

## Frank Kirby VC

## Thame Connections

Frank Howard Kirby was born in Thame on 12 November 1871 and was baptised at St Mary's Church in Thame on 13 December 1871, the fourth son of Mr William Henry and Ada Kirby (*nee* Fuller).

The 1871 census lists William H Kirby as head of a household on the south side of Thame High Street, with his profession as an Ironmonger's Assistant. Unfortunately the census does not give a house number or complete address but indicates that the properties either side were occupied in the names of Holloway and Pearce.

By the 1881 census the Kirby family had moved on but Holloway and Pearce were still in residence and their addresses were given as 17 High Street and Seven Stars respectively. The Seven Stars is known to have been a Public House (now Dominos Pizza) two doors up from 17 High Street, so it can be concluded beyond reasonable doubt that the Kirby family lived at 18 High Street (now Wavertree) when Frank was born.

Another child, Herbert Baile Kirby, was later born to William and Ada and was baptised at St Mary's on 23 February 1874 so the family were still in residence at that time.

By 1881, the next census, the Kirby's had moved to 224 Crystal Palace Road, Camberwell, but in 1887 were back in Thame, this time living and running an Ironmongery business at 3 High Street (*source Kellys Directory 1887*) and in the 1891 census William Kirby is still in that trade and at that address. Frank H Kirby, aged 19, is also recorded at that address and in the profession of Ironmonger's Traveller.

Alleyn's School in Dulwich record that Frank was one of their first pupils, starting in September 1882 and leaving in July 1884 when his parents moved away. This possibly indicates the date of their return to Thame.

### Conclusion

Frank Howard Kirby was born to parents living at 18 High Street, Thame and was resident at that address as an infant for (at least) two and a quarter years.

He later returned to Thame as a young adult, living at 3 High Street and working in his father's business.

### Footnote

An appealing little vignette from the Bucks Herald in July 1890 also places Frank as living in Thame at that time, when he is reported to have landed a 12lb Pike, measuring a yard from head to tail, while fishing at North Weston.