

Aldin, D C

Cecil Charles Windsor ALDIN (1870 – 1935) married Marguerite (Rita) Dorothy Morris on 8 June 1895 and after the marriage lived at The Limes, 46 Flanders Road Bedford Park from 1895 until 1899. There, their first child Dudley Cecil was born on 8 January 1897. Their daughter, Gwendolin Mabel was born in 1899, when the family went to live at 41(now 47) Priory Road until about 1905, after which they moved to Berkshire.

Although resident in Bedford Park for a relatively short time Cecil was a well-known as an artist, etcher and draughtsman, specialising particularly on animal subjects. He apparently kept 13 dogs, two monkeys and a fox cub while in Bedford Park. He also kept a hunter in his stable. When the family moved to Berkshire, his interest in hunting, horses and dogs led him to become Master of the South Berkshire Hunt, which, at the outset of the Great War led him to act as an Army Remount Purchasing Officer. Being too old for active service, he was Major in charge of the remount depot near Pangbourne, a task which must have grieved the animal-loving man deeply because it involved dealing with the horses that were being sent out to almost certain death on the Western Front. His own mounts were among the first to be given up to the Army. He developed many local Remount Depots, including eventually a number of Ladies' Army Remount Units, staffed entirely by women.

Dudley Cecil ALDIN was baptized at St Mary's Church, Stamford Brook on 21 February 1897, by Revd. J Harrison. He was educated at St Cyprian's Preparatory School, Summerdown Road Eastbourne, and was there aged 14 at the 1911 census. At the 1901 census he was staying with his maternal grandparents, the Morris's, in Paddington when the rest of the family could be found at Priory Road, Bedford Park. In 1904 the Aldins moved, first to Henley on Thames, and were by 1911 at Upper Bowram Farm, Pangbourne. Dudley then went to Cheltenham College (May 1911 – July 1914), where he rose to Sergeant in the OTC there.

He must have moved to Pangbourne with his father when he became Secretary and later Master of the South Berks Hunt and lived at The Kennels (now Belleisle). On leaving school he entered the RMA Sandhurst on an application dated 15 August 1914. He was recorded as being fit, measuring 67 in. in height, weighing 137 lb. He was gazetted 2nd. Lieutenant from the Gentlemen cadets on 22. April 1915 in the Royal Engineers. He was a member of the 105th Field Company and had spent six months in France when he was killed in action on Vimy Ridge 15th May 1916.

His company was attached to the 74th Brigade, 25th Division and was working with detachments of the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers and 9th Loyal North Lancs Regiment. One of their key duties was tunnelling to extend the British trench system towards the enemy lines by linking up bomb craters and consolidating the lips of trenches after bombardments.

Bomb craters were often created by placing mines just in front of the line and then detonating them. These were known as Crosbie craters after Lt Col J D Crosbie who was temporarily in command of the 74th Brigade. At 8.30 pm on the night of May 15th five of these were created in the Berthonval sector. The Germans retaliated by a heavy bombardment of the British trenches and that night 14 officers and 93 other ranks were killed in the sector, among them Dudley Aldin. Two nights before he had been mentioned in reports as having 'organised and directed work under heavy fire'.

He is buried at the Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont St Eloi, France in plot 1, Row L Grave 2. His grave bears the inscription:

*'Second Lieutenant D C Aldin, Royal Engineers. 15th May 1916
Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life
for his friends'*