

James Church

Baptised 10/10/1886
Died 23/11/1914 aged 27
RBReg. 1st Bn. Pte 8224
Brompton Cemetery, London

Arthur Church

Baptised 13/08/1893
Died 17/02/1917 aged 23
RBReg. 6th Bn Pte 28758
Thipval Memorial

Albert Leonard Church

Born 17/02/1890
Died 24/04/1917 aged 27
RBReg. 7th Bn. Pte 14405
Doiran Memorial

Maurice Church

Born 11/10/1895
Died 22/08/1917 aged 21
REReg. 2nd/4th Bn. Pte 14408
Tyne Cot Memorial

The Churches were a well established working family in East Hanney, having been here for several generations. They lived in Ebbs Lane, then known locally as 'Tarry Town', due to the number of families called Tarry who lived there, where there were several old thatched cottages, later demolished. The Churches lived in one along the path beyond Kings Farm cottages, which lead to the hollow way and footpath out into the field.

The father of the Church brothers was James. Parish Records show he was born in 1861 to Elizabeth Symonds a single woman from East Hanney. In 1862 she married Robert Church (probably James's father), a labourer from East Hanney and James took his surname.

In 1888 James Church, aged 27, married Sarah Higgs, aged 23, also from East Hanney. Their eldest son, also James, had been born in 1886 to Sarah under the name Simmonds, but census returns and Army records show him taking the name Church later.

In 1888 Charles William was born, in 1890 Albert Leonard. 1891 Frank. 1893 Arthur. 1895 Maurice. In 1898 George was born and died at six days old. Parish records show that in 1902 Sarah Church, aged 37, was buried together with twins, John aged 8 hours old and Jane 5 hours old. This left James to bring up six boys.

The 1901 census shows that the eldest two boys James (14) and Charles (12) were already listed as agricultural labourers.

In 1908 James Church Snr. married, under the name Simmonds, a widow Emmeline Elizabeth Wilde, who already had grown up children.

The 1911 census shows James aged 52 as a farm labourer, Emmeline 57 his wife, Charles at 22 was now a builder/masoner, Arthur 17 a carter on a farm and Maurice 15, a worker in the stables on a farm. There is no mention of the eldest son James, but searching Army records shows that he enlisted in the Army in Abingdon some time between the 1901 and 1911 census. He was then a private in the 2nd Battalion Royal Berks Reg. serving in India. Frank is also missing from the census, but as no record can be found he may just

have been absent for the night.

Five of the six Church brothers served in the war, but only Charles returned (he is on the group photograph). It is not known if Frank went to war as, not surprisingly, having lost four brothers he never spoke about that time to his family.

Emmeline Church died in 1934 aged 80. Frank married Alice in 1936. James Church Snr. died in November 1936 aged 75, having been deeply distressed over the demolition of his cottage earlier that year. He lived with Frank and his wife on East Hanney Green and lived to see the birth of his only grandson.

Charles married in 1922 Annie Roberts a widow (formally Tarry) and later moved away.