



A Family Tragedy

1906, a shooting, a mother killed.

A son lost in the Great War.

It started with a gravestone ...

Nigel Peacock

This is the story of a fatal accidental shooting that occurred in Tharston in 1906 and involved the Lloyd family who lived at Hill Farm in the village.

Not only that, but the family lost a son in The Great War.

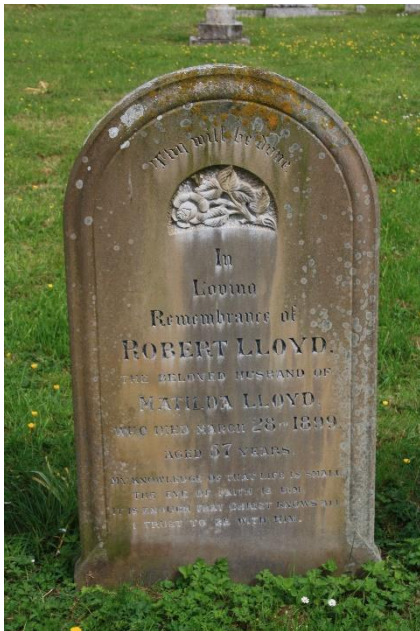
It is events like these that pique the interest of family historians. Genealogy can be a lonely pastime, but this story has brought together several people who, together, have gradually learned more and more about the Lloyd tragedies.

There is more to find out; family history never ends

The source of the majority of the photographs in this booklet are the copyright of the authors or inclusion has been agreed by the owner; if you can identify any for which you consider you have the rights please either pass on your consent to the Tharston History Society or request their removal.

A Family Tragedy

Members of the Tharston History Society had been looking at the memorials in Tharston St. Mary the Virgin churchyard. Three graves, quite close to each other, were for a father, his wife and their daughter: Robert Lloyd, Matilda Lloyd and Mary Jane Lloyd. At one of our Society meetings we talked about the family, but no one knew anything much of significance about them. Natural curiosity made me ask who they were as I had not heard anything about them as a local Tharston family.



Thy will be done • In • Loving •
Remembrance of • **ROBERT LLOYD** •
• THE BELOVED HUSBAND OF •
MATILDA LLOYD • WHO DIED
MARCH 28TH 1899 • AGED 57
YEARS • MY KNOWLEDGE OF THAT
LIFE IS SMALL • THE EYE OF FAITH
IS DIM • IT IS ENOUGH THAT
CHRIST KNOWS ALL • I TRUST TO
BE WITH HIM



Peace Perfect Peace • In • Loving
• Remembrance of • **MATILDA** •
THE BELOVED WIFE OF • ROBERT
LLOYD • WHO DIED FEB. 19TH
1906 • AGED 62 YEARS • LORD,
ALL PITYING JESU BLEST, • GRANT
HER THINE ETERNAL REST



God is Love • In • Loving •
Remembrance of • **MARY JANE** •
THE BELOVED DAUGHTER OF •
ROBERT & MATILDA LLOYD •
WHO DIED MAY 18TH 1883 •
AGED 15 YEARS • NOT GONE
FROM MEMORY • NOT GONE
FROM LOVE • BUT GONE TO HER
FATHER'S HOME ABOVE

This curiosity was further aroused when the THS was contacted by Jane who said that Robert and Matilda Lloyd were her great-great grandparents and asked if we knew anything about her great grandmother Harriet Lloyd, wife of Christopher the eldest son of Robert and Matilda, and her family from 1906 onwards. Her email included:

".....Basically, my Great Grandmother, Harriet Lloyd was killed by one of her sons in a dreadful accident, in April, 1906. I had two Great Uncles, both her sons. One, Robert E Lloyd (born 1895) shot his mother when he was 11 years old, accidentally

with a shot gun Apparently he [Harriet's son Robert] wanted to shoot a pigeon on a roof and was told he was not to touch his father's gun. However, boys being what they are, he got the gun and it must have gone off accidentally, killing his mother Harriet Lloyd immediately"

Jane's connection to this family is through her grandmother, Rosa Matilda Lloyd, the granddaughter of Robert and Matilda, daughter of Christopher Henry and Harriet Rosetta, and sister to Robert and Christopher.



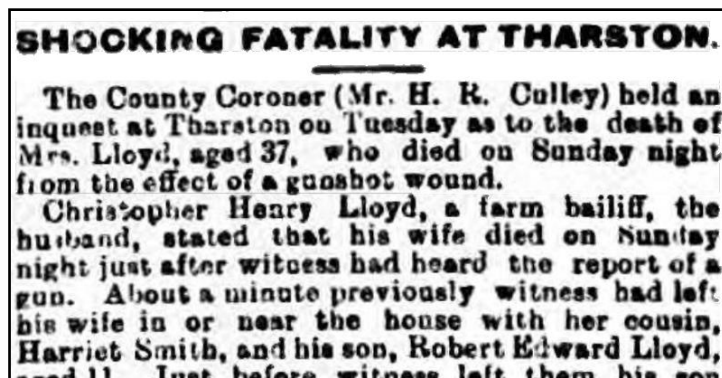
Internet research gave several references to newspaper articles about the shooting, the tragedy being reported across the British Isles. Many of the reports found named Tharston incorrectly as Thurston so it can be assumed the source of much of the information was common to those accounts. One account was:

"TRAGEDY NEAR NORWICH. – A boy, 11 years old, was playing with a gun on Sunday evening at Thurston, near Norwich, when the weapon went off, killing the lad's mother, a Mrs. Harriet Lloyd, who was shot through the heart, and instantly succumbed." (The Bedfordshire Advertiser and the Luton Times on Friday, 20 April 1906)

A current photograph of approximately where the incident happened; it is assumed that the barn is the one the pigeon sat on:



A good account of the incident and the subsequent inquest proceedings was recorded in the Lowestoft Mercury on the 21 April 1919:



SHOCKING FATALITY AT THARSTON

The County Coroner (Mr. H. R. Culley) held an inquest at Tharston on Tuesday as to the death of Mrs. Lloyd, aged 37, who died on Sunday night from the effects of a gunshot wound.

Christopher Henry Lloyd, a farm bailiff, the husband, stated that his wife died on Sunday night after witness had heard the report of a gun. About a minute previously witness had left his wife in or near the house with her cousin, Harriet Smith, and his son, Robert Edward Lloyd, aged 11. Just before witness left them his son told him he would get witness' gun and shoot a pigeon which had alighted on the roof of the barn. Witness warned him not to get the weapon, and then left all three together, intending to go into the meadow to get some eggs. When he had proceeded in the direction of the meadow for about 30 yards, he heard the report of the gun and a scream, and on turning round to see who had fired off the gun saw his wife in a stooping position, with her hands to her sides. She then fell, and witness ran to her at once, and found she was unable to speak, and dying, and she died in a short time. Witness saw his gun, lying five or six yards from his wife, and one of his children, aged six, told him that Robert had shot the deceased. Witness then concluded he had obtained the gun,

notwithstanding his warning that he was not to do so. He had left the weapon in the hayhouse, which was 20 yards from the house, three or four days previously. When the gun went off Robert ran away, and witness could not see him, but he returned in a few minutes. When witness last used the gun he placed it in the hayhouse, where it was always kept, and only one other man than himself ever used it. The last time witness took the gun out he put two cartridges in it, and then fired off one barrel, and left the second charge in the weapon when he put it away. After his wife had been shot he looked into the gun, and saw it contained two empty cartridges, one which the witness had previously fired off, and the cartridge that he left, which had evidently been fired by his son. It was not witness' custom to leave his gun with a cartridge in it, although he did it on one occasion. He did not leave the gun with the hammer up when he put it away.

Harriet Smith, a domestic servant, living at Tharston, said the deceased was her cousin, and on Sunday she was staying at the house. At 7 o'clock in the evening witness was in the house with the deceased, her husband, and the lad Robert Edward Lloyd. The boy said he would get a gun and shoot a pigeon that had alighted on the roof of the barn. Deceased husband and son then went out, as she thought, to get some eggs from the orchard. As soon as they had gone the deceased said, "I will get you some flowers." Witness and the deceased then went towards the back door to go for the flowers, and just as deceased placed one foot outside the door, and when passing out she heard the report of a gun, and saw deceased was shot. Witness, who was behind the deceased, ran back at once. Deceased fell down and expired, after saying, "Oh father" three times. She heard the deceased and the father caution the lad not to touch the gun. She afterwards saw the lad, and he said he threw the gun down as soon as he had fired it off. The boy must have fired the gun from a position between the barn on which the pigeon had been sitting and the door at which the deceased was shot, so that the gun was fired in an opposite direction to that in which the pigeon was.

Robert Edward Lloyd, aged 11 years, who lives at home with his father, said on Sunday evening a pigeon came on to the barn. He told his father and mother the he should shoot it. They told him not to touch the gun, but when his father went into the orchard to get some eggs witness went to the hay-house and took the gun out. When he got back the pigeon had gone away. He then pointed the gun, and as he was bringing it down it went off, and he then let it fall to the ground. He then saw his mother lying in the doorway, and ran into the road. When the gun went off witness was standing five or six yards from the doorway at which the deceased was shot. He had never fired the gun previously.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

The Coroner, addressing the husband, said that he had been requested by the jury to tell him that they considered that death was caused accidentally, but although they came to that conclusion, and in doing so absolved him from criminal responsibility, they wished him to say that he (Lloyd) had been guilty of a great error of judgment in leaving the gun loaded, and this was the sole cause of his wife's death, as the affair would not have happened but for the want of judgment in that respect.

What happened to Robert after the incident was a mystery as no 1911 Census record could be found for him. His father Christopher, his brother Frederick Christopher and sister Rosa Matilda were still recorded as living in Tharston but no sign of Robert. Help was at hand with this as a fresh pair of eyes noted that Robert's birth was earlier than his parents' marriage. Was he listed with a surname of Aldridge, his mother's maiden name? Still no sign of him in the 1911 Census!

Military records often provide significant details about a person. Records were found for the military career of a Robert Edward Lloyd Aldridge whose date and place of birth was 26th December 1894 in Wacton. Everything from these records pointed to this being the correct person including his next of kin being Frederick and a reference to Halesworth in Suffolk. The military record for Robert is quite extensive.

Sub 069 10/14 JY W
Gen. No. 2282
Army Form B. 2505.

SHORT SERVICE.
(For the Duration of the War).

ATTESTATION OF

No. 22782 Name Robert Edward Lloyd Aldridge Corps 14th 3rd Mde Bde

Questions to be put to the Recruit before enlistment.

1. What is your name?.....	1. <u>Robert Edward Lloyd Aldridge</u>
2. What is your full Address?.....	2. <u>9 Pritchard Road</u>
3. Are you a British Subject?.....	3. <u>Gilfach Goch, Glam.</u>
4. What is your Age?.....	4. <u>20</u> Years..... Months.
5. What is your Trade or Calling?.....	5. <u>Bankman</u>
6. Are you Married?.....	6. <u>No</u>
7. Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military, if so, which?.....	7. <u>No</u>
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?.....	8. <u>Yes</u>
9. Are you willing to be enlisted for General Service?.....	9. <u>Yes</u>

Assuming this is the correct person and we have nothing to believe otherwise, when living at 9 Pritchard Road, Gilfach Goch, Glamorgan, Robert enlisted in the Welsh Regiment (Service No. 22782) in 17 Dec 1914. He served in WW1 being wounded twice (in shoulder 18 Aug 1915 and head 6 May 1916) and medically discharged in 15 Aug 1916. He later re-enlisted on 11 May 1921 in the Glamorgan Fortress R.E. (T.A.), (Service No. 2204352),

promoted through Lance Corporal to Corporal to Sergeant, leaving the service on 30 Apr 1929 with a trade of painter.

Further information from the military records gave a wife's name and their 4 children, one of which only lived a few weeks.

Jane's email also contained:

"... The other son, my other Great Uncle, was Frederick Christopher Lloyd. He was killed in World War 1, on 7th August 1918. He started off in the East Surrey regiment, Army No 38389, and when he was killed he was with the 11th Battalion the Royal Fusiliers, Army no 78817. He was buried at Beacon Cemetery, at Saily Laurette near Amiens, France. I have two photos of him, one in his army uniform and one of him driving a horse and cart in 1917, before he joined up, he would have been about 17 years old. ...".

All this detail was confirmed by internet research. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has a record for Frederick and for the Beacon Cemetery, Saily-Laurette where Frederick is buried.

The following is the C.W.G.C. summary of his death:

*Name : Frederick Christopher Lloyd
Birth Place : Tharston, Norfolk
Residence : Halesworth
Death Date : 7 Aug 1918
Death Location : France & Flanders
Enlistment Location : Ipswich
Rank : Private
Regiment : Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
Battalion : 11th Battalion
Number : 78817
Type of Casualty : Killed in action
Theatre of War : Western European Theatre
Comments : Formerly 38389, 4th East Surrey Regt.*

A Family Tragedy



Below are the two pictures which are parts of postcard images of Frederick. The first is him in uniform.

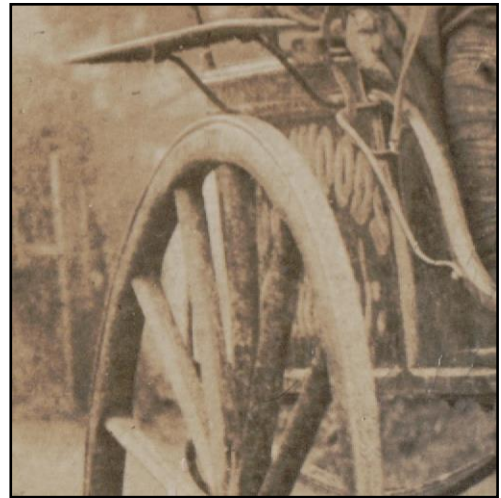


On the rear of the postcard above - to Miss R. Lloyd (presumably Rosa Matilda), Witton Rectory, Norwich - was written; "Dear Rose, Just a line, this is my photograph. What do you think of it. Not very nice is it. Will write in a day or so. From Brother Fred xxx". I wonder if he ever did write to his sister?

The second is Frederick driving a cart when about 17 years old. The name on the cart looks like Woods (see enlargement) and from the military description above saying he lived in

A Family Tragedy

Halesworth, maybe this was a local business. Kelly's Directory of 1900 gives a George Woods having a butcher's business in Halesworth Market Place; is this a clue?



Jane, whose email really started this research, visited Tharston and went to see the graves of her ancestors, laying flowers on their graves and visited the site of the tragedy.



The soldier, Frederick, is listed on the Roll of Honour inside St. Mary's Church and it is thought that Robert should be on there too.

So from an initial curiosity has come the story of a family racked by tragedies: a mother's accidental shooting, a son killed in WW1 and another son wounded twice.

Where DNA testing can lead us

Jane's story:

"When I discovered that my grandmother Rosa Matilda Lloyd had two brothers I was overjoyed. She never mentioned them, and as far as I know my father didn't either.

My father told me that his grandmother (my great grandmother) Harriet Lloyd was shot by a farm labourer by accident when he was cleaning a gun. I believe that that was the story he was given and that is all he knew.

Some years later I found the account of the shooting in a newspaper, and this revealed that the person who shot Harriett was her 11-year-old son, Robert. I had already done some research on his brother Frederick Christopher Lloyd, whose life ended in the First World War and so there was no trail to follow any more with him.

However, I became interested in Robert, wondering what happened to him. I tried to trace him as Robert Edward Lloyd. On his birth certificate (26th December 1894) he is called Robert Edward Lloyd His mother was Harriet Rosetta Aldridge. He was illegitimate and presumably the name Aldridge was added later. Someone from the Tharston History group suggested that his surname was actually Aldridge and so I started to trace on that name instead.

The first time he turned up in records was in 1914 when he joined the Army, service no. 22782, enlisting at Gilfach Goch in South Wales on 17th December His trade was a 'banksman' and he was posted to the 3rd Welch. On 2nd June 1915 he was appointed paid L/Corporal. He married May Draper on 13th February 1915, in the Register Office in Cardiff and was living in temporary barracks at the Skating Rink, Cardiff. But his name on the certificate gives his second name as Edwin.

On 6th May 1915 he had a gunshot wound to the head and on 8th August 1915 he was seriously wounded by gunshot in his right shoulder. He was discharged as being no longer fit for service on 15th August 1915. Character – Very Good.

His first child, Robert Samuel, was born in Barry on 23rd April 1917, his second child Maurice Stanley , born in Barry on 26th June 1920, his third child, Raymond, born in Barry

Dock (not literally I hope!) on 3rd March 1923 and his fourth child, Joan, was born in Barry on 1st July 1925. Sadly, Joan died on 6th November 1925.

His Army records showed that he was invalided out because of injuries, gunshot wounds to the head and shoulder. He was awarded the Silver Medal and carried on to join the Territorials until leaving in 1929. He lived in Barry Island and Cardiff during these years.

And that was that as far as I could see. I could find no records for him after 1929 anywhere.

I had my DNA tested last year, something I have been thinking about doing for a while. I am so glad I did. I was contacted by a lovely lady called Louise who was trying to sort out her family tree, in particular her grandfather, George Henry Davies. He appeared to be the 'common ancestor' but had a different name. We now think that Robert Edward Lloyd Aldridge and George Henry Davies is one and the same person.

In the meantime I wrote to someone, via Ancestry, who had Robert in their tree. The gentleman who's tree it was is related through the May Draper line (Robert's wife) his grandmother being the sister of May Draper. Their family knew Robert as 'Uncle Bob'. I was sent a photograph of four men, one of whom was 'Uncle Bob'. The photograph clearly shows Bob with a round badge on his right lapel, which I would assume to be a Silver Medal.

I sent a copy of the photograph to Louise. She showed it to her Aunty Pam, who is George Henry Davies's daughter, and she recognised him. Unfortunately, the living relatives of Bob don't know much about him. I ordered May's death certificate the other day. She died on 2nd March 1958 in Penarth, South Wales. She is stated as being the 'wife of Robert Edwin Aldridge' address unknown, gardener.

It is a real mystery what happened to Robert at the age of 11 after he had shot his mother, where did he live? Was he sent away, if so who did he live with? And why did he enlist in the Army at Gilfach Goch in South Wales, what was the connection there. And finally, what happened to him after he left the Territorials in 1929? Maybe one day we will be able to fill these gaps."

Jane Sharp, April 2020

Some extra Lloyd information



Above is a photograph of William Lloyd, born 1853 (app) in Wacton and died in 1933 (app) in Aslacton. He was the brother of Robert referred to above. He was living with his brother as shown in the 1881 Census and was listed as being a blacksmith.

In their family tree the earlier Lloyds are listed as Lord. It is rumoured the family was told to change their name, which they did from Lord to Lloyd, to appease the vicar of Burgh Apton. The Lord family wanted a service which said there was only one Lord and he didn't come from Norfolk. The vicar said that if the Lords wanted to enter his church ever again they would have to change their name. Over time some of the family retained the Lloyd name whilst others reverted to the original Lord surname.

And so

Undertaking genealogical research into family trees has brought correspondences with a great many people and has informed so much about family history. This story has brought together several people and groups to help expand the story of the Lloyd family. There are numerous presently unanswered questions and unresolved lines of research – hopefully time will sort out some of these and will put more details into the story.

If you have information that relates to the Lloyd family the Tharston History Society would be most pleased to hear from you.

The Tharston History Society

On 27th March 2013 a group of interested individuals met to look into undertaking research into the history of the village of Tharston in Norfolk. The instigator was Peter Hubbard who has a fantastic knowledge of the area and was looking to bring together other people with an interest in Tharston and its history. The initial meeting was attended by over 20 people. From this we have started with a small committee of Trustees who will manage the group and try to keep everyone on the path to achieving a superb resource. So Tharston History Society was born, and a website was established to be the hub for the information gathered.

The people the THS were targeting are individuals, groups and education establishments who would like to find out more about the history of Tharston and its people. Through the interest shown we hope that the resource will grow as others become involved by providing information which can be added to this site. Anyone who accesses this site and has any reminiscences of times past or present of life in and around Tharston please make at the link below. We extend a special warm welcome to visitors from across the world.



Website: <https://www.tharston-history-society.com/>

Email contact to: web@tharston-history-society.com

Also a sister site at: <https://www.tasvalleyhistory.net/>



© Nigel Peacock, Jane Sharp and Louise Clydesdale - 2020

**Please note that this document, wholly or in part, may not be copied,
published or altered without first seeking and obtaining the permission
through the T.H.S. at**

<https://www.tharston-history-society.com/contact/>