

Name: Priestley, Herbert

Rank: Private No: 305913

2/7th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Robin Hoods)



Date of birth	KIA	Age
1887	26 th Sept 1917	30

Background: Herbert Priestley

There are many branches of the Priestley family going back several generations in Collingham. However, although born in North Collingham, Herbert's father, William Priestley (1846 - 1922), left the village to find work in Newark. In 1881 he and his wife Hannah née Clark¹ (1857-1940) were in Hawton, Newark, where William was an agricultural labourer. Ten years later he was a labourer in a plaster pit on Farndon Road. They moved back to Collingham sometime after 1897. By the 1901 census they were living on Dykes End, S Collingham and were still there in 1911. The 1911 census reveals William and Hannah had 3 surviving children (of 5), all born in Hawton:

Alice b 1881

Herbert b 1887

Leonard b 1894

Herbert (24) was a farm horseman in S Collingham and his brother, Leonard (17), worked as a groom for Dr Frank Broadbent in the Old Hall. Sister Alice (30) is in domestic service. Hannah Priestley is given on the Register of Voters 1924² as still living in Dykes End. The number is thought to be somewhere between 18 and 22 Dykes End. Neither Hannah nor William or Alice (d. 1953) appears in the Collingham burial registers.

¹ According to information on the Notts CC Roll of Honour database

² 1924 Electoral Rolls

The Sherwood Foresters' losses during September 1917 were high – 621⁴ – rendering it untenable. Losses on the day Herbert was killed alone were catastrophic for the battalion:

1/8th = 21

2/5th = 69

2/6th = 37

2/7th = 77

2/8th = 70

As a British army battalion is traditionally between 300-800 soldiers to lose 600 was disastrous. In May it was reduced in cadre until more men could be drafted in. Sadly, even worse was to come in March 1918 when casualties would reach 958.

Pte Harold Priestley is remembered in Tyne Cot Cemetery, West – Vlaaderen, Belgium Plot: XXV E 15

Tyne Cot is the largest British war cemetery in the world, with 11,908 registered graves.

Harold Priestley is also remembered on South Collingham Roll of Honour in St John Baptist Church and the Parishioners' Plaque.



Right: photograph of Private H Priestley's grave c/o Gary Wood, 7th Battalion Sherwood Foresters webmaster. The inscription reads 'Duty Nobly Done'

H Priestley's page on the Sherwood Foresters Roll of Honour link here:

http://www.the-sherwood-foters.co.uk/p_names/priestley_herbert.html

Tragically, Herbert's brother, Leonard, would die of wounds only ten days later (see next profile).

⁴ Source: The Sherwood Foresters' Roll of Honour website

Rev Maxwell of South Collingham Parish's Tribute

SOUTH COLLINGHAM, With Brough and Danethorpe PARISH MAGAZINE. NOVEMBER, 1917.

In Memoriam.

Another member of our Roll of Honour, Leonard Priestley, has made the supreme sacrifice as the result of wounds sustained on the Western front at the end of the month of August last. As he continued to live for six weeks after receiving his severe wounds his friends hoped that his life might yet be spared, although the grave reports of his condition furnished by the War Office at frequent intervals gave but little hope of this, and on Monday, October 8th, his parents were informed that he had succumbed to his injuries.

Leonard Priestley was a lad of stirring character, being steady reliable, and painstaking in everything he undertook to do. These characteristics were observable all through his life, in the Sunday School, in the Choir, in his preparation for Confirmation, and in his everyday occupation. He was much esteemed by his employers, both the late Dr. Broadbent for whom he worked 4½ years, and Mr. John Wigram in whose employ he was for the two years before he joined the army in the autumn of 1914. Always a regular Churchgoer and Communicant in times of peace, he did not neglect these sacred customs in time of war whenever opportunity occurred. He was a christian soldier of whom we are proud and for whom we mourn. R.I.P.

Just as this month's number of the Parish Magazine is going to press news has come to hand that Herbert Priestley (Leonard's only brother) has been missing since the battle of September 26th. The greatest sympathy of us all will be with the Priestley family in this time of great sorrow and anxiety.

Missionary Sunday.

We hope to observe the 23rd Sunday after Trinity, Nov. 11th, as our Annual Missionary Sunday. The Rev. L. C. Peto, the new organising secretary for the C.M.S. in the Diocese, has promised to come on that day. He will D.V. preach at Brough in the afternoon and at the Parish Church in the evening. As usual the collections will be divided between the S.P.G. and C.M.S.

The Annual Missionary Meeting has been arranged for Monday evening, Nov. 26th, when an address illustrated by lantern views will be given by the Rev. F. B. Matthews, Vicar of Shobnall, Burton-on-Trent.

St. Andrew's Day.

This year St. Andrew's Day falls on Friday, Nov. 30th, and will D.V. as usual be observed as a day of continuous prayer for the spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Between the Celebration of the Holy Communion, which will be at 10 a.m., and the Evensong at 5 p.m., the day will be divided into half hours. It is hoped that a sufficient number of people will volunteer to spend half an hour in prayer in Church to ensure that there will be a constant stream of prayer going up to God during these hours. We shall not be alone, as the practice of observing St. Andrew's Day in this manner is becoming more and more general throughout the Communion of the Church of England.

Parish Church Services.

HOLY COMMUNION.

- Nov. 1. All Saints' Day. 10.30 a.m.
" 4. 22nd Sunday after Trinity. 8 and Midday.
" 11. 23rd Sunday after Trinity. 8 a.m.
" 18. 24th Sunday after Trinity. Midday.
" 25. 25th Sunday after Trinity. 8 a.m.
" 30. S. Andrew's Day. 10 a.m.

OTHER SERVICES.

- Morning Prayer and Sermon each Sunday 10.30.
Evening Prayer and Sermon each Sunday 6.30.
Children's Service Nov. 4th. 2.45 p.m.

Altar flowers

- Nov. 1. All Saints' Day. Mrs. Wigram.
" 4. Mrs. Maxwell.
" 11. Mrs. Rice.
" 18. Misses Manuel.
" 25. Mrs. Browne.
" 30. S. Andrew. Mrs. Wigram.

Above: The newsletter for South Collingham reflecting how confusing events were on the Western Front at this time. Rev Maxwell begins by reporting Leonard Priestley's death from wounds (October 8th) and then in 'stop press' inserts news of Herbert's loss a fortnight before. (Ref: Collingham archives EC/B/49)

Further Reading:

Website: The 7th (Robin Hoods) Sherwood Foresters Battalion (Nottingham and Derby) has a good website here: <http://www.therobinhoods.org.uk/>

Book: The Robin Hood Rifles 1837-1901 published as part of the Victorian Nottingham series (Volume 15) by Richard Iliffe & Wilfred Bagley gives a great insight into the founding of the battalion. Published in 1975, the series can still be found on websites such as Abe Books: <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/title/victorian-nottingham-vol/author/richard-iliffe/>

'7 Facts about the Battle of Polygon Wood' on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website here: <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/news-and-events/news/2017/09/15/13/13/7-facts-about-the-battle-of-polygon-wood>

A contemporary account (1917) of The Battle of Polygon Wood can be found here: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/35403/35403-h/35403-h.htm#Page_298

Sources:

- 🔴 Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/>)
 - 🔴 Collingham & District Local History Society (<http://collingham-history.org.uk/>)
 - 🔴 East Trent Genealogy (<http://www.easttretegenealogy.co.uk/>
 - 🔴 Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<https://www.cwgc.org/>)
 - 🔴 Nottinghamshire County Council Roll of Honour (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour>)
 - 🔴 The Long, Long Trail (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>)
 - 🔴
- The Sherwood Foresters (Nottingham and Derby) Regiment Roll of Honour
http://www.the-sherwood-foresters.co.uk/about_us.html

