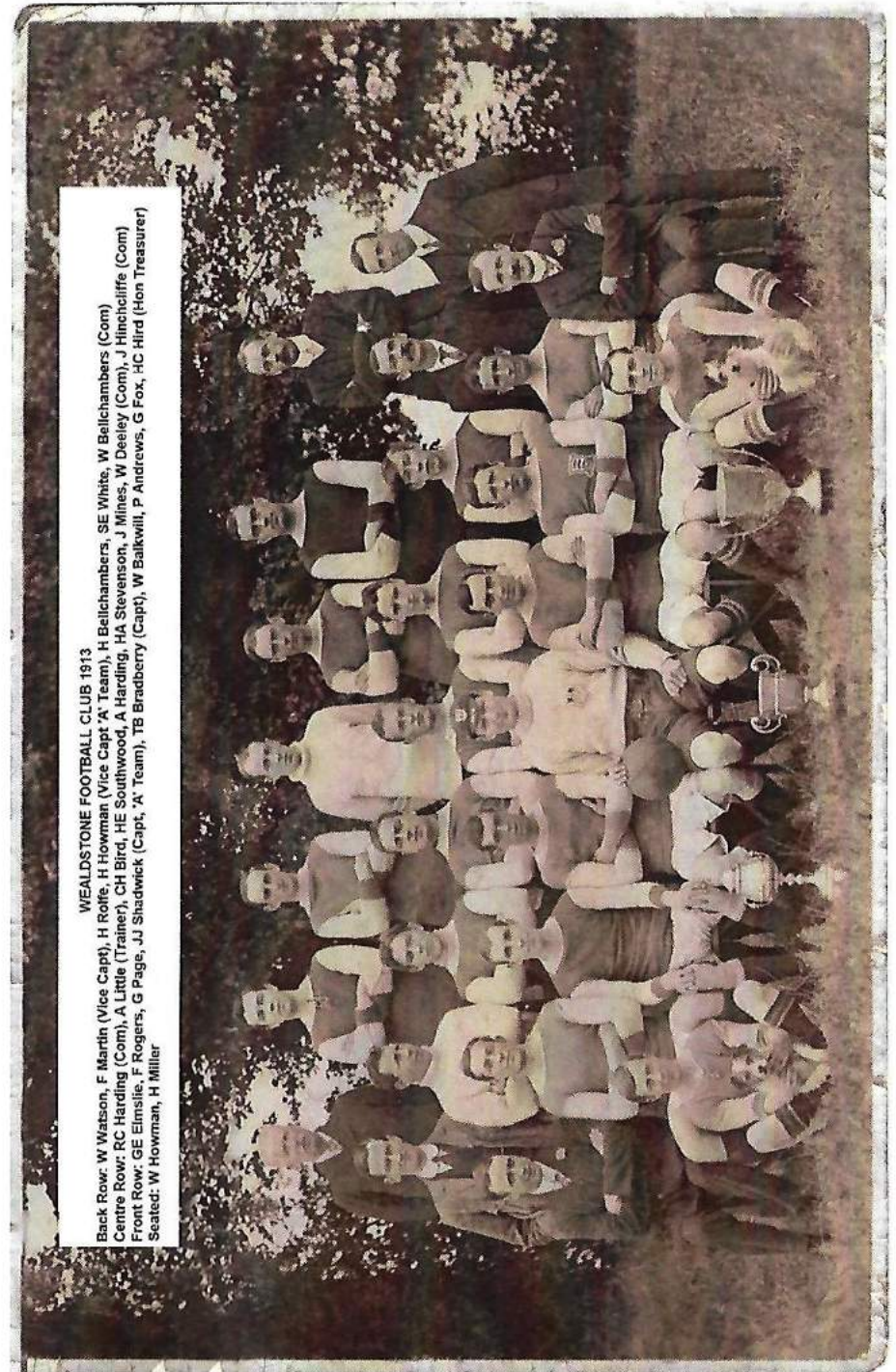
A 'War Diary' of the club has also been created based on the units 'our boys' were serving in and where those units saw action at various stages of the war and this also includes some of the articles written for the WFC Match Programme in recent years relating to the war.

Note that many of the cuttings herein are taken from Harrow Observers published during World War 1. We will always be grateful not only to those mentioned, but also to the newspaper for recording the details that are part of the History of Wealdstone FC.

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*The front cover is a picture I recently took at RHS Garden Rosemoor, digitally treated by **Steve Foster @aqueoussunphoto** and then again by me, while the rear cover shows an image of the new Wealdstone FC War Memorial, presented to the club in November 2018.*



## Wealdstone and The Great War 1913 - 1919

The commencement of the 1913-14 season had seen Wealdstone FC take a major step, leaving the realms of Junior Football to enter Senior competitions for the first time. The club had begun to outgrow its status and signed off from the Junior levels winning the Willesden & District League Premier Division, the London League Division II and the Middlesex Junior Cup the previous year and it was announced at the Annual General Meeting that the club would be entering the London League Division I and the Middlesex and District Leagues as well as The English Cup (FA Cup), the FA Amateur Cup and both London and Middlesex Senior Cups for the first time. The Reserve team also took a step up in status by replacing the First Team in the Willesden and District League and London and Middlesex Junior Cups.

At the end of that first senior season, the club looked back with some pride over their efforts. They had retained many of the players from the previous year and only added one or two new recruits to strengthen the squad.

They had lost their first competitive senior fixture, the Extra Preliminary Round of the FA Cup 0-3 to Page Green Old Boys in mid-September, but gained their revenge against the same opponents in late November, winning 5-1 in the London Senior Cup. They also reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the FA Amateur Cup eventually being knocked out by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coldstream Guards.

On Easter Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 1914 with the ever-changing situation in Europe well known, the War Department had arranged a display in Harrow by the local Brigade Voluntary Aid Detachment. It was part of the recruitment drive as a number of the local volunteers had joined a Naval Auxiliary Reserve and numbers were not as high as wished. The demonstration took two parts – the first a simulation of a mine accident – acknowledged as not very common in Harrow – and a second, a football accident, *“comprising a stretcher drill under Sergeant Ketley and bandaging by the Nursing Division under Miss Pitcairn. The latter performance was most creditable, being warmly applauded by the audience who closely inspected the work. The concluding scene was the collapse of a Football Stand, arranged by Corporals Hutt and Manson and the very common accident was realistically carried out.*

*The good humoured crowd assembled, the teams entered from the back of the*

*hall and the enthusiasm of the crowd caused the collapse of the stand. There were of course Brigade men on hand who administered first aid and removed the injured. As the company passed out of the hall, they inspected the ambulance station fitted up in the adjacent room, under charge of Corporal Oram, where everything was neat and orderly and ready for an emergency.”*

In late May. The AGM of the football club was held and members were told that the first team had finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in both London and Middlesex leagues and the Reserves had managed a creditable 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Willesden and District League (replacing the ‘first team’ that had won the league the previous year) and T Bradberry, F Theobald and F Everitt had also been selected to play for the Middlesex County team.

Off the field of play, the finances of the club had also taken an upturn, the Honorary Treasurer reporting a cash balance of £12 14s 3½d, an increase of over £7 from the previous year. Indeed, the increased cash balance and an expectation that a further increase would be due for the forthcoming year, encouraged a proposal at the AGM that players should receive expenses for their appearances in the new season. The Committee were to meet separately to decide on this prior to the commencement!

A matter of weeks after the AGM however, the political situation in Europe took a further turn for the worse, when on June 28<sup>th</sup>, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in Sarajevo. The political objective of the assassination was to break off Austria-Hungary's South Slav provinces so they could be combined into a Yugoslavia, however the assassination led directly to World War I when Austria-Hungary subsequently issued an ultimatum to the Kingdom of Serbia, which was partially rejected. Austria-Hungary then declared war on Serbia, triggering actions leading to war between most European states.

On 3 August 1914 Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, announced to the House of Commons that Belgian officials had informed him that they had received a notice from Germany proposing to Belgium friendly neutrality, covering free passage on Belgian territory, and promising maintenance of independence of the kingdom and possession at the conclusion of peace. However, it threatened, in case of refusal, to treat Belgium as an enemy. The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs further informed the UK Government

that armed forces of Germany had already penetrated Belgian territory and Belgium chose not to enter any agreement with Germany. They appealed to Great Britain for diplomatic intervention. Subsequently, in accordance with a seventy-five-year-old treaty to defend their ally, Great Britain declared war on the axis powers at 11pm on 4<sup>th</sup> August, Germany having started their invasion of Belgium and France on the 28<sup>th</sup> July.

At home, Wealdstone, like every other amateur club saw their preparations thrown into disarray. The playing squad had been retained but before the club could commence their second season as Seniors (with an English Cup Preliminary Round fixture away to Barnet Alstom), organised league football closed down for the duration.

There was an initial push by professional sides to continue their leagues and to play matches *"to help keep public spirits up"* but this was not well received. Public opinion started to turn against professional sportsmen very quickly, as many other young people joined up and lost their lives in the early days of the war in France. One soldier serving in France, wrote to a British newspaper to complain that *"hundreds of thousands of able-bodied young roughs were watching hirelings playing football"* while others were serving their country.

In Harrow and Wealdstone, number of events were organized locally both to encourage enlistment and to raise money for the various support services that were required both at home and overseas. For the amateur players of Wealdstone, the response was somewhat different. Club Secretary Mr Halsey later noted that *"the club were very proud that their players joined up as keenly as they joined the football team"*. Many current and former players of the club, along with many players from other local amateur sides and other noted local sportsmen volunteered in the first weeks of the war.

It was highlighted in the Harrow Observer on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 1914, as the first published 'Roll of Honour' of those locally that joined up showed eighteen names of former and present players from Wealdstone FC that had answered the call to arms. Nine more were included on the second list a week later and by the end of October thirty names were listed, including 16 of the people in the photograph (inside front cover) above from 1912-13.

A large number had joined the local 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Battalion, originally a local

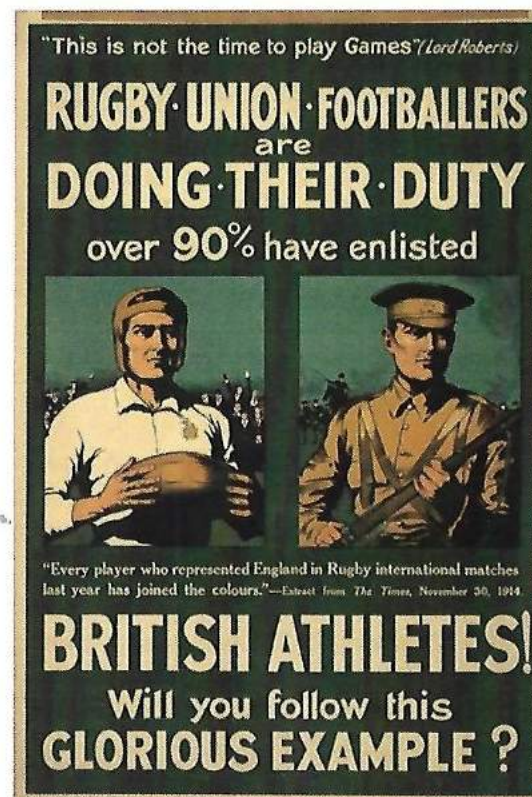
Territorial Regiment. By mid-October they had reached their 1000-man compliment and had been relocated to Sittingbourne for further training. Once this was completed, they were soon to embark for India, while a call went out via the local papers for more volunteers to form a second and then a third battalion of the 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex.

A few old soldiers within the Wealdstone FC squad also enlisted in the first few months of the Great War re-joining regiments in which they had previously served. They were re-joining the army but were to serve in battle for the first time like the new volunteers. Some shared their experiences over the next four-and-a-bit years, fighting alongside their teammates, while others fought alone, with family members in other regiments, battalions and services. There were no boundaries in age, era or action as players from the club at the turn of the century served alongside those from the years immediately preceding the war and indeed in one instance, two of those remembered on the club's

memorial served in the same battalion and era and lost their lives in similar actions in the same area over a short period, yet their services to Wealdstone FC had been twelve years apart.

As the war progressed into the Autumn and Winter of 1914, the public pressure for professional players to join their amateur colleagues continued and a campaign of posters was started to encourage them to enlist.

Of the many posters that were put up, some tried to embarrass the footballers by pointing out that the entire England Rugby team had enlisted (of whom five were killed in battle) and upwards of 90% of all Rugby Union players had also enlisted.





The campaign certainly had an effect as by March 1915, 122 professional footballers had signed up for the 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex Regiments, known colloquially as 'The Footballers Battalion'.

During their training and early postings on the home front, these professionals were allowed to leave behind their Army training every Saturday to return to their clubs to take part in games, but often this opportunity wasn't taken up as the clubs found themselves having to subsidise the train fares.

Posters continued to be produced locally to target specific clubs

where it was felt few had answered the call, while in other areas teams such as Clapton Orient and East Fife were able to announce that their players had all enlisted following the earlier example (in November 1914) of Heart of Midlothian (comfortably leading the Scottish First Division), who saw sixteen players remove their football boots and replace them with those of the Army enlisting together to fight in France.

They became the first British team to sign up on mass and formed a major part of 'McCrae's Battalion' (the 16th Royal Scots) and the Provost's Battalion (the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Scots). By the time the war concluded, seven Hearts first-teamers had made the ultimate sacrifice.

At home, the Roll of Honour published from September to December 1914 in the Harrow Observer was simply a listing of all the people of Harrow and Wealdstone and the surrounding areas that volunteered during the first weeks of the war (and whose family or friends had notified the newspaper). It is evident from this that around 30 current and former club players enlisted,

some returning to regiments in which they had previously served, others choosing regiments associated with the families original 'home' areas, while many more answered the call to increase the strength of the local Territorial Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex. This call to arms was so successful, the 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> were mobilized in early September 1914 and the 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>, a Reserve regiment immediately inaugurated.

Many recent and former players Wealdstone FC joined up and in the following four years found themselves in the same location or battle as other members of the club, whether they knew them or not. We can only imagine what their conversations would have been were they to meet at the time.

George Richard Goodege known in the club as 'Dicky' (and on the Wealdstone War Memorial as R Goodage) was a good example of those that took those initial steps. He's recorded as enlisting in the Middlesex Regiment 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion then based at Larkhill Camp at the outbreak of the war. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August the battalion entrained on route to Sheerness, where they quite literally 'dug in', digging trenches and training until they were relieved by a Special Reserve Unit. He was a good example of a current player that took up arms, while the former players were led by William Cozens, James Robertson and Charles Bellchambers.

William Cozens, Service Number G/19948 was recorded to have joined the 9th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment on the 19<sup>th</sup> August at the age of 37 and James Robertson, Service Number 58824, joined the newly formed 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), at Hounslow, becoming part of 54th Brigade of the 18<sup>th</sup> Division in early September. A matter of two days later, 32-year-old Charles Bellchambers had joined up entering The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, as Private Service Number 207213.

Henry (known as Harry) Howell was the next, on 10<sup>th</sup> September when he rejoined the 7<sup>th</sup> Northants Regiment, with whom he had previously served. He took up his previous rank of Lance Sergeant, Service Number 3/10684. The 7<sup>th</sup> Northants were under command of 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade in the 24<sup>th</sup> Division. On the same day Russell William Bradberry, Service Number 70878, joined the Royal Garrison Artillery 301<sup>st</sup> Siege Battalion.

Frank Martin Service Number B/2070, joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Rifle Brigade at

Winchester on the 13<sup>th</sup> September before the following day travelling to Aldershot to join 41<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 14<sup>th</sup> Division. As he joined his regiment, another former player Fred Farmborough, Service Number TF/265283, became one of the last of the 'first thousand men' that formed the 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment signing up in Harrow.

By mid-September, Charles Bellchambers and his unit had moved from Southampton to Lyndhurst in Hampshire where they joined the 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division while closer to home, the profoundly deaf Walter Howman was recruited to the 24<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment, Service Number PS/2879 before almost immediately transferring to the 16<sup>th</sup> Middlesex (Public Schools) Regiment.

Two weeks later, on 1<sup>st</sup> October William Cozens and his battalion were billeted around Brighton and the South Downs while both Walter Howman and Fred Farmborough saw their units mobilized at Kempton Park Racecourse. It was the first time that two players, one former and one present in this case were known to be at the same place at the same time.

Basic training completed for some of the early volunteers, it was at the beginning of October that Charles Bellchambers became the first to set foot on foreign soil, as he crossed by ship to Zeebrugge in advance of the First Battle of Ypres where he saw action for the first time.

Shortly afterwards, around the 10<sup>th</sup> of October two more 'Stones were to prepare for action as George Goodege received his instruction with 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex to relieve the forces of The Raj in India. Showing the extent of variation in the early stages of the war, on the same day Russell Bradberry and his unit of the Royal Garrison Artillery was deployed in a number of locations around the UK to defend military bases from attack, primarily from the air and the fledgling Imperial German Flying Corps.

In October, a Wealdstone representative also received the first promotion of the year as Frank Martin was promoted to Acting Corporal (and toward the end of the year, full Corporal).

At Ypres in mid-October, Bellchambers witnessed his regiment suffer heavy casualties in the battle which lasted for almost a month. The unit was not

restored to full strength until mid-1915.

At the end of October, now both prepared for immediate mobilization, Fred Farmborough and George Goodege embarked onto transport ships at Southampton for the 35-day journey to India and the battles that awaited them. They travelled via Malta and the Red Sea. In their stead in Harrow, as soon as the 1st battalion embarked, the call went out for a Reserve Battalion to be formed (2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). This was filled by 20<sup>th</sup> November and a further reserve list (later to become the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>) was formed. By the end of January 1915, this too was at full strength.

Early in December the troopships arrived in Bombay after their journey and both Farmborough and Goodege were assigned to the Presidency Brigade based in Calcutta while at home, Walter Howman was relocated to billets in Warlingham and William Cozens found his battalion transferred to the command of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the 24<sup>th</sup> Division based at Portslade.

## When Christmas Stopped The War....

*The deadlock on the Western Front continues and the rival armies face one another in sodden trenches, sometimes not more than forty yards apart. At the outset, neither France, Great Britain or Belgium was ready for the war on land. Britain had its Expeditionary Force fully prepared but it was soon to realise that in place of hundreds of thousands of men, millions would be required. These are now being enrolled, drilled, armed and despatched.*

*The premature policy of breaking the dykes and flooding the country – a policy which should never have been adopted – has made much of Flanders a marshland, causing the trenches to be half full of water all the time. A dreadful harvest of disease will inevitably be reaped by all Europe from these months of Winter exposure, from the almost innumerable dead whose bodies congest the hastily dug pits, and from the armies of wounded everywhere. Already signs are evident of this...*

*The War Illustrated (edit) January 1915*

Despite the images available in books and on the internet, (and even on the silver screen – Joyeux Noel is worth a watch if not completely factual) it's hard to imagine what Christmas 1914 was like in the trenches on either side. This after all was Christmas in a war that was going to be over by Christmas, and it

was a war like no other before or since. It was a siege that had become a stalemate fought in what through continuous cold and rain had become semi liquid mud in Flanders and Northern France.



The British troops (like Charles Bellchambers) had fought their way through the first battle of Ypres, the shattered units and battalions that remained relieved in November by the French, only to find themselves re-building in the trenches, in some cases only 40 yards from their enemy, not only dodging the bullets and shells, but within earshot, even able to smell their opposing cookhouse. Close enough that with typical sardonic humour, the opponents would shout insults to each other and would even stick up small wooden signs saying 'missed' or 'left a bit' after a volley of shots or machine gun fire. These were ordinary men who had, four months earlier been living ordinary lives. If you were born male in Britain, Germany, France or Russia in the years 1887-97 (the formative years of Wealdstone FC by coincidence) it was odds on that you would spend Christmas knee deep in mud, rats and lice while waiting for your turn to play hide and seek with rifle or machine gun bullets.

Standing up to your knees in the slime of a waterlogged trench it was Christmas Eve on the Western Front. Stooping, you would wade across to the firing step and take over the watch from a bedraggled but relieved comrade. A comment, an answer, maybe something to look out for and a shared cigarette, then your bleary-eyed and mud-spattered colleague shuffled off towards his dug out and it was your turn in the firing line. Stamping your feet to keep warm, morale raised as the belief that in the New Year the march to victory would finally begin – then it lowers as you remember that this is the war that would be over by now. You should be back at home with your family...

Christmas 1914 was the point where both sides began to realise that they had been duped. Few soldiers from either side had any personal grievance against the enemy and the stalemate and conditions of trench warfare cried out for relief. That uprush of relief garnered substance to what followed and was in

itself responsible for some of the confusion, romantic exaggeration and myth that surrounds the facts of the Christmas Truce.

On Christmas Eve, 94 British soldiers were lost to snipers and minor skirmishes along the Western Front and the German army had lost a similar number. Despite the date, there was no formal end to hostilities on either side. It was very much an organic affair that in some areas along the twenty seven mile front between the Ypres Salient and La Bassee hardly registered a mention, yet in other areas it left a profound impact upon those who took part.

Subsequent letters home contained rushed and contradictory accounts and Battalion Histories and other reports written in the following months and years were often unintentionally embellished with both propaganda and hindsight, yet the facts (as best as we can find and understand them) inspire awe and amazement at the ease at which arms were apparently laid down. Those uncertain first steps towards a foe and the potency of human nature that created an un-orchestrated few moments of peace in the midst of the greatest conflict the world had ever seen.



**A Christmas Tree on a German Trench**

receiving a present from the Kaiser, the Kaiserliche, a large Meerschaum pipe

As Christmas approached parcels from home began to arrive from families, friends and also from the state. Food was surprisingly plentiful in the British lines, with stories of Turkey, Geese, Duck and Plum Puddings later recounted in letters home, and each soldier also received a 'Princess Mary box'; a metal case engraved with an outline of George V's daughter filled with chocolate and butterscotch, cigarettes and tobacco, a picture card of Princess Mary and a facsimile of George V greeting to the troops. *'May God protect you and bring you safe home,'* it said.

With shorter lines of supply and much more direct links to the Fatherland, the German regiments were well stocked generally and at Christmas they were not to be outdone, soldiers

for the troops and a box of cigars for the NCOs and officers. The Belgians and French also received parcels but for them there was a greater level of sadness as their countries were occupied, this the likely reason that there was far less evidence of truce in their sectors of the lines than those held by the British.

The Daily Telegraph reported that in one area, the Germans had managed to slip a chocolate cake into British trenches (though there is little to corroborate this) and the report continued that it was accompanied with a message asking for a ceasefire later that evening so the Germans could celebrate the festive season and their Captain's birthday. They proposed a concert at 7.30pm when candles would be placed on the parapets of their trenches. Whether or not this is fact or fantasy remains uncertain. What we do know is that each German unit along the lines received an influx of mini Christmas Trees in 'care packages' from home and on Christmas Eve many of these were placed along trench walls and lit with candles. In many cases (as recorded by British soldiers in their diaries and letters) as the candles were lit, the Germans started to sing traditional Christmas Hymns and Carols in their trenches. With artillery silent and the weather breaking, Tannenbaum (Oh, Christmas Tree) was heard to drift across no-man's land to surprised and a little confused British infantrymen. The sight of the trees and candles was reported along the lines from the observers and scouts on their firing steps, and despite the wariness of the officers, curious heads began to pop above the parapets to take in the spectacle of sight and sound in the darkness. Slowly, from the British trenches carols were sung in return and when the Germans finished there was spontaneous applause from one side to the other.



By late evening the British high command (entrenched in a luxurious châteaux 27 miles behind the front) had begun to hear of the fraternization and stern orders were issued by the commander of the British Expeditionary Force, Sir

John French against any such behavior citing the consequences of parleying with the Germans. That became the perfect excuse for the opponents to start shouting to one another, to continue the singing and, in some areas, to suggest a truce – some Germans were known to have placed signs on their trenches alongside the trees with 'No Fire' and 'You no fight, We no fight' written on them for their foes to see as dawn broke on Christmas Day. Along the trenches as the sun rose on a frost covered Christmas morning and somewhere a first soldier stood up and offered himself as a target to the snipers, yet no shot was fired.

There are numerous records and reports of Germans appearing as shadows in the dawn mist walking slowly into no-man's land beckoning toward the British lines and in broken English encouraging the Tommies to do the same, there are also numerous reports and records that in fact, the fraternization started earlier. Regimental Sergeant Major Beck of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment put in his diary for Christmas Eve that "it was a quiet day. Germans shout over to us and ask us to play them at football, and also not to fire and they would do likewise. At 2am (Christmas Day) a German band went along their trenches playing Home Sweet Home and God Save the King which sounded grand and made everyone think of home. During the night, several of our fellows went over no-man's land to the German lines and were given drink and cigarettes".

Sir Edward Hulse, a Captain in the Scots Guards recounted his memory in a letter home to his family, "Four unarmed Germans approached at 08.30. I went out to meet them with one of my ensigns. Their spokesmen started off by saying that he thought it only right to come over and wish us a happy Christmas and trusted us implicitly to keep the truce. He came from Suffolk where he had left his best girl and a 3 ½ h.p. motor-bike!" He continued that having filed a report at headquarters, he returned at 10.00 to find crowds of British soldiers and Germans out together chatting and larking about in no-man's land, in direct contradiction to his orders. His concern was less about the fraternization than it was the fact that his orders had been disobeyed and he sought out a German officer, making arrangements for both sides to return to their lines. Throughout, however he listened and watched the scene before him and his letter continued "Scots and Huns were fraternizing in the most genuine possible manner. Every sort of souvenir was exchanged addresses given and received, photos of families shown, etc. One of our fellows offered a German a cigarette; the German said, "Virginian?" Our fellow said, "Aye,



*straight-cut", the German said "No thanks, I only smoke Turkish!"... It gave us all a good laugh."*

There are numerous reports of soldiers from both sides slowly crossing the desolate space between the lines. In many areas, the truce started with an agreement that both sides could recover and bury their dead, only once these tasks were underway did the fraternization begin as soldiers attended the simple burials of comrades and enemies alike, before exchanging thoughts and good wishes in broken conversation. Men exchanged gifts of cigarettes, chocolate, beer and rum and souvenirs – buttons and even badges from their uniforms. In one or two places soldiers who had been barbers in civilian times gave free haircuts and its recorded that a German, a juggler and a showman in civilian life gave an impromptu, and given the circumstances, somewhat surreal performance of his routine between the trenches in no-man's land.

It is certain that the truce was widespread as there are many photographs that show the opposing infantry together, even with mixed and matched uniforms as caps and helmets were swapped. Indeed, over the early months of 1915 a great deal was written in letters and diaries by soldiers about the truce yet many officers denied that it took place and it is not mentioned in Regimental Diaries or Histories. The ephemera and souvenir collections perhaps testify the reality.

There is no doubt also that in some areas there were football matches – both between the two sides and also where one side staged a match for the other to watch, each more informal kick-about than an organised match, some reports even saying that upwards of 80 men played. The most famous – or at least most referred to – of these was the match apparently played at Ploegsteert, known to the British troops at the time as Plug Street, some two miles north of Armentières.

These days the area broadly between the N365 and the N515 is a guaranteed stop for



**The Khaki Chums Cross 2018**

most of the Great War Tours as there are a number of Commonwealth Cemeteries nearby as well as the Memorial to the Missing and in the wood itself, the remnants of the very trenches defended at Christmas 1914. On the back-road that leads to the much smaller Prowse Point Cemetery is the Khaki Chums memorial. A simple wooden cross accompanied by a plaque that commemorates La Treve de Noel and a football match. It is often adorned with colours, scarves and modern-day match balls left by visitors despite doubts that any match was ever played here, however it does identify the most northern point where the Christmas Truce took effect.

Cigarettes swapped, hands shaken, perhaps a game of football was played on the shell pocked land somewhere. As the story goes, the Germans won 3-2. This fabled match is recorded as hearsay in those diaries and letters, and on January 1, 1915, the London Times published a letter from a Major in the Medical Corps reporting that in his sector the British played a game against the Germans opposite and were indeed beaten 3-2. Similarly, Kurt Zehmisch of the 134th Saxons recorded in his diary: *"The English brought a soccer ball from the trenches, and pretty soon a lively game ensued. How marvelously wonderful, yet how strange it was. The English officers felt the same way about it. Thus Christmas managed to bring mortal enemies together as friends for a time."*

His is among few references in German records that also give a scoreline of 3 – 2 to the Hun, however a little research through the Battalion Histories shows this to be ambiguous. Were the two sources referring to the same match? Was it hearsay or did they actually witness a match themselves? The fact that both sides reference a game that ended 3 – 2 can surely only be coincidence as geography proves that they cannot have been one and the same game; not only were the respective units some distance apart, they were on opposite sides of the River Lys! What remains equally as strange – bearing in mind how momentous an occasion a match would have been, is that among all the photographs of the soldiers from both sides intermingling, there are no pictures of this or any other match. In fact, the photograph (overleaf) used in so many Press and other cuttings was taken at Salonika, Greece on Christmas Day 1915. Look closely and you may realise that both 'teams' are in British uniforms! Not a surprise really as it features a match between the Officers and men of the 26<sup>th</sup> Divisional Ammunition Train.

It must also be remembered that although the truce was widespread, it was



not total. In some parts shelling and firing continued. There were deaths on Christmas Day 1914 and there are many graves in Commonwealth Cemeteries in Northern France that attest to this. A soldier, Pat Collard wrote to his parents describing his

horrendous Christmas under fire. The letter closed *"Perhaps you read of the conversation on Christmas Day between us and the Germans. It's all lies. The sniping went on just the same; in fact, our captain was wounded, so don't believe what you see in the papers."* It was published in the Hampshire Chronicle in mid-January 1915.

Where the truce was established, it lasted (at least) all day. In some places an immediate agreement had been reached on a set time when the troops would return to action, or on a signal from one side or another. Captain J C Dunn, a Medical Officer in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, whose unit had fraternised and received two barrels of beer from the Saxon troops opposite, recorded how hostilities re-started on his section of the front. *"At 8.30 I fired three shots in the air and put up a flag with Merry Christmas on it, and I climbed on the parapet. The Germans put up a sheet with Thank You on it, and the German Captain appeared on the parapet. We both bowed and saluted and got down into our respective trenches, and he fired two shots in the air, and the War was on again."* In other areas the truce lasted for three or four days and there are thinly substantiated stories that in one or two places, the truce – or at least a distinct lack of aggressive behavior – was recorded well into the New Year.

Christmas came and went with little movement for the Wealdstone boys overseas or at home and then early in 1915 the Harrow Observer reported that they *"had it on good authority that the War Office was making arrangements for a new Aerodrome with a flying ground attached at West End, just outside the Harrow parish in the district of Northolt. The farms that would be affected were known as Glebe Farm, Down Barns Farm and One Hundred Acre Farm"*. It continued that *"a number of workmen were expected shortly to start the works"* and so it proved. A follow up a month later in the newspaper read *"the*

*Colne Valley Water Company is on site and had laid in a water supply to the 'proposed' aerodrome. Messer's Fasnidge of Uxbridge had taken the lead on the building of a new road (stated as some 2000 feet long) to the field, starting off the West End Road at a spot about three quarters of a mile from the Northolt Junction Railway Station"*.

As a means of keeping the spirits up for those at home and to show a lighter side to being in the forces, the Observer also carried fairly regular letters home from soldiers serving in many of the theatres of war. One such letter was printed on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 1915. It was from a Private RA Lemmings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex in Dinapore, India. It read *"At the request of G Company Football Team i am sending a photo of when they played Dinapore Young Men's Club. The players all come from Harrow and Wealdstone. They have played this team three times, the first two resulting in draws of 0 - 0 and 2 - 2, and the third they won 3 - 0"*.

He noted that the opposition played in bare feet and although the photo did not survive, the team pictured (with their local club side) was as follows: Corporal T Key (Allens Athletic), Private L Jackson (Wealdstone United), Private Harold Miller (Wealdstone FC), Private H Leaper (Wealdstone United), Private C Newman (Harrow Gas Works), Lance-Corporal CF Everitt (Wealdstone FC), Private GR Goodege (Allens Athletic - formerly of Wealdstone FC) Private F Mascall (Wealdstone United, joined Wealdstone FC in 1919), Private F Ansley, Roxeth Brigade Old Boys), Private G Gawn (Wealdstone United), Private R Drake (Roxeth Brigade Old Boys) and Private D Ward (Allens Athletic).

The following week, further progress at the new airfield was reported: *"the new Aerodrome is fast nearing completion. A 17-man section under the command of Major Duncan le Geyt Pitcher (later Air Commodore, CMG, CBE, DSO) of the Royal Flying Corps has already established a base at The Paddocks, "having found admirable billets and workroom accommodation in the shelters and pavilions of this Summer playing ground". They were employed clearing hedges, trees and other obstructions from the landing ground. A small army of carpenters was busy building hangars and the first aeroplanes were expected to arrive in a matter of a few days"*.

By the beginning of March, Bellchambers was involved in the battle of Neuve-Chappelle and the newspaper carried a report that, some six weeks after the

first rumours surfaced, The Royal Flying Corps Aerodrome at Northolt was completed and fully operational.

Alongside the Hangars, seven Barrack Huts had been completed with others under construction. Another piece of the air defence of London and the South East was in place to repel Zeppelin raids.

At the same time another former Wealdstone player, a junior who made one first team appearance as a 17-year-old, was about to join the war. Private Charles Bird S/No 703 joined the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Infantry, part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, based in Liverpool, New South Wales. In 1913-1914 Charles had emigrated to Australia to join other members of the extended family, with the intent that his future wife, Elsie (who he worked with at Kodak) would join him once he was settled. Charles had worked as a boundary rider in NS Wales until the outbreak of war, far removed from his previous work as a photographic paper looper!

In early April, one player formerly of Wealdstone FC in the late 1890's and the first league seasons, William Bentley had returned to his cattle farming, yet in 1915 he too had cause to write to the Harrow Observer, advising *"W Bentley, cow-keeper and dairyman begs to inform his customers and the residents of Harrow and district that, in spite of pressure brought to bear upon him, he is still supplying milk at fourpence a quart, and he has never had any intention of doing otherwise!"*

The same issue reported that William Cozens and his battalion had now relocated to Shoreham and James Robertson now found himself and his regiment based on Salisbury Plain.

Overseas, the actions in India were ongoing with both Fred Farmborough and George Goodege involved, while Charles Bellchambers was called into battle at Aubers Ridge prior to moving into the Battle of Festubert, an attack by the British Army in the Artois region of France. The ten-day offensive formed part of a series of attacks by the French Tenth Army and the British First Army in the Second Battle of Artois (3<sup>rd</sup> May – 18<sup>th</sup> June 1915).

At the same time, though on the other side of the world, Charles Bird embarked with the Australian Infantry for two months training in Egypt before

being sent on to fight in the Gallipoli campaign.

At the end of May Frank Martin was mobilized and embarked for France. The ship docked at Boulogne-sur-Mer on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and Martin's Regiment moved up the line into Belgium.

At the beginning of June, Henry Bowell and William Cozens were on the move again, this time relocating to Woking prior to an impending overseas posting and former player and Club Captain Percival Andrews who had been running the family business since the age of 20, attested to the Derby Scheme (Group Scheme). This meant that he could continue running the business (it was the sole source of the family income) but agreed to a deferred call-up if required.

In the middle of the month, Charles Bellchambers and the 7<sup>th</sup> Division which by now included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment, moved into the Givenchy sector. This was shortly after the costly involvement in the Aubers Ridge and Festubert assaults. It proved to be a very difficult line to hold, being subject to constant mining, sniping and trench mortar activity from the German Army in the area.

Early July saw James Robertson mobilized and he too was to land in France ready for battle, while moving still closer to an overseas posting, Walter Howman and his unit joined the 100<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 33<sup>rd</sup> Division relocating to Clipstone Barracks.

Sadly at the end of July two months after landing in France, Frank Martin was to become a casualty of the war, as he was Killed in Action in the first German Liquid Fire attacks (flamethrower) at Hooze Crater, near Ypres, Belgium.

Originally reported missing at the end of July, it was not until 17<sup>th</sup> December that further news was received in a letter from a comrade, Rifleman H Wooster. It stated; *"Frank and I were in a trench behind Hooze Wood when he (Corporal Martin) was hit and wounded. I asked if there was anything I could do for him, but he said no and told me to go*



Corporal F T Martin

*and support the boys in the trench. Moving on no more than ten yards, I too was shot - through the thigh - and I saw no more of Martin". He added "the place was a death trap. If you have heard no more, you should assume the worst as the shells fell in the woods in their hundreds, making any escape impossible".*

On the 4<sup>th</sup> August, one year since the war had started, Fred Farmborough and George Goodege transferred out of the 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment in India as they were part of the first draft to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Norfolk Regiment, serving in Mesopotamia. Their transfer was immediate, once again they embarked on a transport ship for the journey.

At home, Walter Howman undertook his final training before embarkation overseas at Pereham Down, his battalion scheduled to resource and supplement a number of regiments in the field that were suffering losses.

After long spells of action in the first few months of the war (Ypres, Vimy, Lorette, Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Ypres again), the Royal West Sussex Regiment and Charles Bellchambers were dug in, the front under British control in Artois and Flanders. They had enjoyed a relatively quiet summer with no major attacks being attempted although both sides continued to lose hundreds of men to sporadic shelling and sniper fire.

First to arrive in support was the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Sussex where William Cozens was serving. They arrived on 31<sup>st</sup> August at Boulogne-sur-Mer and two days later Henry Bowell was to arrive in the same place as part of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, he too about to see service on the Western Front.

Following their transfer, George Goodege and Fred Farmborough arrived in the Persian Gulf on the 9<sup>th</sup> September and were immediately involved in the 300-mile march to Baghdad and into battle.

In Champagne and Artois, a joint offensive was planned for late September with the French Army, the British attacks were undertaken at Loos. It was another battle where much of the preparation was mining by the Royal engineers, tunneling under the German defences to plant mines that would be blown at zero hour. It was also the first time that the British Army used Gas in an attack. A tragic failure as much was blown back into the allied trenches by

the wind.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion including Bellchambers was joined in the battle by the newly arrived William Cozens and his regiment, each surviving the 24 days of the offensive. Sadly, Sergeant Henry Bowell who had only arrived in France at the end of August, just prior to the battle, was not as fortunate. He was wounded in action on the first day of the battle and died of his wounds two days later aged 38.



**Sergeant H J Bowell**

Goodege and Farmborough had by early Winter been engaged in a number of actions in the Persian Gulf, and at the beginning of November, Fred Farmborough was wounded in the Battle of Ctesiphon, fought between combined British Empire and British Indian forces, against the Ottoman Empire, in Mesopotamia. The campaign in Mesopotamia was to defend the oil refinery at Abadan at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab. Adopting a forward defence policy, the British army under General Townshend fought off a series of small Ottoman forces, then after a string of defeats, the Ottoman forces were able to halt the British advance in two days of hard fighting at Ctesiphon.

Fred had two brothers also serving, one, Albert Farmborough was with the 2/9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex (and later East Surrey) Regiment, stationed in Sevenoaks, Kent, while the other, Harry had served with the Royal Berkshire Regiment at the outbreak of the war, serving in Flanders where he had been wounded, losing an eye while on night patrol. He was subsequently invalided out of the service.

With losses mounting on the Western front much of Kitchener's New Army of volunteers was embarking for France, many lacking in training and unprepared for trench warfare. Walter Howman was one of those to embark, crossing the channel and landing at Boulogne-sur-Mer on 17<sup>th</sup> November. As part of the 99<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 33<sup>rd</sup> Division, his battalion was immediately pressed into action, marching on to Morbecque. Just a few days later George 'Dicky' Goodege was Killed in Action just outside Baghdad, while the following week, Fred Farmborough, sufficiently recovered from his wounds, returned to action in the Siege of Kut which was to last for a number of months. Cut off, the British

attacked and tried to relieve the siege throughout the early part of 1916.

Following a long series of actions and battles on the Western Front, just before Christmas 1915 Charles Bellchambers and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment were again transferred, this time coming under the command of the 91<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division. They were taken out of the line for a short time to rest and re-equip (no doubt also taking in replacements) before returning to The Somme.



George Goodege

Although not related to the war, Christmas Eve in 1915 was also a sad day for Wealdstone Football Club when it was reported that on the previous Thursday George Elmslie, a former Wealdstone player and Committee man had died. He had played only a handful of games for the club, but he was a Committee man from 1905 to the outbreak of WW1. He was the father of Clarence Victor Elmslie, later to take on many roles within the club and honoured on his death in the mid 1930's with the naming of The Elmslie Stand.

As the new year (1916) dawned battles continued on many overseas fronts and once again, it became the job of the local paper to try and raise spirits at home with letters from the front. In early February, an interesting letter was published by the Editor of the Harrow Observer. It had been sent by a Private JE Elliot of 2/10<sup>th</sup> Middlesex regiment from Bene Salem Camp in Egypt, containing details of the 160<sup>th</sup> Brigade Sports Day that had been held in the desert. (it was R&R for the battalion that had been taken out of the line after 20 consecutive days under shell fire at Gallipoli).

The results showed that the battalion, known as the Die-Hards in common with other Middlesex regiments, though seriously depleted in terms of numbers was still a force to be reckoned with. One point of note was the performance of Private R Rolfe of Wealdstone FC who won the Men's Relay to give the 2/10<sup>th</sup> a fine start in the competition. A week later another similar letter was published from the same source, this time "a report on inter-company football matches that were played in Egypt" that commented: "the leading club was D Company, captained by R Rolfe of Wealdstone FC with many of the members of each Company side representative of local football clubs".

Certainly, looking back over 100 years later these snippets are of interest as they cast a different light on some of the popular images of war, but if they had an uplifting effect at home at the time, no one can know.

At the end of January 1916, Frederick Bird (the younger brother of Charles Bird) who had remained living in Wealdstone died of his wounds as a seventeen-year-old. He was the Battalion Drummer and Bugler of the Middlesex Regiment, 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, (Private), Service Number 648 and became the youngest Wealdstone resident killed in the war up to that time.

With losses in the Persian Gulf depleting the forces, many more embarked on troop transports for the long journey east. The brother of a future Wealdstone player Reg Wartnaby also had a letter published by the Harrow Observer at the beginning of March which noted: "On arrival in Alexandria, Seaman A Wartnaby, serving on HMS Marathon wrote home to his parents that he was pleased to have met up with his brother Reg (who played for Wealdstone from 1919) as well as many other local lads serving in the 2<sup>nd</sup> West Herts Royal Field Artillery". Part of the letter reproduced in the Harrow Observer named among others Wealdstone FC players Deeley and Wolters.

At home for some the war must have seemed a long way away as in March 1916, football once again came to the fore, when William (Bill) Gallagher, at the time a Wealdstone FC player was injured while representing his Regimental Team. He made a good recovery in Cambridge Hospital in time to embark for France with the 134<sup>th</sup>

Field Ambulance Division. (He was to survive the war and became the longest

#### DIED OF WOUNDS.

##### DRUMMER AND BUGLER BIRD.

It is with great regret that we record the death from wounds, of Bugler Bird, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bird, of 85, Palmerston-road, Wealdstone. The gallant was only 17 years of age, and enlisted in September, 1914, in the 16th Middlesex. He went to France about November. Being a drummer and bugler, he was taking messages to the front line trenches. Mrs. Bird has had no official



news or details as to how he met his death, but Sergt. H. Ward, of 8, Elm-terrace, Harrow Weald writes the following letter to his parents:—"I very much regret having to write this letter, to inform you of the sad news, that your dear son died yesterday. I am very pleased to tell you I was with him at the very last, in fact, I was the last one he spoke to. It will be a consolation to you to know that he died free of pain,

and that he was most cheerful. I had heard of what had happened, and in consequence, I kept a look-out, and saw him brought from the trenches, and at the time I was with him, he had been brought right out of the trenches, and as I have said above, he was most cheerful, and he died whilst unconscious. I can assure you, it is with feelings of the deepest regret, I write you. I have known you and your children for a good many years now, and during the time we have been out here, I have been with and spoken to your son, it will be some consolation to you to know that he always did his duty cheerfully, and that he was wounded, whilst going into the front-line trenches, with an important message. Of course I cannot say more, but should I return, I will call on you at the first opportunity, when I can give you full particulars. All the Wealdstone Men, including myself tender our sincere sympathy, and express the deepest regret." The deepest sympathy of the district is extended to Mr. and Mrs. Bird, in their loss. Probably Bugler Bird is the youngest Wealdstonian to give up his life for his country. He was wounded and died on January 29.

serving Club Trainer (Manager) from 1922 until 1952).

On the Western front, Wealdstone were further represented when Charles Bird and the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Infantry arrived in Northern France from Gallipoli, supplementing those such as William Cozens and his battalion at The Battle of Hooge. He was to be involved in the defence of a German Gas Attack at Wulverghem at the end of April, before moving once again, this time to Messines Ridge. Bird was more fortunate as shortly after his arrival in France, he was awarded leave (in April), returning to Harrow to marry fiancé Elsie, who remained living with her parents.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1916 Private Harry Rogers RAMC was wounded in northern France having served there for 14 months since joining up in the first weeks of the war. A well-known Wealdstone man he was to serve on the Club Committee post war as did following generations of his family. Slow to heal, complications set in as a piece of his uniform was embedded in his wound and this saw him sent home to England and hospitalised in Balham.

The Battle of Messines Ridge was where a series of underground mines were secretly planted by British tunneling units beneath the German Fourth Army. They were detonated to start the battle which lasted until 14th June and the nineteen craters (of twenty-six charges laid) ranks among the largest non-nuclear explosions of all time. William Cozens survived the action and his regiment moved again to the Somme in advance of the planned battle there. Just before the end of June however, news was received that Wealdstone player Lance-Corporal Sid White, a quick tricky winger who lived in Locket Road had been injured serving with the Royal Fusiliers taking him out of the early (and in the main unsuccessful) exchanges on the Somme.



**Corporal Sid White**

With the major offensive at the forefront of all planning, it is evident that most of the serving Wealdstone men in France and Belgium were diverted to the Somme to take part, perhaps a lucky few like William Cozens, held in reserve. Charles Bird also returned directly to The Somme following his wedding fighting initially in the Battle of Poziers not knowing if he would ever

see his wife in England or his family in Australia again.

Charles Bellchambers and James Robertson remained in separate divisions and under separate command, but both fought in the Battle of Albert which comprised the first two weeks of Anglo-French offensive operations in the Battle of the Somme. The Allied preparatory artillery bombardment commenced on 24 June and the infantry attacked on 1 July, on the south bank of the river from Foucaucourt to the Somme and from the Somme north to Gommecourt, two miles beyond Serre.

Recently wounded, Lance-Corporal Sid White wrote home and mention was made also of an injury to Private Tom Bradberry, another former Wealdstone player who served in the same regiment, the 10th Royal Fusiliers (Stock Exchange Battalion).



**Tom Bradberry**

Both had been wounded on the same night as part of a group of 30 men picked from the ranks who successfully carried out a raid on German trenches and bombed four or five dug outs. The group had done 12 days training for the task with additional fitness training, and the letter went on to explain in some detail what happened: "At 11:50pm our artillery lifted at the point of attack and over the top we all went. We had to run about 80 yards and had some difficulty in getting across. Nearly everyone fell into shell holes etc. and we found the Germans were not quite cut up. Anyhow, we all got into the German trenches and found them in a terrible state, not a German alive in them; they had all disappeared into their dug outs. We threw about half a dozen (Mills) bombs into each dug-out and at a given signal, we returned as quickly as we could".

*"By this time the Germans were sending over shrapnel (shells) etc. Tom was hit by shrapnel on his way back. I fortunately was not hit. I was knocked over in the German wire by the force of an explosion and I must have caught my knee on the wire or glass, but anyway the whole 30 of us managed to get back into*

*our own trenches safely, thank God. We are all so pleased it was a success, and we must have done a good deal of damage to the Germans”.*

As it turned out, there may have been some bravado in the letter from Sid White, as he was thrown down in the German wire by the force of an artillery shell explosion, but he had suffered wounds to both legs. By the time the letter was received by the newspaper, he had been returned to England and was in hospital in Shrewsbury. Slowly recovering, he was by this stage, just able to walk on crutches. Eventually, his recovery was sufficient that he was able to return and play for the club again after the war.

A few days later Tom Bradberry was also able to write from hospital in Chichester. He noted that his arm was getting on nicely. The doctor had taken a piece of shrapnel out on the same day that he was hit, without an operation.

He said it gave him some gyp at the time, but it was better than taking chloroform. He also recounted that he had got the piece of shell to go with the two wounds in his upper arm and he was fortunate that the bone had been missed, though the nerves were severed.

With losses growing and progress minimal, reserves were called into action to supplement those battalions serving on the front line of The Somme, and Walter Howman was one such, as his regiment were called forward to Longeau, from where they joined the ongoing Battle of Albert on 10<sup>th</sup> July.

The front was a continuous battle stretching over 30 miles and as one battle receded another would commence in its place. Bellchambers and Robertson moved from the Battle of Albert around 12<sup>th</sup> July to take their respective places in the second big push, just two weeks after the first assault; the Battle of Bazentin Ridge from July 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, when the British scored a rare victory but then failed to exploit it, giving the Germans a chance to regroup and dig in.



**L/Sgt Jack Smerdon**

Also involved in the battle, Lance Sergeant Jack L Smerdon had been a Wealdstone player leading up to WW1. He was dangerously wounded and was returned by Hospital Ship to Dover and then entrained. He was however able to write a postcard, and the Red Cross

train he was on slowed through Harrow & Wealdstone Station to deposit the postcard on the platform. It read: *“Please deliver to Mr J Smerdon 67 Masons Avenue, Wealdstone. Arrived Dover 1:30pm. Passed through 7:30pm on the way to Manchester, Jack”.* He was treated at the Military Hospital at Chorlton-on-Medlock and he was lucky enough to make a full recovery. He retook his place in the Wealdstone line-up in 1919.

The following day, Walter Howman was on the move again, this time his Regiment took part in an attack on the Switch Line near High Wood where they suffered 321 casualties, almost a third of their compliment. Close by, Bellchambers and Robertson saw further action in the Battle of Delville Wood which lasted until 3<sup>rd</sup> September (William Cozens was to join the battle in the second week of August). It was a series of engagements between the Allied and German armies as part of a general offensive. General Douglas Haig, Commander of the British Expeditionary Force, intended to capture the German second position between Delville Wood and Bazentin le Petit and the attack achieved the objective though it was a considerable costly success.

Early in August, Corporal l'Anson Royal Garrison Artillery (father of AF l'Anson, a post war Wealdstone player) who had enlisted at the outbreak of war was dangerously wounded and hospitalised, though he did recover and returned home. He had been serving in France for 22 months.



**Corporal l'Anson**

Following the initial forays in the Battle of Delville Wood Robertson and Cozens had with their regiments, relocated to Langemark taking part in the offensive there. After an unusually large amount rain, the poor natural drainage and lack of evaporation turned the ground into a morass.

was worse for the attacking British than the defending Germans, as they occupied the lower-lying ground and were attacking areas which had been frequently and severely bombarded. Mud and flooded shell holes severely reduced the mobility of the infantry and poor visibility hampered artillery observers and artillery-observation aircraft. Rainstorms and German defensive success during August led the British to stop the offensive for three weeks.

Just as they moved forward, former player Walter Howman of Graham Road, Wealdstone was Killed in Action while serving with the 1st Middlesex Regt. in the region of High Wood on The Somme. He had been a Wealdstone FC player since 1907 as well as being a regular cricketer playing for a number of local clubs. He had enlisted in the 24<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment in October 1915 training at Woldingham, Wendover, Northampton and Aldershot prior to transferring to the 16<sup>th</sup> Middlesex with whom he moved to France in July 1916. He was profoundly deaf and because of this was not immediately put into the fighting line, though with casualties it was a matter of weeks before he took his place and sadly soon lost his life.



**Walter Howman**



His younger brother Harold Howman was shortly afterwards returned to the UK, to Northumberland War Hospital, suffering with Trench Fever from which he recovered, returning to France.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1916 it was reported that Sergeant Alfred Cozens of the 11th Middlesex Regiment was awarded the Military Medal.

**Harold Howman**

He was one of three members of the family to play in the early years of Wealdstone FC, making a handful of appearances and he was also a member of the Church Lads Brigade. The citation noted that: *"On 8th July at Ovilliers he was in charge of a party who successfully took up bombs under shell fire to a recently captured German trench where they were badly needed"*. At the time, the regiment was fighting in close proximity to Bellchambers and Cozens' brother, by now involved in the early skirmishes for the Battle of Guillemont, an attack by the 4<sup>th</sup> Army. The village was on the right flank of the British sector, near the boundary with the French Sixth Army and the eventual capture of the village was the culmination of



**Sergeant Alfred Cozens**

British attacks, which began on 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> July.

James Robertson's battalion had been redeployed and on 20<sup>th</sup> September the Battle of Thiepval Ridge was the first large offensive mounted by the Reserve Army (under Lieutenant General Hubert Gough), during the Battle of the Somme. The battle was fought on a front from Courcellette in the east, near the Albert-Bapaume road to Thiepval and the Schwaben Redoubt (Schwaben-Feste) in the west, which overlooked the German defences further north in the Ancre valley, the rising ground towards Beaumont-Hamel and Serre beyond. Thiepval Ridge was well fortified and the German defenders fought with great determination, while the British co-ordination of infantry and artillery declined after the first day, due to the confused nature of the fighting in the mazes of trenches, dugouts and shell-craters. The final British objectives of the Battle of Thiepval Ridge were not reached until 1<sup>st</sup> October, with the re-organisation of the Reserve Army and the Battle of the Ancre Heights, which lasted a further six weeks.

October saw further sad news from the Gulf, when it was reported that Frederick Farmborough, serving with the 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment was wounded and missing. He was later recorded both as Killed in Action and Died of Dysentery, the later seeming most likely as he was once again wounded and this time taken prisoner at Kut. His death was not confirmed until August 1918.



**Frederick Farmborough**

At home, a matter of a couple of months after the death of older brother Walter, Harold Howman was hospitalised with trench fever and returned to the Northumberland War Hospital in Gosforth.

Following the Battle of Guillemont in July Charles Bellchambers and his regiment were next recorded in mid-November, in the five-day Battle of the Ancre, was fought by the Fifth Army, against the German First Army. The battle was the final major British attack of the Battle of the Somme.

As the year turned, there was further news from home as the deferred call-up for Percy Andrews came through. On the 17<sup>th</sup> January 1917, he joined the Royal Naval Air Service serving as a Mechanic 1<sup>st</sup> Class. Service Number 225242, believed to have been serving in 'B' Squadron, No 5 (Naval) Wing, a bomber



unit equipped with Sopwith 1½ Strutters, which it used to carry out raids against the Belgian ports of Ostend, Zeebrugge and Bruges as well as attacks against German airfields.

There was also sadness for two local families with Wealdstone FC connections as news came through that Private Harry Tann (9<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regiment) had been killed by shrapnel on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1917.

He was one of three brothers, one of whom, A Tann was a Wealdstone player prior to the war. All three joined up at the outbreak of hostilities. Harry was one of a number of heavy losses, killed while defending a German attack when a shell exploded nearby, a fragment entering at the base of his skull killing him immediately.



**William Clowes** With a slightly less direct Wealdstone association, William (Tut) Clowes became another casualty of war. He had been a Harrow Athletic player in the 1890's and had played for the Athletic club when Wealdstone were merged under the same banner for one season in 1894. He remained a Harrow Athletic player until 1900. A Sergeant serving with the Machine Gun Battalion of the 13th Middlesex Regiment, he had joined up in September 1914 and fought in France and Belgium before he was invalided home from the Somme after being severely gassed on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1916. He spent time in the Great Eastern hospital in Cambridge, the Cottage Hospital in Hounslow and eventually in Mount Vernon Hospital in Northwood where he resided for four months, his condition slowly worsening until his death on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1917.

In February 1917 the Germans shortened their lines and withdrew to the

**Pte. HARRY TANN.**

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death of Pte. Harry Tann, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Tann, of Palmerston-road, Wealdstone, who was killed in France, on February 15, by shrapnel. The gallant young soldier enlisted in the 9th Royal Sussex in October, 1914, being sent to France about six months ago. He was well known in the town, where his parents resided for some years, and the deepest sympathy is extended to Mr. and Mrs. Tann in their sad bereavement. A letter from Captain E. A. McNan, of "B" Company, 9th Royal Sussex, to another son, is as follows: "I very greatly regret to have to inform you of the death of your brother, Pte. H. Tann, of my Company. He was killed by shrapnel in the head, and death was instantaneous. You have the sincere sympathy of myself and the whole Company with you in your great loss." The other from a friend of Pte. Tann's to Mr. Tann himself reads: "It is with a sad heart that I write you these few lines to let you know that your son Harry was killed on February 15. He was hit on the back of the head with a piece of shell, and killed instantly. The fighting which we have had has been of the fiercest, the Germans trying all they know to break through and we held them back only with heavy losses."

Hindenburg Line, after which Charles Bird and the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Infantry took part in the fighting around Warlencourt as the Allies sought to follow up the German withdrawal.

On the eastern front, Rifleman HA Luck (Chippy) was reported wounded twice in a matter of months at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917. He had joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex regiment in September 1914 alongside a number of other Wealdstone players and officials. After training he embarked for France just in advance of The Battle of the Somme, arriving in June 1916, attached to the 17<sup>th</sup> London Regiment and engaged in the Vimy Ridge area where they gained battle honours. The regiment then departed for Macedonia and Salonika. Suffering trench foot there, he recovered in time to serve in Palestine operations. He received a minor wound there in November 1916 and early in 1917, having returned to service, he was wounded again and hospitalised at El Arish. The news of Chippy's wounds did not reach home until February 1918!



**Harold Luck**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1917, former player Russell Bradberry embarked for France as part of the 301<sup>st</sup> (S) Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. They were relieved of their defensive duties in England and deployed to Le Havre, France, armed with 4 x 6in Howitzers as part of Heavy Artillery Group (HAG), moving up behind the front line in support of the infantry at Arras where they commenced a four-day bombardment on the 9<sup>th</sup> April.

James Robertson was also involved in the front line at Arras throughout the remainder of April and into May. William Cozens also was involved, in an attack on Bois en Hache on the periphery of the main theatre.

Allied troops achieved the longest advance since trench warfare had begun at Arras before the advance slowed and the German defence recovered. The battle was a costly stalemate for both sides, by the end of the battle on the 16<sup>th</sup> May, the British First and Third Armies had suffered about 160,000 and the German Sixth Army about 125,000 casualties.

Around the same time, Private Edward Theobald, a former player that had joined the London Scottish early in the war and saw continued service in

France was wounded. Theobold had first played for Wealdstone in 1909 and was living in Canning Road at the outbreak of the war. On May 11<sup>th</sup> 1917 at the second Battle of Bullecourt (in which Charles Bird and his Australian battalion were also fighting), he was shot for the second time suffering a wound to his hand resulting in him being sent back to England. He was treated in Gloucester Hospital and subsequently recovered, surviving the war thereafter to return to play for Wealdstone FC until 1925.

Following the battle, the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion Australian Infantry was withdrawn again to Belgium where Charles Bird and his comrades were to see action around the Ypres Salient at Menin Road in September and Poelcappelle in October before settling down for the winter.

### THE WAR: LOCAL ITEMS.

**WEALDSTONE YAD COMMENDED.**  
Mr. F. Tann, of Messrs. Tann and Archer, 31, Palmerton-road, Wealdstone, has received the news that his son, Rifleman James Tann, 12th London Regiment, has been commended for bravery in the field. Major-Gen. Hill has written to Rifleman Tann:—"Your Commanding Officer and Brigade Commander have informed me that you have distinguished yourself by your conduct in the field. I have read their report with much pleasure." Rifleman Tann, who is 22 years of age, has been in the Army two and a-half years. He went to France about 8 months ago. He has lived in Wealdstone practically all his life, and is an old High-street schoolboy.

There was further news for the Tann family, as on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, Rifleman James Tann serving with the 12th London Regiment, brother of Wealdstone player A Tann, was commended for Bravery in the Field aged 22.

The battle of Arras behind them, Russell Bradberry and the HAG had relocated in support of the infantry again just prior to the Battle of Messines Ridge while Charles Bellchambers and James Robertson found themselves pushing on to breach the Hindenburg Line near Soissons on the Aisne.

Percival Andrews and his B Squadron No5 (Naval) Squadron, by now equipped with DH4's were re-assigned at the start of July to take on a day-bomber role in support of the offensive.

The British Fifth Army including James Robertson were soon involved in The Battle of Pilckem Ridge (31 July – 2 August 1917), the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres. Supported by the Second Army on the southern flank and the French First Army on the northern flank, they attacked the German 4th Army, which defended the Western Front from Lille northwards to the Ypres Salient in Belgium and on to the North Sea coast. On 31 July, the Anglo-French armies captured Pilckem Ridge and areas either side, the French attack being a great success.

Shortly afterwards, on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1917, the brother of Wealdstone player Henry Bowell (who after three and three months in France years was in fact in England recovering from wounds at the time), WE Bowell was reported Wounded and Missing during the Ypres advance. Subsequently he was noted as believed killed on that date. He was a Lewis Gunner serving with the Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry in the fight for Sanctuary Wood. A third brother was serving in Palestine in the 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex at this time.

From the battle of Pickem Ridge, at the start of September James Robertson found himself at the Battle of Passchendaele, part of the Battle of Ypres. It was a campaign fought by the Allies from July to November 1917, for control of the ridges south and east of the Belgian city of Ypres in West Flanders, as part of a strategy decided by the Allies at conferences in November 1916 and May 1917. Passchendaele lays on the last ridge east of Ypres, 5 miles from a railway junction at Roulers, which was vital to the supply system of the German Fourth Army, and a critical target for the allies.

As the Ypres campaign progressed, Charles Bellchambers was also brought into the area as his regiment were brought up in support at the Battle of Polygon Wood which took place during the second phase of the Third Battle of Ypres,

### MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED

PRIVATE W. E. BOWELL.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowell, of 101, Headstone-road, Harrow, have received the news that their son, Private W. E. Bowell, reported wounded and missing in the Ypres advance of August 23, 1917,



is now believed to have been killed on that date. Private

Bowell was at the time a Lewis gunner with the D.C.L.I., was with that gallant regiment in the fight at Sanctuary Wood, for which they were specially mentioned by Sir Douglas Haig. He enlisted in June, 1916, and left for France with a bombing party in November of the same year. He took part in the battle of Arras and many minor engagements.

He was well known in Harrow, as he was a postman for some years. His cheerful and willing disposition won him many friends. His Company Sergeant-Major writes to his mother:—"Your son, to the best of my knowledge, was reported to me as being hit in the abdomen. We were under such heavy fire that we had no time to dress our wounded. I can honestly say he was one of the best men of my Company, always willing and feared nothing. I might say we searched all the hospitals at the time, and found a good many of our comrades, but your poor son could not be traced. You have my deepest sympathy. You know that he has died like a hero on the battlefield." Mr. and Mrs. Bowell have two other sons in the Forces, one is in Palestine, having been on active service for the past three and a half years, and the other, H. G. Bowell, who has spent three years and three months in France is at present in England suffering from injuries received in France.

26<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1917, in the area from the Menin Road to Polygon Wood and then north to the area beyond St Julien.

At the start of October, Percival Andrews was wounded and returned to England for treatment before returning to France (March 1918) and returning to his squadron.

From Polygon Wood, the infantry offensive continued and made progress to the Battle of Poelcappelle commencing on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1917 where Charles Bellchambers was to see his last action of the war. It marked the end of the string of highly successful British attacks in late September and early October as only the supporting attack in the north achieved a substantial advance. On the main front the German defences withstood the limited amount of artillery fire managed by the British after the attack of 4<sup>th</sup> October. The ground along the main ridges had been severely damaged by shelling and rapidly deteriorated in the rain which began again on 3<sup>rd</sup> October turning some areas into a swamp. Dreadful ground conditions had more effect on the British, who needed to move large amounts of artillery and ammunition to support the next attack. The battle was a defensive success for the German army, although costly to both sides. The weather and ground conditions put severe strain on all the infantry involved and led to many wounded being stranded on the battlefield.



#### Charles Bellchambers, The LMS Memorial

On 11<sup>th</sup> October Charles Bellchambers died as a result of wounds received during the Battle of Poelcappelle, aged 35.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1917, Russell Bradberry who had enlisted in 1915 and embarked for France in March 1917 died of Fever in Rouen Hospital having contracted a chill through exposure.

In March 1918, the Germans launched their Spring Offensive. With their rapid gains, the Australian units, including the 18th Battalion, were moved south from



Russell Bradberry

Belgium where they had spent the winter and they were thrown into the line to help blunt the attack around Villers-Bretonneux, which lay before the strategically important rail hub at Amiens.



#### Percival Andrews

At the end of March James Robertson was called upon in defence of the Battle of St Quentin part of the German Spring Offensive. This was part of Operation Michael, the largest German artillery barrage of the war (3.5 million shells fired along a 40-mile front).

The battle was to see the death of William Cozens, the oldest of three brothers who played for Wealdstone FC in the formative years. William had been Club Captain and was serving in the 9th Royal Sussex Regiment and had served in France for 16 months prior to his death. He was Killed in Action on 21st March 1918 aged 41 in the Battle of St Quentin at Shepherd's Copse.

At the start of April with the Spring Offensive faltering, James Robertson saw further action at the Battle of the Avre, part of the First Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, which constituted the final German attack towards Amiens. It was the point at which the Germans got the closest to Amiens, the attack an attempt to take the city. The offensive began against the British Fifth Army and

In April, Percival Andrews became ill with Bronchial Pnuemonia, transferred to 30 General Hospital, Calais. Subsequently suffered Paraplegia and died on 4<sup>th</sup> May. He had played for Wealdstone as an inside left and was selected to play for the Middlesex County side in 1910-11 and was also Wealdstone Captain for the first season in Senior football in 1913. Additionally, he played cricket for many local clubs.

#### KILLED.

##### PRIVATE W. H. COZENS.

Mrs. Cozens, of Moston, 2, Gordon-road, Wealdstone, has received the news of the death of her husband, Private W. H. Cozens, who was killed in action in France, on March 21. He was 41 years of age, and was the eldest son of the late Mr. W. Cozens and Mrs. Cozens, of High-street, Wealdstone. Pte. Cozens joined up with his group in August, 1916, in the Royal Fusiliers, afterwards being transferred to the 9th Royal Sussex Regiment. He had been through many engagements and had served 16 months in France, being home on leave only three months ago. A keen sportsman he was an excellent footballer, and was in his day captain of the Wealdstone Football Club. Quiet and unassuming in manner he was liked and respected from one end of the district to the other. Private Cozens has a brother serving, another having been discharged through wounds. Much sympathy has been expressed with his widow and daughter. He had been a resident of Wealdstone from childhood. Mrs. Cozens has received a letter from his Officer saying how deeply he sympathised with her and how keenly his loss is felt by all ranks as he was extremely well liked and respected by all who met him.

the Third Army on the Somme and pushed back the British and French reinforcements on the north side of the Somme, however The Avre marked the beginning of the end for Ludendorff's Spring Offensive.

With the Germans now on the defence, by August the allies (and James Robertson) were pushing forward. The Battle of Amiens, also known as the Third Battle of Picardy was the opening phase of the Allied offensive which began on 8 August 1918, later known as the Hundred Days Offensive, that

ultimately led to the end of the First World War. Allied forces advanced over 11 kilometres (7 miles) on the first day, one of the greatest advances of the war, with Henry Rawlinson's British Fourth Army playing the decisive role. During the battle, James Robertson was wounded and he sadly Died of Wounds Received (at Vignacourt) aged 30 on 16<sup>th</sup> August.



**Vignacourt CWGC Cemetery**

During the same offensive, the Australian 18<sup>th</sup> battalion and Charles Bird were in action at Amiens and Mont St Quentin before assaulting the "Beaurevoir Line", which was the third (and final) fortified line of the Hindenburg Line. Charles was killed in action on 31st August 1918 in Péronne, Somme, France, at the age of 25, during the assault on Mont St Quentin, hit in the neck by a piece of shrapnel whilst seeking cover in a poorly maintained trench, and bled out in the dressing station. He is buried in the Péronne Communal Cemetery Extension, Grave ref IV.B.10.



**Charles Bird**

Following the Armistice, many of those representatives of Wealdstone FC were able to return home fit and well, while a handful more returned home with wounds and injuries. Eleven were destined never to return and of these, six have no known grave, their bodies never recovered.

Of those players from Wealdstone that survived the hostilities, we have been able to trace the following (many of the records of Great War service were in

fact destroyed in a bombing raid on London during WW2).

- W Balkwill** William Thomas Balkwill. Lived in Wealdstone and served with the Royal Horse Artillery. Demobbed 1919 suffering from malaria and trench fever. He died in Weymouth in 1974.
- E Bellchambers** Private Ernest Bellchambers served in the Middlesex Regt (G/54569). Returned to live in Wealdstone in 1919.
- T Bradbury** Private TL Bradbury served briefly with Middlesex Regiment before transferring. He was wounded during the war and though he survived, he was unable to play again.
- F Butler** Pte Francis Butler served in the 17th Middlesex Regiment.
- F Everitt** Frederick A. Everitt served with the 9th Middlesex Regiment, seeing service in India and the Middle East.
- A Harding** Private Arthur Percy Harding of the 17th Middlesex Regiment.
- F Rogers** Private Frederick Rogers 17<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment
- JJ Shadwick** Royal Field Artillery Gunner Joseph J Shadwick
- JR Shadwick** Leicestershire Regiment Private John R Shadwick
- F Theobold** Labour Corps Private Frederick Theobold

Players that returned to the area from overseas found that the clubs they had previously served were still mothballed. Early in 1919, there were no leagues in place and little football available, so a number of 'new' clubs sprung up in their place and regular friendly matches were played in the hope that some of the old established clubs would reform for the following season. A number of Wealdstone players appeared in these matches for the Young Men's Football Club (YMFC later to become the YMCA) and for Wealdstone United. Matches were played against the various Services teams, The Brigade and The Rangers, as well as similar sides from the surrounding areas such as Highgate and Stonebridge Oakwell.

Once Wealdstone FC had re-entered the London and Middlesex League competitions (1919-20), some fifteen players that had appeared in the seasons leading up to the Great War were once again to represent the club.

## To the memory of those representatives of Wealdstone Football Club who lost their lives in The Great War

**Percival Andrews**, DoB 28.04.1889 in Hendon, Middlesex. Died on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1918.

Percy was a fine goal scorer capped in 1911 by the County and a regular player for a number of years, initially with Wealdstone Church Athletic and subsequently with Wealdstone FC. He made his Wealdstone debut on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1910, Captained the club in its first season in senior football in 1913-14 and played his last game for the club after 97 appearances on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1914. He had scored 59 goals including five hat-tricks and once scoring four. He was also an accomplished cricketer playing for a number of local sides. His



grave is reference III F.2. in the Les Baraques Military Cemetery in Sangatte, France. He was the son of Alice and William Andrews, of Grant House, Grant Rd, Wealdstone, Middx and he had had three sisters (Edith, Ellen and Eva) and a brother (Thomas).

**Charles John Francis Bellchambers**, DoB 16.09.1882 in Hendon, Middlesex. Died as a result of his wounds 11<sup>th</sup> October 1917.

Charles was Goalkeeper and an Official of Wealdstone FC in 1899, the season previously incorrectly recorded as the foundation of the club. Indeed, he kept goal in what has often been referenced as *'the first match'* against Northwood FC on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1899. He played for the club over three years making his last 'known' appearance versus Brigade Institute Old Boys on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1901, though he continued as an official of the club thereafter. His grave is reference VI. C. 22 in



the Wimereux Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. He was the son of

another former Wealdstone player William Thomas and his wife Elizabeth Bellchambers, of 23, Aberdeen Rd., Wealdstone, Middx and Ernest George Bellchambers who played for the club from 1902 was his younger brother.

**Charles Henry Bird**, DoB 18.05.1893, Harrow Middlesex. Killed in action on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1918. Charles made a single first team appearance for Wealdstone FC as a 17-year-old (1911), though also represented the club and other local sides as a Junior. He was also included in the 1912-13 Team Photo, prior to emigrating to Australia.

He is buried in the Péronne Communal Cemetery Extension, Grave ref IV.B.10. At birth, his father Charles (33) and mother Frances (22) also had an older son, Sidney though they were to have nine children in total. Charles married fiancé Elsie on 01.05.1915 whilst on leave – she remained in Harrow - and their son Ashley Charles Bird was born on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1917. His younger brother Frederick Bird was also killed in The Great War and is buried in grave reference L.20 in the Chambrin Churchyard extension



**Henry (Harry) James Howell**, DoB - .04.1878. Died of wounds 27<sup>th</sup> September 1915. Henry had played in the last match of Wealdstone FC in 1905, before the fixtures were overtaken by Wealdstone Church Athletic (who he continued to play for) and he was also in the line-up for the rejuvenated Wealdstone FC club in the 1908-09 season. He made 36 known appearances for the club, scoring 17



goals. A Printers Warehouseman who lived in Wealdstone. With no known grave, he is named on Panel 91 – 93 of the Loos Memorial, Dud Corner

Cemetery, Loos-en-Gohelle. He was the son of Henry James Bowell and Hannah and husband of Ellen May Bowell. They had two children, Henry James and George Edward Bowell and prior to the war lived at 21 Grant Road, Wealdstone.

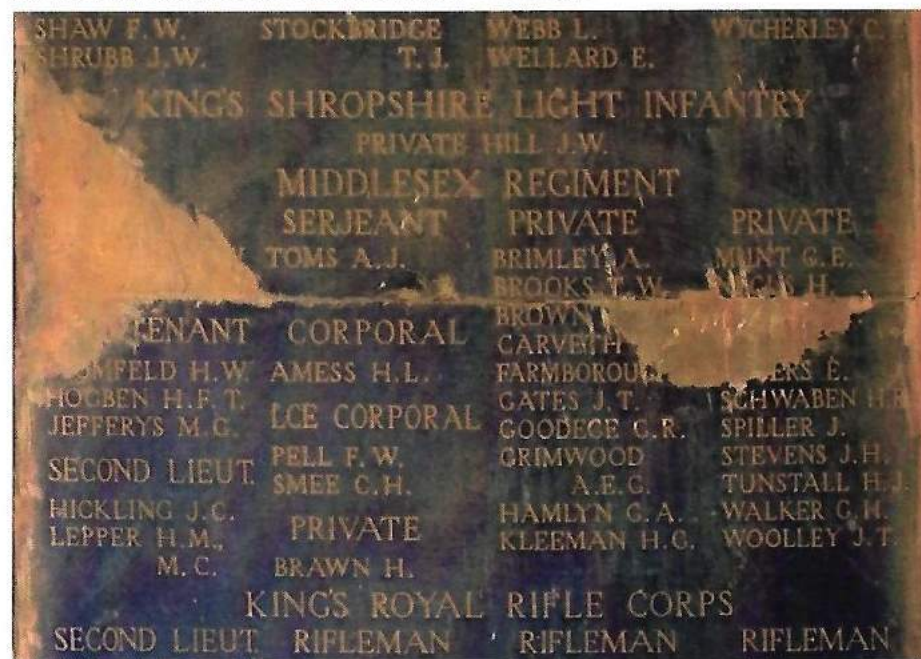
**Russell William Bradberry**, DoB -.10.1884. Died of fever 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1917. Russell was a former Reserve player and Club Officer in the years prior to The Great War, and he was also brother of goalkeeper Thomas W Bradberry. He worked as a Stock Exchange Clerk before enlistment. Originally buried in the Bois Guillaume Communal Cemetery extension, Grave Ref B. 11A (where the headstone remains) his body was repatriated and now lies in All Saints Harrow Weald Churchyard. Russell was the eldest son of Russel and Mary Rebecca Bradberry, and he had a Brother and Sister, Thomas and Millicent also of Wealdstone. His wife Elsie Bradberry and daughter Dorothy Elsie Bradberry lived at 44 Locket Road, Wealdstone. His brother Thomas, the Wealdstone goalkeeper served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers alongside former Wealdstone player, Sid White.



**William Henry Cozens**, DoB - 09.1877 in Fulham, London. Killed in Action on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918. William Cozens had been the Captain of the Wealdstone side in 1899, playing alongside his brother, both having turned the fortunes of Wealdstone Athletic in 1895. He made 68 appearances, 13 goals. With no known grave he is named

on the Poziers Memorial. He lived with his wife Annie and daughter Florence at Moston, 2 Gordon Road, Wealdstone and he was the first Caretaker of Harrow County School (now Harrow High) as it was built and for a short period after it opened in 1911.

**Private Frederick Farmborough**, DoB --,1890 Died 12<sup>th</sup> October 1916. a former Wealdstone FC goalkeeper. He and his brothers joined up in the first weeks of the war. He is recorded both as Killed in Action and died of dysentery, the later seeming most likely as he was wounded and taken prisoner at Kut. His death was not confirmed until August 1918 and he is commemorated on Panel 30 and panel 64 of the Basra Memorial, separated from another former Wealdstone player, George Richard (Dicky) Goodege by one name. Brother Albert Farmborough served with the 2/9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex (later East Surrey) Regiment as a Drummer. He was killed in 1918 and is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial while another brother (Harry) who served with the Royal Berkshires survived the war though was wounded, losing an eye in Flanders, which eventually resulted in a medical discharge.



**George Richard (Dicky) Goodege**, (Incorrectly recorded by the club originally as Goodage R) DoB --.1888 Killed in Action on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1915. George Richard (known as Dick) Goodege was a former player (14 appearances, 1 goal), who was playing for local rivals, Allens Athletic at the outbreak of the war. He has no known grave, but is commemorated on the BASRA Memorial – Panel 30 and 64 two names below club-mate Frederick Farmborough. He was unmarried and lived at 3 Florence Villas, Cecil Road, Wealdstone, working locally as a Lithographer.

**Walter Langston Howman**, DoB -.04.1885, Killed in Action on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1916. Walter was a former Wealdstone and Wealdstone Church Athletic player making 81 appearances, scoring 16 goals. Known as Wally, though deaf, he was a recruit in the 24<sup>th</sup> and subsequently 16th Middlesex (Public Schools) Regiment. He has no known grave but



is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 12D and 13B. He was the son of George and Louisa Howman and Husband of Laura Amy

OR 502	KIRWAN E. McALISTER H. P. SALTER J. D. C. M.  SERJEANT ANDREWS A. A. BANNELL C. A. BAYNES P. H. BRIGGS E. B. S. BRINDLEY G. BYERLEY L. CHINCHEN W. COOK A. W. CRISFORD G. GROSS A. J. D. C. M. DALE E. DAVIES J. DAWSON R. D. DEMPSTER R. J. DENT G. DUNTHORNE J. DYER E. W. EDWARDS M. S. ELLIOTT I. FALL W. G. FORDHAM G. GARNER S. R. GODWIN T. A. HARRIS C. S. HARRISON J. HARVEY N. Y.	CHAPMAN E. CHATTEN C. H. CLARKE C. F. COARE R. A. COPPING A. DAVENPORT W. Y. DICKSON G. F. DIGGINS J. FLETCHER J. FULLER F. G. GARDNER W. GEORGE E. GLYVER G. F. GOODMAN W. H. M. M. GRAVENY A. H. HAINES G. HEYS H. HIGGS W. E. HILL W. R. HOWARTH A. HUTCHINSON A. J. LOWE A. N. LICKETT L. P. LUNNEY J. LINT E. McDONALD D. E. MARTIN C. MARTIN F. T. MITCHELL T. C. MULLINS T. NASH W. G. NICE T. W.	MUR PODS PRE RAB RAN REE ROBE ROSE ROSE SEAL SEIG SLAN SMY SNG STO STR STU SWA TAL TOM TUR WAL WAR WAT WEL WIR WIR WIR WIC WIL WIS
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Howman and father to daughters Elfreda and Olive. The family lived at 6 Graham Road, Wealdstone. His brother Harold (left) who also played for the club similarly served in France and shortly after Walter's death, he was repatriated home suffering from Trench Foot, recovering in the Northumberland War Hospital. He survived the war.

**Frank Tingay Martin**, DoB --.12.1888 in Hendon. Killed in Action 30<sup>th</sup> July 1915. Frank joined the club as it reformed in 1909 and became 1<sup>st</sup> Team Vice Captain for the first Senior season, 1913/14. He made 107 appearances for the club between 1907 and 1914, scoring twice. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 46-48 & 50. He was born in Harrow, lived at 12 Alexander Terrace, Headstone Drive and worked in Wealdstone.

**James J Robertson**, (*Incorrectly recorded by the club as Robertson G*). DoB unknown, Died of wounds 16<sup>th</sup> August 1918. James J Robertson was a former player who made around 12 appearances, scoring twice. His grave is in Vignacourt Cemetery, Somme, France and this was a Field Cemetery adopted by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission after the war. Much travelled James was born in Belfast, he enlisted London, was a resident of 1 Palmerston Villas, Palmerston Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex and his parents James and Margaret Robertson lived in Edinburgh.



We will remember them when the whistle blows.

## Our Memorials

".....the following week, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1922 Wealdstone faced Arsenal and pushed them all the way, finally losing 2-1 in front of another crowd of over 2000. The Wealdstone side had been strengthened by the return of Miller and Harbud to the half back line and F Theobald to the forwards. The Wealdstone goal, the first at Lower Mead, was scored by club captain E Theobald." Before the game, Lieutenant General Sir Francis Lloyd had unveiled a Memorial Plaque in the ground, adjacent to the Pavilion, in memory of those members of the Wealdstone Club that had lost their lives in the First World War. As reported in the Middlesex Advertiser & County Gazette on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1922: "Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd, who unveiled the Wealdstone Football Club War memorial on the club's new ground, Lower Mead, Station Road, on Saturday week.

### FOOTBALLERS' WAR MEMORIAL



Sir Francis is here shown chatting to President of the Club, C. E. Brady, on his way to the platform from which he unveiled the memorial.

The memorial marble tablet, which surmounts the granite cairn and rests against the flagstaff near the pavilion and faces the main entrance to the ground, is shown on the left of the photograph. On it are inscribed the names of the ten club members

Lieut-General Sir Francis Lloyd, who unveiled the Wealdstone Football Club War Memorial on the club's new ground, Lower Mead, Station Road, on Saturday week.

Sir Francis is here shown chatting to the President of the Club, Mr C. E. Brady, on his way to the platform from which he unveiled the memorial. The memorial marble tablet, which surmounts the granite cairn and rests against the flagstaff near the pavilion and faces the main entrance to the ground, is shown on the left of the photograph. On it are inscribed the names of the ten club members

who were killed or died on war service, the inscription being as follows:

"1914-1918. In affectionate memory of Andrews, P., Bellchambers, C.F., Bird, C., Bowells, H., Bradberry, R.W., Cozens, W., Goodage, R., Howman, W., Martin, F., Robertson, J. Members of the Wealdstone Football Club who gave their lives for their country in the Great War. *Patriae Amicum Armaei Deus*"

Wealdstone is one of the comparatively few football clubs in the country that has commemorated the sacrifices of its members in this permanent manner.

service, the inscription being as follows; "1914 – 1918 In affectionate memory of Andrews, P. Bellchambers, C.F., Bird, C., Bowells, H., Bradberry, R.W., Cozens, W., Goodage, R., Howman, W., Martin, F., Robertson, J., Members of the Wealdstone Football Club who gave their lives for their country in the Great War. *Patriae Amicum Armaei Deus*"

Wealdstone is one of the comparatively few football clubs in the country that has commemorated the sacrifices of its members in this permanent manner.

The club had in fact written to The Duke of York in an attempt to encourage him to unveil the memorial, but it was reported that this request, although met with a pleasing and courteous reply, had been declined. The local public confirmed the feelings of a local reporter and agreed that the tribute that has been paid by the Wealdstone Club is worthy of the affection that the club still retains for the memory of its departed servants. The closing words of the speech by Lieutenant General Sir Francis Lloyd at the unveiling were *to instruct the two teams to go out and play the game that they (those named on the plaque) loved so well*. That Memorial plaque, although later moved to a position adjacent to the entrance of the ground, was to remain displayed at Lower Mead until the ground was eventually demolished.

Some years later, in 1998, I was pleased to help when then Chairman Paul Rumens suggested we establish a 'Friends of Wealdstone'. One of my first decisions in setting that up was that one day, when the club had a home of its own, a new Memorial would be provided. In 2016, ensconced at The Vale, I had an idea and I discussed and tweaked it with Alan and Steve Foster. I then drew up an image and met with a glass artist local to me in Devon, Amy McCarthy @amyorangejuice <http://www.amyorangejuice.co.uk/> who works with Stained glass, Leaded glass and Fused glass where images are 'burnt' into the glass then used to create a picture.

From my original sketch Amy added her thoughts and we commissioned a new glass memorial panel to be unveiled on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armistice. I built a frame around the panel itself symbolising a First World War Trench with aged oak sides, a duck-board floor and an Elephant (corrugated) Iron top. Behind the glass there are also some strands of barbed wire – English, French and German - finds from field walking on Great War battlefields, some with a group of Wealdstone FC fans in 2017.

The plaque was presented to the club on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018 prior to a match v Bath City in which Wealdstone wore a replica of the Black & White hooped kit of 1919. The presentation was made, on behalf of 'Friends' by two serving servicemen who follow Wealdstone, Andy Gibbs and Sam Morris.



**WEALDSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB 1913**

**Back Row:** W Watson, F Martin (Vice Capt), H Rolfe, H Howman (Vice Capt 'A' Team), H Bellchambers, SE White, W Bellchambers (Com)  
**Centre Row:** RC Harding (Com), A Little (Trainer), CH Bird, HE Southwood, A Harding, HA Stevenson, J Mines, W Deeley (Com), J Hinchcliffe (Com)  
**Front Row:** GE Elmslie, F Rogers, G Page, JJ Shadwick (Capt, 'A' Team), TB Bradberry (Capt), W Balkwill, P Andrews, G Fox, HC Hird (Hon Treasurer)  
**Seated:** W Howman, H Miller

