

Family History Research Group

Newsletters 56-57

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Family History Research Group
Newsletter Fifty-Six



Wilfred Howard Henshaw

born 7/11/1881 Whittle-le-Woods Lancashire

died 30/12/14 age 33 - Aachen Belgium - prisoner of war WW1

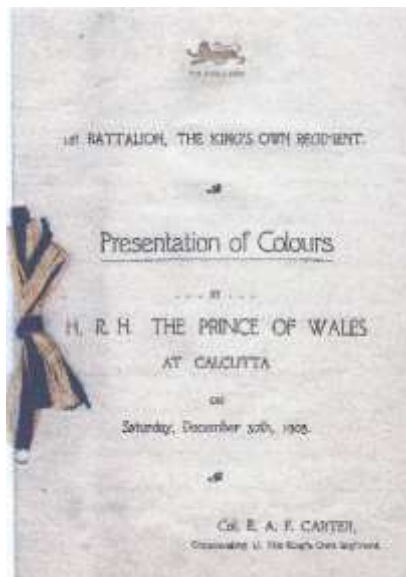
Dianne Rawcliffe nee Henshaw

I recently researched my grandfather's World War One history for my grandson Charlie aged eleven. As part of his school history lesson about the war, he wanted to join in with details of the involvement of his family. While undertaking the research I discovered that Wilfred Howard Henshaw Wilfred had previously served in the army for 8 years. He volunteered to re-join at the outbreak of war.

He was born to William John, a Stone Mason and Elizabeth Henshaw his wife. They came from Cheshire so that he could help to build the church of St John's Whittle-le-Woods, they stayed in the area for the rest of their lives.

Wilfred left school when he was eleven or twelve and was apprenticed to a Joiner in Lancaster (where they say the best joiners were trained). At the end of his apprenticeship, he wanted to see something of the world so served 8 years with the King's Own Lancaster Regiment on foreign service in Calcutta India. The family remembers that he sent the most interesting letters back home detailing all the wonders he had seen in India - the opulence of some parts, magnificent palaces, Maharajahs riding elephants, beautiful scenery and yet such heart-breaking poverty, starvation, malnutrition, and disease among a great many of the lower classes. Wilfred who had been brought up in a church-going Christian family back in Whittle-le-Woods, did his best to learn the language and help the disadvantaged. He wrote and told his then girl-friend Nancy (later to become his wife), that he had to do something to help these poor wretched people. He joined a group of Plymouth

Brethren and spent all his spare time helping them in their endeavours to feed the people, educate them and get the children off the streets. During his time in Calcutta, the Prince of Wales visited and presented the regiment with new Colours.



On returning home he married Nancy Alice Fairbrother at St John's Church Whittle- Woods in 1910 when he was 29. They moved to Nelson in East Lancashire where Wilfred worked as a joiner on church buildings for 3 years before joining the police force. A son, Walter Howard Henshaw was born 17th May 1913.

After leaving India, my grandfather kept in touch with the Plymouth Brethren group helping them raise funds for relief of the Indian poor.

'Your Country Needs You'

When World War One broke out, Wilfred volunteered for duty and joined the 3rd Regiment of the first battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment at Preston on the 6th August 1914 and was allocated Service Number 2645. In September 1914 he proceeded to France as Lance Corporal with Captain Sydney Thomas Lucey with whom he served in India. They joined the Regiment as part of The British Expeditionary Force, all looking very fit and ready for action. *"the Regiment now stands 14 Officers and 895 other ranks"* Captain Lucey wrote the diary which detailed day to day exactly what they encountered on a daily basis. During trench fighting during December 1914, many of those fighting perished and those who survived were taken prisoner. Wilfred died later of his injuries in a P.O.W. camp.

"The losses of December 1914 were bitter; they had been incurred for no tactical gain and for Command objectives that were known to be uncertain and questionable. Many potential leaders and seasoned regular troops were lost men who would have been a vital backbone for the new armies that would come in 1915." (Extract from the diary kept throughout the conflict by Captain Lucey)


Wilfred's family know that his Widow received a letter from Captain Lucey commending his bravery, his leadership of his platoon consisting of young inexperienced men, the way he led them "over the top" into battle time and time again and was glad to have him by his side in dealing with the Indian soldiers.

Nancy was left with baby Walter without any income (War Widows Pension was only implemented later) and moved back to Whittle-le-Woods with her young son. She lived with her bachelor brother for the rest her life and led a campaign to get Widows Pension eventually receiving 15/- per week.

The Plymouth Brethren offered her support and later, when Walter developed Polio paid for his medical treatment and much later provided his education and then employment. Nancy and Walter were never members of the Sect but for the whole of her life afterwards Nancy became a devout Christian.

When I was very young Grandma Nancy used to get out her box of letters and photos Wilfred had sent her from his time in India and I was captivated by them all. Sadly, no one knows what happened to the box and its contents. Only the Programme of the Presentation of Colours has survived along with the photograph of Wilfred, cuttings from the newspaper of him being missing and then a report of his death.

A SINCERE CHRISTIAN.
FORMER NELSONIAN'S DEATH.
As briefly stated in Saturday's issue, news was received last Thursday of the death of Lance-Corporal Wilfred Henshaw, of the 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, and formerly of Stafford-street, Nelson. His widow, who is left with one child, now resides at Whittle-le-Woods, near Chorley.
Mrs. Henshaw learns that her husband took part in an action on December 22, and was posted as missing some weeks after. Word, however, came last week that he had actually died of wounds on December 30th. In a letter she has received, a soldier comrade who knew him said that Lance-Corporal Henshaw was a most sincere Christian, did his duty well, and



also did much good work among the troops.
Lance-Corporal Henshaw was 33 years of age, and had served eight years with the King's Own Lancaster Regiment on foreign service. On going on reserve he joined the police force for a short time. By trade, however, he was a joiner, having worked for Mr. Jackson Bailey, of Nelson, for over three years. He volunteered for duty when the war broke out, and joined the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment on August 6th at Preston. From there he went to Felixstowe, and on September 22nd proceeded to France.

King's Own Lancaster Regiment

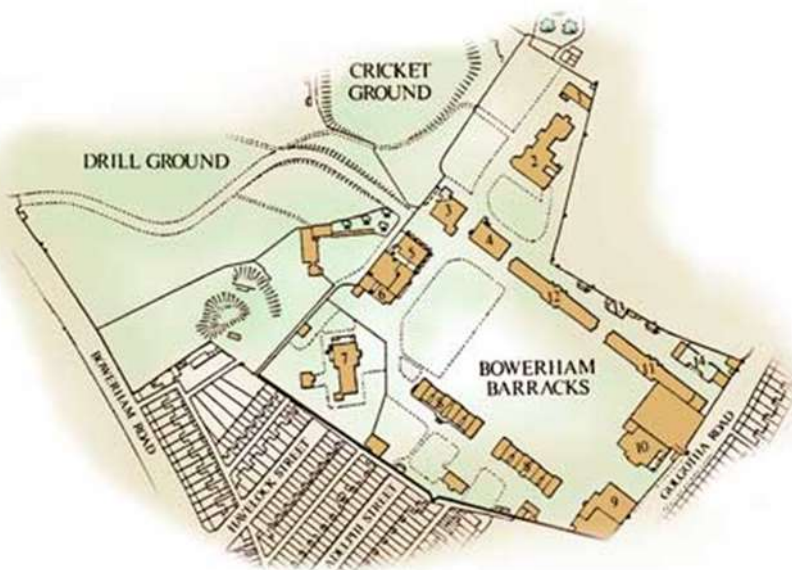
Janice



Dianne's grandfather probably enlisted at Lancaster and then reported for duty at Bowerham Barracks, situated on a hill to the south of the city. This really interested me because I spent rather a lot of time there in my younger days.

Uniform of a private in the King's Own Royal Regiment c1903

The Barracks was built as part of a reorganisation of the Army by the Secretary of State for War, Edward Cardwell, after the disastrous failures during the Crimean War (1854-1856). In 1873 the King's Own Royal Regiment was allocated to Lancaster and the site at Bowerham was completed in 1880. The main function of Bowerham Barracks, as Regimental Depot, was to provide recruits with their basic training. This function continued until the 1950's.



1. Stables
2. Officers' Mess
3. The Keep - Armoury and Stores
4. Drill Shed
5. Guard Room
6. Offices
7. Hospital
8. Married Quarters
9. Shops and Stores
10. Sergeants' Mess and Canteen
11. Brooke Barrack Block
12. Hodgson Barrack Block
13. Cookhouse
14. Quartermaster's Stores

So, why did I spend time there? My first visit took place in 1967 after our A level Religious Education teacher passed informed us about a weekend vocational conference for those interested in joining the nursing profession, teaching, or

entering the ministry. It was to take place at St. Martin's College Lancaster, one of the training establishments on my shortlist so off I went with some of my friends.

In the 1960's the site was acquired by the Lancaster Training College (Church of England) and later became the College of St. Martin. The name adopted was appropriate as St. Martin is the patron saint of soldiers, he was a Roman soldier who converted to Christianity. Many of the original very fine barrack buildings had been repurposed and wonderful new facilities put up. I loved the feel of the place, saw all opportunities the college offered and the advantage of being in walking distance of an historic town. By the end of the weekend, I decided that it was the place I wanted to continue my education. During my time there, my hall of residence had once been the married quarters.

I have very few photos of myself at college, developing and printing was very expensive and I hated having my picture taken. After this photo appeared in a newspaper, I became very sceptical of anything appearing in the press. I had heard that my friend's parents were in the art department with her. Mum had sent some things up to college with Elsie and I had rushed over to collect the goodies. Before I knew what was happening, my hand was placed on the loom and told to look as if I knew what I was talking about.



The keep was turned into the library

The film accessed on the link below begins with footage of preparations for mobilisation at the barracks. It then shows hundreds of young men marching to the railway station, some of them would have been my relatives. You may want to fast forward the film in places as it is rather long.

[Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. Mobilisation in Lancaster and Morecambe, 1914. - YouTube](#)

The King's Own Regiment Museum occupies part of Lancaster Museum which is on my list of places to visit.

Family History Research Group

Newsletter Fifty-Seven



MY GREAT UNCLES

Anne Sheppard

My Grandma, born Marion Noad in 1896 was the eldest of six children, three boys and three girls. Growing up in Cornwall and with a father who was a coastguard stationed at numerous places around the Cornish coast and Southern Ireland, it was almost inevitable that her brothers would look to the sea for their careers. All of them; William John (Will) birth registered 1899 in Penzance, Andrew Stephen (Andy) birth registered 1902 in Polperro and George Edward (Ted) birth registered 1906 in Looe joined the navy as soon as they were able. I have good memories of two of them; Great uncles Andy and Ted. When we were children, we visited Cornwall on a regular basis with my Grandma. They couldn't have been more different in temperament. Ted was quiet and serious. He had a wonderful garden and grew fruit and vegetables. I can remember being allowed to go and pick and eat as many loganberries as I wanted! He kept ferrets and went rabbiting. I was rather afraid of the ferrets with their sharp teeth though I enjoyed the rabbit pies!

Ted enlisted in the navy two months before his sixteenth birthday and while underage, attended HMS Impregnable, a naval training establishment at Devonport. He completed his training on HMS Hood, becoming an able-bodied seaman on the 24th May 1924. He became a Chief Petty Officer on the 16th November 1940 while at HMS Defiance, a training establishment at Devonport.



H.M.S. Defiance Devonport

In 1941 his service record states that he was serving at the South Atlantic station covering a sea area between southern South America and the Falkland Islands and southern Africa. Janice kindly found me details of his service record on the National Archives database and I need to do some more research as to the various ships and I believe from family memory, submarines that he served on before and during the Second World War.

[Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic - Wikipedia](#) (Information about the South Atlantic Station ww2)



Will had died before I was born. I have done a bit of research on him. I knew from family stories that he had married a pretty lady called May Langmaid but they had no children. Tragically she died of Spanish flu in 1929. He volunteered for service in the navy in World War Two though he would have been too old to be conscripted. He was assigned to HMS Ardent, a destroyer built in the 1920s. It was escorting HMS Glorious off the coast of Norway when it was struck and sunk by two German U boats in 1940. Only two of the crew of 154 were rescued and one of these died shortly after. Sadly, my uncle was drowned and is one of the names recorded on the Plymouth Naval Memorial.

Andy was chatty and full of fun. We loved going out shrimping and crabbing on the beach with him though we were always wary of the large spider crabs which he coaxed out of the rock holes and took home. We enjoyed the crab sandwiches and shrimps though! As to Andy's service record, I have not yet started to research that. As with all family history, there are numerous stories to be found in our ancestors' lives- we just need the time to do it!

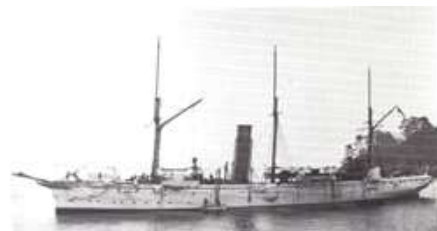
THOMAS WALTER CORNTHWAITE (Continued from Newsletter 49)

Janice

During his first three years at sea Wally visited many exotic places including India, Ceylon, and Japan. He then joined the crew of HMS Blake the flagship of the West Indies fleet. In 1892 he set sail for St. George's, Bermuda the location of the HMD Royal Dockyard and a military garrison. [Bermuda Garrison - Wikipedia](#) . The crew of HMS Blake patrolled the seas from the Caribbean up to Canada. On returning to Chatham,

Wally joined the torpedo vessel HMS Racoon in 1898. This ship had previously taken part in the Anglo-Zanzibar war, the shortest conflict to be recorded in history lasting between 38 and 40 minutes. British ships sailed into the harbour at Zanzibar, destroyed the Sultan's palace and sank the royal yacht.

The Sultan's harem after the bombardment



HMS Racoon

The Racoon hunted down slaving dhows in the Indian Ocean. The 1901 census records that the Racoon was anchored at Aden, Wally was on board.

Photo of 33 enslaved people rescued by the Racoon in 1901. Unknown author - <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/262029>, Public Domain <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=99602898>

Shockingly, the Arab slave trade continued openly until 1912.

[Forgotten slavery: The Arab-Muslim slave trade | FairPlanet](#) One of the articles on this website claims data indicates that even today there are an approximated 9.2 million Africans trapped in slavery, a business estimated to generate up to \$13 billion in profits each year.

After serving in the second Boer War, Wally spent the last 4 years of his career on HMS Caledonia, a Royal Navy receiving hulk anchored at Chatham. He was discharged in 1905 after spending 22 years in the Royal Marines. He had earned four good conduct badges which entitled him to a good conduct medal and a boost to his pension.

He returned to Lancashire and gave his sister (my granny) many items collected from all over the world. These included Japanese pottery, lion claws and conch shells (Mum grew houseleeks in the shells but they eventually rotted away).



Mum told us that one of the items in the photo is a poison dart case and led us to believe that it came from South Africa. I now suspect that all the items are of sub-Saharan origin. From the 16th century, traders used beads manufactured in Europe to acquire amongst other things gold ivory and slaves. I don't know what these objects are or when they were made but it is likely they were old when Wally collected them.

In 1910 Wally set sail to the other side of the world to start a new adventure. I have recently found out many things about what he did over the following 41 years but that is all a story for another day.

THE END!!!



As we will be meeting this month this is the last of our Lockdown Letters. Our articles have been every bit as varied as products offered by Heinz so I think Newsletter 57 is an excellent place to close. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles and those who have taken the time to read them.