

SIX STREETS HISTORY DERBY



Poppies on Chevin, Belper, grown by Army Cadets, a seed for each person and horse that died in WW1



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Six Streets History Newsletter No 1

Six Streets History Newsletter will be published from time to time by Six Streets History Derby to update you on the progress of our project - "The Impact of World War One on a Derby Neighbourhood". This is a two-year programme of research and activities funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project was launched in June with a performance of "The Second Minute" by Nottingham Playhouse at Broadway Church. Our plans include a talk on Derby at War, a trip to the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester and a history trail and exhibition to run alongside the Six Streets Arts Trail planned for June 2015.

We are a small neighbourhood group formed in 2010 and part of Six Streets Derby, a community group active in Wheeldon Avenue, Parkfields Drive, Park Grove, White Street, Statham Street, Bromley Street and immediate surroundings. We are always happy to welcome new members to our group - for example our current focus is on researching personal histories of the men from our area who fought, but we are happy to include in our project other aspects that interest people. Subjects we want to explore further include women's roles and whether tribunals for exemption from military conscription affect any families in this area.

If you want to know more please go to www.sixstreetsderby.org.uk and to get involved please email 6streetshistory@gmail.com – Thank you for your interest.



Thomas Moreton Cooper who worked for the Midland Railway Company and joined the Army Reserve. He was mobilised in 1917.

Photograph kindly provided by relatives

Six Streets Midland Railway Employees in Armed Forces in WW1

Six Streets History are researching other men from our neighbourhood who worked for Midland Railway and served in the armed forces. They include:

- Harry Bale
(18 Statham Street)
- William Bradburn
(61 Statham Street)
- Herbert Bradley
(4 Wheeldon Avenue)
- John Hodgson
(45 White Street)
- Stanley Holt
(42 Wheeldon Avenue)
- Lancelot Knowles
(55 Wheeldon Avenue)
- Albert Maxey
(30 White Street)

As well as the men named above who worked for the railway themselves and served in the First World War, more local railway families felt the impact of the war directly through the involvement of sons, brothers, cousins, uncles, and neighbours.

Thomas Moreton Cooper

94 Kedleston Road

Thomas served as a "Sapper" with the Royal Engineers in France. The Engineers maintained the railways, roads, water supply, bridges and transport – vital for the war effort. ([See The Long, Long Trail, Royal Engineers](#))

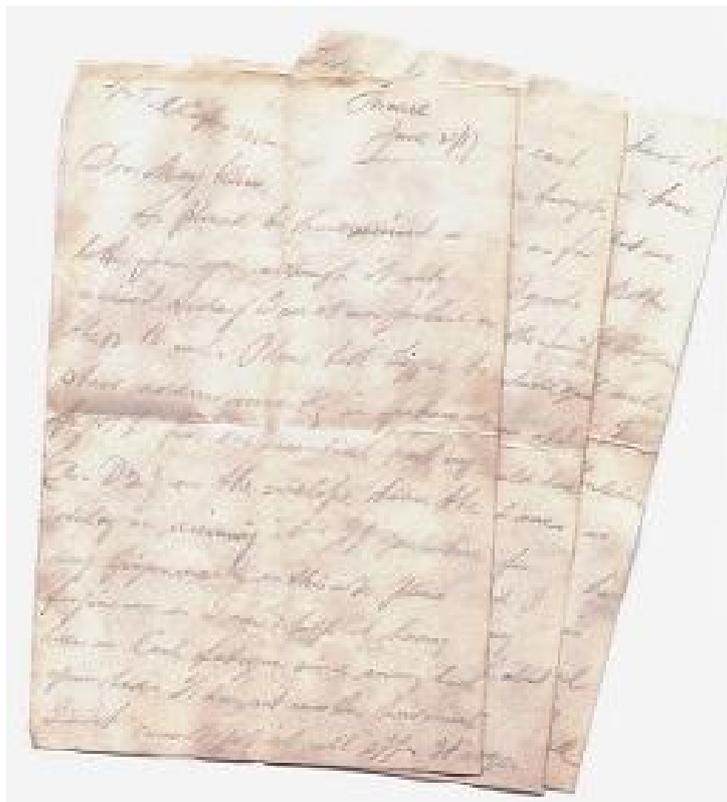
Before conscription was introduced in 1916 the government were worried about the lack of volunteers for the front line and the "Derby Scheme" or "Group Scheme" was introduced, named after Lord Derby, Director-General of Recruiting. Men aged 18-40 were given the option to volunteer for immediate enlistment or attest with an obligation to serve if called up at a later date. If they opted for deferred service they were given a grey armband with a red crown to show that they had volunteered and were sent back to their civilian lives until they were needed. The public were warned that voluntary enlistment would cease in December 1915 and men were encouraged to register so that they could be called up when required. ([The Long, Long Trail, Group Scheme](#))

Thomas "attested" in November 1915, and was assigned to the Army Reserve but was not mobilised until February 1917, aged 35. As he worked for the Midland Railway Company the delay in his mobilisation may have been influenced by the vital nature of railway transport. He was assigned to the Royal Engineers (Railway Operating Division).

He was posted to France late in February 1917 but we have no details about where he served.

On 30 November 1917 Thomas sustained a gunshot wound and a partial fracture of his femur (it is unclear whether one caused the other) and he was sent back to England. On 7 April 1918 he was admitted to hospital in London; later he was moved to Leicester and then to Whalley in Manchester from where he was discharged in February 1920 as unfit for military duty. His family believe that he also suffered from a poison gas attack, which contributed to his early death aged 53 in 1935.

Before the war Thomas worked as a Clerk and Storekeeper for the Midland Railway at the Midland Hotel adjacent to the railway station. Born in 1882 and brought up in Derby, Thomas lived on Abbey Street with his parents until he married Elizabeth Wheatcroft in 1909. They lived at 94 Kedleston Road where in May 1911 their daughter Nellie was born, and son Thomas followed in 1915. After the war he returned to his old job.



Thomas's Letter written from France in 1917 – Life as a Sapper

Thomas Cooper's family have this letter, written home in June 1917 which gives a glimpse of his work in the army as a Sapper in the Engineers, alongside news from home and other everyday concerns. In his letter he mentions Bert Hurlstone who lived at 5 Park Grove and members of our team are researching his life.

Transcript of Thomas's Letter

Spr T M Cooper 238600 France June 21/17

Dear Mary Ellen (wife's sister)

So pleased to have received a letter from you, although it only arrived today. I see it was posted on the 12th inst. Please tell Lizzie [his wife] to show address correctly in future she forgot to put the essential part ?? (A D2) on the envelope hence the delay in receiving it.

If you notice any fingermarks on this note please forgive me. I can't help it having been on Coal fatigue since coming back again here. It does not matter how much I wash I cannot get it all off. It is a matter of about an hour each night washing at the public trough – and then it is only down as far as possible, you "comprez".

I quite understand Lizzie writes for the family also when I write to her I include you all. Having little I can tell you if I wrote to separate members it would have to be in the same strain to each over. Please give Jack my best thanks for what he has done towards the shed I understand has been put up in my garden at home recently.

You ask about potatoes and sugar. We get the former sometimes and the latter always. Taking the food all round here it is very decent, of course we have no covering on the tables, but we don't eat tablecloths.

Glad Mother benefitted by her stay at [Nottingham] and also to hear you are all well. To use an hackneyed old phrase "I am in the pink". How does Bert Hurlstone stand in regards military duties, is the reason of his marriage because he expects to be "called up" soon, or is he exempt through his professional calling? As the "Last Post" will be going soon I will conclude.

With Best Love to all.
Yours affects Tom

If you have any information about people who lived in Six Streets during
World War 1 please contact us at 6streetshistory@gmail.com.

100 years ago:

28 June: Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and his wife Sophie are assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

29 June: Secretary of the Austro-Hungarian Legation at Belgrade sends despatch to Vienna accusing Serbian complicity in the assassination.

20 July: Austria-Hungary sends troops to the Serbian frontier.

25 July: Serbia orders mobilisation of troops.

28 July: Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.

29 July: Austrians bombard Serbian capital Belgrade. German patrols cross the French border.

1 Aug: French military mobilisation ordered. Germany declares war on Russia.

3 Aug: Germany declares war on France. Great Britain gives order for troops to mobilise.

4 August 1914: United States declares neutrality. Great Britain gives Austria-Hungary ultimatum to stand down from hostilities. When Austria-Hungary doesn't comply a state of war is declared at 11.00pm

For the full timeline go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/remembrance/timeline/>