

## Cecil Rhodes (1898 – 1962)

Cecil Rhodes, whose mother died when he was not quite seven years old, was born in the Keighley area. After living with his family in Bradford and in Derbyshire he moved, with his father and younger brother, to the Farnhill area.

Not much is known about his war service but it has been established that during that time he was gassed and subsequently hospitalised.

After discharge he married, had a daughter, was a house decorator and lived at various addresses in Ilkley until his death in 1962.

It is possible that Cecil Rhodes, the Private from Farnhill, was named after the Cecil Rhodes, mining magnate and politician in South Africa, who has become a somewhat controversial figure in more recent times.

However, in 1918, a controversy surrounded the Rhodes family, of Farnhill. Father, Arthur, objected strongly to his younger son Norman's conscription – took matters into his own hands and was arrested, fined, and bound over to keep the peace.

### Pre-war life

Cecil Rhodes was born on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1898. The exact location is not known but his birth was registered as being in the Keighley area, and in the 1901 census his family – which consisted of Cecil, his younger brother Norman, and his mother and father – were recorded as living at 299 Bradford Road, Riddlesden.

His father, Albert, was a self-employed cabinet maker, originally from Haworth. His mother, Ethel (nee Parratt), had been born in Otley. They had married at St. Peter's Church in Heysham on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1898.

On 19<sup>th</sup> April 1901, 11 month old Norman Rhodes died and was buried in Riddlesden churchyard. Ethel was already expecting her third child and when another son was born later in the year, in Morecambe, he was also named Norman.

The family appear to have moved away from the area for a few years after 1902. Initially this must have been to somewhere in the North Bierley civil registration district, which included parts of Leeds and Bradford. It was here that another son, Sydney, was born to the family in 1904.

They then moved to Chapel-en-le-Frith, in Derbyshire, and lived in a house in the Market Place. Here, in November 1905, both Cecil's mother and his brother Sydney died. They were buried, together, on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1905; Ethel was 28 years old, Sydney was 14 months.



No Photo Available

By the time of the 1911 census Cecil, his father, and brother Norman, had moved to Crosshills and were living at Hardings Houses, with a servant. The 13 year-old Cecil and nine year-old Norman were both still at school.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.							
<small>Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink. The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, than the preparation of Statistical Tables.</small>							
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.	BIRTHPLACE of every person.	
1. Albert Rhodes	Head	39 M	Married	2	General Practitioner	York	York
2. Cecil Rhodes	Son	13 M			School	York	York
3. Norman Rhodes	Son	9 M				York	York
4. Agnes Routhstone	Servant	44 F	Single			York	York

Extract from the Rhodes family's 1911 census return  
Used under licence from the National Archive

The family subsequently moved to 56 Starkey Lane, Farnhill, sometime between 1915 and 1918.

## Cecil Rhodes during WW1

There is no doubt that Cecil Rhodes volunteered to serve in WW1 – otherwise his name would not have been included in the Farnhill Parish Council Roll of Honour. However, it has not been possible to say when, where, or how he served.

There are only two pieces of evidence that show Cecil saw active service. The first comes from the 1918 electoral roll for Farnhill. This recorded him as an absent voter, on the register for 56 Starkey Lane, and eligible to vote because of his military or naval service.

The second piece of evidence is the only newspaper report that mentions Cecil. It suggests that he was in the army.

**Private Cecil Rhodes, son of Mr. Rhodes, Starkey Lane, Farnhill, has been gassed (slightly) and sent to hospital at the base.**

From Craven Herald, 13/5/1918  
By kind permission of Craven Herald

There is an interesting anecdote from the war period concerning Cecil's father and the conscription of Cecil's younger brother Norman. The following is a precis of a report published in the Craven Herald (18/1/1918). [Full report here.](#)

Early in 1917, with compulsory conscription in force, Norman Rhodes was called up for military service. Perhaps feeling that he had already given up one son and unwilling to risk another, Albert Rhodes appealed to a local military tribunal for an exemption on behalf of his son, but it was turned down and Norman was ordered to join the Army.

Like the Rhodes family, the chairman of the tribunal that considered this case, Rural District Councillor George Bottomley, also lived in Farnhill. Albert Rhodes subsequently held Bottomley personally responsible for his son's safety and over the following months he repeatedly threatened him with dire consequences if Norman came to any harm. This included saying that he was not afraid to die and would "do Bottomley in" and that he would "swing for him" if his boy was sent to face winter in the trenches.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1918 Albert received a letter from Norman saying that he was going to be shipped over to France within a very few days. Later that day he accosted Bottomley in the street, shouting "I shall go [deleted] mad. I give you fair warning that I shall have my revenge. You will have to suffer with me – I will 'do you in'. My son would never have joined the army if he hadn't been sent; you are the man that sent him and I shall hold you responsible. The Tribunal is, like the war, a [deleted] fraud."

The police were called, Albert Rhodes was arrested, and appeared before Skipton Magistrates on 14<sup>th</sup> January. He admitted threatening Mr. Bottomley, but persisted in voicing his belief that he was fully justified. He took some persuading to agree to cease troubling Mr. Bottomley in the future, but was eventually bound over to keep the peace for six months with a personal surety of £50 and surety of £25 from another person.

Norman Rhodes survived the war (see later).

## Post-war life

After the war, Cecil returned to Farnhill and lived with his father at 56 Starkey Lane. However, at the time of the 1921 he appears to have been living as a boarder in a house in Ilkley; he was working as a House Painter.

In 1923 both Cecil and his father set up home together in Ilkley. At about the same time Norman married Annie Longbottom and they eventually set up home in Shipley.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 1929 Cecil Rhodes, a painter, married Florence Julia Greenfield Day at Ilkley Parish Church. Florence had been born in South Africa.

Both Cecil and Florence gave home addresses in Ilkley, and Cecil's witness was his brother Norman.

Any Correctional Notes must be written in this margin.

Col. 2. for Cecil near Cecil C.P.M.

Column —	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
151	May 18 <sup>th</sup> 1929	Cecil Rhodes	31	Bachelor	Painter	1 Railway Terrace Ilkley	Albert Rhodes	Cabinet Maker
		Florence Julia Greenfield Day	31	Spinster		25 Leamington Victoria Ilkley	John Edward Greenfield Day (South Africa)	Postman

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by Norman Rhodes after Banns by me, C. J. Names

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Cecil Rhodes and Florence Julia Greenfield Day in the Presence of us, Norman Rhodes and Lena Wilkinson Vicar

Rhodes – Day marriage certificate (the vicar couldn't get his name right !)

(c) Crown Copyright

The couple set up home at 25 Leamington Terrace, Ilkley – the address that Florence gave on the marriage certificate. Albert, Cecil's father, lived with them for a while.

Cecil and Florence had a daughter, Jean, born on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1931.

In 1935 Cecil, Florence and Jean moved to 18 Ash Grove, Ilkley. This was their address in 1939 when the register was taken to enable ration cards to be issued at the start of WW2. On this register Cecil gave his occupation as Foreman House Decorator.

In 1960 Jean Rhodes married Joseph S. Binns, somewhere in the Wharfedale area.

Cecil Rhodes of 18 Ash Grove, Ilkley, died on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1962.

## **Postscript**

Florence Rhodes died in 1976, in the Skipton area.

Jean and Joseph Binns are thought to have had at least one child and it is possible that descendants of Cecil Rhodes still live in the Ilkley area.

## Cecil Rhodes – a life in summary

**Born:** 20/12/1898, Keighley (Registration district)  
**Died:** 5/5/1962 **Aged:** 63  
**Home address:** 18 Ash Grove, Ilkley

### Parents

**Father:** Albert; b. 1872, Haworth; d. 1938, North Bierley (Registration district)  
**Mother:** Ethel (nee Parratt); b. 1878, Otley; d. 1905; buried 13/11/1905, Chapel-en-le-Frith  
**Married:** 20/7/1898, Heysham, St. Peter

### Siblings

Norman (I); b. 1900, Keighley; d. 19/4/1901, Keighley (Registration district)  
Norman (II); b. 1901, Morecambe; m. Annie Longbottom, 1923, Keighley (Registration district);  
d. 20/11/1957, Shipley  
Sydney; b. 1904 North Bierley (Registration district); d. 1905; buried 13/11/1905, Chapel-en-le-Frith

### WW1 service

Service details not known.

### Marriage

**Wife:** Florence Julia Greenfield Day; b. 29/6/1898 (or possibly 27/1/1897), Natal South Africa;  
d. 1976, Staincliffe (Registration district)  
**Date:** 18/5/1929, Ilkley

### Children

Jean; b. 12/7/1931, Wharfedale (Registration district);  
m. Joseph Binns, 1960, Wharfedale (Registration district)

