



Charles Mortimer Hobson

93 Kedleston Road

now Shakespeare House

Charles volunteered for active service on the outbreak of war, aged 21. At the time he was at Queens' College, Cambridge, having won a scholarship in 1912. An only child, he attended Derby School (based in St Helen's House) and then St Paul's School, London.



Photograph of Charles as a student at Cambridge

He was posted as temporary 2nd lieutenant with the Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment) in October 1914. He travelled to India to join his regiment in 1915. The regiment spent the war patrolling the North West frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan – an area of great strategic importance to the British occupiers. Charles took part in the Marri Expedition in 1917 and in the Afghan campaign of 1919, returning home with the rank of Captain.

He resumed his studies at Cambridge in January 1920, after a five year break, and was awarded a double first in Classics in June 1921. He planned to practise as a barrister within his uncle's chambers, but his father's death in late 1921 led to change of direction.

Charles came from a family of journalists.

His family were proprietors and editors of The Derbyshire Advertiser which they founded in 1845. There were also family links to the Manchester Guardian and the Financial Times. In 1914 his father purchased the Reading Mercury and Berkshire Chronicle. Charles took over his father's businesses from 1921, editing the Derbyshire Advertiser, while running the Reading group of newspapers as proprietor. From 1952 he took over as editor in Reading.

He married Thecla Ellison, his cousin, in 1925 in what descendants describe as a marriage of convenience. Charles split his time between London, Reading and Derby. They never had a family but he was obviously fond of children, supporting several children's charities. He became chairman of the Children's Hospital on North Street, Derby in 1934 and it was during a visit to Derby to attend the annual fête at Eaton Hill, a Children's Society home for babies and toddlers where he was Chairman, that Charles died suddenly on 15 September 1963.

Described as a charming and thoughtful intellectual "Hobby" was also a keen sportsman. He regularly swam and, at the *Chronicle* offices in Reading, it was a common sight to see bathing shorts and towels drying out of office windows after his daily swim. One friend Allan Grime recalled: "When I lived in Park Grove [Derby] he might be seen in running shorts exercising on the less frequented parts of the neighbourhood, quite unembarrassed and obviously happy."