

# *Banstead Remembers*

*Private Allan Guest*

*of 10 Diceland Road*

*4<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers*

*Served at Gallipoli, in Belgium and France*

*Killed in action, aged 22*



## THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL

at All Saints Church, Banstead

11:50am: a short service of remembrance will be held

Noon: a church bell will be tolled 100 times

The churchyard flag will be raised to half mast at 7:30am and lowered at 5:30pm

The Battle of Arras is often forgotten, overshadowed by the fighting that took place before it on the Somme and afterwards at Passchendaele. Eight men from Banstead and Burgh Heath were killed in the battle. Allan was one of three Banstead men to lose their lives on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1917.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Private Allan Guest of 10 Diceland Road*

Allan Owen Guest was born at home on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1895 in Kilndown, Kent. He was the son of Harry and Frances Guest and was one of at least fifteen children.

The Guests moved to Banstead in the late 1890s. They lived at 10 Diceland Road (numbered 5 when they moved in). Allan's dad was a bricklayer, one of several men in the building trade who lived in Diceland Road around the turn of the century and built the houses in Diceland, Ferndale and Lyme Regis Roads.

Allan attended the Church of England School at Burgh Heath (in the building now known as *Chips Folly*, opposite St Mary's). After leaving school, probably at 14 years old, he worked as a butcher's errand boy but soon became a platelayer, looking after a section of the line on the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway.

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 1914, two months after war broke out, Allan married Kate Harman at the Registry Office in Brighton. Kate was the daughter of a bootmaker from Walton on the Hill and had been working as a servant in Brighton. After the wedding, they came to Carshalton, where a son, Frederick, was born on 26<sup>th</sup> November at 36 Harold Road. They soon moved to Banstead and made their home at 3 Devonshire Cottages, which used to stand where Shrubland Court is now, on the corner of Shrubland Road and Garratts Lane.

Allan enlisted in the Army at Kingston on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915. He chose to join the Royal Fusiliers and went to Gallipoli with their 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion a few months later. Within a few weeks of Allan's arrival, the weather turned for the worse and the men on the peninsular, most of them kitted out for desert heat, were subjected to blizzards, freezing temperatures and flooding. By 1<sup>st</sup> December, the weather had reduced the Battalion to just 42 men who were still fit enough to fight. Allan contracted dysentery and spent several months recovering in Malta and England.

When he returned to duty, it was with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Belgium and then France. Allan fought in Delville Wood and in an attack on the village of Guillemont during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917, he took part in the capture of The Harp, a German defensive work on the Hindenburg Line, during the successful first day of the Battle of Arras, when a creeping barrage was employed to great effect. Four days later, on 13<sup>th</sup> April, the Fusiliers supported an attack on the village of Guemappe. Their brigade had no support on either flank and German machine-guns on the far bank of the Cojeul River and in Guemappe itself were able to inflict 100 casualties among the Fusiliers. Allan was one of those killed in action. He was 22.