

George and Mary Ann Nason were married in 1883 and had two sons and three daughters. They lived on the main road close to Short Lane and, from the age of 7, George worked for the Lowe family rising to be their coachman and head groom.

They became grandparents for the first time in 1909 when their daughter Lilian Francis, married the previous year to Frank Gillett, gave birth to her first son. She had a second in 1914 before the war started and a third followed in 1916. Their son Frederick George's wife had a son in 1912 from his marriage, Kate had a daughter, Dora, late in 1914, and Leonard and his wife Amy, married in 1915, had a son born in 1916 and a daughter in 1917-18. So by the start of the war they had three grandchildren and four more by the end.

Their elder son Frederick George enlisted for service in 1915 in the Bedfordshire Regiment, later transferring to the Dorset Regiment. He had left home before 1910 and gone to Kings Heath, Birmingham where he worked as a domestic gardener. He was married in 1910 in Hatfield, Hertfordshire to Mary Jane Vickers and after their son was born they moved to Hatfield where her parents lived. Nevertheless he kept in close contact with his own family. On 29th January 1917 he wrote from France to his sister Lilian who had been unwell. The following extract indicates his feelings for the family: "I expect by the time you get this I shall be up the line, so I will write to you again Dear and send you my address. So cheer up Dear and I hope when I come Home to come down and have a good time with you all ... Well Dear give my best love to the children and Frank and best love and wishes for your speedy recovery to better health. Best love Dear from your ever loving Brother, Fred"

Later that year George and Mary Ann received the devastating news that Fred had been killed in action on 16th August. Mary Ann's granddaughter recalled her grandmother telling her that on that very morning she was awoken by a voice calling at her front door. It was Fred's voice. She woke her husband and went to the door, but of course there was nobody there.

However, George and Mary Ann's grief became much greater after his death, as his wife and her family refused to allow them any contact whatever with Fred's child. Frederick Thomas George Nason grew up without ever meeting his grandparents in Ettington. It was not until he was old enough to travel alone that he once made the journey to Ettington by train to meet them.

Frederick George Nason c.1910

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