

Eric George Frost, died 26 January 1916, aged 27

Benjamin Wilfred Frost, died 13 October 1919, aged 39

At least three generations of the Frost family had a business in Smithfield meat market, which must have been quite successful as they were able to live comfortable lives. Benjamin Frost (born 1843) was the grandson of the founder, and was involved in the family meat business all his adult life. He and his new wife Louisa moved into a house in Highbury on their marriage in 1875, and ten years later the growing family moved to a large house on Shepherds Hill in Highgate. Benjamin and Louisa eventually had seven children, five sons and two daughters, and were able to afford three or four live-in servants. Cecil was born in 1876, Mabel in 1878, Kathleen in 1879, Benjamin in 1881., Harry in 1883, John in 1887 and Eric in 1888. Cecil and Benjamin junior were sent to board at Dean Close School in Cheltenham and Eric was a day boy at Highgate School. Cecil studied at Bart's Hospital, qualifying as a doctor in 1899 and becoming house physician at the Royal Hospital for Chest Diseases, and at one time being Civil Medical Officer of Health in Pretoria. Benjamin junior and Harry followed their father into the family meat business, while John became a stockbroker's clerk. The other six children were still living at home and, as was not uncommon for middle class girls at that time, neither Mabel nor Kathleen were in employment.

On 4 June 1902 Mabel married accountant Sydney Tubbs in St Michael's Church in Highgate, and the Tubbs settled in Hadley Wood where they had three sons of their own. Soon after Mabel's marriage the rest of the Frost family moved to Oakdene, a substantial house in Bishop's Avenue in East Finchley, where they were to live for over 20 years. It would have been during this time that they might have become involved with All Saints' Church.

Eric left school in 1906, and joined a publishing company as a clerk. In his spare time he joined the Territorial Army and was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant. He appears to have done well as he was promoted first to Lieutenant and then in 1912 to Captain.



Sadly Mr and Mrs Frost's eldest son Cecil died on 26 September 1908, and it is recorded that he was buried in 'St Pancras Chapel Cemetery'. The old St Pancras graveyard was closed and the newer St Pancras Church in Euston Road was unlikely to have much space for burials by then, so perhaps this was St Pancras Cemetery in East Finchley. His sister Kathleen died just six months later in March 1909, and was also buried in St Pancras Chapel Cemetery.

When war was declared in August 1914 Eric's unit (7th Battalion the Middlesex Regiment) was mobilised to the Isle of Grain, and then moved to Gibraltar arriving there mid-September. In February 1915 they returned to England and spent time in Barnet before going to France. On 15 April 1915 they landed at le Havre and moved to the front. In May Eric was wounded at Fromelles (a village some 10 miles west of Lille, where the Australians were heavily involved in battle a year later), and invalided home to England. His family must have been pleased to see him and relieved to know that he would recover from his injuries. He was promoted to Major in October 1915, and applied to rejoin his regiment at the front. The photo of Eric, which is kept on the war memorial altar, may have been taken at this time.

Eric left England again on 21 December 1915, and was posted to the French/Belgian border. Barely a month later he was wounded and died at the casualty clearing station at Estaires on 26 January 1915. Brigadier-General R B Stephens wrote to Eric's parents the following day: *'Your son has done excellent work whilst serving with this division, and you have every reason to be proud of his gallantry and devotion to duty'*. He was buried nearby, in what is now Estaires Communal Cemetery, and after the war ended his parents asked for *Until the Day Dawn* to be engraved on his headstone.

This was not the last loss for the Frost family. Benjamin, their second son, is also commemorated on the All Saints' war memorial. He had enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1916, when he was 36 years of age. Benjamin served in the 7th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry, becoming a Staff Sergeant, and managed to survive the Great War but then he died of phthisis (a form of pulmonary tuberculosis) on 13 October 1919. He was still in the Canadian forces and was in Canada when he died, as he has a CWGC war grave in Kelowna Memorial Park Cemetery in British Columbia. There is no family epitaph engraved on his headstone, but he too is commemorated on the All Saints' war memorial.

More grief was to come for the Frost family: less than six months after Benjamin's death his younger brother John also died from phthisis, on 4 February 1920, aged 35. John left his substantial estate of £2,623-0-6 to his father – perhaps he had been running the family business, as his father was now an elderly man.

The Frosts had now lost five of their seven children in 18 years, an unimaginable sorrow for them. Mr Frost died at the age of 79 on 29 April 1924. The large house in Bishop's Avenue, once home to seven growing children, must have seemed very large and quiet to Mrs Frost. She moved to North Finchley, to 2 Friern Watch Avenue which was probably a more manageable house. She lived until the age of 90, dying on 18 June 1943. Her daughter Mabel (by then a widow) died in June 1948 aged 70, and her last surviving child Harry – who was unmarried – died in December 1975 aged 93.