



	Name:	<b>Lieut Thomas Cecil HIGGINSON Grenadier Guards, 3rd</b>
Age		
	Parents:	<b>Harry Pasley HIGGINSON</b> (born 25 May 1838 in Thormanby, Yorkshire - died 27 Feb 1900 in Wellington, NZ) and <b>Florence KEBBELL</b> (born about 1853 - died 24 Sep 1922 in Tavistock, DEV, ENG)
24	<b>Life Range</b>	<b>1892 - 15 Sep 1916</b>
	Marriage Status:	<b>This person had no relationships and no children</b>
-54	<b>25 May 1838</b>	<b>Birth of Father:</b> Harry Pasley HIGGINSON (born 25 May 1838 in Thormanby, Yorkshire - died 27 Feb 1900 in Wellington, NZ). In Thormanby, Yorkshire.
~-39	<b>Abt 1853</b>	<b>Birth of Mother:</b> Florence KEBBELL (born about 1853 - died 24 Sep 1922 in Tavistock, DEV, ENG).
0	<b>1892</b>	<b>Birth:</b> New Zealand. Registration 1892/2137 ( <i>NZ BDMs Online</i> )
8	<b>27 Feb 1900</b>	<b>Death of Father:</b> Harry Pasley HIGGINSON (born 25 May 1838 in Thormanby, Yorkshire - died 27 Feb 1900 in Wellington, NZ).
22	<b>19 Dec 1914</b>	<b>Will:</b> (Not re-sealed in England). Thomas Cecil Higginson of Wellington, New Zealand, Lt G.G.
23	<b>20 Mar 1915</b>	<b>Commission:</b>
23	<b>26 Jul 1915</b>	<b>Overseas:</b>
24	<b>15 Sep 1916</b>	<b>Death:</b> France. Killed in Action.
		<b>Burial:</b> Thiepval Memorial.
24	<b>20 Sep 1916</b>	<b>Telegram:</b> From War Office. To Mrs Higginson informing her Thomas had been killed in action Sept 15th.
24	<b>25 Sep 1916</b>	<b>Newspapers:</b> NZ Evening Post. News has been received in Wellington that Lieut. T. C. Higginson. Grenadier Guards, was killed in action in France on 14th (sic) September. The late officer was the youngest son of the late Mr H. P. Higginson, C.E., chief engineer to the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company during the construction of the Wellington-Longburn line. Lieut. Higginson went to England last year to offer his services and was immediately given a 2nd Lieutenancy in the 4th Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, and after a period of training in England was sent to the front, and some months later was promoted to 1st Lieutenancy.
24	<b>16 Oct 1916</b>	<b>Times Biography:</b>
24	<b>10 Nov 1916</b>	<b>Newspapers:</b> NZ Evening Post. The younger son of the late H. P. Higginson and of Mrs Higginson (Wellington) came to England about the middle of 1915 and obtained a commission in the 4th Battalion of the Grenadiers. He got another star in December last year and then specialized in machine gun work. It was in this capacity that he met his death on the 15th September, during the memorable advance of the Guards Division, in company with the New Zealanders at High Wood.
	<b>Attached:</b>	MGC. Attached Guards Machine Gun Corps.
	<b>Personal File:</b>	339/48986.
	<b>Siblings:</b>	<b>2/Lt Montagu Wynyard Higginson</b> , NZASC; born 1875 NZ; married Anita Marguerite Hare-Danby 1927 NZ; (served in Europe).

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**Lt Ralph Bingham Higginson**, Royal Engineers; born 1876 NZ; went to England as employee of Union Bank of Australia (was there in March 1919.); married 1915 Sydney, Mary Beatrice Hague.

**Charles Clinton Higginson** born 1878 NZ; married Margaret Stanway Gordon-Glassford 1914 NZ; their son 2/Lt Thomas James Higginson, MM, 6th Field Co. NZ Engineers, died 30 March 1944 on active service.

**Frank Pasley Higginson** born 1880 NZ; died 8 May 1900 NZ

**Maude Cicely Higginson** born 1881 NZ; married **George William McOram Campbell, Capt. RN** later Commander (Destroyer HMS "Obedient" - Battle of Jutland; received Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, for valuable services in command of the First Destroyer Flotilla operating in the Gulf of Finland.) [*Lots on the web about him. Listed in Burkes Landed Gentry of Scotland.*]

**Phyllis Mary Higginson** born 1888 NZ

**School:** Wanganui Collegiate School. New Zealand.

**Next of Kin:** (Mother).  
Mrs Higginson  
National Bank of New Zealand  
London, E.

Later at:  
Nash House  
Lindfield, Sussex

His brother Lt. R. B. Higginson (Royal Engineers) wrote to the W/O 17 March 1919 stating his mother was Thomas nearest relative but at that time she was a confirmed invalid. He asked for the scroll and plaque to be forwarded to him at:

C/- Union Bank of Australia  
71 Corn Hill  
London

**Sources:** <http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/Cenotaph/35210.detail>  
NZ Electoral Rolls - Occupation

**Brothers:** Youngest of 5.  
Brothers Survived 2: 2/Lt NZASC; Lt RE  
Other brothers 2: 1 Died 1900; 1 No Evidence of service (Son died WW2)

**Father's Occupation:** ENG: Engineer, Civil.

**Siblings:** ? 2 Living Sisters

**Empire/Overseas:** Born. New Zealand.

**Occupation:** CLERK.

**Decorations:** Star.

General Notes:

**Photo from:**

<http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/Cenotaph/35210.detail>

Full Name Thomas Cecil Higginson

Rank Last Held Lieutenant

Forename(s) Thomas Cecil

Surname Higginson

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War World War I, 1914-1918  
 Other Units 4th Battalion, Grenadier Guards  
 Last Unit Served Grenadier Guards, 3rd Battalion, attached Guards Machine Gun Company  
 Place of Death Somme, France  
 Date of Death 15 September 1916  
 Age at Death 24  
 Cause of Death Killed in action  
 Memorial Name Thiepval Memorial, Authuille, Somme, France  
 Memorial Reference Pier and Face 8 D.

ntbl Biographical Notes Son of Harry Pasley Higginson, and Florence Higginson. "Here from the beginning of 1908 for two years, fell in action in France September 15th, 1915. He was sheep-farming at the outbreak of war, but gave this up and left for England in December, 1914. There he was immediately given a 2nd Lieutenancy in the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards, and after a period of training was sent over to France attached to a machine gun battalion. Some months later he received his promotion to first lieutenancy." (In Memoriam, 1914-1918 [Wanganui Collegiate School])  
 Further References In Memoriam, 1914-1918 [Wanganui Collegiate School], Wanganui Chronicle Co. Ltd. [printer], Wanganui, 1919[?]

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***His parents married in New Zealand in 1874.***

***His mother was living in Richmond, Surrey in 1919.***

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**Father: Harry P. Higginson:**

The railway line between Wellington and Longburn was constructed by the Wellington & Manawatu Railway Company (W&MRC). The Company was formed after earlier government projects to form a rail link to the west coast stalled and were abandoned. A number of surveyors were involved in formulating the early stages of the project; their work was handed over to Harry Pasley Higginson. Higginson was born in England in 1838 and undertook his engineering apprenticeship under Sir William Fairburn from 1855-1859. He worked on railways in Russia, Mauritius, India and England before coming to New Zealand in 1872 to take up an appointment as superintending engineer for railways and other public works in the South Island. In 1878 he went into private practice. He was involved in a number of railway, waterworks and other engineering projects before being appointed to the W&MRC project in 1882. Following completion of the line he became engineer-manager of the Wellington Gas Works. He died in 1889. One of the share holders of the W&MRC, C.T. Richardson believed that the line was a monument to Higginson's '...energy and skill, and no man could have a better monument.'

Higginson was appointed Chief Engineer for the project on 4 April 1882. His contract was expected to be completed within five years from 25 September 1882, allowing six months for him to review all the previous survey work, finalise the layout and designs and let the first contracts for the work. He took on two engineering assistants '96 the Fulton brothers Arthur and James '96 to assist with overseeing the project. Responsibility was divided between the Fultons, with James given charge of the northern section from Longburn to Waikanae and Arthur the difficult southern section, which included the line between Kenepuru and Paekakariki. The work proceeded well and the line was ultimately commissioned six months ahead of schedule. Higginson retired at the completion of the line and Arthur Fulton took over the Chief Engineer's role. Arthur died of typhoid fever in 1889 and was succeeded by his brother James. James Fulton was followed by his assistant James Marchbanks, who remained Chief Engineer and Locomotive Superintendent until the line was sold to the government in 1908.

**FROM:** [<http://www.pcc.govt.nz/About-Porirua/Porirua-s-heritage/Porirua-s-Rail-Heritage/History-of-the-railway-line-through-Porirua>]

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**Man who hunted the dead dodo**

The dodo may be dead - so dead, in fact, as to have become the stuff of proverb - but at least the unfortunate flightless bird is not forgotten. And for that, we may have the son of a North Yorkshire clergyman to thank. Harry Pasley Higginson was a true Victorian. Born on May 25, 1838 and brought up in Thormanby, North Yorkshire, where his father was a vicar, he trained in that most Victorian of professions, civil engineering. His first job was in Latvia, helping to construct the Riga to Dunaberg railway. Then, in 1862, he pitched up on the remote Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, to help build its first railways. The young engineer, like many Victorians, had a healthy curiosity - and, also like many Victorians, appears to have kept a regular journal. It's this habit that we have to thank for what we know of his part in the discovery of the first dodo bones. When Higginson arrived in Mauritius, the young engineer was well aware he was coming to the home of the semi-mythical bird. Unfortunately, at the time, that's all the dodo was. The first sightings of the famous flightless bird - a member of the pigeon family - were apparently by Portuguese sailors in 1505. The squat, ungainly creature seems to have remained perfectly at home on its isolated island until Mauritius was "re-discovered" by Dutch traders led by Admiral Jacob Cornelis van Neck in 1598. However, Neck apparently kept a journal - now lost - in which he recorded details of the unusual bird - which were used by fellow

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Dutchman Clusius in 1605 as the basis for a picture and description in his First Natural History Of The World. The dodo had entered the scientific literature - but already its days were numbered. By the 1660s, the helpless bird - unused to defending itself against any kind of predator - had been driven to extinction by a combination of humans hunting and eating it and the introduction to the island of rats, deer, goats and, in particular, monkeys and pigs, which are notoriously fond of eggs. After its extinction, knowledge of the dodo was based chiefly on drawings from the 16th and 17th centuries by artists who may never even have seen it. The most famous image was a 1626 painting by Roelandt Savery - and the first dodo book was written by Strickland and Melville in 1848. The only known dodo remains were a head and a foot, kept in Oxford from at least 1656, and a few scattered remnants in some European museums. What made the dodo more fascinating, says Mary Kershaw, director of collections at York Museums Trust, was that no one had encountered any other remains since its extinction. The Victorians questioned the existence of the bird, likening it to the griffin and phoenix. By the time Higginson arrived in Mauritius in 1862, therefore, the dodo had taken on a mysterious, almost mythical status. Not that the engineer was about to let that put him off searching for evidence. **Alastair McOran-Campbell, who has been researching his great-grandfather Harry Higginson's life**, has obtained a copy of the Victorian engineer's travelogue - entitled *Reminiscences of Life And Travel 1859-1872* - which brings his great-grandfather vividly to life, and reveals the part he played in the re-discovery of the dodo. Towards the end of his time in Mauritius, Higginson was strolling along the nearly-completed railway's embankment one morning. "I noticed some coolies removing some peat soil from a small morass," he writes. "They were separating and placing into heaps a number of bones and various sorts among the debris. I stopped and examined them as they appeared to belong to birds and reptiles and we had always been on the lookout for bones of the then-mythical Dodo. So I filled my pocket with the most promising ones for further examination." He took the bones to George Clarke, a Mauritius schoolmaster. Clarke happened to have a book about the dodo - probably the one by Strickland and Melville. "The result showed that many of the bones undoubtedly belonged to the Dodo," Higginson records. "This was so important a discovery that Clarke obtained leave to go out to the morass and personally superintend the search for more. He eventually despatched a large quantity to the British Museum, which sold for several hundred pounds." Richard Owen, the foremost comparative anatomist of the day, formally described the British Museum bones to science. The material was transferred to the Natural History Museum, where the bones can still be seen today. You don't have to travel to London to see dodo bones, however. Higginson, obviously not forgetting his Yorkshire roots, despatched a box full of bones to museums in York, Leeds and Liverpool. The York bones, now in the keeping of the Yorkshire Museum, form the centrepiece of a new exhibition opening at the museum on April 3. *Dust Off The Dodo - Fabulous Finds That Time Forgot* will showcase some of the York Museums Trust's rarely-seen gems and will tell the fascinating stories behind an array of unusual artefacts, many of which have not been on public display for several years.

The story of Higginson's discovery of the dodo bones will be part of a group of exhibits exploring the theme of extinction. It is a story which is, finally, about to receive due recognition. According to Mary Kershaw, Julian Pender Hume of the Natural History Museum, a palaeontologist and dodo expert, plans to write a paper with Higginson's great-grandson Alastair McGoran-Campbell, who lives near Reading, exploring the roles of Higginson and Clarke in the discoveries of the dodo remains. The story of the dodo continues to fascinate to this day. Recent studies and DNA tests in Oxford have led to the discovery of new evidence about the bird, says Mary, suggesting it was faster-moving and sleeker in size than the 16th century artists' images suggest - and that it was closely related to the still-living Nicobar pigeon of South East Asia. But for many the image of the dodo as a slow-moving, slightly overweight character remains, immortalised by the character in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. This book was co-incidentally published in 1865, the same year Higginson found the bones in Mauritius. The author's real name was Charles Dodgson and he regularly took a little girl called Alice to see the dodo remains at Oxford. He was inspired by the dodo head and foot he had seen in the museum, and Dodgson immortalised both Alice and the bird in his book. And what of Higginson himself? He left Mauritius in 1866, says Mary, moved to India, then to New Zealand where he became chief railway engineer and settled for the rest of his life. **A stained glass window has been built in the Cathedral at Wellington in New Zealand, in recognition of his work as a civil engineer. In one of its panels, unmistakable in its squat ungainliness, stands - a dodo.**  
[York Press Monday, 23 February 2004]