42. Lieutenant Philip Alfred Durlacher, MC, age 27

Lieutenant Philip Alfred Durlacher, MC, was born in Fulham in 1891 to parents Alfred, a dealer in works of art, and Hilda Durlacher. He was schooled at Uppingham and appears to have taken part in the War from at least April 1916, when he was promoted from Private in the West Kent Yeomanry (Territorials) to temporary 2nd Lieutenant.

On 25th Sept 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross. The London Gazette of 8th Jan 1918 provides this citation:

“For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on two separate occasions. During a hostile attack he visited his guns which were in exposed positions and by his personal example under a heavy barrage encouraged his men to keep their guns in action. On the second occasion he again continued to visit his guns during a hostile attack and assisted his men to carry ammunition across the open to their guns, which were in shell holes. When a gun was knocked out he immediately got it mounted and firing again from another position. It was due to his spirit and fine example that the enemy’s attack was repulsed.”

Sadly, there is a postscript all too common to this era. Other records confirm that he was suffering from a nervous disorder at the time of his death later in the year, when on 12th May he committed suicide whilst of an unsound mind, aged 27. His death certificate confirms that he did this as a direct result of his war service. It would appear that he shot himself in the head with his own loaded revolver whilst staying at the Coburg Hotel, London. His father found him lying dead in his room with a large hole in his head. Philip had been due to marry his fiancée only a few weeks later. He is buried at Brookwood Cemetry