

## Ernest AGER

Born 6 May 1880 Roxwell, Essex  
Motor Driver 32496

Died 5 March 1921, Exeter, aged 41  
Royal Air Force

Ernest Ager was born in 1880 (GRO ref 1880, Apr-June, Chelmsford, vol 4a, p 310) to James and Maria Ager.

The Ager line has been traced by a.n.other (Ancestry family tree Crocker) to William Ager (1750-1816) and Jane Bunton (1751-1810), then to John Ager (1779-1853) and Sarah Holmes (1782-1870), then to John Ager (1807-1887) and Mary Lay (1811- 1897), and to James Simon Scivener Ager (1831-1910) and Maria, nee Webster (1836-1905).

Ernest was one of nine children of which the following appear in the 1881 census at Mountneys Lane, Roxwell, Essex:

James Ager,	Head,	45	Carpenter	born	Romford
Maria "	Wife,	45			Kidderminster, Worcs
William "	son,	13			Abbots Rooding, Essex
Albert "	son,	10			"
Edward "	son,	8			Roxwell
Frederick T	son,	5			"
Mary	dau,	3			"
<b>Ernest</b>	<b>son,</b>	<b>10 mths</b>			"

The family stayed there for the 1891 census but in 1901 **Ernest** was in the household of Thomas F Buxton at Easney, Stanstead Abbots, where he was a footman among 17 servants.

In 1911 **Ernest** had arrived in Dawlish and was living at 'Fairfield' in two rooms and was a chauffeur at Luscombe Castle.

In 1912 he married Jessie Dunkley at St George's, Hanover Square (GRO ref 1912, Q4, London, vol 1a, p 1045).

In 1916 he was called up and signed an attestation on 27 June. One record shows that Ernest Ager enlisted with the Royal Naval Air Service on 15/6/1916 and transferred to the RAF on its formation in 1918. There are few service records for him but it may be assumed that he joined the Royal Flying Corps which became the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918. His occupation was shown as Motor Driver, but it is not clear if that was how he was employed in the RFC/RAF. Dawlish War Memorial show him as an Air Mechanic 3<sup>rd</sup> class.

He died on 5 March 1921 (GRO ref 1921 Q1 Exeter, vol 5b, p 108)

The *Dawlish Gazette* tells us that he 'contracted tuberculosis whilst on service. Sanatorium treatment failed to effect a cure, and after a long illness,...he passed away at the Devon and Exeter Hospital on 5 March 1921 .' In those days, before effective drugs were discovered, treatment generally consisted of fresh air and sunshine, preferably in pine woods. Some notable sanatoria were built in the early 1920's to provide wards with walls opening onto sheltered terraces where patients were exposed to fresh air and sunshine for most of the day.

The newspaper report refers to his sister, Miss Mary Ager being a chief mourner with his widow, Jessie Ager.

## Dawlish World War One Project

Dawlish War memorial supplementary panel inscription: AGER E A.M.3. ROYAL AIR FORCE

The Probate record shows that **Ernest Ager** of 16 Hatcher Street, Dawlish, chauffeur, died 5 March 1921 at the Devon & Exeter Hospital, leaving to Jessie Ager, widow, £380. 10s. 5d.

There is no Commonwealth War Graves entry, possibly because this was treated as a civilian death even though his name is on Dawlish War Memorial and his illness was contracted while in service.

Last known address: 16 Hatcher Street

Next of kin: Jessie Ager, wife

### References:

Free BMD refs

Dawlish Gazette

Refs from subscription websites:

- Crocker Family tree – Ancestry

- Census data

- Marriage refs

- Probate entry

- Airmens' Service records – Find My Past

- Forces War Records