

## **'For King and Country'**

This article is a tribute to the sacrifice of the men of Wellow who lost their lives as a result of their service during the Great War.

Wellow is possibly a little unusual in having three separate memorials to these men. St Swithin's church has a stone wall tablet listing the names of the fallen, as well as a hand scribed 'Roll of Honour' listing all the men who served. Wellow Memorial Hall has a Roll of Honour in the form of a wooden wall plaque, again listing all the men who served. There is some discrepancy about the total number lost, but the five listed on all three memorials are Christopher Caudwell, William Clay, Albert Crofts and Alfred and James Crowder. The church Roll of Honour also lists Wallace Paulson, and the one in the Memorial Hall additionally includes A. Cooper. The government of the day deemed that all those who died up to 1925, as a result of injuries sustained during the conflict, were officially casualties of the war, which could be the reason for the discrepancies between the Wellow memorials.

The details below are given in date order and are taken collectively from the Wellow Rolls of Honour with additional details from the Nottinghamshire County Council virtual Roll of Honour ([www.nottscc.gov.uk/rollofhonour](http://www.nottscc.gov.uk/rollofhonour)), Commonwealth War Graves Commission website ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)), the 1911 census and other information available online.

### **In Memoriam**

**William Henry Clay** (Corporal, 1<sup>st</sup> Batt. Life Guards) – killed in action 27<sup>th</sup> April 1915 in Flanders aged 18 years. He was the only child of William and Ellen Clay and was living with them at the Rufford Hunt Kennels at Jordan Castle in 1911. He was born at Quorn, Leicestershire and the family subsequently moved from Wellow to the Kennels at Binstead on the Isle of Wight. He is commemorated, together with 695 other casualties, at the Klein-Vierstraat British Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium and also on the village memorial at Quorn.

**Christopher John Cauldwell** (Private, 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt., Lincolnshire Regiment) – killed in action 25<sup>th</sup> September 1915 at the Battle of Loos, Belgium aged 20 years. He was the son of Alfred and Sarah Cauldwell and was born in Wellow. At the time of the 1911 census he was working as a garden labourer. The Worksop Guardian of 29/10/1915 reported that he went out 'to France in April. He was a youth of fine character and exceedingly popular in the village.' He is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial (to the 11369 missing of the Lys battlefield sector close to the Ypres salient), Hainaut, Belgium, and also on his parents' headstone in Wellow cemetery.

**Albert Crofts** (Private, 4<sup>th</sup> Lincolnshire) – killed in action at Gallipoli on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1915 aged 21 years. Born at Retford, the son of Sidney and Elizabeth Crofts, in 1911 he was working as a farm servant. Two of his brothers, Herbert Trevor and Clarence also fought for

their country but survived and came home to Wellow. Albert is commemorated with 1073 other servicemen at Azmak Cemetery, Suvla, Turkey, which was established after the Armistice when graves were brought in from isolated sites and smaller cemeteries.

**Wallace Paulson** (Gunner, H.M.S. Natal) – killed by an internal explosion of his vessel in Cromarty Firth, Scotland on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1915 aged 23 years. He was born at Eakring, the son of William and Sarah Paulson, but was living with his family in Wellow by 1911 and was working as an engine fitter. Wallace enlisted that year and was in the Royal Marine Artillery. H.M.S. Natal was part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cruiser Squadron and spent much of 1915 patrolling the North Sea. She was lying in Cromarty harbour north of Inverness when she was torn apart by internal explosion of one of her after magazines, possibly due to faulty cordite, and sank almost immediately with the loss of 421 crew and visitors. Together with the other casualties, Wallace is commemorated on Portsmouth Naval Memorial. There are also memorials for the Natal disaster in Durban, South Africa and at Invergordon, Scotland. Wallace's family moved to Kersall, and so he is also remembered on the war memorial at St Bartholomew's Church, Kneesall.

**James Crowder** (Private, 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) – died at Salonika, Greece on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1917 aged 26 years. James was born in Wellow to James and Mary Crowder, and by 1911 was working as an estate labourer. The eldest of the Wellow casualties during the conflict, he married Ethel Fable in 1913 and they had a daughter Winifred. Whilst the Memorial Hall Roll of Honour states that James died of wounds, according to the grave registration document of Struma Military Cemetery he died of malaria, and is buried there with 946 other casualties from the Commonwealth.

**Alfred Crowder** (Private, 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Batt. Northumberland Fusiliers) – died in France on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1918 aged 23 years. With his death, James and Mary Crowder tragically experienced the loss of a second son less than 9 months after the death of James (above). Alfred worked as a farm labourer before the war. According to the Roll of Honour in the church he was killed in action; he is buried in Perreuse Chateau Franco British National Cemetery, Seine-et-Marne, to the east of Paris. The Chateau was used by French medical units throughout the war and the cemetery contains 150 Commonwealth burials, all brought in from the surrounding battlefields. Albert was originally buried in St. Dizier (La Noue) Communal Cemetery, but was transferred and reburied at Perreuse Chateau on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1953.

**Albert Cooper** (Corporal, Royal Engineers) – died as the result of wounds in 1922. Listed as A. Cooper on the plaque in the Memorial Hall, the church Roll of Honour gives his name as Albert Cooper (Notts & Derby). An only son whose widowed mother Harriet was housekeeper at Wellow Hall, Albert came home but never recovered from his injuries. He died aged 27 years, more than three years after the war, on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1922 and was buried in Wellow churchyard.

**R. I. P.**

