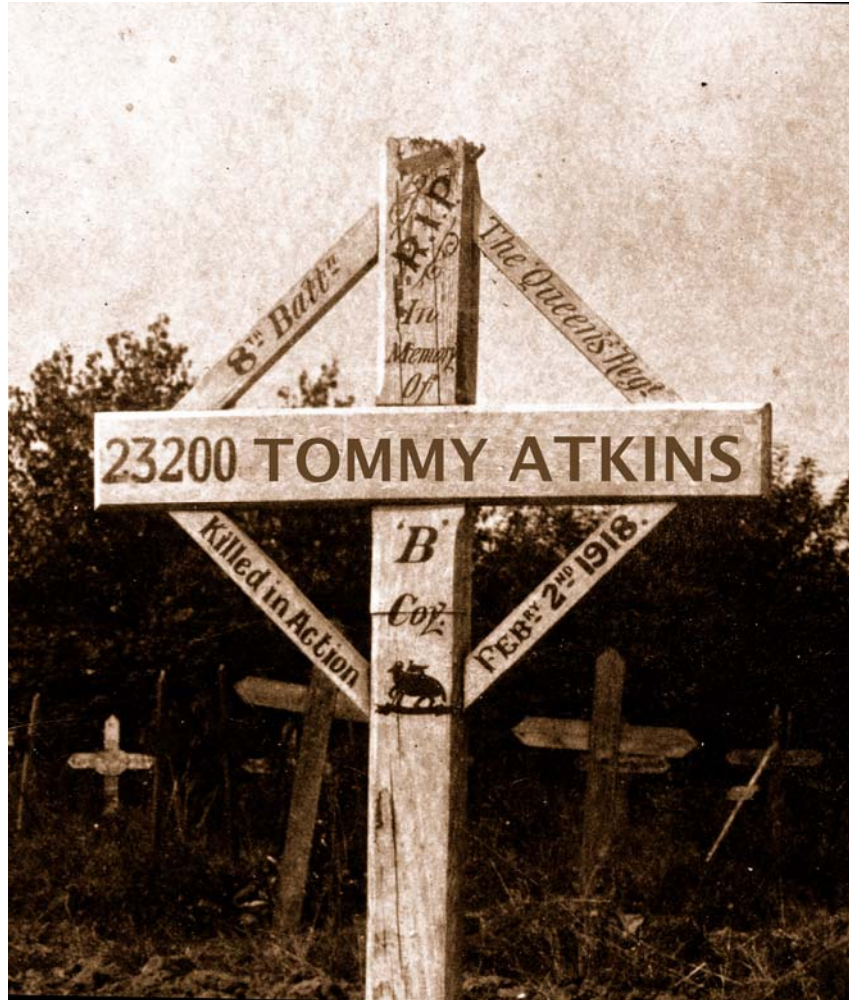


TOMMY, TOMMY ATKINS



The story of one soldier – and many

display by

The Dover War Memorial Project

www.doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk tel: 07876 240701

“Thomas Eaves is absent today, taking the scholarship exams.”

No. 1406	1885	July	26 th	Alfred Thomas	Alfred Oliver & Cordelia	Eaves	Mill Road Deal	Porter Makers
No. 1407								

Alfred Thomas Eaves (“Tommy”) was born on 3 June 1885 and christened at St Leonard’s church, Deal, on 26 July. Of eight children born to the family only three survived infancy.

Alfred O. Eaves	Head	1m	5	28	Minister of Labour
Cordelia D.	Wife	1m			
Alfred T. D.	Son		5		Scholar
Harry D.	D.		3		D.
Arthur G. D.	Daughter				

In 1892 Tommy went to Deal Parochial School. He became a pupil-teacher there in 1901, whilst training at the Boys’ County (now Grammar) School in Dover.

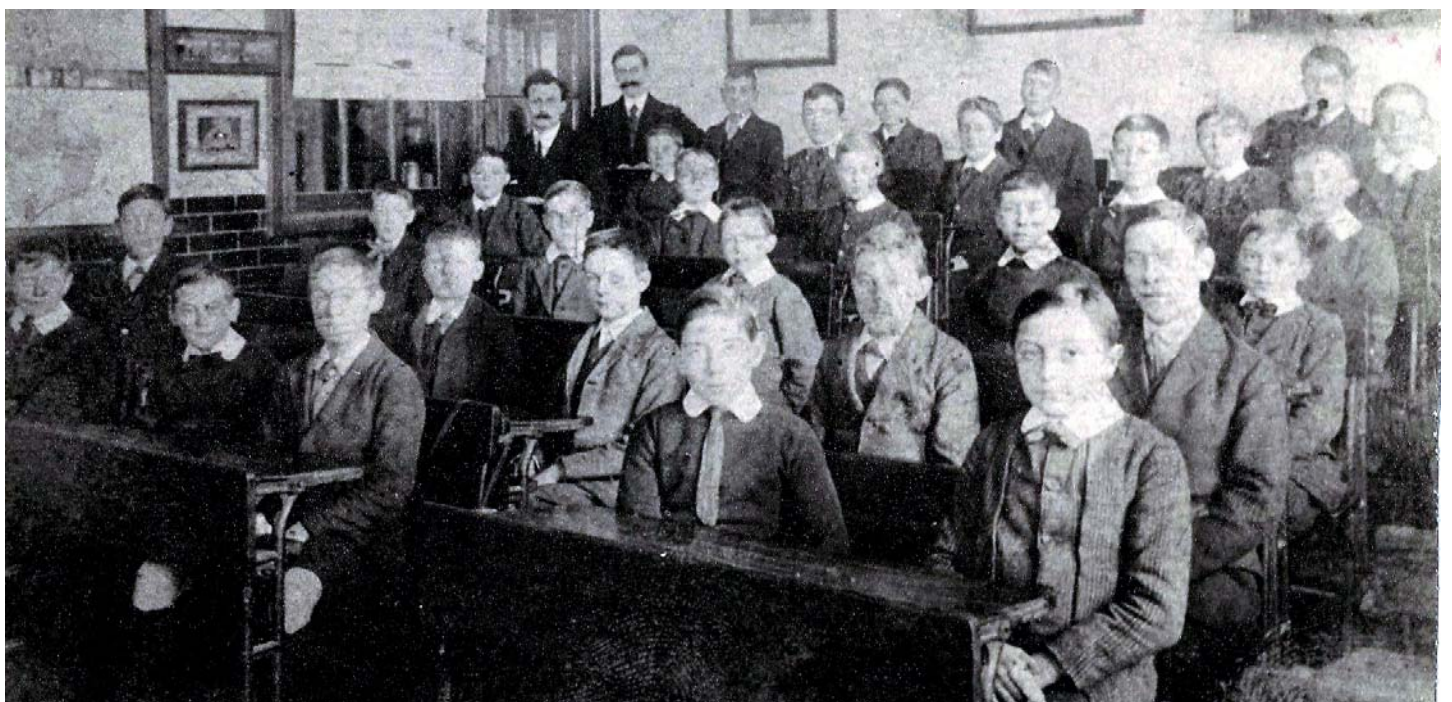


Tommy qualified at Battersea College in 1907, and in 1908 became a master at St Martin’s School, Dover, above.

“For he’s a jolly good fellow!”



Tommy (3rd from right, back row) was a keen sportsman and helped St Martin's School boys to win many trophies. St Martin's Scouts also won the Emden trophy, centre. The pupils spontaneously sang “For he’s a jolly good fellow” in Tommy's honour.



“I love you, my dear little wife.”



On 2 June 1914 Tommy married Daisy Love. They'd met when Tommy was 12. In his 1904 poem "The Rocky Path of True Love" Tommy recalled wryly:

*“Dear sweetheart, darling of my life, my pride and only joy,
Can you remember all the strife we had when girl and
boy?”*

Just over two years after their marriage, Daisy was a widow. Tommy may have had a premonition. In his last letter from the Front to Daisy he wrote:

*“I love you, my dear little wife, and hope that you will not
get married again in case you are not well treated. May all
your future days be happy is my earnest wish.”*

“Mr Eaves, under your able guidance the Dover Scouts have been most useful to their country.”



Scouts performed many duties during the Great War, from hospital orderly to coastwatcher. Tommy founded 3rd Dover (St Martin's) Scouts in 1908, and was District Scoutmaster.



“I only trust that I shall do well in all that I am required to do.”

Tommy gained a commission in the Royal East Surrey Regiment at Christmas 1914.

He was killed on the Somme on 3 October 1916. Regardless of his own danger, Tommy had been urging his men to dig for cover when he was struck by a shell.

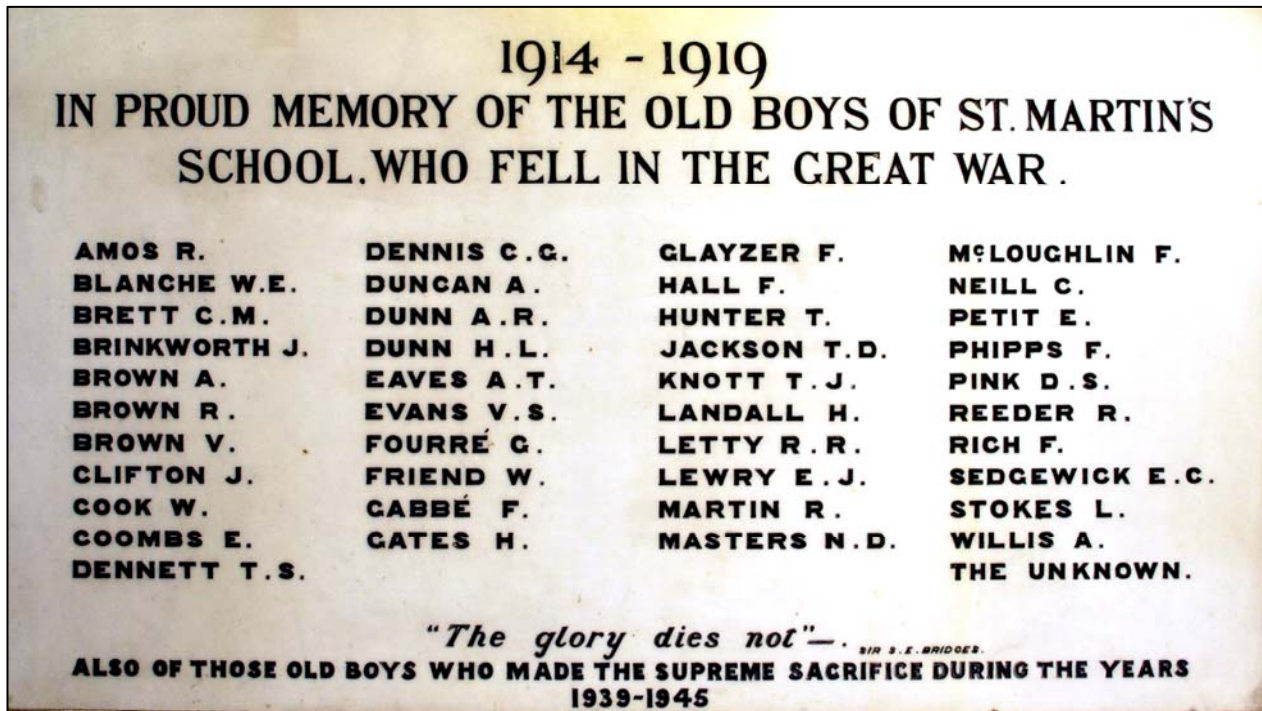
Daisy, his wife, had been teaching in Tommy's place at St Martin's. She remained at the school and never remarried.



At the front of the book of poems Tommy had written for Daisy, his dedication prophetically reads;

***“Words from my lips your hands shall write,
Then in the days to come
Those words themselves will cheer your sight,
Your comfort they’ll become.”***

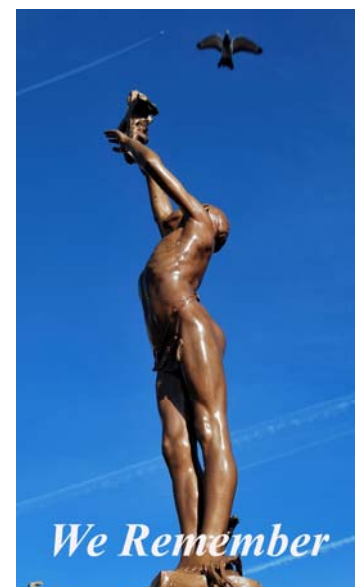
“Do not forget me too soon.”



Tommy is commemorated on school and town memorials in Deal and Dover, and on the memorial at Battersea College. Every year St Martin's Old Boys would drink a toast in his memory. Eaves Road, Dover, and the Scout hut there, Eaves Hall, are both named after Tommy.

A Tommy is a British soldier, and Tommy Eaves' story is just one amongst thousands of Tommies' stories. In 1894 a popular music hall song had the chorus:

***"Oh! Tommy, Tommy Atkins,
You're a "good 'un" heart and hand,
You're a credit to your calling
And to all your native land,
May your luck be never failing,
May your love be ever true,
God bless you, Tommy Atkins
Here's your Country's love to you!"***



Captions for Artefacts

Tommy's Diaries

Tommy Eaves left two diaries. One contains illustrations drawn by colleagues, family, and friends between 1906 and 1915 - the period when he was training to be a teacher and then joined the colours. The picture on the left was drawn by his sister, Doris, in December 1907.

Tommy's Diaries

Tommy Eaves left two diaries. One contains Tommy's poems, and is dedicated to his "Old Dutch" - his beloved wife, Daisy. He wrote the poems between 1904 and 1907, when the couple were courting. The illustration was drawn in 1906 by Bertram Williams, a fellow student of Tommy's at Battersea.

Postscript



Daisy's brother, Lewis Herbert Love, was killed on the Somme on 23 March 1918. Like Tommy, his body was never found.

Tommy and Daisy had no children. Until her death in 1971 Daisy retained her connection with her boys at St

Martin's, welcomed as a member of the Old Boys' Association. Their badge is above.

Tommy's brother, Harry, survived the Great War. In 1917 he and his wife had a son, whom they named after his Uncle Tommy. Thomas Eaves died in Dover in 1981.

“Tommy, Tommy Atkins”

A story of one soldier – and many

Photo Credits

Tommy Eaves archive – St Martin’s Primary School

Lt Tommy Eaves – The Dover Express

Tommy Atkins cross – courtesy Colin Ackehurst, edited by M S-Knight

Baptism and census (details) – FindMyPast.com

All other photographs – Simon John Chambers

Research Credits

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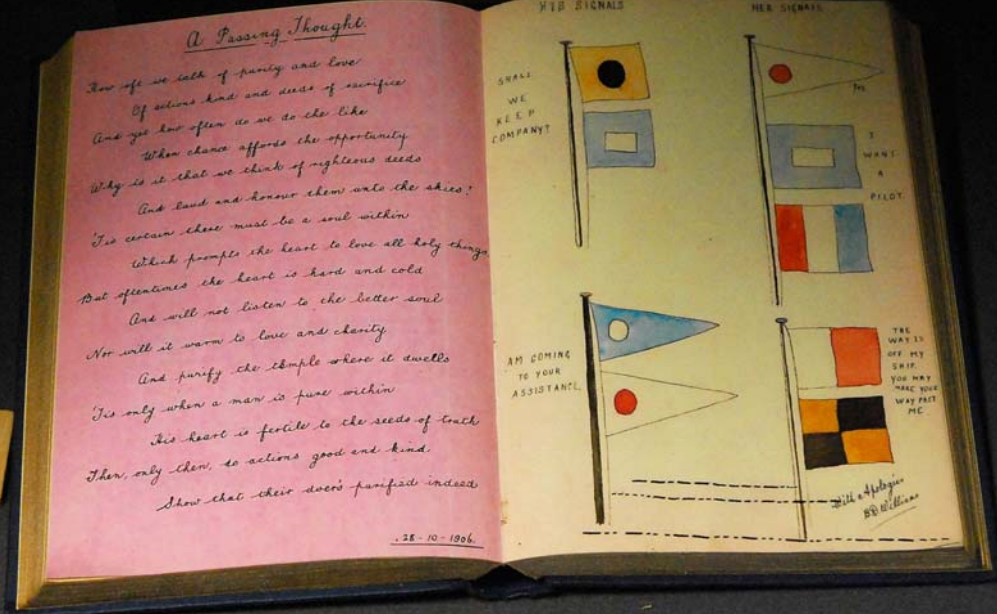
Marilyn Stephenson-Knight

Simon John Chambers

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