

For King and Country

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At this time of the year with Remembrance Sunday to come the thoughts of many turn to those who perished in both World Wars, particularly of men from Hertford.

Perhaps not many in the parish are aware that thirteen service men from both wars are interred in our churchyard. All are listed in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, some have the WGC headstone with the appropriate regimental badge and some stones have been provided by their family.

Their names along with those buried abroad near where they fell also appear on memorials in All Saints Church and in Parliament Square but one casualty is also named on a family memorial in our Churchyard and his story must be so like that of so many of the young men sacrificed in these Wars.

His name, Cecil Gledhill, caught my attention as it did not match the family name on the headstone which is for Ellen Farrow, died 1909 but the headstone also records Cecil's name and that he gave his life for his King and Country at Thorigney France on the 2nd October 1918.

The 1911 census shows that Cecil was adopted and living with the family of William and Clara Farrow in Brickendon Lane, Ellen had been their daughter. The census uses the term adopted although the relevant parliamentary act formalising adoption did not come until later in 1926.



(c) www.workhouses.org.uk

Research shows that Cecil was born in St. Saviour's Workhouse Southwark on 1st December 1898 to Minnie Gledhill and baptised two days later in St. George the Martyr Southwark, clearly deserted by his father Cecil Redmond Gledhill who was later back living with his parents. In 1901 Cecil, aged 2, was being fostered in West Hanningfield Essex by Mary Pinnock; his mother Minnie becoming a domestic servant living in Aldbury. By 1911 Cecil, now 12, was living in Jenningsbury Cottages, with the Farrow family.

It is interesting to conjecture that Cecil attended Faudel Phillips School, the successor in the early 1900s to All Saints Infants School.

Cecil had enlisted in Hertford in the Royal Field Artillery and was posted to France in November 1915. He was a Driver most likely of a horse team and reached the rank of Sergeant, serving in D Battery 298th Brigade RFA.

He was killed in action, near Thorigney North of St. Quentin on 2 October 1918 during a successful attack by the British on the Hindenburg Line and just seven weeks before the end of hostilities and just two months before he would have reached 20 years of age. If ever there was a wasted life this was it.



He is interred in the Vadencourt British Cemetery in Northern France. R.I.P. Cecil