**Harold Frederick Birch**

Harold Frederick Birch, born in Bushey in about 1894, was the son of William and Elizabeth Birch. He was the second of four children and at the time of the 1901 census, when he was six, he was living with his family at 50, Wiggenhall Road, Watford. His father was a store keeper. When Harold left school he was employed as a railway clerk.

On 2 March 1916, as the age of 22, he enlisted as Private 220856 with the Royal Army Service Corps. He was promoted to Lance Corporal and his period of service amounted to 2 years and 250 days. He served with the Indian Expeditionary Force from 1918 to 1919 and on 25 July 1919 he became seriously ill with influenza. ‘His temperature continued to be 102 – 104 degrees throughout his illness and he was very restless and gradually became unconscious. He died at 11.10 hours on 11 August 1919 of influenza and from exhaustion, accelerated by great heat of weather’. He was 25. The report stated, ‘He died of disease contracted on and attributable to military service’. He was buried at the Basra War Cemetery. He is commemorated on the memorial plaque at the Bushey Baptist Church.

