

Private Thomas Harry Hamlet 237762

1/4th Battalion Kings Shropshire Light Infantry

Died of Wounds Wednesday 17th April 1918

Age 28

Mendinghem Cemetery, Proven, Belgium.

Plot 9 Row F Grave 23

Enlisted in Hinckley living in Burbage

Son of Edward and Christina Hamlet

Husband of Beatrice Hamlet.

19 Sketchley Rd, Burbage.

Thomas was born in Taylors town South Wales in 1889. The second child of six. His Father Edward Hamlet was Welsh but his mother Christina originated from Wolverhampton.

The family moved around Wales as his father was a Sawyer working in wood, probably making the pit props for the mining industry in the Rhondda valley. Thomas chose not to follow his older brother Edward and father into the wood industry but instead became a shop assistant probably at one of the nearby shops on Market St where his family lived.

By the age of 21 Thomas was living and working in Hinckley. His mother Christina may have had relatives in Burbage. He lodged with the Toone Family at 7 Orchard St Hinckley. Orchard Street was near the Hinckley Co-op. In 1911 the Co-op stores on Castle St Hinckley expanded its building to create a larger drapery department, where Thomas was employed as a shop assistant.



Co-op Drapery, Castle Street, Hinckley 1912

In December 1912 Thomas married Beatrice Bishop in Hinckley. Beatrice came from Leicester and worked in one of the many factories making fancy hosiery. Perhaps Thomas had met her through his connections with the drapery trade.

There are no records of any children in the marriage and by May 1916 all married men up to the age of 41 were conscripted. Thomas must have joined the army by this time as his work would not be a reserved occupation.

The couple were living in Burbage from 1915 as Thomas may have worked for the Co-op in the village. The couple were friends of the Eccles sisters whose brother Bernard was serving in France and had previously been employed by the Co -op.



19 Sketchley Road, Thomas's last home

By April 1918 the Spring offensive against the Germans was well underway. The 4th Battle of Ypres sustained heavy casualties during April.

Thomas would be somewhere in this area. The camp at Proven was a clearing station for casualties and Thomas was brought here from the battlefield badly wounded.

It is not known how long he survived but by the end of Wednesday 17 April he had died.

Thomas served with the Shropshire Regiment who fought in the fourth battle of Ypres.

2,300 British casualties were placed in commonwealth war graves in the cemetery at Mendinghem, including Thomas Hamlet.