

## The First World War and Goldington, 100 years on June 1917

*Continuing the occasional series of articles to add some detail to the scant information on the First World War memorial in the church porch and to mark one hundred years since each individual soldier fell:*

Of all the family names that appear on the Goldington war memorial, it is arguably the Odell family to whom the First World War was most unkind.

One of the first soldiers to appear on the list, back on 15 May 1915, was Private Albert Edward Odell of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bedfordshires who died on the Somme at the age of just 17. Last month we met his cousin, Private Bertie Odell, who died aged 28 on 3 May 1917 during the Battle of Arras whilst serving with the 7<sup>th</sup> Bedfordshires.

Barely a month later our attention now turns to Bertie's younger brother, **Private Edward Odell**.

Edward was born in Goldington, the son of James and Sarah Jane Odell. The 1911 census shows him simply as a farm labourer.

The available war records give us very little extra information. He served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bedfordshires but we cannot tell whether this was voluntarily or after conscription.

On **7 June 1917** he found himself in the front line trenches during the Battle of Messines Ridge. Although his battalion was not engaged in the attack itself they were nonetheless busy in a supporting role and came under heavy barrage from the German artillery. Edward was killed aged about 29.

The impact on the Odell family did not stop there. Edward's next of kin was listed as his sister Mary Elizabeth who by this time had married Arthur Spavins. Arthur was later killed in August 1918 and also appears on the war memorial.

And lastly, another brother, Walter Odell, served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bedfordshires having enlisted on 28 October 1913. He survived the war but was injured several times and his war ended around 12 September 1917 when a gun shot wound fractured his thigh and subsequently necessitated an amputation.

**Andrew Dennison**  
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