

**Grange U3A Family and Social History
Group Project on the Grange WW1 War Memorial**



Machine Gun Corps Badge

***A short biography in commemoration of
Arnold Ainsworth 1876 – 1916***

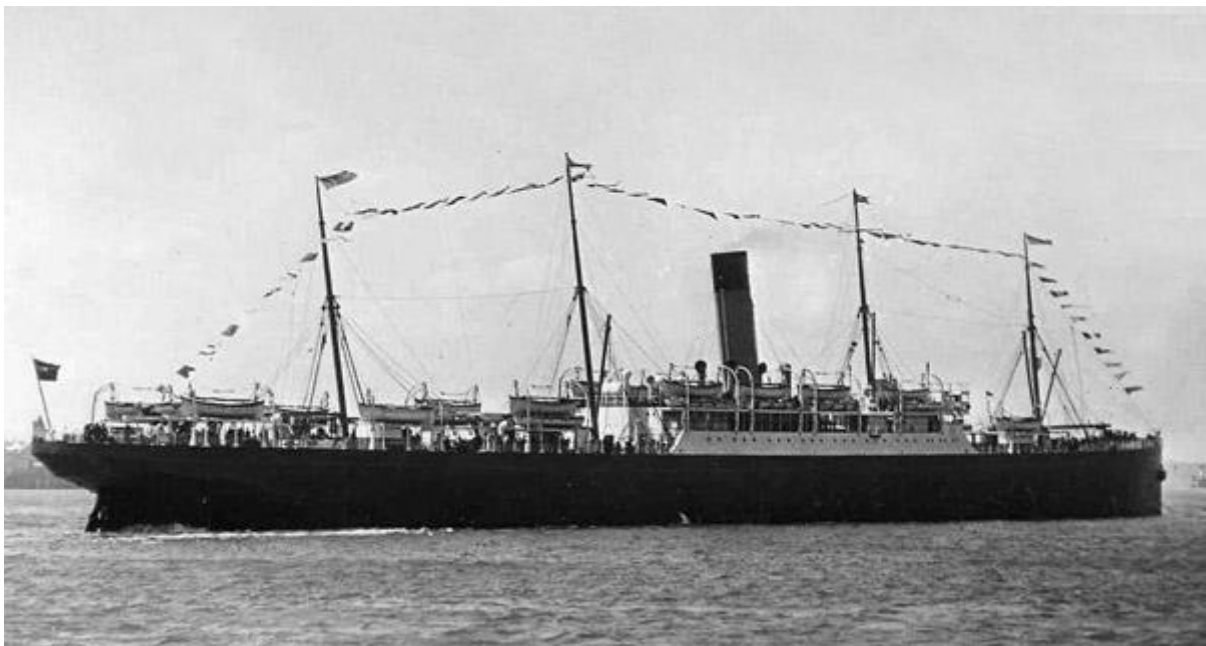
A short biography in commemoration of Arnold Ainsworth 1876 – 1916

Arnold Ainsworth was born in Darwen, Lancashire, on the 13th July 1876, the son of John and Sarah Ann (nee Cowell) Ainsworth. He was probably born either at 108 or 134 Tockholes Road, Over Darwen.

As his father was a Tax Collector and estate agent, it seems likely that Arnold had a good education as did his brother Herbert and their other brothers and sisters.

In 1899 Arnold married Ada Morton and two years later they were living at 5 Leach Street, Over Darwen. Arnold had followed his father and was also an estate agent, insurance agent, collector of taxes and a local preacher. Ada was in woollens as a Hose Knitter.

In 1911 Arnold and Ada were still living at the same address as ten years earlier, but the house was now named "Rydal Mount". Arnold was still in the same business. Ada was still in her old job with the suffix of "Stocking knitter (machine)". They had no living children but sadly had had one still-born daughter.



SS Haverford

On the 16th April 1914 Arnold sailed from Liverpool for Philadelphia on the SS Haverford to visit relatives in America. He wanted to see them before he

enlisted in the Army. This may have been a premonition on his part as he never saw them again.

The following transcript of Arnold's trip has been kindly sent by John Ainsworth, a descendent of the Ainsworth family.

DARWEN NEWS, SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD 1914.

IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

VISITS TO MANY FORMER DARWENERS.

MR. ARNOLD AINSWORTH'S TOUR

Mr. Arnold Ainsworth of this town has just returned home after a most interesting tour in the United States and Canada, during which he had many interesting experiences and renewed acquaintance with several families formerly resident in Darwen. The tour was undertaken in the interest of health, and Mr. Ainsworth's friends will be pleased to hear that it has not been in vain.

The trip extended over four and a half months, Philadelphia being reached on Aril 28th. Eleven miles out is Swarthmore. Here Mr. Albert Ainsworth, uncle of Mr. Arnold Ainsworth, is in residence. Mr. Albert Ainsworth went out from Darwen many years ago and will be remembered as a designer at Belgrave Mills, and Mrs. Ainsworth, as the daughter of Mr. Richard Hothersall, formally a butcher in Bridge Street. Here he probably saw more of the adjacent country than is the privilege of the average English tourist as a result of his uncle's guidance and influence. A singular coincidence was the coming of age of Mr. Albert Ainsworth's second son during Mr. Arnold Ainsworth's stay, and the coming of age of the eldest son three years ago at the time when Mr. And Mrs. John Ainsworth (parents of Mr. Arnold Ainsworth) of this town were also on a visit to Swarthmore.

AT WASHINGTON

While staying at Swarthmore, Mr. Arnold Ainsworth took full advantage of his time and opportunities to visit well known places in the district, Atlantic City, the Blackpool of New Jersey, is probably most notable for its famous boardwalk. This is a boarded promenade eight miles long, and during the holiday season the walk becomes one long stretch of humanity. Atlantic City also contains many fine hotels, the architecture of which is certainly unique but nevertheless full of grandeur. Mr. Ainsworth spent three days in exploring

the attractions of Washington, the American capital. The Congressional Library there is easily the finest building in the States, its elaborate decorations, fine pictures and sculptures and ornamental work being amongst the choicest in the world. "I went through these buildings open-mouthed, as you might say" observed Mr. Ainsworth when discussing the tour with a "Darwen News" representative. "My wonder and amazement grew as I passed through, and it was difficult to conceive that such a fine collection of art could be got together". After the Congressional Library the American Mint claimed attention. Here tourists are permitted to see the process followed in coinage, but from behind iron bars only, as an obstacle which counts for little, however against the privilege of being able to watch operations at all.

MOUNT VERNON

Mount Vernon, the home of the late General Washington, invariably attracts the attention of tourists and it did so with Mr. Ainsworth. "This", he said, "is a very fine place. The grounds are most extensive yet very simply arranged and planned. A tour of the house is particularly interesting. Nothing is denied visitors even the privilege of seeing the late General's bedroom". The city of Washington itself is very finely laid out, the streets being arranged so that where they intersect large open spaces are left and these are elaborately planted and some arranged as recreation grounds. One fact struck Mr. Ainsworth very forcibly whilst being in the States and Canada, and that was the limited rainfall. Although he took an umbrella with him this was never required. This does not mean that there was no rain; there was a little, but there were none of those numerous outbursts we are accustomed to in this country. No visit to this part of the States would be complete which did not embrace the famous Falls of Niagara. Mr. Ainsworth decided to (*cut in paper*) trip but previously carried out a portion of the programme he had originally drawn up including visits to New York and the Fall River district.

Reaching New York on his journey to Massachusetts with a few hours time to while away, advantage was taken of the opportunity to gaze upon the wonders of this American centre of activity. From the noted aquarium, housing all varieties of fish known from the minnow to sea lions and porpoises, attention was directed to the handsome customs house, and in turn to the famous Broadway with its noted sky-scrappers. No longer can the famous Singer building lay claim to the highest in the world for a rival firm has gone one better with the Woolworth building. The famous Brooklyn Bridge and an adjoining bridge is the centre of one of the most ingenious tramway tracts it is possible to conceive. This is arranged on the principle of the well-known pinwheel of Guy Fawkes fame; save that having completed the journey on the outer circle, the

cars enter the next circle and in turn the third circle until the centre of the network is reached.

AT FALLS RIVER

Mr. Ainsworth arrived at Falls River on the very day that the re-union of former Darweners was taking place in the adjoining district of New Bedford. "This re-union was noted in the "Darwen News" at the time. At Fall River he called upon members of the Walsh family who prior to emigrating about four years ago resided in Jepson Street. Mrs. Walsh will be remembered as the sister of Mrs. Robert Jepson, of Duckworth Street. Next he saw Mr. And Mrs. F.J. Kendall. Mrs. Kendall was a daughter of the late Mr. Benjamin (Benny) Whalley, and visiting America about nineteen years ago, met Mr. Kendall to whom she was married without returning home. Whilst staying at Fall River Mr. Ainsworth visited Boston and Rhode Island, and there met an old Darwen family in Mr. And Mrs. Kershaw and their daughter, and Mrs. Mottshaw, who married a son of the late Mr. John Mottshaw. "(Rhode Island) is a very mixed sort of place, and is well known as a manufacturing town principally. Leaving the boat I could see nothing but cotton mills and works, and the first impressions of the town itself once we had stepped ashore were not very bright ones. I had to pass through the Portuguese portion of the town and the Portuguese are numerous. They live in tumbled down ramshackle built places of wood with streets unpaved and pathways unflagged. My first impressions, fortunately, were soon superceded because as I further penetrated the town I found many handsome buildings, modern property and very attractive residential districts.

AT THE FALLS

Having again returned to Swarthmore Mr. Ainsworth set out for the Falls. From Philadelphia a twelve hours' ride through the beautiful Lahigh Valley, where for a great part of the journey the train describes horseshoe curves amongst beautiful wooded hills, brought Buffalo within reach and once at Buffalo, Niagara is close at hand. It was midnight when the latter town was reached and when Mr. Ainsworth retired for the night he was at first very much impressed by what sounded to be a large engine revolving at a tremendous number of revolutions per minute. The noise was none other than that produced by the Falls which Mr. Ainsworth was gazing upon in all their majesty and splendour by as early as eight o'clock the following morning. Several hours were spent in viewing this wonderful force of water from various points of vantage and to use Mr. Ainsworth's own words "The longer the gaze, the more magnificent the sight and the greater the wonder of their great natural creation. From the Falls, the journey --- via Lake Ontario to Toronto. Her Mr. Ainsworth stayed with Mr

and Mrs. James Ratcliffe, formerly of Darwen. When in residence here Mr. Radcliffe was engaged as a joiner, in Toronto he conducts a very successful business as a joiner and builder. Other former Darweners seen in Toronto were Mrs., Miss and Mr. Philip Wilson, the former the widow of the late Mr. Joseph Wilson; also Mr. Jack Fretwell who is Mrs. Wilson's brother, and engaged now as a builder on his own account. The latter married a Darwen lady in the person of Miss Holland. Mr. And Mrs. Joseph Lomax and Mr. And Mrs. Harry Golborne were also visited, and Darwen of the past was naturally lived over again. Leaving Toronto Mr. Ainsworth took the boat for Montreal via the "Thousand Islands" and the St. Lawrence Rapids, which furnish a fine sight and not a little excitement. At Montreal he crossed the river to Valleyfield where he visited Mr. And Mrs. Clarkson who when in Darwen, resided in Elizabeth Terrace. Mr. Ainsworth arrived at Quebec to find the town en fete on the occasion of the visit of the Roman Catholic Archbishop and it was indeed a great occasion. To Fredericton was the next journey in the programme, and here difficulties were encountered. The railway station was crowded and it was with considerable difficulty that accommodation was secured on the train. To add to the unpleasantness the journey took from two o'clock in the afternoon to eight o'clock the following morning. This train, known as the Maritime Express, is noted for its punctuality, but on this particular occasion it was just three hours late and the result was that Mr. Ainsworth was too late for the only train which leaves Chatham Junction each day for Fredericton 125 miles away.

Making the best of matters he secured accommodation in the village and encountered the first annoying incident of the journey. The annoyance was comparatively small, it is true, but nevertheless Mr. Ainsworth would rather have been without it. Screened windows are the rule in most parts of Canada in the summer to avoid the mosquito pest. Unfortunately the bedroom which Mr. Ainsworth occupied for the night at Chatham Junction was not mosquito proof, a small hole in the screen being sufficient to attract the attention of these marauders, and in they came, whistle, whistle, whistle, all night long in their daring to inflict their poisonous sting. Mr. Ainsworth was not sorry when next morning the time to rise came, but even then he had only had a taste of what had yet to come from these troublesome pests. But of that anon.

AT NEW BRUNSWICK

Arriving at Fredericton, New Brunswick, Mr. Ainsworth was welcomed by his brother-in-law, the Rev. Joseph Ainsworth formerly of Darwen. Mr. Ainsworth has charge of four churches in the district of Maugerville, a small town on the banks of the river St. John. The churches are scattered and when officiating at one of them the Sunday's services necessitate leaving home on Saturday

morning and returning on the Monday. Maugerville is very well situated with the river on the one side and dense pine woods on the other. It was when amongst the woods that the mosquitoes inflicted upon Mr. Ainsworth the greatest suffering. The insects alight and poison the flesh without warning and their visitations results in large and painful inflations which are only removed by the application of remedies over the course of several days. Continuing the journey to St. John, Mr. Ainsworth spent an evening with Mr. And Mrs. Walter Brindle, formerly of Duckworth Street. Mr. Brindle is engaged in business at St. John as when in Darwen, and has so far done very well. Whilst here Mr. Ainsworth saw a contingent of the Canadian volunteers leave for barracks. All over Canada after the outbreak of war, the enthusiasm was intense and the loyalty of the people to the Empire. Mr. Ainsworth returned to England by a cargo vessel and arrived in London. A young Scotch-man and himself were the only two civilian passengers and contrary to expectations the vessel was not intercepted until off the South Coast of England, when a British warship called for identity before the journey could be resumed. Mr. Ainsworth is very much impressed by the vastness of the country he visited, by the great loyalty of Canada, and the Canadians to the Empire, and the attractions which the States offer to persons yet to make initial acquaintance with the land of the Stars and Stripes.

So ended Arnold's momentous and memorable trip to America and Canada. It was amazing to read about him visiting so many people from Darwen. It must have taken months to organise, with letters to and fro to ensure he met all those he wanted to visit. Quite what his health problems were, they did not seem to affect his gruelling journey. Two years later he was killed in action.

Arnold initially enlisted with the Liverpool Regiment, but subsequently transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. This pattern of movement from one regiment to another seems to have happened quite often and was probably due to the original battalion of the regiment being a training one, from whence the recruits were sent to where men were needed.

The local newspaper "The Darwen News", had the following article dated Saturday September 30th 1916:

ROLL OF HONOUR CORPORAL ARNOLD AINSWORTH

The death in action is reported of Corporal Arnold Ainsworth, of Rydal Mount, Leach Street, Belgrave Road. The captain of his regiment writes to Mrs Ainsworth as follows:

I very much regret to have to inform you that your husband, Corporal Ainsworth, was killed in action on the 15th inst., while leading his men forward into action against the enemy. I am most extremely sorry to have lost your husband. He was one of the best and most trustworthy N.C.O's in my company, and always willing to do any dangerous task. About a month ago I had offered to make him a sergeant, but he asked time to think the offer over. He was also thoroughly liked and respected by all the officers, N.C.O's and men in the Company, and will be missed by everyone. He was buried on the battle-field by his men in a spot which he had just helped to capture from the enemy”.

Another article appeared in the Darwen News which gave a very detailed description of Arnold's life and work. This ties in very closely with the report on his trip to the States and Canada.



CORPORAL ARNOLD AINSWORTH

Another article appeared in the Darwen News which gave a very detailed description of Arnold's life and work.

CORPORAL ARNOLD AINSWORTH

Corporal Ainsworth, who was 40 years of age, was a well-known townsman, being the son of Mr John Ainsworth, of Post Office Chamber, with whom he was in business as estate agent and tax collector. He enlisted voluntarily in a Liverpool regiment, and was latterly in the machine gun section. Before joining the army Corporal Ainsworth moved in many public circles. He was for many years identified with the United Methodist Church and Sunday School, where, amongst other official positions, he was a local preacher, Sunday school superintendent, and Sunday school secretary. Interested in amateur theatricals, he was on many occasions a performer at the annual Cafe Chantants, and was also prominent in temperance circles, being connected with the old Temperance Society. Corporal Ainsworth was one of the promoters locally of the Athlete Volunteer Force, and was treasurer up to the time of enlistment. During the long number of years that Mr John Ainsworth was secretary to the Agricultural Association Corporal Ainsworth was closely identified with the work, and during the latter years he was assistant secretary. By his untimely end a promising career is cut short, and, indeed, the supreme sacrifice has been made.

Mr and Mrs John Ainsworth, the parents of Corporal Ainsworth, have this week received the following letter from the United Methodist Church, with which Corporal Ainsworth was so closely associated:-

At a meeting of the church and congregation, held last evening (September 27th, 1916) the following resolutions was unanimously passed:

“That we place on record our deep regret at the loss of Corporal Ainsworth, who was killed in action, when leading his men against the enemy on Friday, 15th, September, 1916, somewhere in France, and we convey to Mrs Arnold Ainsworth and Mr and Mrs John Ainsworth, and his family, our sincere sympathy with them in their bereavement.

“This meeting remembers with thankful appreciations the late Corporal Ainsworth’s lifelong association with our church and school, his interest in every department of our life and work, and the many years of faithful and willing service he has rendered as teacher, secretary, superintendent, choir-master of the Band of Hope, leader, and local preacher. “It rejoices to know that by his heroic courage and conscientious devotion to the perilous duties of his calling, he has won the confidence and esteem of the officers and men of his Company; recognises that in his death he has made the supreme sacrifice for his King, his country, humanity, and the Kingdom of God; and prays that the Divine consolation may be given to those whose hearts are stricken by his

loss". We forward the above in the hope that you may derive a little comfort in your sorrow from the knowledge of the sympathy of your many friends. On behalf of the meeting, Yours sincerely, H.C. Renshaw (Chairman), James A.Greenwood, (Secretary).

The above notes clearly show the regard in which Arnold was held by his local community. The following notes are as accurate as I can make of his army career and final day.

Arnold originally joined the 3rd Battalion the King's Own Liverpool Regiment. This was a training battalion which then sent troops off to various other active regiments and battalions. It seems likely that Arnold, having completed his basic training may have opted to join the newly formed Machine Gun Corps formed in October 1915.

A training centre was formed at Belton Park and Harrowby Camps, Grantham, Lincolnshire. Volunteers arrived from many parts of the Army from mid-November 1915. Thirty-six companies were raised and sent overseas within three months. When a volunteer arrived from another regiment they were re-allocated a new number, hence Arnold's number changed from 3/30383 to 3328. It would seem, from the notes above, that Arnold became a corporal quite early on, as between arriving in France and his death, he was in line to be a sergeant.

Arnold was assigned to the 46th Machine Gun Corps Company attached to the 46th Infantry Brigade, which was itself part of the 15th (Scottish) Division. The Company joined the Division on the 11th February 1916 in France.

The gunners usually took on the brigade or battalion identification when attached. In 1916 the corps was attached to the 15th Division and took part in the attack and capture of Martinpuich. In the notes above it was stated that Arnold was killed leading his men and that, "*He was buried on the battle-field by his men in a spot which he had just helped to capture from the enemy.*" Martinpuich was the only village captured that day although there was action by the 15th in another area.



Martinpuich after the battle on the 15th September 1916

Having buried Arnold on the battlefield his grave would have been marked with whatever material they had. Unfortunately, like many others buried in areas with constant shelling and movement, such graves were often lost. Hence Arnold is mentioned on the Thiepval Memorial Panel C on the Somme.



Thiepval Memorial, The Somme. (CWGC)

Acknowledgements: John Ainsworth for extensive material from his archives.

Author: David Clapp