

# *Banstead Remembers*

A double commemoration on the 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the deaths of two men whose connection to Banstead has only recently been discovered.



*Private Ernest Fairs  
of Diceland Road*

*1<sup>st</sup> London Rifle Brigade  
Killed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres  
Aged 19*

---



*Private William Appleby  
of The Kensington & Chelsea  
Cottage Homes School,  
Fir Tree Road*

*1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers  
Killed at Gallipoli  
Aged 23*

**MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MAY**

at All Saints Church, Banstead

7:30am: the churchyard flag will be raised to half-mast  
11:55am: a short service of remembrance will be held  
Noon: a church bell will be tolled 101 times

Please come and remember the sacrifice that our local community made in World War One.

*We will remember each one*

## *Private Ernest Fairs of Diceland Road*

Ernest William Fairs was born in Diceland Road on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1895. He was the second child of William and Ellen Fairs and was baptised at All Saints in February 1896.

The family had recently arrived in Diceland Road, moving to Banstead from the nearby village of Margery (between Mogador and Reigate Hill) in 1894. William worked as a joiner for a local builder. The number of the house in which the family lived was not recorded but it was probably a cottage on the northern side of the road. They moved away, to Kingswood, and then to Croydon, where Ernest attended school.

Ernest went to work for a London-based firm of auctioneers and estate agents and also joined the Territorial Army in August 1913, attesting with the 1/5<sup>th</sup> (City of London) Battalion of the London Regiment, known as the "London Rifle Brigade".

The L.R.B. were attending their annual camp when war broke out in August 1914 and they were mobilised that day and sailed to France in November.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1915, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres began with the Germans using chlorine gas in a cloud attack for the first time. The L.R.B. soon found themselves marching into the Ypres salient and into days of constant and accurate artillery fire. They dug in at Fortuin, a hamlet near the Gravenstafel Ridge.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May, under cover of gas and a heavy artillery bombardment, the Germans descended from the Gravenstafel Ridge and crept through cover towards the L.R.B.'s lines. The men of the L.R.B. exposed themselves to the danger of the artillery barrage in order to shoot at the Germans, holding them off at a high cost. 45 men were killed and 128 were wounded that day. Ernest Fairs was among the dead. He was 19.

---

## *Private William Appleby of Kensington & Chelsea Cottage Homes School*

William Joseph Appleby was born in Kensington on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1891. His parents, James and Annie, were poor and they suffered ill-health. William and his sister were sent to live at the Kensington & Chelsea Cottage Homes School in Fir Tree Road, Banstead, by the Kensington Board of Guardians in 1897.

The Cottage Home School was set up as a new model of school, almost a village in its own right, designed to provide better conditions than the old barrack-like District Schools. There were 800 pupils, with 30 or 40 children living in each "cottage" under care of a House Father and Mother. Discipline was strict but the conditions were far better than the children had been living in. The focus was very much on learning practical trades in the school's well-equipped workshops.

William's parents died and he was orphaned at 11 years old. He left the school when he and his sister were adopted by a Mrs Bagshawe in 1903. When William joined the Army in 1909, he gave his birthplace as "Banstead". He attested with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, serving with their 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion before being transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup>.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers were in Madras when war broke out. They briefly returned to England before sailing for Gallipoli. The Dubs took part in the landings of the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915. They were to land at V beach. It was a deathtrap: wired, entrenched, covered by machineguns and artillery, defended by well-led Turkish troops and with little cover. The sea was described as turning crimson with blood. The Dubs suffered 637 casualties.

They were finally able to make progress when night fell and they inched inland over the next few days. On 1<sup>st</sup> May, the Turks attacked with bayonets and the Dubs fought them at close quarters. On 2<sup>nd</sup> May, they were shelled all day and continually sniped at and William was killed. He was 23.

William is commemorated on the Irish National Roll of Honour but has no known memorial in the UK and is not yet listed on the Cottage Homes School's Roll of Honour at St Paul's, Nork.