

## THE HEMMINGS FAMILY

**George and Elizabeth Hemmings** came to Ettington from Idlicote between 1898 and 1901. They had a family of six when they arrived and two more children born afterwards completed a family of five girls and three boys. They lived in the vicinity of Kents Lane / Warwick Road (Station Road as it was) and George was a domestic gardener. By 1911 he had become a head gardener.

Two of the girls, **Sarah** and **Maud**, were married before the war. Sarah married **Frank Mills** in 1906 and had five children, the last shortly after the start of the war. Maud married **George Ashfield** in 1911 and their two daughters were born during the war.

The eldest two boys were **George** and **James**. When the war started they were aged 20 and 18 respectively and were both among the first batch of men to volunteer for military service by signing the "Roll of Honour" on the door of the church. It was not long before Frank Mills, a Boer War veteran, also re-joined the ranks.

Two more daughters were married in 1915 and 1917. **Kate's** husband was **Alfred Padbury** from Stratford and **Ellen Matilda** married the wheelwright **Algernon Keck** from Tredington. Both men also joined the army. Also we think, but cannot confirm, that George got married in 1917.

So over the course of the war George and Elizabeth had two sons and four sons-in-law serving in the military. Sadly two of them did not return.

Ellen's husband Algernon Keck must have returned to his regiment very shortly after their marriage, which was in the last quarter of 1917. He was killed in France on 7<sup>th</sup> December, fighting with the Worcestershire Regiment. Ellen was already pregnant and their daughter **Algy Iris Keck** was born on 29<sup>th</sup> December.

Then George and Elizabeth learned that their younger son James, a lance corporal in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, had been killed in action on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1918, only 2½ months before Armistice Day.

As if these two deaths were not enough, George and Elizabeth received a further blow on 12<sup>th</sup> November, the day after the war ended, with the death of their eldest daughter Sarah Mills at the age of 31.

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