

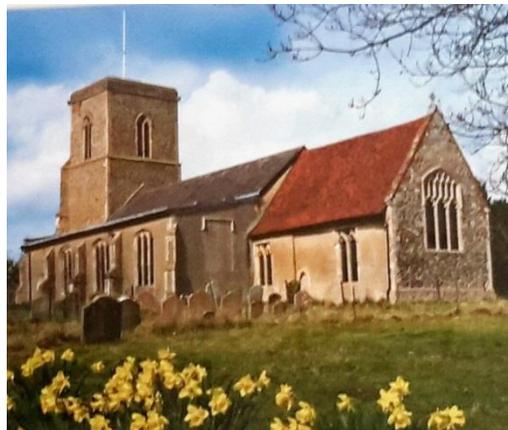
HACHESTON REMEMBERS –

**A souvenir booklet to accompany the displays
in**

Hacheston Church

on the Centenary of the Armistice

11-11-18



"Hope springs eternal..."



The Cap Badge of the Suffolk Regiment

Preface

It is difficult to gauge the impact of the First World War on our little village. Some of our young men who had never before heard anything louder than a thunderstorm had endured being shelled and being shot at. The War had taken our young men away from their homes and families and work places. Around Hacheston the main work was in agriculture; so local farms had had to rely on an older workforce and had to train women for farm work.

So, in addition to the workforce being depleted, there was also the sorrow of death and injury. Young men went off to fight, and some never returned, and apart from two there could be no local funeral because they were buried near where they died, if their bodies were ever found.

This booklet outlines some of the local experience of the war, and summarises where our 'boys' found themselves. The second part of the booklet offers material which can help us to reflect on the horrors of war and to value peace.





Men photographed at Darsham going off to war, July 1916

The Great War and the 'Boys' from Hacheston

Hacheston was a particularly patriotic village, with over 100 serving the Colours out of a population of 406 (Framlingham Weekly News, 27th September, 1919). Some of these were men who had served in the Armed Forces prior to 1914 and, as regular servicemen, WW1 was simply another deployment for them. Others, many of whom were teenagers, volunteered as part of the wave of patriotism sweeping the country with the outbreak of war, often signing up together in their local Regiment (the Suffolks) at places such as Framlingham and setting off for training camp by train. Conscription did not come in until 1916 when older men were 'called up', some in their late 30s.

Among the 'over 100' who served, two Hacheston families were remarkable. Mr and Mrs Edgar Hatcher of Long Row had 10 sons serving the King in 1914, while the Carter family of Turnpike Road had 6 sons serving the King by 1915. Other families had two or more sons serving; please see the Roll of Honour that hangs beneath the War Memorial for those who served.

The War Memorial lists in alphabetical order the names of the men from Hacheston who gave their lives. The list includes three Hatcher brothers, two Smith brothers, and two Fletcher brothers. The War Memorial and the Commemorative East Window were dedicated in 1919, following a meeting almost immediately after the end of the war when some £280 was raised by subscription. The Window depicts the figure of our Lord, with St George and St Martin (the patron saints of England and France) on either side. The panel at the foot of the window is inscribed "Giving thanks to God for the honoured memory of the men of Hacheston who laid down their lives in the Great War, this window is dedicated by grateful parishioners, A.D. 1919".

Thinking of the well-known poem by Rupert Brooke ('The Soldier'), not all of our Hacheston 'boys' lie in 'some corner of a foreign field'. Two (Samuel Smith and Harry Fletcher) lie buried in this churchyard. Both had been returned to hospitals in the UK where they died. Samuel Smith's headstone also lists his brother William, missing in action and with no known grave. This is sadly the case for eight of Hacheston's 'boys'. In the slaughter of the Somme (607,489 British officers and men lost) or Passchendaele (244,489 lost), many bodies were never recovered and families only have the names of their sons, husbands or brothers listed on memorials such as the Thiepval Memorial (William Smith, Edward Farmer), Cambrai Memorial (William Clarke), Arras Memorial (Ernest Rollinson, Frederick Hatcher), Loos Memorial (John Myers) or Tyne Cot Memorial (Ernest Fletcher, Thomas Foskett Walker). The others lie in Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries as far flung as Egypt (Henry Todd lies in the Kantara War Memorial Cemetery near Cairo). Harold Leonard is very unusual in that he served in the Royal Navy yet is buried, not at sea, but in Queensferry

Cemetery. He drowned while his ship was in port (so not 'in action') and we understand his mother had to fight hard to get him a Commonwealth War Graves Commission pattern headstone. Her inscription at the foot of it is particularly moving:

AND WHEN THE SUNSET
GATES UNBAR
SHALL I NOT SEE THEE
WAITING STAND - MOTHER

This is from the poem 'Snow-Bound' by the American Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

Most of the Hacheston 'boys' served as either Privates or NCOs, Able Seamen or Petty Officers. The exception is John Coupar Myers, who served as a Captain in the Scottish Horse; Sally Whiffing identified him for us from the 1911 Census where he is listed as a servant at Glevering Hall (we believe he was Mr Heywood's personal valet). The other exception is Hubert Anthony who was an Air Mechanic in the newly-formed RAF. Interestingly, Thomas Foskett Walker who has a tablet on his parents' grave in Hacheston churchyard, belonged to the Artists Rifles. This was a special regiment that you could only join by invitation. It recruited men from the universities and public schools as potential officer material (to replace the many officers who had been killed). Thomas was in training for this, but we believe was called to the front in the crisis at Passchendaele before he had been commissioned.

Details of the men listed on the War Memorial can be found by clicking on the QR patch with your smartphone or tablet, which takes you to the War Memorial pages on the church website (www.hachestonchurch.onesuffolk.net). Printed copies can be found in the little booklets set out with their CWGC Commemorative Certificates in the chancel. There is a special display, with memorabilia, on the 10 Hatcher brothers. Richard and I wish to record our thanks to the Suffolk Record Office at Ipswich and Sally Whiffing; Philip Tallent from Wickham Market Archive Centre; Mrs Evelyn Empson from Framlingham; Mr Andrew Walker for information on the

Artists Rifles and Passchendaele; Ron Reeve and Doug Ireland.
If you can add any further information, please get in touch with us.

There is also a display board on Flora Sandes, the only woman known to have actually fought alongside men in the front line during WW1. Flora has a local connection; her father was Rector of Marlesford and Flora grew up in Marlesford Rectory. At the end of her very eventful life, during which she served, became a Sergeant and then a Lieutenant in the Serbian army for which she was decorated, Flora came to live at Follies End cottage in Hacheston (since demolished). Women of course served with the Red Cross or as military nurses in hospitals both close to the front, behind the lines, and in the UK. They also worked in the munitions factories where the cordite turned their skin yellow and they died very young; on the home front as drivers, including bus, trolley bus and tram drivers and conductors; in factories making armaments such as guns, aircraft, and tanks; or on the land trying to keep the country and the armed forces fed (Framlingham took part in an 'Eggs for our Wounded' campaign for which trainloads of eggs ran along the branch line through Hacheston). Many of the local horses (including Suffolk Punches) were sent to France to haul the guns and wagons, so tractors and farm machinery were brought in via Ireland from the USA to replace them on farms (which women drove and operated).



Territorials embarking from Framlingham Station

The War in summary -

The First World War was a 'first' for many things:

- The first 'world' war (i.e. the first global war).
- First use of artillery and machine guns on such a scale (the first 'industrialised/mechanised' war with a total of over 41 million military and civilian casualties including around 18 million dead and 23 million wounded); guns were used to bombard and mow down the men on both sides night and day (the railway guns of the Germans could fire across the channel and the guns at the front could be heard in England).
- First large-scale use of trench warfare.
- First use of aircraft to observe, and then later bomb, the enemy (and civilians in the case of the German raid on London).
- First war where men, supplies and munitions were conveyed to the front by railways, including narrow gauge ones reaching up to the front lines. Ambulance trains used to take the wounded back to UK.
- First bombing of civilians in the UK by Zeppelins (one crashed at Theberton 17 June 1917) and by aircraft on 7 July 1917 when German Gotha aircraft bombed London (160 civilians killed including 18 children as one of the bombs fell on a primary school). (German naval vessels also shelled Lowestoft early in the war).
- First mass use of chemical weapons – chlorine, phosgene (the most fatal) or mustard gas (used towards the end of the war caused internal and external blistering) – gas first used by the Germans at Premysl on the Eastern Front in Jan 1915, then again at Ypres on the Western Front later in 1915.
- First use of tanks (see the display by Alfie Allsop); Cambrai the first use in any numbers in 1917; also used successfully at Amiens in August 1918.

- First occurrence of what we would now call 'Post-traumatic stress disorder' but was called then 'shell-shock' (or worse). 306 men were shot for desertion because they could not stand the shelling any longer (many since officially pardoned).
- First use of cine cameras to make films to be shown in cinemas in the UK (though very carefully vetted).

The Great War produced what has become known as the 'War Poets'; poets such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and Edmund Blunden. These were mostly well-educated young men from universities and public schools, and so officers; though there were exceptions such as Isaac Rosenberg. Most of them did not survive the war (Sassoon and Robert Graves are two of the exceptions) and for many their work was not published in their lifetime. Among the men, their form of poetic expression tended to be their songs. With both poems and songs, they moved from the patriotic and sentimental (The Soldier; Pack Up Your Troubles); through those that expressed the harsh reality of what life in the trenches was like (Mud; We have no beer – sung to a well-known hymn tune); to the harshly critical seeing the war as pointless and badly-managed (Futility; Oh! What a Lovely War).

Out of the war came the ground-swell movement for social change (Homes fit for Heroes; Trades Unions; Women's Suffrage), always in the shadow of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Huge changes were generated through legislation; for example, the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1918 gave votes to men of 21 and women of 30, nearly doubling the electorate to 16 million, and the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 opened nearly all public offices and professions to women.

The Silver War Badge – 'Services Rendered'.

Those eligible included civilians and army personnel discharged or retired due to sickness or injury.



Some statistics:

- It is estimated that around 900,000 British servicemen died and around 1,600,000 were wounded.
- Around 200,000 fatalities from the Commonwealth (then known as the Empire) with troops from Australia, New Zealand (known as the ANZACs), Canada, India and South Africa with a further 450,000 wounded.
- The French empire had nearly 1,500,000 fatalities with over 4,000,000 wounded. A further 300,000 civilians in the NE corner of France died from military action, disease and famine.
- Germany lost nearly 2,000,000 men with around 4,000,000 wounded. Austria lost about 1,200,000 men killed.
- The total military casualties of all nations who fought in the war is around 8,500,000 killed and 21,000,000 wounded. The civilian death toll is estimated at about 8,000,000, including 6,000,000 million who died from war-related famine and disease.
- It has been estimated that about 1½ billion shells were fired by the combatant armies on the Western Front alone. How many bullets were used is probably incalculable.
- The estimated cost of the War to Britain and its Empire was over £13 billion.

The major battles involving British troops were:

Mons and the Marne (September – mid November 1914)

Britain declared war on Germany on August 4th 1914, following Germany's invasion of Belgium. The British Expeditionary Army of just over 100,000 landed and clashed with the advancing German forces at Mons, Belgium on 23rd August. The British were heavily outnumbered and forced back over the Marne river and close to Paris; the largest

German guns could shell Paris which caused panic among the civilians there. In what became known as 'The Miracle of the Marne', the French and British forces forced the Germans to retreat to their next defensible line, the river Aisne, where they took up the high ground. The French had also managed to hold (just) their fortress at Verdun. What then followed was that both sides raced to outflank each other on the large gap left to the north of these positions in what became known as the 'Race to the Sea'. This continued into November 1914, when the coast was reached. With winter approaching and both sides exhausted, Allied and German forces dug lines of trenches just north-east of Ypres. The Allied forces trenches were much shallower than the German ones as they expected to soon be on the move again; however, this area was to become their home for around the next three and a half years. The line of trenches stretched from the North Sea coast to the Swiss border, a distance of around 400 miles.

1st and 2nd Battle of Ypres

The **first Battle of Ypres** was in October 1914 with French, Canadian and British troops managing to hold the line. On 22nd April 1915 the Germans used chlorine gas along the northern part of the Ypres salient. Within ten minutes 6,000 troops were dead, either with their eyes and lungs destroyed by the gas or gunned down as they tried to escape from their trenches. This formed the setting for the **2nd battle of Ypres** (22nd April -25th May 1915). A series of major offensives during the spring and summer of 1915 followed, but failed to make any breakthrough. Sir John French was replaced by Sir Douglas Haig as British commander. Haig believed it would be a war of attrition with the enemy having to be worn down by relentless attacks before any major advance could be made.

The Somme (1st July – 18th November 1916)

In February 1916 the Germans attacked the French stronghold of Verdun and almost captured it. French troops were moved from Ypres to help defend Verdun (something the Flemish speaking Belgians never forgave them for, and why today the town is known by its Flemish name of Ieper; the 'Tommyes' of course always knew it as

'Wipers'!). It was because the British and Commonwealth troops, who had been left to defend Ypres, fought and died to hold the town that the British are held in such high esteem in this part of Belgium today. This is also why the Last Post Ceremony is held each evening at the Menin Gate to honour the British and Commonwealth troops who have no known grave.

This then meant the planned Somme offensive had to be mainly a British affair. Also, from captured plans the Germans knew what was coming and when. The week-long bombardment of German positions thus had done little to damage the German defences. In addition, the British had to use a large proportion of inexperienced volunteers who had not adapted to this modern kind of war. On 1st July they advanced slowly in straight lines and were easily mown down by the Germans who held the high ground. July 1st, 1916 became the worst single day for the British army with around 60,000 casualties. Around 20,000 were killed, 40,000 wounded. As Haig had accepted this to be a war of attrition, the battle dragged on along this 25-mile front through the summer and into the autumn. By the time it ground to a halt in mid-November 1916, the Allies had suffered over 600,000 casualties with 150,000 killed. Despite these enormous losses, the targets set for the first day were only finally reached in November. One shocking feature of the Somme was the bodies of fallen comrades left to rot hanging on the barbed wire in No Man's Land leaving a terrible smell. Few had the opportunity to have a decent burial because it was too hazardous to try to collect their bodies.

Third Battle of Ypres (31st July – 10th November 1917)

The first offensive of 1917 by the Allies involved British, Canadian and ANZAC forces in a diversionary attack at Arras. This included digging tunnels through which troops could suddenly appear in No Man's Land. The Canadians took Vimy Ridge and, while the battle turned into stalemate, it diverted German troops from the attack by French troops on the river Aisne south of Laon. The latter still turned out to be a disaster for the French with 100,000 men killed or injured leading to mutiny by French troops. While the French were recovering the British

went ahead with an offensive to take the high ground from the Germans to the south and east of Ypres. Tens of thousands of men constructed railways and dug tunnels to place huge quantities of mines under the Messines Ridge. On 7th June 1917 at 3.10am 19 of these were detonated in the largest man-made explosion ever known at that time which could be heard back in Britain. Huge craters were left, including the one at the appropriately named Hooze. The final phase was the campaign to take the village of Passchendaele and the high ground around it in a long-drawn-out battle with high casualty rates, only ending on 10th November with the approach of winter. Passchendaele is still remembered as a struggle of men against the awful mud. The millions of shells fired obliterated the village of Passchendaele. The actions around Ypres in 1917 cost over 300,000 Allied casualties.

Cambrai (20th November – 7th December, 1917)

This was the final planned offensive for 1917. New tactics were tried out using close co-operation between artillery and infantry and this was also the first time that tanks were used in any numbers. The tanks were divided into groups of three to form an arrow, with troops following on foot behind. The artillery could now register their guns on enemy targets by sound ranging rather than having to fire them to do this, which of course warned the enemy an attack was coming. The attack began on 20th November with a short but intense artillery barrage followed by a creeping barrage under which tanks and infantry advanced. Unfortunately, communications remained a problem and reserves could still not be brought up quickly enough. The battle showed the potential effectiveness of the new tactics and the value of the tank in the initial stages to cross barbed wire and disable machine-gun posts. At the time it was regarded as a victory and church bells in Britain were rung for the first time since the war began to signal this.

German Spring Offensive (21st March -5th April, 1918)

Following the Russian Revolution in the autumn of 1917 and the withdrawal of Russia from the war after signing a treaty with Germany,

German troops were released to be brought back from the Eastern Front to bolster those already on the Western Front. Germany now had numerical superiority on the Western Front and so an attack was expected by the Allies who strengthened their lines. The Germans launched their attack on 21st March, 1918 with the heaviest bombardment of the war on a 40 mile stretch of the British lines south of Arras. Over 3,500,000 shells were fired within 5 hours on the rear lines while gas and mortars were used on the front lines. The Germans used storm troopers to burst through in the confusion and push the Allies back into France over the following weeks, some reaching the Marne which is back to where the Allies were in November 1914. Operations finally ground to a halt and were called off by the Germans on 5th April. Part of the reason was that the starving German troops took French towns and British supply bases that were full of food, wine, clothes and other things they had not seen much of for many months/years because of the Allied blockade of German-held ports, and simply stopped to gorge themselves.

Amiens and the Hundred Days Offensive (8th August - 11th November, 1918)

By spring 1918, the Allies had appointed Marshall Ferdinand Foch from France as Allied Supreme Commander of their combined forces instead of operating as separate national forces. The Allies' plan was to push the Germans back in a series of battles collectively known as the Hundred Days Offensive. Douglas Haig came up with the plan to attack at the Somme which was accepted. The Battle of Amiens commenced on August 8th with close co-operation between artillery, infantry, tanks and aircraft. Secrecy was maintained and the surprise attack created a 15-mile gap in the German lines. This also allowed German plans for their defensive Hindenburg Line to fall into Allied hands. The Allies were also boosted from May onwards by American troops who were finally ready for action. Following the sinking by German submarines of the liner *Lusitania* in 1915 which had American passengers on board, and subsequent intense Allied pressure on the USA, America finally declared war on Germany in April 1917. However, it took time for their troops to arrive in Europe and

receive at least some training before seeing action. By early September, British, Canadian, Australian, French and American forces pushed the Germans almost back to the Hindenburg Line. Having captured the plans of its defences, the Allies broke through and created a 20-mile gap in the middle of it by October 5th. The Germans thus lost most of the land they had captured in their Spring Offensive in a matter of four weeks.

The End of Fighting

There were severe problems for the Germans at home, with 400,000 estimated to have died of starvation in large part because of the Allied blockade of ports. With morale falling both among their troops and at home, the German High Command saw no alternative but to seek for an Armistice. This was signed in a railway carriage in a siding near Compiegne at 5am on the morning of the 11th November, coming into effect at 11am (i.e. at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). Sadly, fighting continued in odd places right up to 10.59am when an American soldier, Henry Gunther, was the last soldier to be killed. He charged a German machine-gun post, despite the Germans waving him back and not firing. When he got to within a few yards of the German position, he was shot dead.

David Clough and Richard Ginn



(Information included taken from: *The Trench* by Trevor Yorke and *The First World War: an Historical Insight* by Hew Strachan)

THE MEN OF HACHESTON WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR

1915

- 05 July **A(lbert) MILES** – Private 3/8875 1st Bn, Dorsetshire Regiment, Age not known – Larch Wood (Railway Cutting) Cemetery
 17 July **Harold Leonard** - Able Seaman J/16071, H.M.S. "Indomitable" Royal Navy, Aged 19 - Queensferry Cemetery.

1916

- 20 July **William SMITH** – Lance Corporal 8180 2nd Bn, Suffolk Rgt, Aged 25 – Thiepval Memorial
 26 September **B(ruce) R(aymond) HATCHER** – Private 15417 8th Bn, Suffolk Regiment, Aged 31– Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval
 14 October **Armond Wilfred MILES** – Private 20488 7th Bn, Suffolk Rgt, Aged 25 – Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L'abbe
 19 October **Samuel SMITH** – Serjeant 3/9668 8th Bn, Suffolk Regiment, died of wounds, King George's Hospital, London, Aged 35 – Buried 23rd October in Hacheston (All Saints) Churchyard

1917

- 09 April **Edward W(illiam) F(rank) FARMER** – Private 21st Bn, Middlesex Regiment, Age not known – Thiepval Memorial
 11 April **Ernest ROLLINSON** – Private 80524 Essex Yeomanry, Age not known – Arras Memorial
 24 April **Alfred William CABLE** – Private 9619 11th Bn, Suffolk Rgt, Aged 19 – Level Crossing Cemetery, Fampoux
 01 May **Harry Cuthbert FLETCHER** – Lance Corporal 17832 19th Bn, The Kings (Liverpool Rgt). Died of wounds at Norwich Military Hospital, Aged 28 – Buried on 4th May in Hacheston (All Saints) Churchyard
 26 July **George GLANFIELD** – Private G/24419 17th Bn, Middlesex Regiment, Age not known – Gorre British and Indian Cemetery
 30 August **Herbert CARTER** – Bombardier 62158 15th Bde, Royal Horse Artillery, Age not known - Canada Farm Cemetery
 29 October **Thomas Foskett WALKER** – Private 761888 1st/28th Bn. London Regiment (Artists' Rifles), Aged 30 - Tyne Cot Memorial and Framlingham College War Memorial
 24 November **William Llewellyn CLARKE** – Private 328049 12th Bn, Suffolk Regiment, Age not known – Cambrai Memorial, Louveral
 12 December **Henry James TODD** – Private 202862 'C' Coy 15th, Suffolk Regiment, Aged 34 – Kantara War Memorial Cemetery

1918

- 21 March **Frederick HATCHER** – Private 7761 12th Bn, Suffolk Regiment, Aged 27 – Arras Memorial
 09 April **Ernest FLETCHER** – Sapper 551124 106th Field Coy, Royal Engineers, Aged 30 – Tyne Cot Memorial
 26 April **Hubert Frank ANTHONY** – Air Mechanic 101522 2nd Class 35th Sqdn RAF, Aged 19 - St Pierre Cemetery, Amiens
 04 May **John MYERS** – Captain, Scottish Horse, Aged 43 – Loos Memorial
 22 August **Frederick BARHAM MM** – Private 201162 1st Bn, Cambridge Regiment, Aged 22 - Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt
 02 October **William Henry HATCHER** – Private 48297, 12th Bn., East Surrey Regiment, Aged 23 – Hooge Crater Cemetery
 23 October **George Spencer MILLS** – Private 260167 1st/8th Bn, Worcestershire Rgt, Aged 32 – Forest Communal Cemetery

The centenary of each man's death was commemorated in Hacheston Church at the service closest to the date of his death – as compiled from Commonwealth War Graves Commission records and other sources.