

Chaddesden Stories

Albert John Fell was a private in the 11th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment). He was born in 1895 in Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire. In 1911 Albert was living with his parents, his brothers Edward and Charles and sister Elizabeth. His father was a cemetery labourer, and Albert was a bobbin threader for a lace manufacturer.

On 29th July 1916, the 11th (Service) Battalion, Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regiment), part of the 70th Brigade, 23rd Division, was heavily involved in the Battle of the Somme, following their catastrophic losses at Ovillers on July 1st. They were experiencing intense fighting, with some personnel reported killed or mortally wounded around this date. Albert was one of those who fell on 29th July 1916 and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

Arthur Fletcher was a private in the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards. He was born in Chaddesden, Derbyshire. In 1911 he was living with his parents in Chaddesden and was working as a coal mine pony driver. His father was a farm waggoner.

He enlisted in Derby in the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards. He headed to France on 26th July 1915. He was killed in action between 14th and 17th September 1916. He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

Bert M Hall was a private in the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards. He was born in Killamarsh, Derbyshire in 1894. At the outbreak of the First World War, he enlisted in Derby in the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards.

On 25 September 1916, the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards attacked in the Somme sector as part of the Battle of Morval, advancing toward the 1st Objective despite heavy machine-gun fire and suffering high casualties. The unit was involved in intense fighting, with two companies reaching their target, though the left flank was left exposed, leading to significant losses. Bert was killed in action on 25th September 1916 commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

Edwin Whiting was a private in the Derbyshire Yeomanry (Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line). He was born in Long Whatton, Leicestershire in 1888. In 1901 Edwin, at the age of thirteen was working as a servant for Joseph and Sarah Tansley at 32 Glebe Farm, Loughborough.

In 1911 he was living as a boarder with Mary Elizabeth Aldridge in Normanton-on-Soar. He was working as a groom.

At the outbreak of the First World War Edwin enlisted in the Derbyshire Yeomanry. They sailed for Egypt in April 1915, then deployed dismounted to Suvla Bay, Gallipoli. In August 1915 they were involved in heavy fighting at Chocolate Hill and Scimitar Hill, suffering significant casualties. The Battle of Scimitar Hill on 21st August 1915 was a disastrous, failed Allied offensive marking the final, costly attempt to break out of the Suvla Bay beachhead. British forces, including the 11th and 29th Divisions, suffered roughly 5,000 casualties against entrenched Ottoman troops in a battle marked by intense, fatal scrub fires. He was killed on 21st August 1915 in Gallipoli and is remembered on the Helles Memorial.

George Thomas Mills was a private in the 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. He was born in Chaddesden, Derbyshire in 1893 and was baptised on 7th May 1893 at St Mary's Church, Chaddesden. He was the son of Frank and Catherine Alice Mills.

In 1911 he was living with his parents, Samuel, Ralph and Frank and sisters Edith and Mabel at 98 Nottingham Road, Derby. His father was a carter, and George was a plain net threader.

At the outbreak of the war, he enlisted in the 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. In the middle of August 1916, the battalion found itself near Montauban and were moving up to Delville Wood. Whilst in the trenches there they suffered 15 casualties from 'friendly fire' and were forced to communicate with the artillery observation post that the shelling was falling well short of the enemy trenches. It is noted in the war diary that the artillery did not believe this to be the case. Furthermore, the battalion advanced towards to enemy trenches still being hit by their own artillery. Over the coming days the battalion did manage to achieve a number of their objectives and were able to take several German prisoners. On 18th August, however the left flank was overrun by German forces. What followed was a week of heavy fighting with a brief period of rest. George was killed on 23rd August 1916 near Delville Wood. He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

Henry Cecil Wilmot was a Private in the 1st/7th Worcestershire Regiment. Henry was born on 13th June 1890. He was the son of Rev. Francis E. W. and Katherine Wilmot. He was educated at the School House in the Lower School in January 1902, and left from the Sixth Form in 1909, to take up a post in India on a sugar and indigo estate. He was a fine forward in the football field and represented the school at cricket. He subsequently migrated to Canada, where he was doing well in farming when the call to serve came. He returned to England and enlisted in the Worcester Regiment. He soon went to France and their contracted lung disease in the trenches, which after a lingering illness terminated fatally in a London hospital, on 23rd July 1917. His reserved nature covered a warm heart, and he bore his long illness with singular fortitude and patience. He was buried in Yatton Churchyard, Herefordshire.

His brothers Thomas Norbury Wilmot MC and Robert Coningsby Wilmot also fell.

John Oldershaw was a Sergeant in the Army Cyclist Corps (North Midland DCC and XVIIth CCB). John was born in Chaddesden, Derbyshire in 1892 and was the son of Herbert and Agnes Julia Ann Oldershaw.

In 1911 he was living with his parents at Cherry Tree Hill, Chaddesden, Derbyshire. His father was a farmer, and John was working as a county council clerk.

He enlisted in the Army Cyclist Corps and disembarked for service in France on 28th February 1915. He died of accidental injuries on 17th December 1918 and was buried in Awoingt British Cemetery.

John William Davidson was a private in the 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regiment). He was born in Chaddesden, Derbyshire in 1893 and was the son of John Edward and Mary Ann Davidson of Church House, Chaddesden.

In 1911 John was a domestic footman in the house of Ernard Lane, Dean of Rochester Cathedral at The Deanery, Rochester, Kent.

He enlisted in the 1st Battalion Notts & Derby Regiment in Derby on 26th August 1914. Disembarked for the Western Front on 11th December 1914 and was killed in action on 9th May 1915. He was commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial. On 9th May the 1st Battalion were involved in the Battle of Aubers Ridge which began at five in the morning with a bombardment of the German lines, though reports show that many shells fell short of their target. Shortly after British troops begin to march into No Man's Land and advance towards the German trenches. Just after six o'clock the 1st Battalion Notts & Derby regiment supported the advance, but almost immediately face heavy fire and suffered heavy losses. More than 11,000 British casualties were sustained on 9th May, the vast majority within yards of their own front-line trench. John was one of those to fall in this attack.

Richard Harvey Pell was a Lance Corporal in the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards. He was born in Ashley, Northamptonshire in 1888 and was baptised on 11th March at Ashley Parish Church. He was the son of Richard and Annie Pell. His father was a station master.

In 1911 Richard was living at the home of Sarah Ellen Brocklehurst at Fairy Bank, Hayfield, Derbyshire. He was a police constable at the time.

During World War One he enlisted in the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards in Derby and disembarked for service on 15th August 1915. He died of wounds in No.3 Western General Hospital, Cardiff, Glamorganshire on 28th September 1916. He was buried in Cardiff (Cathays) Cemetery.

Robert Coningsby Wilmot was a Captain in the 10th (Service) Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regiment). He was born 14th July 1886 in Chaddesden, Derbyshire and was baptised at St Mary's Church, Chaddesden on 1st August 1886. He was the son of Rev. Francis Edmund William and Katherine Wilmot. He was educated Worcester Cathedral King's School and became a solicitor.

In 1911 Robert was at the Connaught Club, 75 -79 Seymour Street, Paddington, London.

In August 1914 he joined the Public Schools (UPS) Battalion and was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in 1915. He served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from July 1915 and was seriously wounded the following month and invalided home. He returned to France in 1916 and was killed in action near Poelcappelle on 29th October 1917. He was buried in the Ruisseau Farm Cemetery. His brothers Henry Cecil Wilmot and Thomas Norbury Wilmot MC also fell.

Thomas Norbury Wilmot was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment. Thomas (known as Tom) was born on 18th March 1896 in Burbage Vicarage, Buxton, Derbyshire. He was the son of Rev. Francis E. W. and Katherine Wilmot (Norbury). He was one of eleven children. Although born in Derbyshire Tom grew up in Herefordshire and Worcestershire where his mother's family lived on the Norbury Estate. His father had moved to St. Mary's Church in Monnington-on-Wye. In September 1905, Tom attended the King's School in Worcester where he excelled at games and was Captain of his school house. He remained there until 1910 before moving on to Hereford Cathedral School. He loved cricket, football, tennis and rowing. In between schooling he would visit the Norbury family estate. It is possible he met Edward Elgar the composer here as his Aunt Winifred was one of Elgar's muses and was immortalised in Elgar's Enigma Variations. Although Tom had a pretty idyllic childhood, he sadly lost his father on the 12th January 1911. He was just 61 years old. He was buried in St Mary's Churchyard, Monnington-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

After leaving school Tom emigrated to Canada where he took up farming. He wrote to his mother and proudly told her "I have been ploughing solidly for the last two weeks with five horses".

On the outbreak of World War One, Tom immediately returned to England to fight for his country. He enlisted as a Private in the Royal Fusiliers in October 1914 before being selected to attend the Military Training Academy at Sandhurst. In July 1915 he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant and joined the 2nd Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment at the front.

In October 1915, Tom fought in the battle of Loos. On the 1st/2nd July 1916 in the trenches near Bethune the Battalion launched a night attack on Auchy. Following the explosion of two mines and intense artillery bombardment two companies of the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment dashed forward across 'No Man's Land'. The German's first and second lines were overrun and then systematically the enemy's dugouts and mine shafts were bombed out and destroyed. The enemy fought stubbornly and made several attempts to retake the trench, by bombing either flank. Thomas

distinguished himself with great gallantry during the bombing fight. For his actions Tom was awarded the Military Cross.

The Military Cross citation stated:

'For Conspicuous Gallantry'

By his dash in securing and tenaciously holding a post in the enemy's position he contributed largely to the success of the operations.

In 1916 on the Somme, the Battalion made two assaults on High Wood. On the 23rd August he wrote a short letter to his mother in which he told her "He was exhausted and would be glad to get a rest. No time to write. Your loving son, Tom." It was to be his last letter home.

The next day the Battalion attacked Delville Wood. During this attack, Tom was severely wounded in the abdomen. He was taken to No 36, Casualty Clearing Station at Heilly where he later died.

A month later his mother received a letter from a casualty nurse telling her that:

"Tom had been severely wounded in the abdomen. He was operated on, but his wound was too great to give any chance of survival. Lt Wilmot was very comfortable all day. He slept on and off and seemed to be in no pain, only very thirsty at times. Towards the evening, he grew weaker and asked me to write home and let you all know that he was here and sent his love to everyone. He almost immediately fell asleep for an hour and passed away at 8pm."

He died on 25th August 1916 at No.36 Casualty Clearing Station, Thiepval and was buried in Heilly Station Cemetery, Heilly, France.

His Colonel wrote:

"He was a splendid officer, loved by all; he fell within a few yards of the objective. The attack was a huge success in no small way due to him. He would have been recommended for the Military Medal had he come through. His influence was always good and manly."

His brothers Henry Cecil and Robert Coningsby Wilmot also died fighting in the First World War. His brother Laurence (Larry) Mead Wilmot joined the 21st Royal Fusiliers (Public Schools Battalion) and then the Herefordshire Regiment. He was the youngest of the brothers. He had lied about his age to join the Army and was shot through both kneecaps during the Battle of the Somme. Larry recovered from his wounds and survived the war. He died in 1971.

Wallace Flixon was a gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery/Royal Field Artillery. He was born in Chaddesden, Derbyshire on 22 December 1890 and was the son of Charles and Catherine Flixon (Orme). His mother was born in Derby. In 1906 Wallace was working in the telegraph department of the Midland Railway. In 1907 he was based in Derby and in 1908/09 he was based at Beighton Junction, Derbyshire.

In 1911 he was an asylum attendant working in Narborough, Derbyshire.

He died when he was a prisoner of war on 19th November 1918 at Niederzwehren, Stadtkreis Kassel, Hessen, Germany of inflammation of the lungs and was buried in Friedhof Niederzwehren cemetery. He is also remembered on the family gravestone at Nottingham Road Cemetery, Chaddesden.

William Henry Downing was a private in the 15th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby Regiment) (formerly 2nd Battalion Notts & Derby Regiment). He was born in Derby and was the son of Richard and Rose Isabell Downing. In 1911 he was working as a farm servant in the house of Alexander Ogden, a colliery commercial traveller at The Yews, Stanley, Derbyshire.

William enlisted in Derby in the 15th Battalion Notts & Derby regiment on 11th August 1914. He stated that he was employed as a fitter's labourer at this time. He disembarked for service in France on 11th November 1914. On 17th June 1916 William was injured whilst taking part in a training exercise using live bombs when he was hit by fragments when he was standing behind an elevation of earth. William was killed in action on 25th August 1917. He was buried in the Unicorn Cemetery, Vendhuile.



Albert John Fell



Thomas Norbury Wilmot



Wallace Flixon

