

John EVANS

Born Cofton, 1 August 1867
Chief Stoker (pensioned) No 147793

Died Plymouth 17 January 1919, aged 51
H.M.S.VIVID, Royal Fleet Reserve

The 1841 census lists an Evens family at Kenn, with parents William, 34, an agricultural labourer, and Martha, 30 and 5 children: John, 12, Mary Ann, 11, William*, 9, George, 7, and Daniel, 2. It seems likely that this is the family into which **John Evans** was born.

In 1851 William* was 17 and a farm labourer servant to Frederick Elliott at Crablake, Exminster. In 1861 William Evens, 27, was a carter at Shutterton Farm, run by William Pitts with 6 labourers of which 2 were domestic servants.

John Evans was born to William* and Elizabeth Evans of Westwood, Cofton (1871 census).

William Evans was an agricultural labourer, born in Exminster ca. 1834. He worked as a general labourer (1881 census) as did son **John** after leaving school.

In the summer of 1862 William Evans (spelling varies Evens/Evans in different sources) married Elizabeth Wood in the St Thomas district (GRO ref 1862, July-Sept, St Thomas, vol 5b, page 83). Elizabeth Wood was born in Rackenford, near Tiverton, in 1839 (GRO ref 1839, Apr-Jun, South Molton, vol 10, page 209) to William and Mary Wood. They had moved to Kenton by 1851 and are recorded at Willsworthy, Kenton. The proximity to Exminster and the comparable dates suggest that it is this Elizabeth who married William Evans.

In 1871 William and Elizabeth were living in a 'Cottage' at Westwood, Cofton, with four children:

Henry,	son, 9	scholar	born	Kenton
Ellen,	dau, 8	"		Kenton
John,	son, 3,			Dawlish
William	son, 1,			"

Ten years later the family was still at Westwood and the children at home were:

John	son, 13	general labourer		Dawlish, Westwood
William,	son, 11	scholar		"
Mary Ann,	dau, 8	"		"
George,	son, 4	"		"
Annie,	dau, 1			"

John Evans left home in 1889 to join the Navy. His mother became a widow between 1881 and 1901 and there is possible death registration for William Evans in 1888, aged 54 (GRO ref 1888, March, N.A., vol 5b, p 96). In 1911 she was living at 5 Manor Row, Dawlish with her youngest son, George. He was in the Royal Marine Light Infantry and married to Jane with two sons, Cecil Evans, 3, and Reginald Evans, 1.

John Evans joined the Royal Navy on 1 February 1889 at the age of 21 and signed on for 12 years service. He declared his previous occupation as 'labourer'. He was initially a Stoker 2nd Class. He served aboard H.M.S.TEMERAIRE for two years in which time he progressed to Stoker, serving also on 3rd Class Cruiser H.M.S.BLANCHE. while serving a similar appointment aboard H.M.S.BARROSSA, sister ship to BLANCHE, he was made up to Leading Stoker, 1st Class.

He returned to barracks in September 1897 and on 6 November he married Selina Burch (GRO ref 1897, Oct-Dec, N.A., vol 5b, p 224). She was born in Dawlish in 1865 (GRO ref, 1865, Oct-

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Dec, N.A., vol 5b, p 108) to William and Ann Burch who had seven children by 1871 and she was then the youngest daughter.

Selina Burch was a parlourmaid in 1891, aged 25, and was in the household of John Jamieson of 4 Marloes Rd, Kensington, London. After her marriage to **John Evans** they lived mostly in Plymouth as he had spells based in the Devonport Naval Base until his pension in 1911.

They had a son, Harold, born in Stoke, Devonport (GRO ref 1901, June, Devonport, vol 5b, p 299) and it appears that he was christened Harold John S Evans. He is listed on the 1911 census aged 9 when they lived at 47 St George's Terrace, Stoke, Devonport.

John Evans was made up to Chief Stoker in March 1902, at the age of 34 and continued in that rank until he was pensioned from H.M.S.VIVID on 5 February 1911. In August 1905 he was sent to H.M.S.DEVONSHIRE when she was completed and was initially assigned to the 1st Cruiser Squadron of the Channel Fleet.

He joined the Royal Fleet Reserve on 12 February 1905 with the service no. A3043, and was paid from H.M.S.VIVID (R.N.Base, Devonport) until his death on 17 January 1919.

H.M.S.ALBEMARLE was withdrawn from service after 1916 and became an accommodation ship attached to the Naval Barracks, Devonport, and this is the name of the ship on Dawlish War Memorial.

The Death Certificate shows that he died of Heart Disease and death was recorded as taking place at 78 Cotehele Avenue, Ford, Plymouth.

He is shown on the Devon Roll of Honour as Chief P.O. HMS ALBEMARLE died 17 January 1919, Devonport

Dawlish War memorial inscription: EVANS J. CPO HMS ALBEMARLE

HMS ALBEMARLE was a battleship of 14,000 tons built in 1901, and placed in Reserve in Devonport Dockyard in March 1917 until April 1919. In this period she acted as overflow accommodation for the naval barracks (HMS VIVID) at Devonport.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: (UK Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll)

John EVANS, born 1 August 1867, Caffon (*Cofton*), Dawlish

Died: 17 January 1919 from disease , HMS VIVID (naval Base, Devonport)

Devon Heritage site info: (*incorrect assumptions *** RBV 09/12/2013*)

Believed to be Chief Petty Officer Jesse Evans of the Royal Navy. *HMS AMPHION*. Son of Valentine and Maria Evans. Born in Blaby, Leicestershire in the September Quarter of 1874., Date of death not known but presumed to have been 6 August 1914 when *HMS AMPHION* sank with the loss of 148 men. *AMPHION* was the first British ship to be lost in the 1914 war. (Jesse Evans lived and worked in Dawlish as a hairdresser) *There is a John Evans, Hairdresser at 15a The Strand, Dawlish in a commercial Directory of 1902 – rbv.*

Last known address: 78 Cotehele Avenue, Ford, Plymouth

Next of kin: Selina Evans, widow (1865-1949)

References:

Service Record, Royal Navy – The National Archives, Kew

Free BMD – birth, marriage, death refs

Dawlish World War One Project

www.navy-history

worldnavalships.com

www.findmygrave.com (buried in Weston Mill cemetery, Plymouth, plot B, 2660)

Wikipedia - HMS ALBEMARLE – H.M.S.BAROSSA – H.M.S.DEVONSHIRE

refs via subscription sites:

census data

(UK Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll)