

## William Henry BURCH

Born Dawlish 30<sup>th</sup> August 1897      Died 9<sup>th</sup> November 1918, aged 21  
Able Seaman, R.N. J/30208 (Dev)      H.M.S. BRITANNIA

**William Henry Burch** was a first cousin of Arthur Charles Burch who was also a Dawlish casualty, killed in action on 17 February 1917. Their common grandfather was William Burch, a gardener born in Lymptone on Christmas Eve, 1825. He was a son of Thomas and Sarah Burch.

William Burch 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,	son,	(1853- )	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 1 <sup>st</sup> Class and naval pensioner on 5 <sup>th</sup> October 1891.
					Married Ann, six years his senior, no children, and they lived at 21 Hatcher Street. He was working at the Post Office in 1911.
George John,	son,	(1856- )	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, 1 <sup>st</sup> Class on 20 July 1894.
Sarah Ann,	dau,	(1857- )	born	Dawlish	
Ellen,	dau,	(1858- )		"	
Mary Jane,	dau,	(1860- )		"	, married Stephens
Eliza,	dau,	(1862- )		"	
Bessie,	dau,	(1863- )			the mother of Arthur Charles Burch
Annie M,	dau,	(1865- )		"	
Selina,	dau,	(1866- )		"	
Henry Garrish,	son,	(1867- )	father of	<b>William Henry Burch</b> ,	1897-1918
Thomas,	son,	(1870- )		"	
Emma Jane,	dau,	(1871-1956)		"	

William and Anna were living at Manor Place, Dawlish (1861), 16 Park Row (1871), Queens Row (1881) and in 1891 were living at Rose Cottage, 13 High Street, where William was a gardener. Four of their children were living with them. Henry Garrish Burch (1867 -1928) was a house painter.

On May 23 1897 Henry Garrish Burch married Emily Baker (born Blackheath, London, 1863-1944).

Emily (nee Jeffrey) had previously been married to Edward White Baker (1856-1892). Edward White Baker was a carriage proprietor and in 1891 they were living at 7 Strand, Teignmouth with three children, Ida (1888- ), Arthur (1889- ) and Beatrice (1890- ). Edward White Baker died on 1 June 1892 and in the same year another child Emily (1892- ) was born.

Henry G Burch and Emily had four children, all born in Dawlish:

Harry,	son,	(1896-1918)
<b>William Henry son,</b>		(1897-1918)
Gladys,	dau,	(1902- )
Leonora,	dau,	(1905- ).

## Dawlish World War One Project

In 1901 Henry and Emily Burch lived at Beach Street, Dawlish with Harry, **William Henry**, Arthur Baker (step-son 1889- ) and Emily Baker (step-daughter 1892- ).

In 1911 the family was living at No 1 Court, High Street, Dawlish with their four children, Emily Baker, 20, and a step-grandson, Reginald Baker, 6 months old.

**William Henry Burch** was working as a domestic gardener when he was 13 but appears as a labourer in a mineral water works on his joining the Navy.

Arthur Baker, Harry and **William Burch** went on to serve the country in the Navy during WW1.

**William Henry Burch** joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1914, aged 16 ½ and signed for a 12 year term on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1915, his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. After training aboard *H.M.S.IMPREGNABLE* he was sent to *H.M.S.BRITANNIA* on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1915 and made up to Able Seaman on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1916.

*H.M.S.BRITANNIA* was a battleship of the King Edward Class, completed at Portsmouth in 1906. She was an old style battleship with a top speed of 18 knots and carried a complement of 777 men.

*H.M.S.BRITANNIA* was assigned to the Third Battle Squadron upon its creation in May, 1912 and remained with the Squadron until being detached along with *AFRICA* in September, 1916. The two battleships operated in the North Atlantic with Ninth Cruiser Squadron with a dwindling number of cruisers throughout the war. By November, 1918, they were gone. Between September and November 1918, *BRITANNIA* was moved to "Miscellaneous Service", though she remained in commission. She was torpedoed and sunk on 9 November 1918 off Cape Trafalgar by the German U-boat UB-50, becoming the last Royal Navy ship lost in the war. Only 40 lost their lives in the explosion and most of the crew were saved, the ship taking 3 hours to sink.

**William Henry Burch** was one of those who lost their life.

His name is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour but Ship, date and location of death are not recorded. He also appears on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Dawlish War memorial inscription:    BURCH W.H.                    A.B.                    R.N.

Devon Heritage site info:

J/30208 Able Seaman William Henry Burch of the Royal Navy, H.M.S.BRITANNIA, Son of William and Ann Burch of 21 Hatcher Street, Dawlish. Born in Dawlish 30 August 1897. Died 9 November 1918.

Commonwealth War Graves entry:    BURCH, WILLIAM HENRY    Able Seaman    J/30208  
09/11/1918                    Royal Navy    H.M.S. "Britannia."    Lost with the ship.

Panel Ref: 27.    [Plymouth Naval Memorial](#)

Last known address:    No 1 Court, High Street, Dawlish (1911 Census)

Next of kin:    Emily Burch, widow

References:

CWGC

[www.wrecksite.eu](http://www.wrecksite.eu)

Dawlish World War One Project

Jane's Fighting Ships of World War One

Free Birth Marriage & Death refs

Royal Naval Service record – National Archives, Kew

Jeffrey family records – private file

Refs via subscription services:

- Census records

- Royal Navy And Royal Marines War Graves Roll