

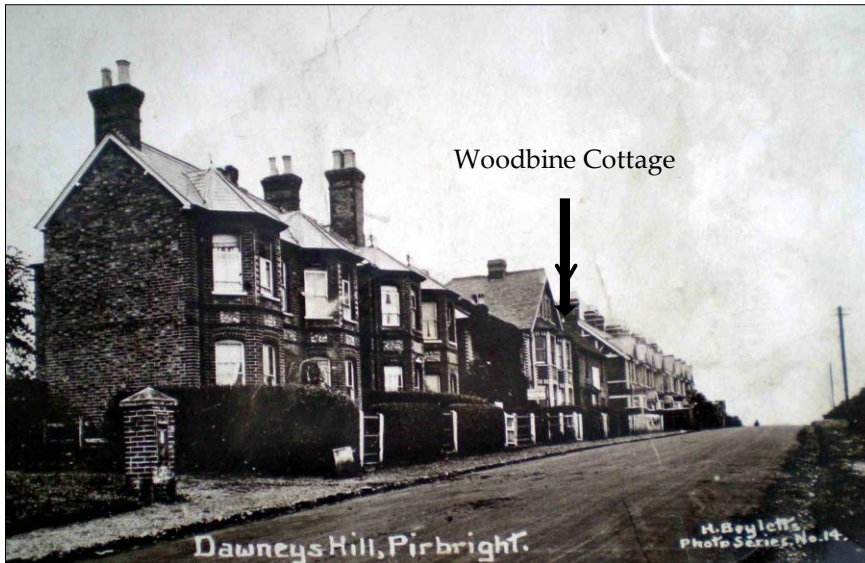
RICHARD CHARLES STEVENS

Dvr. 686936 Royal Field Artillery

Died 20th July 1919, buried Pirbright Churchyard, age 31

As a child born into a blacksmith's family in a quiet country village, Richard could never have envisaged that he would, later in life, be taking part in an appalling war that would change the world forever.

Not that his childhood would have been easy. His mother, Susannah died in 1901, when he was only twelve years old. Father Arthur Charles Stevens was a shoeing smith at what was then Woodbine Cottage, now Wayside, on Dawney Hill. With eight children to bring up, the youngest only three, it was hardly surprising that the following year he would remarry, to Lizzie Davis, a widow with three children of her own, but two years later he too was dead, leaving her with what must have



been a mighty struggle to bring them all up. At the time, with the exception of the oldest, Richard Charles, all the children were still at school, so she took in a 30 year-old lodger, John Daborn.

In the 1911 census it was a complicated family living at Woodbine Cottage. Widow Lizzie Stevens, deaf John Daborn (whom she would marry in 1912) and eight children from three fathers and two mothers. Three of those children would be dead as a result of the Great War; Arthur Jack Stevens, his older brother Richard Charles and half-brother Frederick Davis in July 1917.

Richard Charles Stevens signed on at Woking on November 29th 1915, aged 27 and was called up under the Derby Scheme in March the next year. A baker, shorter but stockier than his brother, at 5ft 2ins with a 38in chest, he had a ruddy complexion and dark brown hair and eyes. He became a driver in the Royal Field Artillery, went to France for a year in 1917, was sent home sick and discharged in August 1918. Whatever illness he suffered, he lingered on until he died in 1919. Buried on July 24th, his is the only War Grave in Pirbright churchyard, not far from Stanley's grave.

