

# *Banstead Remembers*

*Private William Wallis  
Flint Cottages, High Street*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Grenadier Guards  
Served in France and Belgium  
Killed in Action, aged 35*



## MONDAY 31<sup>st</sup> JULY

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

William Wallis, a warehouseman who grew up in a cottage that used to stand where the entrance road to Waitrose car park is now, served with the Grenadier Guards in France and Belgium. He was wounded during the Battle of the Somme and killed on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres.

Please come and remember the sacrifice made in the Great War.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Private William Wallis of Flint Cottages*

William Albert Wallis was born in Banstead in late 1881 and baptised at All Saints on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1882. He was the son of Francis and Eliza Wallis (nee Pratt),

The Wallis family came to Banstead in the late 1860s and first made their home at Mint Cottages, by The Mint public house, where William was born. They later moved to the High Street, living at Flint Cottages, which used to stand where the entrance road to Waitrose car park is today. William's father was a wheelwright and probably ran his business from a workshop at home.

After working as a gardener at one of the local big houses as a teenager, William left home and sold advertising for a while before becoming a warehouseman in Bootle, Liverpool.

William joined the Army at Seaforth on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1915, signing on for 3 years or the duration of the war. He served with the Grenadier Guards and after basic training, probably at the Guards depot at Caterham, he joined 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion and served on the Home Front until being posted to 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in France in August.

On his second day in the trenches, during the Battle of the Somme, he was shot in the side and spent a month recovering. After the fighting was over, the Guards held trenches on the battlefield throughout the cold, hard winter and remained there as other troops fought the Battle of Arras in April 1917. They trained while the Battle of Messines Ridge was fought in June and then moved north, to Belgium, ready to take part in the Big Push.

Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig wanted to fight his way out of the Ypres Salient, the bulge in the line around the low-lying Belgian town of Ypres, and north to the Channel coast ports. With the French temporarily finished as an attacking force following their disastrous offensive in April and May, the brunt of the effort would have to be borne by British and Commonwealth troops.

After a massive preliminary bombardment, the attack began in the early morning of 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917. It would become known as the Third Battle of Ypres, more commonly "Passchendaele" after its horrific final phase. The Guards were in the north of the battlefield and had an easier start than most, having already captured the frontline trenches opposite them a couple of days earlier, and the Grenadier Guards advanced several hundred yards across the flat landscape before they suffered their first casualties. Machine-guns in concrete blockhouses and farm buildings scythed through the advancing troops and each had to be fought for. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Grenadier Guards reached their objective line and consolidated their position as other guardsmen pushed on. In the evening, the rain began to fall, dooming the British Army to spend the next three months struggling through the mud. William was one of the men to fall on the first day of the battle. He was 35 years old.