



## FROM THE PARISH ARCHIVES

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### ELTHAM HONOUR ROLL GREAT EUROPEAN WAR 1914 - 1918

Welcome to the ninth (ANZAC) edition of "From the Parish Archives". We hope that you will enjoy reading about the history of the Parish. This is especially so with the 150th anniversary in 2011.

The "From the Parish Archives" aims to be factual. However, any opinions expressed are personal and may not be necessarily shared by other parishioners.

Geoffrey A Sandy

#### **Introduction**

On the back wall (south) of our Church is an Honour Roll of those men (no women are listed) connected with St Margaret's who served in the Great European War 1914 to 1918. We usually refer to this as World War 1 (WW1). There are 74 names inscribed on the Honour Roll. A red cross before each of 13 names indicate they died in the conflict. Nearby on the east wall is a separate memorial to George Alfred Williams who is one of those with a red cross before his name

These are not the only memorials to those 13 men who were killed in the War. The Advertiser January 1925 reports on the dedication and consecration of "a handsome altar piece of beautifully grained blackwood, which was given to the church in memory of those soldiers formerly connected with its congregation who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War". On the front of the altar piece "the words, 'Holy, holy, Holy' are neatly carved, and on a silver plate below is the following inscription...". The inscription lists the thirteen names in memoriam.

The service of dedication and consecration of this memorial was conducted by the Very Rev. Archdeacon Hindley and was assisted by the Vicar the Rev. J A Peck. The Advertiser further reports that "following the devotional portion of the service, the Archdeacon delivered an interesting and encouraging address to the congregation, in which he stated his belief that departed friends in the unseen were around us, and were cognisant of all we did upon

*earth*". Sadly this memorial no longer exists. It was removed from the altar, probably in the 1980s, and then was a victim of an overenthusiastic clean-out some years ago.

In this issue six enlisted men who died in the conflict are featured. These are those for whom we are confident of having their correct details. The others on our Honour Roll require further investigation.

### **Information Sources**

The primary source of information for this issue comes from the searches of the web site of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
<http://www.cwgc.org/>

Obviously the list of names comes from our Honour Roll and also from the January 2 issue of The Advertiser a weekly newspaper of the Shire of Eltham. One error detected is that the newspaper lists G T Williams when the correct name is George Alfred Williams.

### **In Memoriam**

Let us turn to six young men associated with the congregation of St Margaret's Eltham who enlisted and died as a result of the Great European war. Sadly the youngest was 19 and the oldest only 22 years of age when killed.

George Alfred Williams held the rank of Corporal in the Australian Army Medical Corps. He died 17 September 1918 aged 21. He was the son of W A and Mary Ann Williams of "Belle Vue" Eltham. He is buried at Hancourt British Cemetery in the Somme region of France. Hancourt was captured by the Australian Corps in the middle of September 1918. It is likely George was a casualty of that battle. The British Cemetery was constructed by Australian units in September 1918 and these original graves are in Row B, C, and D.

William Jonas Prior served as a Private in the Australian Infantry (AIF). He died 26 August 1916 at the age of 22. He is buried at Knightsbridge Cemetery at Mesmil-Martinsart also in the Somme region of France. The cemetery, which is named from a communication trench, was begun at the outset of the Battle of the Somme in 1916. It was used by units fighting on that front until the German withdrawal in February 1917 and was used again by fighting units from the end of March to July 1918, when the German advance brought the front line back to the Ancre. William was the son of Thomas and Keziah Prior of 129 Palmer Street Sydney, New South Wales but, nevertheless William is described as a native of Eltham, Victoria, Australia.

William Moore Crellin held the rank of Lance Corporal in the AIF 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He died 7 May 1917. He is buried at Villers-Bretonneux. This village became famous in 1918, when the German advance on Amiens ended in its capture by their tanks and infantry on 23 April. On the following day, the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions, with units of the 8th and 18th Divisions, recaptured the whole of the village. The memorial is the Australian National Memorial erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in

France and Belgium during the First World War. It includes within the memorial those whose graves are not known. William was the son of John William and Amelia Jane Crellin and husband to Alice Maud Crellin. William was born in Eltham.

Geoffrey Treacher Grant was a Trooper in the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse. He died 7 August 1915 at the age of 19. He is buried at the Lone Pine Memorial in Turkey. The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915. Lone Pine was a strategically important plateau which was briefly in the hands of Australian forces following the landings on the 25 April. It became a Turkish strong point from May to July, when it was known by them as 'Kanli Sirt' (Bloody Ridge).

The Lone Pine Memorial stands on the site of the fiercest fighting and overlooks the whole front line of May 1915. It commemorates more than 4,900 Australian and New Zealand servicemen who died in the Anzac area, New Zealanders who were killed prior to the fighting in August 1915 and whose graves are not known and those who were killed at sea in Gallipoli waters. Geoffrey was the son of William Treacher and Emilie Mary Catherine Grant of Eltham.

Robert Lindsay Medley Maddison held the rank of Lance Corporal in the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF. He died 1 September 1918 at the age of 20 years. He is buried at Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension in the Somme region of France. Peronne was taken by the Germans on the 24 September 1914. On the 18 March 1917, the 40th and 48th Divisions captured the town, but it was recovered by the Germans on the 23rd March 1918. It changed hands for the last time on the 1 September 1918, when it was taken by the 2nd Australian Division. The cemetery extension was begun by the 48th (South Midland) Division in March 1917, used by the Germans in 1918, and resumed by Australian units in September 1918. At the Armistice it contained 177 graves. He was the son of Lewis Medley and Helen Isobel Maddison of "Hureah" Greensborough, Victoria. Robert was born at Kilcool Drummond Queensland.

Walter James Moseley was a Private of the AIF. He died 14 August 1916. He is buried at Etaples Military Cemetery in the locality of Pas de Calais, France. Etaples is a town about 27 kilometres south of Boulogne. The Military Cemetery is to the north of the town, on the west side of the road to Boulogne. During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and was accessible by railway from both the northern and the southern battlefields. In 1917, 100,000 troops were camped among the sand dunes and the hospitals. The cemetery contains 10,771 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, the earliest dating is from May 1915. Thirty-five of these burials are unidentified.