

## Sidney Charles BOWDEN

Born Exeter district (Mamhead) Q2 1896  
Guardsman, service No 9438

Died 19 January 1919, Dawlish, aged 22  
Coldstream Guards, 5<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion

**Ernest John Bowden** and **Sidney Charles Bowden** (q.v.) were brothers from a Dawlish family. Their grandparents were John and Mary Bowden who were living at 'Orchard' in the vicinity of Langdon/Shutterton in 1851. John Bowden (1813-1884) was an agricultural labourer, born in Dawlish, and his wife Mary (1814- ) was born in Ideford. They had five children by 1851:

Martha (1838- )	dau, 13		born Dawlish
John (1850- )	son, 11	ploughboy	"
Anne (1842- )	dau, 9	scholar	"
James* (1846- )	son, 4		"
Sarah J (1850- )	dau, 1		"

By 1861 John and Mary Bowden had moved to Park Row, Dawlish with:

James* (1846- )	son, 14	scholar	"
Sarah Jane (1850- )	dau, 11	"	"
Richard (1854- )	son, 7	"	"
Thomas (1855- )	son, 6	"	"
John (1860- )	son, 1 mo		"

James Bowden\* was born in Dawlish in summer 1846 (GRO ref 1846, Sept, N.A., vol 10, p 142) and he first married Mary Hill (1844-1882) in 1871 (GRO ref 1871, July-Sept, N.A., vol 5b, p 212). She appears in the 1851 census as Mary Heel, daughter of John and Ann Heel but later census entries revert to the spelling Hill. (See document on James Henry Hill, also a casualty).

In 1881 James (37) and Mary Bowden (39) were living at 4 Church Street with three children:

William J (1876- )	son, 5		Dawlish
Alfred George (1876-1964 )	son, 4		"
Mary J (1879-1958)	dau, 2		"

James was shown as a labourer.

Mary Bowden (nee Hill) died in early 1882 (GRO ref 1882, Jan-Mar, N.A., vol 5b, p 86) leaving James with three young children.

James married Elizabeth Packer, born in Thorverton, in the second quarter of 1884 (Newton Abbot district, vol 5b, p279).

In 1891 they were living at 27 High Street, Kenton with three children:

Mary J (1879- 1958)	dau, 12	Scholar	Dawlish
Frederick W (1885-1964)	son, 6	"	Teignmouth
Henry J (1887- )	son, 4	"	"

Ernest John was born in St Thomas registration district (Kenton) in 1892 (GRO ref 1892, Sept, St Thomas, vol 5b, p 74).

By 1901 the family had moved to 42 High Street, Dawlish and had one more child, **Sidney Charles (1897-1919)**.

In 1911 the census return for 75 High Street shows that James and Elizabeth Bowden declared five children, but that one had died. The children from their marriage were Frederick William, Henry John, Ernest John, Sidney Charles and one other. Frederick is also shown as a widower, aged 26, and there is another daughter (of Frederick's marriage?) Beatrice (1906- ).

In 1911 **Sidney Charles Bowden** was 15 and an agricultural labourer, but on 22 January 1912 he enlisted with the Coldstream Guards. It states "Entered the services to complete 7 years with the colours only" on 17 October 1913. He was 17.

A partial service record shows that he served at Home from 22-1-1912 to 11-8-1914, then was posted with "Expeditionary Forces Overseas" from 12-8-14 to 6-11-14 and returned to Home posting from 7-11-14 to his discharge on 5-2-16.

**Sidney Bowden** was wounded in action on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1914 at Sonnebeke near Ypres and the medical record shows that "bullet entered just below spine of scapula (L) and came out close to the right of spine, about 8<sup>th</sup> dorsal vertebra. Has lost power of legs & also micturition and defaecation." He was just 18 years old.

The conclusion was that it "totally prevents for life" and led to his discharge. The examination was carried out at No 2 Hospital, Pennsylvania, Exeter and is over stamped "TOTAL DISABLEMENT".

He was discharged on 5 February 1916 and died on 19 January 1919 and is buried in Dawlish cemetery. The Death Certificate was informed by his mother, Elizabeth, and the cause of death is "1 Wounds received in warfare, 2 Paralysis asthemia". He was living at 29 Manor Row and receiving a forces pension.

"I am awfully sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings. Your son was killed on July 1st when the Battalion assaulted the German trenches. From what I can hear from the section he was wounded and was getting back to our lines when he was hit again by a piece of shrapnel. He died doing his duty nobly, as every Devon man did on that day, and I was proud of him. At present I am the only unwounded officer left in the Company. I knew your son. He always did his duty, and was a man of whom any mother might be proud."

They have already a son at home who is bedridden as a result of wounds received in the early days of the war.

His brother's death in 1916 brought a report in the *Dawlish Gazette* (left, partial extract) which refers to **Sidney Charles Bowden** as 'bedridden as a result of wounds received'.

His older brother Henry James Bowden served in the Royal Navy during WW1.

The Military History Sheet shows next-of-kin as 'Father, Henry James (Bowden), Older brothers, Fred, Ernest John – 2/ Devon Regt, Henry James – R Navy'.

## Silver War Badge

The Silver War Badge was issued in the United Kingdom to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness during World War I. The badge, sometimes known as the Discharge Badge, Wound Badge or Services Rendered Badge, was first issued in September 1916, along with an official certificate of entitlement.

The sterling silver lapel badge was intended to be worn in civilian clothes. It had been the practice of some women to present white feathers to apparently able-bodied young men who were not wearing the King's uniform. The badge was to be worn on the right breast while in civilian dress, it was forbidden to wear on a military uniform.

The badge bears the royal cipher of GRI (for Georgius Rex Imperator; George, King and Emperor) and around the rim "For King and Empire; Services Rendered". Each badge was uniquely numbered on the reverse. The War Office made it known that they would not replace Silver War Badges if they went missing, however if one was handed into a police station then it would be returned to the War Office. If the original recipient could be traced at his or her discharge address then the badge would be returned. **Sidney** was awarded Badge No 18848.

## Dawlish World War One Project

**Sidney Bowden** is included among Dawlish names on the Devon Roll of Honour.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: BOWDEN S C PTE COLDM GDS

Commonwealth War Graves entry: BOWDEN, S C Guardsman 9438  
19/01/1919 Age: 22 Coldstream Guards, 5th Reserve Bn.

Grave Ref: 133.

[Dawlish Cemetery](#)

Son of James and Elizabeth Bowden, of 63, Manor Row, Brook St., Dawlish.

Devon Heritage site info:

9438 Guardsman Sidney Charles Bowden of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion, the Coldstream Guards.

Son of James and Elizabeth Bowden of the High Street, Dawlish; brother of Ernest. Born in Mamhead in 1897. Died 19 January 1919 aged 22. Buried in Dawlish Cemetery.

He is listed among those on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.



References:

Free BMD

refs via subscription websites:

- Census data.

- War Service and medical records

- UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects