

Arthur Charles BURCH

Born Dawlish, 5 January 1882
Private 26681

Died 17 February 1917, aged 35
Wiltshire Regiment 1st Battalion

Arthur Charles Burch was a first cousin of William Henry Burch, the last Dawlish casualty before the Armistice in 1918. Their common grandfather was William Burch, a gardener born in Lymptone on Christmas Eve, 1825. He was a son of Thomas and Sarah Burch. He married Anna Maria Garrish (1831-) of Chagford in Jan-Mar 1853 (N.A., vol 5b, p 238) and the census of 1911 records that they had 11 children, of which 3 had died. Census records for this family over the years from 1861 suggests that they had:

William, born in Dawlish 3 October 1853, joined the Royal Navy at age 18 for 10 years, extended for a further 10 years and retired as a Petty Officer 1st Class and naval pensioner on 5th October 1891. Married Ann, six years his senior, no children.

George John, born in Dawlish 20 July 1856, joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman at age 16 ½ and served two 10 year terms to retire as a Petty Officer, 1st Class on 20 July 1894.

Sarah Ann, born Dawlish 1857-

Ellen Burch, born Dawlish 1858-

Mary Jane Burch, Born Dawlish 1860, married Stephens

Eliza Burch, born Dawlish 1862- (*taken from a family tree, this may be Bessie*)

Bessie Burch, born Dawlish 1862 – the mother of **Arthur Charles Burch**

Annie M Burch, born Dawlish 1865-

Selina Burch, born Dawlish 1865-

Henry Garrish Burch, born Dawlish 1867- , father of William Henry Burch, (above) 1897-1918

Thomas Burch, born Dawlish 1871-

Emma Jane Burch 1872-1956

They were living at Manor Place, Dawlish (1861) and 16 Park Row (1871).

In 1881 Bessie Burch was 19 and a housemaid to Sarah Lindsey, a boarding house keeper at 10 West Cliff Hill, Dawlish. **Arthur** was born in the following year (Q1, 1882, Newton Abbot district Vol 5b, page 114) and it appears that Bessie was his mother but no father is shown. The Parish Register shows that he was baptised in St Gregory the Great, Dawlish, on 26 March 1882 (alongside his name is the abbreviation "illi", presumably indicating that his mother was not married and no father has been named).

Arthur retains the surname of Burch when he appears in the 1891 census at Rose Cottage, High Street, Dawlish in the household of his grandparents, William and Ann Maria. Three of their children were still living at home, Bessie, 28, working as a laundress, Henry, 24, a painter, and Emma, 20, a housemaid.

In 1891 also, Bessie Burch married George Newman (1891 Apr-June, N.A. Vol 5b, p195) when **Arthur** was aged 9.

Arthur left home and joined the Royal Navy as a boy seaman on 22nd July 1897 at age 15. He has a record in the UK, Registers of Seamen's Services, No 194753, which gives his trade as a plumber.

He joined *H.M.S.IMPREGNABLE* and then *H.M.S.LION* before he was invalided out of the service on 3 October 1898. There is no indication of the nature of invalidity.

In 1901 he was boarding with the Long family at 22 Victoria Terrace, Portland when his occupation was shown as "Fireman on steam, Navy, Public Works".

John Long (1847-1924) and his wife Arabella (1857-) had seven children at home in 1901 and their eldest daughter Louise (1882-) was of a similar age to **Arthur**, the lodger. **Arthur** and Louisa were married in 1907 (Weymouth, June 1907, Vol 5a, p 665).

It is not known whether **Arthur Charles Burch** joined the army by choice or by conscription for the expectation might be that he would rejoin the Royal Navy which seemed to be favoured by family members.

The WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls show that he had been enlisted with the 5th Dorset Regiment, as a Private, No 18625 before joining the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment, 1st Battalion, Private No 26681.

From the Wiltshire Regiment War Diary

15th February 1917

Location France, Romarin

Except for wire cutting, bombardments by artillery and trench mortars preparatory to the impending daylight raid, these days passed without incident as far as this Battn's Sector was concerned. There was very little retaliation on the enemy's part in response to our periodical bombardments. On the night of the 15th/16th, however, the enemy was busy repairing the gaps cut in his wire, and to ensure that adequate gaps were made the wire cutting programme had to be prolonged until the last possible moment. On the 16th there were two casualties: wounded, still at duty, 12093 Pte Miller, J (A Coy). Wounded, 9191 L/Cpl Strong, G.

17 February 1917

The raid was carried out in conjunction with a party of the 10th Cheshire Regt. (200 in strength) the objective allotted to the Brigade being the enemy's defences N and S of FACTORY FARM, the farm itself included. Zero hour was 10.40a.m. The enemy seemed to be taken quite by surprise and his trenches were gained with but slight loss. All objectives were seized, with the exception of FACTORY FARM, where stout resistance was offered. Elsewhere very few of the enemy were found. It is believed that about 20 Germans were killed in this Battn's objective exclusive of casualties caused by shell fire. Two prisoners were taken, and no identification was secured. 1 died of wounds, 1 missing. The majority of these were caused by hostile machine gun fire, which was brought to bear upon the parties as they returned to our line.

Arthur Charles Burch is shown to have been Killed in action and was buried at the Berkshire Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium.

Dawlish World War One Project

The UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects show that a Death grant of £2.6s.9d and a War Gratuity of £3.0s.0d were paid to his widow Louisa. The latter payment was made in 1919 by which time she had remarried to Frederick Sylvester Wilson (1888-1966) at St Peter's, Portland, Dorset on 21 April 1919.

The British War Medal and the Victory Medal were awarded and sent to his widow.

Arthur Charles Burch is not included on the Devon Roll of Honour, but he appears on Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: BURCH A.C. PTE. WILTSHIRE REGT. (side panel, west face)

Devon Heritage site info: No information is shown for the entries on the west facing panel.

Last known address: Portland, Dorset

Next of kin: Bessie Newman, mother

References:

CWGC.org.uk

Free Birth Marriage Death index

Wiltshire Regiment war diary

St Gregory the Great, Baptism Register

Ancestry Subscription website for the following:

UK, Registers of Seamen's Services

UK, WW1 Service Medal & Award Rolls 1914-20

UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects

UK Census records 1861- 1911

UK, Soldiers died in the Great War

Hardy Family Tree (Ancestry)