Edwin Billings
1846 - 14th February 1949

Edwin Billings was born in 1846 in West Hoathly his parents were William Billings and Mary Ann Payne. He married Margaret Wickham in 1865 in the Uckfield District, they set up home and by 1871 were living in Birchgrove, in the parish of West Hoathly. It seems the family moved about quite a lot as they had 3 children, Jane Ann born 20th April 1866, in Fletching, Mary born in 1867 in Maresfield and Charles born in 1870 in West Hoathly.

The 1881 census records the family still living in Birchgrove, but by 1891 they had moved to Twyford Cottage, in the parish of East Grinstead. 1901 records show them at Ryes Farm, Birchgrove, and Edwin's occupation is stated as a Farmer.

In 1911 Edwin and Margaret were living in Chapel Cottage, Chelwood Gate. The house had 4 rooms. Edwin's occupation was a general laborer / gardener. Edwin died 14th February 1929, at Forest View, Chelwood Gate. He left £161.17s. 1d in his Will.

Edwin and Margaret's son Charles married Mahalia/Amelia Francis in July 1900 and they also had 3 children. The 1901 census records Charles' wife as Mahalia then this is crossed out and Amelia written in. Later records state her name as Mahalia. The 1939 register records Mahalia Billings as a widow living at 33, High Street, Chesterton, Cambridge, her daughter Winnifred is on the electoral register at 33, High Street, Cambridgeshire in 1945. She was born 1903 and died unmarried in Coventry, on 9th January 1995. Her place of death is recorded as Abbey House, Abbey Park, Humber Road, Coventry. She left in excess of £12,500 in her Will.

Charles and Mahalia's son Herbert Charles Billings was 3 months old in 1901 and they were living with Edwin and Margaret at Ryes Farm. Sadly, Charles died on 10th October 1918, so close to the end of WW1. He had been serving in the Military Police as a Lance Corporal. His service number was P/13667. It is unclear whether he died at sea or at home, as some records on family trees available online state "at sea" but the British Army records state he died at home. Charles would have been entitled to The British War Medal and The Victory Medal. His next of kin, his wife Mahalia, was given a war gratuity and would have been sent a Death Plaque. Over one million of these were issued, but some families refused to accept them, feeling it was an insult to their loved ones. Mahalia died aged 64 in July 1943 in Cambridgeshire.

Charles and Mahalia's third child Edwin Ronald born in 1909 and died in 1987.

In 1911 Charles and Mahalia were living with their children in Chelwood Gate in a house with 4 rooms. They had two boarders Harry Richardson, and Sidney Billington, who were both grooms. Sidney came from Northampton. It must have been a bit cramped.

Edwin and Margaret Billings are buried at Danehill Cemetery

Margaret Billings (nee Wickham)
July 1846 - 24th September 1923

Margaret was born in Maresfield, Sussex, in July 1846 her parents her parents were John Wickham 1800-1872 and Jane Burley 1808-?

Margret was one of nine children. In 1861 she was recorded as a boarder living with Charles and Ellen Page in Lampool Lane, Maresfield. She was 14 years old at the time and although her occupation is not listed, it is likely she was in service.

Margaret died 24th September 1923 at Chapel Cottage, Chelwood Gate. She left £187. 10s. 8d in her Will to her husband Edwin Billings.

Charles Billings
3 September 1870 - 10 October 1918

Charles Billings was born on 3rd September 1870. He was the son of Edwin & Margaret Billings of Chapel Cottage, Chelwood Gate.

He was married, Mahalia, who at the time of his death was living at 112 Stanford Avenue, Brighton. He also had three children, Charles, Winifred and Edwin.

Charles was an Acting Lance Corporal in the Corps of Military Foot Police, P/13667. Formerly in Royal Sussex Regiment 3548.

The Book of Remembrance states that he was drowned on the Leinster. He was one of the 145 service personnel lost on the "Leinster" who were buried in Ireland. A.J.P. Taylor in his book "*The First World War - an Illustrated History*" [2] states "on 12th October (1918) a German submarine sunk the "Leinster", a ship running between England & Ireland, 450 passengers were drowned, some of them American." - He goes on to say that this incident caused a delay in the Armistice negotiations.

He died on 10th October 1918, aged 48. He is buried at Grangemorgan Military Cemetery, County Dublin, Republic of Ireland, CE. New Plot. 691.

Charles Billings is remembered on the war memorial in Danehill

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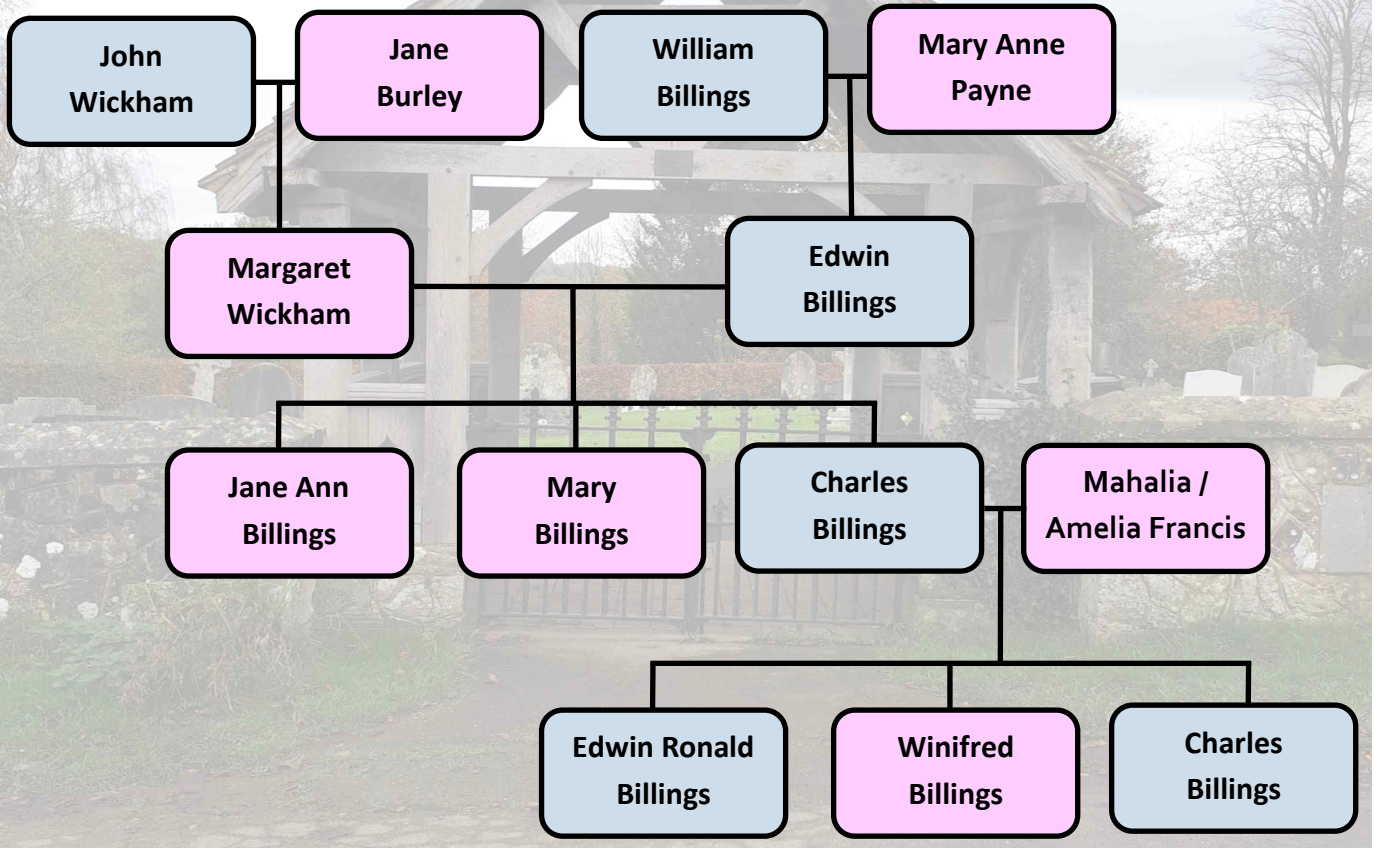

If you have any more information about this family that you believe would be of interest please contact the Danehill Parish Historical Society dphs@outlook.com. We'd love to hear from you

Danehill Parish Historical Society