

FREDERICK GEORGE FORD - CENTENARY MEMORIAL SERVICE 9TH MAY 2015

Fred was born 26th May 1896 at 3 Strand Hill, Dawlish and his mother was Rose Mary Ford, my mothers aunt. I have little to tell you about Fred although whilst naming the children on the family photograph dated 1904, my mother referred to him as 'Rose's boy' but did not elaborate anymore. I know that Rose married Harry Coyle, a sailor from Glasgow, in 1908 and was living in Kingsteignton on the 1911 census and they had a son in 1914. It wasn't until last year whilst researching further into the Ford family history that I discovered that Fred was killed at Gallipoli and is named on the Helles Monument in Turkey.

I have some details of the Ford family history which I hope you will find of interest.

Rose's father John Ford came from Roborough, North Devon and his wife Mary Ann Way from Bow near Crediton. They moved to Dawlish between the time of the 1871 census and 1874 when they were married in this church, John's occupation being a tailor. They had sixteen children in total although five died in infancy. Most were christened here at St Gregory's as were later generations including my mother in 1920.

Rose was their second daughter and working as an asylum worker, possibly Starcross, when her son Fred was born. With no mention of the father on the birth certificate, he was brought up by his grandparents John and Mary Ford at 3 Strand Hill, Dawlish as shown on census entries. They certainly would appear rather good natured and were already struggling to bring up their own children without an additional mouth to feed. The 1901 census entry shows two lodgers living with the family making eleven people living in the house in Strand Hill. (thirteen on the 1891 census including two lodgers). It is listed as 3 Park Street in 1901 but the road was renamed at some point around the turn of the 20th century to Strand Hill.

Bearing in mind that John was a tailor and working from home, goodness knows how they all fitted in or slept as it certainly does not appear that big even looking at it today from the outside.

Maybe enough was enough when Lilian the third surviving daughter gave birth to a child in 1905 as this child Thomas Herbert Foster Ford was brought up by Mary Ford's sister Ann Morrish nee Way.

Lilian later married William John Hutchings who was killed at the battle of Jutland on 31st May 1916 as was Frank Morrish, son of Ann Morrish. Both of these will be commemorated next year.

There were eleven in the Ford family and eight in the Way family all living in Dawlish at the time of the 1891 census. My grandfather Ralph Harold, the youngest child of John and Mary Ford, returned from the Somme and in 1919 married my grandmother who was working in service at Elm Grove House, Dawlish and they lived at 8 Strand Hill, Dawlish. Around 1929 when my mother was 9, they moved to Coombeinteghead maybe to get away from all the aunties, uncles and their families! They later moved to Shaldon and although I was born in Teignmouth, my parents moved to Shaldon in 1965 to look after my grandfather and I spent many years living both there and in Teignmouth.

I have brought Fred's medals from World War 1 which were given to his grandmother in 1921 and subsequently passed down to my grandfather and then my mother. Princess Mary initiated an idea to send all the troops for Christmas 1914 an embossed brass box which originally contained such items as tobacco and a lighter, chocolate and other small presents, varied for non-smokers and different religions. I have brought his Christmas card with a photograph of Princess Mary, and also my grandfathers, with the original envelopes which were included in their boxes.

I also have a picture of the Helles Memorial from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website along with other information including family trees and photographs if anyone is interested.

Thank you to all involved in the work to hold these commemorative services particularly poignant as it is six years ago today that my mother died and of course 70 years since VE Day signifying the end of World War 2 in which both my parents served, my father on the Arctic Convoys and my mother in the WRNS.

June Snell