

Archibald Frederick DAVIES

Born Dawlish July-Sept 1881

Died Flanders, 2 December 1917, aged 36

Rifleman 552746 1/16th (County of London) Battalion Queen's Westminster Rifles

Archibald Frederick DAVIES was the grandson of Frederick Peter Davies (1825-). He was born in Clerkenwell, Middlesex and married Jessie (?) and they had four children, born in St Bride's Middlesex, Jessie (1850-), Clara (1852-), Frederick Alexander *(1852-) and Frank (1858-). They moved to Dawlish in the following three years for the 1861 census shows them living at 12 Portland Place, Dawlish. The father was a widower and his cousin Harriet Johnson was their housekeeper.

Frederick Peter Davies is shown in census returns as a photographer and occasionally as an artist and secretary to the Gas Company.

Frederick Peter Davies and Harriet Johnson were married in the Parish Church Islington by licence on 9th February 1875, by which date they were both aged 50. There is a death registered for Harriet Davies aged 74 in 1899 (GRO Ref Newton Abbot 1899 Oct-Dec, vol 5b, p 90). Her husband, a widower for the second time, was 86 at the 1911 census and living with his unmarried daughter Jessie.

In 1881 they had moved to 21 Brunswick Place and Frederick Alexander worked as a plumber.

Frederick Alexander Davies* was born in Clerkenwell, Islington, London in 1852 (GRO Oct-Dec 1852, Islington, London, vol 1b, page 250) and trained as a printer. In 1871 he was working as an apprentice printer at 48 Blackfriar's Road, Southwark.

Frederick Alexander Davies married Mary Jane Knight in Dawlish in the April- June quarter of 1881 (GRO Ref N.A., Vol 5b, page 287).

Mary Jane Knight was the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Knight. Thomas Knight (1817-1852) was a machine maker and he married Elizabeth Tucker (1817-) and they lived in South Molton. Elizabeth was born in Kings Nympton and she and Thomas had two daughters, Mary Jane (1853-1932) and Louise Elizabeth**(1849-1901). Mary Jane Knight was born in South Molton (GRO ref 1853, Jan-Mar, vol 5b, p 438).

** Louise Elizabeth Knight married John Slee and they had a daughter, Bessie, who appears aged 12 in the 1881 census in Dawlish, and again in 1911 with Frederick and Mary Jane Davies.

After the death of Thomas Knight in 1852, Elizabeth married again, to James Vile. She had been living with him as his servant at Cooks Cross, South Molton in 1861. At that date she was working as a plain needlewoman and Mary Jane Knight was still at school, aged 8.

In 1871 Mary Knight was a housemaid to Elizabeth Vile (formerly Knight) at 12 Marine Parade.

In 1881 Mary Jane Knight was still living with her mother, Elizabeth Vile at 1 Brookdale Terrace, Dawlish where her mother was a lodging-house keeper.

It is possible that Frederick Alexander Davies had moved on from printing to establish a business as a photographer, his father's trade, for that is how he appears in the 1891 census at 9 Marine Parade:

Frederick A Davies,	Head,	37	Photographer	born London
Mary J Davies	wife	37		born South Molton
Archibald	son	9		born Dawlish

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Mabel	dau	8	"
Herbert C	son	4	"
Dora E	dau	2	"
Annie Ray	visitor	9	born Chelsea

By 1901 there was one more child, Lilian M Davies, born in Dawlish ca 1892, and **Archibald** was no longer listed at home. He may have already, at age 19, left to study law in London where we find him in 1911, living at 54 The Crescent, Wimbledon Park, S W London with his wife Lilian, nee Page. They were married at St John's Church, World's End, Chelsea on April 10th, 1909. Lilian was born in Bellingdon, near Amersham, Bucks, daughter of Edward and Jane Page.

Edward Page (1836-1906) was a farm labourer married to Jane, nee Pittim (1841-1914). When Jane was widowed she moved to live with a nephew in Tring in 1911. She may have been deprived of a farm labourer's tied cottage on the death of her husband.

Frederick A and Mary Jane Davies had six children but two had died by 1911. Mary Jane Davies died on 24th January 1932 at 51 Withycombe Road, Exmouth at the age of 79 and left her possessions to her daughter Mabel Davies, spinster. Her husband died in March 1953 at the age of 100 (GRO ref Devon Central, March 1953, vol 7a, p 395).

Archibald Frederick Davies is mentioned in an article in the *Dawlish Gazette* (see Documents) as 'confidential clerk to a well-known firm of London solicitors, by whom he was held in the highest esteem.' It also appears that Archibald and Lilian Davies had a son ca 1913.

It is not clear when **Archibald** enlisted with the London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles), 1st/16th Bn. He was with a Trench Mortar Battery when he was killed 'instantaneously' in the final phase of the battle of Cambrai. A regimental war diary shows that the battalion had been in action on the 30th November and were withdrawn from the front line and resting on 1st and 2nd December, but there was one casualty from other ranks (O.R.) on the 1st and two O.R. on the 2nd December. The diary for the 30th November records the lack of anti-aircraft fire against patrolling enemy aircraft and it may be that shrapnel from a bomb may have caught **Archibald Davies** unawares?

A F Davies is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour and on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: DAVIES A.F. RFN. LON.Q.W.RFLS

Devon Heritage site info: 552746 Rifleman Archibald Frederick Davies of the 1st/16th Battalion, the London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles). Son of Frederick A and Mary Jane Davies of Marine Parade, Dawlish. Born in the September quarter of 1881. Died 2 December 1917, aged 36.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: DAVIES, ARCHIBALD F. Rifleman 552746
02/12/1917 London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles), 1st/16th Bn.

Panel Ref: Panel 12. [Cambrai Memorial, Louverval](#), France

Last known address: 54 The Crescent, Wimbledon Park, S W London

Next of kin: Lilian Davies, wife

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References:

Birth marriage death refs

Dawlish Gazette collection in Dawlish Museum

The Battle of Cambrai - <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/battles-of-world-war-one/the-battle-of-cambrai/>

refs via subscription websites:

- Census records

- Regimental War Diary

- Marriage record, Chelsea 1909

- UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects

- Probate records