

The Chedham Family.

It was Thomas Chedham, born in Ledbury, Herefordshire that arrived in Wellesbourne Mountford at some time between the births of his son Frederick in 1816 and daughter Eliza in 1820 to establish his Wheelwright business in Church Walk. Henry, the elder of Thomas's sons, also a wheelwright, worked initially with his fatherⁱ before opening his own business in Guy Street, Warwickⁱⁱ, returning to Wellesbourne around the 1850s.

Henry married Caroline Bustin, a local Wellesbourne girl in April 1837 and the couple produced eight children. Of their grandsons, either born or who lived in the village, four went on to don the Kings uniform for service in the Great War, the most notable being Christopher Chedham.

Christopher Charles Chedham.

Sergeant, No. G733, 8th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

Christopher Charles Chedham, born in Leamington Spa on the 15th October 1896 and baptised in the Wellesbourne Parish Church of St. Peter on the 11th January of the following year, was the eldest of two sons born to Henry's son Albert Chedham and his second wife Elizabeth (nee Hawkins). Albert, in the baptismal records of his sons, gave his occupation as a Joiner, but in the 1911 Census that of a Wheelwright.

Christopher attended the village school from the age of six and in the January of his last year the children of the school performed an operetta entitled the 'Rajah of Rajahpore' to a large audience of parents and villagers. As a sign of what was maybe to come Christopher took the part of Major General Bangs V.C and it was reported that he 'looked and acted the part with spirit'ⁱⁱⁱ. He completed his education on the 7th April 1910 and left the school with the intention of working for the Post Office as a Telegraph Boy. A year later however he was employed as a 'boy gardener' for an unrecorded gentleman. The family lived at the time in one of the Hammond's Cottages in Church Walk.

Immediately before the outbreak of the Great War Christopher worked as a Valet at Kibblestone Hall, Stone, Staffs for Mr. Copeland of the Spode-Copeland firm of bone china manufacturers.

On the 20th August 1914, he attested in Stoke on Trent, for military service and was posted to the 8th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, part of the 36th Brigade, 12th (Eastern) Division. Standing 5 feet 11 inches tall he would have clearly stood out from his peers of an average height of 5 feet 7 inches. By December he had been promoted to Lance Corporal but it wasn't until the 31st May 1915 that Christopher arrived in France. Four months later he was wounded at the Battle of Loos^{iv} and returned home in November with severe trench foot.

After several months rest he returned to France in April 1916 now with the rank of Corporal. The Division transferred to the Somme region in preparation for the major offensive timed to begin on the 1st July. Still only 19 years of age, on the seventh day of the battle he was again promoted, this time to the rank of Sergeant^v. Wounded again in early August he left France for the Whitchurch War Hospital near Cardiff for three weeks of treatment.

He returned to France during March 1917 but luck was still not on his side for on the 9th April, the first day of the Battle of Arras, he was again wounded by a machine gun bullet to the abdomen. After spending several hours in a disused trench he was carried off the battlefield and sent to Number 8 Casualty Clearing Station, Bailleul for an operation to remove the bullet from his large intestine. Christopher arrived back in England on 25th April with his military career now at a premature end. On the 5th October 1917 he was honourably discharged as no longer considered fit for war service. He returned home to Hammond Cottages, Wellesbourne and was accordingly awarded the Silver War Badge^{vi}.



The Silver War Badge

At the end of the hostilities Christopher received the 1914-1915 Star, the British War and Victory medals and the King's Certificate of Honorary Discharge. His name appears on the Wellesbourne Church of England Roll of Honour^{vii}.

In the early months of 1922 he married Kate Bradford also known as Kitty. From 1919 to 1926 Christopher, described as a butler or valet, appeared on the passenger manifests of a number of ships bound for or returning from the USA. After their marriage his wife also appeared on these lists and referred to as 'a lady's maid'.

The Leamington Spa Courier of the 28th September 1928 reported that on the seventeenth the couple, of the 'Barley Mow', Stockton, near Rugby, had been blessed with a daughter which they named Monica. Christopher was the Landlord of the public house and from 1932 to 1936 he occupied a similar position at 'The Wheatsheaf' in Tachbrook Rd, Leamington Spa and then from 1936 to 1942 at the 'Avenue Hotel', in Spencer Street^{viii}. In their later years Kitty and her husband lived at 7, Archery Rd. Leamington Spa but it was at 913, Warwick Rd, Solihull^{ix} that Christopher died on the 6th August 1966.

William Henry Chedham.

Private. No 134823, 3rd Labour Corps (Southern Command) previously no. 49394, 13th Devonshire Regiment.

William Henry Chedham, born in the latter part of 1880 in Wellesbourne, was the eldest of the four sons born to Henry's son, also named Henry, and his wife Hannah (nee Faulkner). Upon leaving the local Church of England school William, who lived with

his parents and siblings in the family home in Church Walk, followed his father into the family trade, that of a Wheelwright.

By 1916, there was a need to boost troop levels for the war effort and conscription was introduced. Appeals tribunals were also put in place and it was before one of these that William and his brother, Frederick Charles Chedham both appeared. The chairman stated that at least one of the brothers would have to join up and after joint discussion, although aged 35 and five years older than his brother, it was William that volunteered^x.

His occupation was described as a Traction Engine Driver when he attested on the 19th February 1916 and was immediately transferred to the army reserve before joining, in early April, the 17th battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment at Budbroke Barracks, Warwick. This battalion subsequently became the 92nd Training Reserve Battalion of the 22nd Reserve Brigade in September of that year. William had a further transfer at the end of December to the 13th Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment which on formation of the Labour Corps in January 1917 became the 3rd Labour Battalion, later designated Southern Command.

William remained at military bases in this country throughout the war even though his medical classification, A1, allowed for overseas service. Unlike his cousin Christopher, who was 6 feet tall, William stood only a quarter of an inch above the required minimum height for army service, that of five feet three inches. He was discharged on the 24th July 1919.



William's brother, **Frederick Charles Chedham** born on the 6th April 1885 in Wellesbourne, made a further tribunal appearance in June 1916^{xi} when the military authorities assented to his total exemption from military service, amended six months later on the condition that he joined the Volunteer Training Corps^{xii}. The cap worn by Frederick in the photograph is an indication the he had joined the Volunteers as required.

The youngest of Henry and Hannah's sons **Albert Chedham** born on the 12th November 1891 attended the Wellesbourne Church of England School and left in November 1905 to enter service. At the time of the first, of a series of appearances before a Military Appeals tribunal which began in October 1916 he was then employed as a Wheelwright by his father. Varying reasons were given as to why he should be excluded from military service, although he had been passed for garrison service abroad; defective vision, busily engaged, the only man who understood the tractor, injured hand etc. Eventually in July 1917 he was medically examined and rejected by the military^{xiii}. From the photograph, believed to be Albert, it appears that he also served as a member of the local Volunteer Training Corps. In 1927 he married Eveline Alice Hopkins, the brother of William Francis Hopkins who died in France on the 7th September 1916 and whose name appears on the Moreton Morrell War Memorial. Albert and Eveline lived at 49, Warwick Rd, Wellesbourne. They had 2



*(Believed to be)
 Albert Chedham*

children William and Betty. Albert died on the 9th July 1966, one month before his cousin Christopher.

Victor Ernest Chedham.

Private No, S1714, 11th Battalion Rifle Brigade.

Victor Chedham was the son of Henry's second eldest son John and his wife Mabel (nee Court). He was born on 22nd December 1892 in Wellesbourne and attended the village school, the records of which indicate that when he left, in July 1906, he was to become a 'Plough Boy' but by the time of the 1911 Census he worked as a milkman.

On the 3rd September 1914 Victor was one of a group of men from Wellesbourne who enthusiastically travelled to the recruiting office in Birmingham to register for military service. The group included Edwin Soden, William Findon and Herbert Loomes. Whereas they were posted to the 8th Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, Victor joined the 11th Battalion and arrived in Winchester on the 21st September.

Victor like his cousin William was short in stature, just meeting the designated minimum height of five feet three inches. On the 18th November 1914, following what would have been his initial training he was discharged as being medically unfit and subsequently granted the Silver War Badge^{xiv}.

It is known that after his discharge he worked as a bus driver and that it was reported that in October 1917, whilst overtaking a tractor on the Kenilworth Rd, Coventry, he knocked a cyclist off his bicycle and was fined £5 plus costs of one pound five shillings^{xv}.

Victor's name appears on the Wellesbourne Church of England School Roll of Honour (offered services but was rejected).

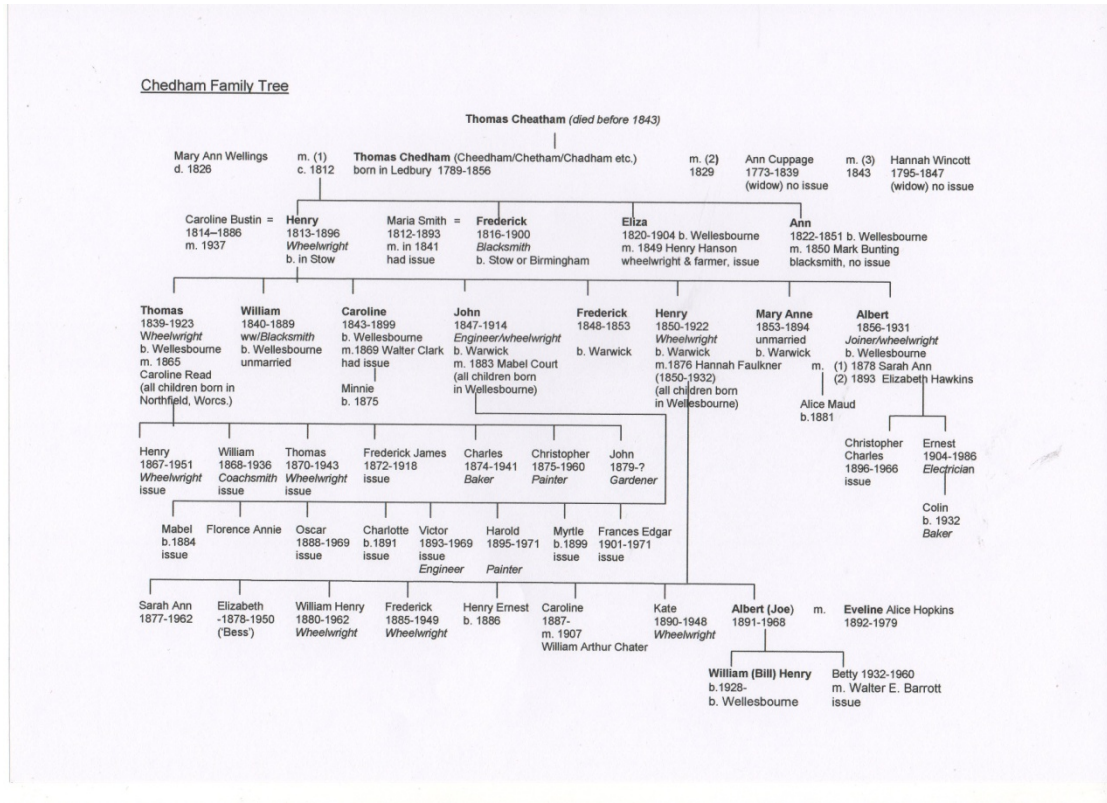
Harold Osbert Chedham,

Private, No 24555, 15th and 2/5th Battalions Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

On the 3rd February 1895 Harold Chedham was the third of the four sons born to John and Mabel Chedham. He attended both the infants and junior sections of the Church of England school in Wellesbourne before leaving in April 1908 and like his brother Victor, to work as a plough boy. He subsequently worked as a groom, living with his parents and siblings in Cherry Orchard.

Little information is available regarding Harold's military career. He did however volunteer for military service in the early days of the Great War but was initially rejected^{xvi}. Within the archives there is however a record of his medal entitlement at

the end of hostilities. From this information, with the award of only the Victory and British War Medals, it can be assumed that he was probably called up at some time after the introduction of conscription in 1916^{xvii}. He served in both the 15th and 2/5th Battalions of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. It is not known which Battalion Harold was with at the time, although both were serving on the Western Front when during September 1917 his mother received the news that he had been wounded^{xviii}. It later transpired that he had also been taken as a prisoner of war. At the end of hostilities he was released and returned home in time for Christmas 1918^{xix}.



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ⁱ Census 1841

ⁱⁱ Census 1851 and White's Directory 1850.

ⁱⁱⁱ Leamington Spa Courier 14/1/1910

^{iv} Stratford upon Avon Herald 8/12/1916

^v Stratford upon Avon Herald 8/12/1916.

^{vi} The sterling silver lapel badge was intended to be worn on civilian clothes. It had been the practice of some women to present white feathers to apparently able-bodied young men who were not wearing the King's uniform. The badge was to be worn on the right breast while in civilian dress but was forbidden to be worn on a military uniform.

^{vii} Compiled about November 1915

^{viii} Pubs of Royal Leamington Spa by Allan Jennings, Martin Ellis and Tom Lewin.

^{ix} Probate Records 1966

^x Stratford upon Avon Herald 17/3/1916

^{xi} Stratford upon Avon Herald 23/6/1916

^{xii} Stratford upon Avon Herald 19/1/1917

^{xiii} Stratford upon Avon Herald 27/7/1917.

^{xiv} (see vi)

^{xv} Warwick Advertiser 3/11/1917 &

^{xvi} Harold's name appears on the Wellesbourne school Roll of Honour as 'volunteered but not accepted'. This record can be dated to about Nov. 1915.

^{xvii} An award of the 1914-1915 Star would indicate that he had served at some time during these years

^{xviii} Stratford upon Avon Herald 28/9/1917.

^{xix} Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser 21/12/1918

Other sources: Service records for Christopher Chedham, William Chedham, Victor Chedham (via ancestry.com and Find my Past)

Wellesbourne School Records CR371/1, CR371/2, CR371/3, CR371/4. (Warwick RO)

The Long Long Trail (www.1914-1918.net)

Chedham Family Tree by courtesy of Michael Dane.