

Claudius Wilfred Dix of the 23rd County of London Yeomanry



Claudius Wilfred Dix was born on 17th May 1892 at 7, Gloster Road, Barnstaple to George & Alice Dix. George Dix's family (left) lived in Yeo Vale, (3, Warwick Terrace and then 38, Kingsley Avenue) until the mid 20th century. In 1911 census, Claudius was recorded as 18 years old, single and a stationer's assistant, and living at Warwick Terrace, Yeo Vale, Pilton. At the time of conscription in early 1916, he was working in London as an architect's clerk. On 16th

March 1916, Claude married Marguerite Eva Ackland of 8, New Buildings, Barnstaple at All Saints Church, Finchley Road, London, an event described as a khaki wedding by the North Devon Journal. At that time, Claude was on army training at Haveringland Hall Farm Camp, Norfolk. He had joined the London Yeomanry, aged 24, as a Private and was mobilised for the war in France. His regiment subsequently merged with the 6th Dragoons, known as the Inniskillings.

Claude suffered gas poisoning on the battlefield when his horse fell on him, pinning him to the ground. He was hospitalised in France and was officially discharged from the 6th Dragoons on 26th March 1919. He returned to Pilton and lived with his wife and young son, Claude Eric, and worked as a grocer at 11 Pilton Street. He was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. Unfortunately, his health was so compromised by the war injury, as the gas poisoning had weakened his lungs, that he died from pulmonary tuberculosis on 24th October 1921, at the age of twenty-nine, only two years after his discharge from France.



The family photograph, top, shows Claudius, centre back, with his parents and sisters and was taken sometime before 1916, while the photograph, left, shows him at the time of his marriage. His son, Claude Eric, went on to become a teacher at Pilton Church of England Primary School in 1939, after successfully applying for a schoolmistress' post! In 1949, he became Headmaster of the school until 1954, when he became the founder Headmaster of Forches Cross County Primary School.

Many thanks are due to Monica Jarman, Claudius' grand-daughter, who provided much of this story, and to Brian Barrow, for his tremendous work in collecting information on all the men of Pilton who died in the Great War.