



# DERBYSHIRE LIVES

## THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### Alice Wheeldon

**Suffragette, socialist, pacifist and opponent to the War. Tried and found guilty of conspiring to poison the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George.**

Born in Derby in 1886, Alice married William Wheeldon in 1886 with whom she had four children. Alice's political views, particularly her belief in non-violence put her at odds with the surge of nationalist feeling at the outbreak of the War. Alice helped organise a network in Derby to aid conscientious objectors, men who refused to fight, on the run. This brought the Wheeldon family to the attention of MI5.

In late 1916 Alex Gordon, an undercover agent posing as a conscientious objector on the run, arrived at the Wheeldon home. Gordon told the Wheeldons that they could release his friend, an objector, from an internment camp by poisoning the guard dogs. The letters Alice wrote to her son-in-law, a chemist, to acquire poison were used to fabricate evidence of a plot to kill the Prime Minister, Lloyd George.

The family was tried at the Old Bailey. Alice and members of her family were sent to prison. Alice was released early due to illness, partly caused by hunger strikes. She never fully recovered and died a short time later of influenza.

*"We are giving to the eternal keeping of Mother Earth, the mortal dust of a poor and innocent victim of a judicial murder".*

*John S. Clarke, friend of Alice Wheeldon*



Alice Wheeldon (far right) with family.  
Courtesy of Derby Local Studies Library.  
Original image The London Magazine.



If you are looking to investigate your own community's heritage, the Derbyshire Record Office holds a wide variety of First World War archives, these include official documents, personal letters, diaries and photographs.

All are available to research at the Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock.



Tel: 01629 538347  
record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk  
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice



# DERBYSHIRE LIVES

## THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### Arthur Bryan

#### Father, husband and soldier

Arthur Bryan was born in Derby and worked as a goods porter for Midland Railway. He was married in 1912 to Louisa Adkins and they had one daughter Doris. He served in The Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

The letters written by Arthur to Louisa from the front line are kept at Derbyshire Record Office. From his letters it is apparent that Arthur only saw his daughter for the first few weeks of her life before being sent on training and then to the front in France.

Arthur was killed in action while helping to move wounded soldiers from between trenches on 10th March 1915.

#### Letter home from Arthur to Louisa

*I hope Doris is keeping well you make me feel quite proud of you both when you say what a fine baby she is...this war will not last for ever I don't expect it lasting another three months I hope it don't.*



British soldiers at the front – a sense of camaraderie was essential to survive life in the trenches.  
Courtesy of Imperial War Museum

If you are looking to investigate your own community's heritage, the Derbyshire Record Office holds a wide variety of First World War archives, these include official documents, personal letters, diaries and photographs.

All are available to research at the Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock.



Tel: 01629 538347  
record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk  
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice



# DERBYSHIRE LIVES

## THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### Arnold Doughty

**Volunteered in 1914 and captured as a prisoner of war in 1918**

Arnold Doughty, of Normanton-by-Derby, enlisted for military service in 1914 as so many others did. He joined the Royal Medical Corps and was captured as a prisoner of war on 21st March 1918. He was held at Munster I camp in Germany until 1919.

His letters home, held by Derbyshire Record Office, reflect the poor conditions in the trenches and the positive attitude he had towards being a prisoner of war.

**April 23rd 1917**

You will be glad to know I managed to have great bath the other day – the first one I have had since leaving England, also my second change of underclothing for the same period (2-3 months) In spite of that however, I have not yet found any traces of livestock! Possibly they do not like my flavour!

**April 30th 1917**

So far I have avoided becoming "lousy"! I have seen some fine specimens of louse on some of our boys – real beauties, & according to their proprietors, they can't half bite!



Arnold Doughty in military uniform.  
Derbyshire Record Office



Arnold Doughty in RAMC uniform.  
Derbyshire Record Office



Prisoners at Munster Camp, Germany. Derbyshire Record Office

**Oct 16th 1918**  
received about 2nd Dec  
I think much less need for you to worry now than if I had not been captured; I have, I think much more chance of seeing the end of the war uninjured!... found my feet & settled down to the life of a "Kriegsgefangener."

If you are looking to investigate your own community's heritage, the Derbyshire Record Office holds a wide variety of First World War archives, these include official documents, personal letters, diaries and photographs.

All are available to research at the Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock.



Tel: 01629 538347  
record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk  
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice



# DERBYSHIRE LIVES

## THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### Bernard Hooley

Bernard Hooley of Chesterfield, Derbyshire joined the Sherwood Foresters before being transferred to the South Staffordshire regiment. He was wounded in action on May 26th 1917 and died on July 26th from his injuries in a London hospital, aged 24. He was interred at Spital Cemetery in Chesterfield on July 30th. The letters of Bernard Hooley are held at the Derbyshire Record Office

June 1st 1916, Brocton Camp, Nr Stafford

... we are a smart battalion too, you know the Foresters has a good position in the British Army, did you notice who quelled the Irish Rebellion, it was the Sherwoods again, where there is any fighting, you will always find your County Brigade in the thick of it.

9th South Staffords, France

Oh how I wish I was back in the old homestead once more...I don't reckon much to France for beauty, there's nothing to touch dear old England and I shall greet her shores once more with real

joy. I look a knut in my Steel Helmet, I think they are a good thing for protecting your napper...my boots have never been dry for a fortnight but I still keep carrying on.

Thursday 4/1/17

I am looking forward eagerly to the post every day for letters seem to bring such joy. I often picture you all at home...let's hope that very soon we shall all be together again.

Sunday 21/1/17

Yesterday morning, I had to break the ice off my boots before I could get them on.

Sunday April 1st 1917. Somewhere-in-France

...all I have met with up to now, is mud frost and lice and the hun.



Bernard Hooley in uniform.  
Derbyshire Record Office



Local newspaper reporting on Bernard Hooley's injuries.  
Derbyshire Record Office

If you are looking to investigate your own community's heritage, the Derbyshire Record Office holds a wide variety of First World War archives, these include official documents, personal letters, diaries and photographs.

All are available to research at the Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock.



Tel: 01629 538347  
record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk  
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/recordoffice