

THE COLDICOTT FAMILY

John Coldicott was a farm labourer who from Tysoe who moved to Ettington during the 1870s. In 1878 he married Eliza Petty and over the next 21 years they had eleven children, They were six boys and five girls, of which one girl died in childhood. Eliza died in 1899 giving birth to the last of the children or very shortly afterwards.

In 1901 John remarried. His second wife was Fanny Ashfield (nee Rouse) the widow of Thomas Ashfield. She had a boy and two girls from her first marriage, and she and John then produced two more, a girl and a boy, making a total of fifteen children altogether.

Of course they were not all at home together. When the 1901 census was taken three of the older 'children' were living and working outside the village. Hannah (Annie), the eldest daughter, was married and living in Smethwick. The eldest son, William, was a railway worker living in Nottinghamshire, George was living and working in Kenilworth and Rosetta was a kitchenmaid in Loxley. Nevertheless the census records that six Coldicott children and the three Ashfield children were still at home in the family's cottage in Banbury Road, opposite the tailor's shop.

Most of the others from John's first marriage also left over the following few years. William had moved to Kingston-on-Thames by 1904 and was joined there before 1911 by Ellen, Rosetta, John Henry, George and Thomas, the youngest child, who attended school in Kingston. Meanwhile Frederick had joined his sister Hannah and her family in Smethwick and Kate was a domestic servant living in Edgbaston.. This left only Arthur Victor at home from John's first marriage, the three Ashfields and the two youngest Coldicott additions, Laura and Harry.

At the outbreak of war the men of eligible age for military service were William, John Henry, George and Frederick Coldicott and George Ashfield. Arthur Victor was 17 and Thomas 15. Of these we know that John Henry and Frederick both served in the war and lost their lives. Frederick was killed in action in France in 1916, while John Henry survived until March 1919 and then died in Greece, four months after the end of the war. We can be certain as well that George Ashfield served as it is known he became a member of the British Legion after the war.

We have no record of the service of William or George Coldicott. Their two younger brothers were Arthur Victor, born in 1897 and Thomas born in 1899. Arthur received call-up papers in 1916 when working for Mr. Pratt at Rookery Farm. Mr. Pratt appealed at a tribunal hearing for him to be exempted, but this was granted for two months only. It is probable that Thomas would have been called up when he reached the age of 18.

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