

## THE SIMMS FAMILY

Edward Simms (1849-1917) became the gamekeeper at Ettington Grove on the Shirley Estate in 1875. Edward became the third in the family to hold this post following his father Henry Simms and previously his grandfather John Simms, the latter having become the gamekeeper to Mr. Shirley in 1811. The monumental inscription to John Simms in the old St. Thomas à Becket churchyard read: “In memory of John Simms late of Grove Farm and tenant of E. J. Shirley, Esq., whom he faithfully served as keeper 27 years. His landlord records his service with gratitude and in testimony of his work erects this stone. He died November 12<sup>th</sup> 1838 aged 54 years”.<sup>a</sup>

After the Shirley family left Ettington in the early 1900s, Edward Simms also took on the role as the farmer at Grove Farm. He and his wife Ellen, nee Taylor, were married in 1878 and had four sons and two daughters, but lost the elder daughter at the age of three. The others, except the eldest son Joseph Edward, were still at home and unmarried in 1911. Grove Farm at that time comprised 700 acres.

Joseph was one of the Ettington men who died while serving in the First World War, and a profile of him is recorded elsewhere in this report. We also know that his younger brother Henry also joined the colours and it is likely that William did so as well. Henry, who was earning his living as a carpenter, was married shortly after the start of the war to May Louisa Southam, daughter of William and Louisa Jane Southam from the Chequers Inn. William had been the assistant gamekeeper in 1911, but would definitely have been required for military service. However Ralph, the third son, was granted exemption by an Appeals Tribunal in August 1916 as he was about to take over a farm at Goldicote, having previously been helping his father at Grove Farm.

Shortly before that Edward and Ellen's daughter, also named Ellen, had been married to Robert Ashby, the farmer at Whitfield Farm.

Edward Simms' death occurred on 12th November 1917. He was buried at Holy Trinity churchyard. Only twelve days later Joseph died from his battle wounds in France.

Henry and May Louisa Simms had three children and a number of their descendants are still residing in Ettington.

*Note: a) Monumental Inscriptions for St. Thomas a Becket Church, Ettington, published by the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry*

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