



WILLIAM EDWARDS

Born - Sketty, Swansea, 3rd May 1892

Died - Beersheba, Palestine, 1st November 1917

William Edwards, a talented young cricketer from Swansea, was amongst a group of Welsh soldiers to be killed in early November 1917 whilst assaulting the western flank of Beersheba in Palestine. The son of a local JP who lived at The Hill in Sketty, his sporting talents were nurtured initially at Harrow with the wicket-keeper/batsman also being coached by Billy Bancroft and his father – the groundsman-professionals at the St. Helen's ground. The youngster duly won a place in the Swansea side before going up to Cambridge. He subsequently represented Trinity Hall at both rugby and cricket, but did not make the University teams besides leaving Cambridge without completing his degree.

After returning to South Wales, William switched his allegiance to Neath, largely because Swansea already had two other talented keepers in Jack Bancroft and Ernie Billings. With greater opportunities at the Neath club, he was able to display his talents with the gloves and in May 1913 when others were unavailable, Edwards was called up by the Glamorgan selectors to keep wicket in the Minor Counties Championship match against Surrey 2nd XI. He didn't let anyone down and in the Glamorgan second innings the youngster top-scored with 37 as Glamorgan hung on for a draw on 93/9.

The following month, he was chosen as the wicket-keeper in the Gentlemen of Glamorgan side which played the Players at Neath – confirmation of his standing as one of the best amateur keepers in South Wales. Later that summer, he was also chosen to play for Glamorgan in their return match with Surrey 2nd XI at the Arms Park, and again he kept very capably.

1914 was a bitter-sweet year for William. On a happy note, it was the year when he married his childhood sweetheart, Miss Aeron Sails, whilst he was chosen once again to keep wicket for the Gentlemen of Glamorgan against their counterparts from Carmarthenshire at Swansea. The two teams met the following week at Stradey Park in Llanelli but this time he was chosen solely as a batsman and therefore had an opportunity to display his seam bowling. He duly claimed a couple of wickets, but tragically it proved to be the final major game in which he appeared.

William duly joined up and became a 2nd Lieutenant in the Glamorganshire Yeomanry. After completing his basic training as a rifleman, Edwards and his colleagues briefly saw action in August 1915 at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli, before time in France as part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and then departing the UK in October 1916 to serve in the Middle East.

He subsequently became a member of the 4th Dismounted Brigade of riflemen in the European Expeditionary Force. After a year in Palestine, William and his colleagues were involved on the assault on Beersheba, with Edwards leading a platoon in an attack on the western flank on October 31st. Tragically, William suffered a major shrapnel wound as his platoon approached the outskirts of the town where well-placed Ottoman artillery were positioned. He failed to recover and died in the early hours of the following day.