

# Local History News

The newsletter of the  
South Molton & District Archive  
Local History Society

The Constables Room, Town Hall, Broad Street, South Molton EX36 3AB

Charity No. 900293

September 2014

Editor – Shirley Bray

About 8 of us enjoyed the walk around Pilton - we spent quite a time in the Church, which has a beautiful WW1 commemorative stained glass window. We ended the evening with a drink in the Green Man pub.

Our Display at the WW1 Exhibition in South Molton Parish Church drew a lot of interest. We were able to add a few names to some of the group photographs and we sold two copies of "Lest we Forget". With thanks to everyone who helped with this project. Our display is now part of the Museum's Exhibition, which runs until the end of September, there are lots of interesting items of memorabilia, so please support it. We will continue to add to our WW1 information over the next four years and will publish some of our findings in future issues of the Local History News.

Angel Bavidge has written two excellent books, one on the 1/6 Battalion the Devonshire Regiment and one in memory of Ronald Bellew entitled "THE DIARY OF A DEVONSHIRE BOY to Canada and France"

This edition of the LHN contains the first part of a recording made by Denny and Lilian Lock talking about the Kings Arms and South Molton during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is one of our many interesting Oral Histories, which are well worth listening to.

## MILESTONES

*Britannia, Volume The First* was published in 1675 by John Ogilby and was the first complete survey of the main highways of England & Wales. The main road from Exeter to Barnstaple passed through our parish and was described "... carries you through Chidingford (Chittlehamholt) a small village. Thus leaving Wortley (Warkleigh) 3 furlongs on the left. You cross a small rill, by Beatford House contiguous on the left descend 4 furlongs, pass another rill ... and leaving Chetelhampton church a small distance on the right. Cross two small rills, pass through Bathing (Bableigh) and Ronson (Rumsam)". . .

In the 1840s, when Turnpike Trusts were established the route from Barnstaple was slightly amended by turning off at Newport, coming through Bishops Tawton and along the side of Codden Hill. All the milestones along this route are still visible today and state the mileage from 'Barum'.

With the construction of the bridge over the River Taw at New Bridge the preferred route went via Chapleton, Atherington, High Bickington and Burrington joining the earlier route at Chulmleigh. The milestones on this route are also still intact. This route in turn was superseded by the valley road now known as A377 - some of the milestones on this route are missing. Now the official designated route from Barnstaple to Exeter is by the A361 and M5. Milestones are now no longer needed for this route

Of the milestones between Barnstaple and Chulmleigh the only two in Chittlehampton parish are the two of the least preserved! - 'Barum 8' between Townsend and Whitehall is very 'camouflaged', and 'Barum 9', between ~~Ardbow~~ Ardbow and Broadmoor has been broken and is lying at the side of the road. These tomb-like monoliths are part of our heritage and should be preserved. Do you agree?

**P.S Barum 9 has now been removed.**

Carole Ryall.

Lilian and Denny Lock talking to Shirley Bray, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1987

*Lilian was born in the Kings Arms, South Molton in 1917 the daughter of Henry and Eliza Sanders née Brown. Lilian had a sister Olive born in 1916 and a brother Tom born in 1919.*

*Her father was born in North Molton in 1887 and her mother was born in South Wales, the couple married in 1908 in South Wales. They came to South Molton in 1915 to take over the tenancy of the Kings Arms. Henry (or Harry) Sanders died in 1942 and his widow Eliza died in 1950.*

This is Lilian's story (with a little help from Denny):

When I was a little girl father must have been away so mother looked after the pub, she had her sister living there and she used to look after the children there were three of us. We seemed to be surrounded by very good ladies; a Mrs. Warren down at Cooks Cross, who was a midwife, came to look after my mother at times. Then she was sort of adopted by us and she used to come every week – a nice lady she was. She was sort of like a district nurse but unofficial but she was very, very clever I believe. She was a very good nurse, I remember her well and she seemed to come for years and years after, so they must have become very good friends.

The pub had a kitchen with a big old black grate and we used to get bathed on the table in front of the fire. There was gas lighting and we went to bed by candlelight.

The bar had plain wooden floorboards that had to be scrubbed and wooden benches all the way round; no comfort, people didn't look for it; a few tables but not many. We used to scrub the bars through, Sunday mornings - the smoke rooms and the bars. There was no floor coverings, just bare boards.

Every Thursday was a very big day because all the farmers came to town with their wives and all used to get into the kitchen. The pub was open all day on a Thursday. When I was small my mother did dinners once a month for the police in a room upstairs, in the big dining room that we had – mother was a very good cook. Family and relatives used to come and stay.

There was a stable in behind the pub – every pub in the town, bar the Hare and Hounds, had their own stables and the farmers used to come in on market day and bring their horses and stable them for the day. It was a complete day out in town for shopping and everything, not like today when they sell their cattle and are gone. Every pub had its own stables. We had stabling for three horses; there were three stalls. There was a ring outside – it is still there now; they would tie up the horse outside.

It had a cider cellar – hogshead of cider; a man used to bring beer in barrels in a horse and cart from Barnstaple. Before father took over the pub there used to be dogcarts for hire and small traps. We had a sign that used to hang outside. That was in Salter and Beer's days before father – Salter – Beer – Thorne.

The Bottle and Jug used to be in a passage, lots of people would come along with a little tin jug and fill it up with beer. When I was growing up no ladies ever went into the public bar. That didn't start until the 1930s. I remember my father coming up one day in a dreadful state to my mother and saying, "*quick come and serve, there's a woman in the bar*". There used to be two rooms at the side where women could go, and they were sort of separated from the men but of course they used to go in, but in the public bar there wasn't women allowed not even with their husbands. It was spit and sawdust in the public bar; that was one of my jobs, they used to have these like iron things full of sawdust and the men used to spit in it. We got rid of them when we took over. My father used to keep a little box – my job was to fill them up with sawdust every morning. They were kept under the counter until we took over.

*To be continued...*



**Kings Arms c 1930s – on the left is Harry Sanders and in the doorway is his wife Eliza.**

### **Harry Fowler KINGDON (slightly edited)**

**H F KINGDON** (Harry Fowler Kingdon) is named on South Molton War Memorial, but his name was in actual fact, **John Henry Westlake Kingdon** birth registered as **John Henry W Kingdon 2nd Q 1896 South Molton Ref 5b 419**. Private **Harry Kingdon** service No: **15866**, served with the 8th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. He died on 21 July 1916, (probably from wounds received at the attack on High Wood). Harry is remembered with honour at Daours Communal Cemetery Extension, Grave Ref. I.B.32, in the Somme. The Commonwealth War graves website shows Pte H Kingdom and his Medal card shows Harry Kingdon. His brother William Fowler Kingdon, who emigrated to

Canada in 1909 and lived in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, claimed Harry's medals.

Harry was the son of William Kingdon and Elizabeth née Reid, daughter of James Fowler Reid and Elizabeth née Gauld. Harry's father, William Kingdon was born 1849 in South Molton. His 1st marriage, in 1879, was to Eliza Ann Bridgeman. They had two children Minnie, born 1880 who died 5th October 1900 and William Charles, born 1882 who died 6th March 1883 South Molton. There is a headstone in South Molton Cemetery which reads:-

**"Eliza Ann wife of William Kingdon died 22 December 1882 age 24  
their son William Charles died 6 March 1883 age 11 months "**

In 1891 William was a widower living with his widowed mother at No. 1, Laurel Cottage, South Molton. He was a Solicitor's Clerk. Later the same year William was married for a second time to Elizabeth Reid. Elizabeth, aged 23, was from Auchmill, Aberdeenshire, Scotland and worked as an Officer/School Mistress at South Molton Workhouse. Elizabeth was 20 years younger than William. In the 1901 census William Kingdon, age 52 and Elizabeth, age 31 are recorded as Master & Matron at South Molton Workhouse\*. Harry is shown as John H Kingdon age 4.

Elizabeth Reid's mother was born in 1844 at Old Machar, Aberdeenshire. The 1911 census shows her a 67 year old Widow who was housekeeper to a single gentleman called **John Henry Westlake**, a Retired Chief Prison Officer and Pensioner, living at 20, Barton Crescent, Dawlish, South Devon. Also in the household recorded as a visitor was Gertrude May Kingdon born in 1895 at South Molton, a Draper's Assistant aged 16 (William and Elizabeth Reid's daughter). So it would appear that Harry Kingdon was named after John Henry Westlake of Dawlish.

William and Elizabeth's eldest son William Fowler Kingdon was born in 1892, a daughter, Gertrude May was born in 1895 and a son Edward

Reid Kingdon born in 1901 who died aged 6 on 22 December 1906 at South Molton.

Elizabeth Kingdon died of pneumonia on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 1907 in South Molton. She was buried on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April. Her husband, William, was unable to attend Elizabeth's funeral because he was seriously ill. William Kingdon died on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1907 in South Molton. Their son, Edward, had died only a few months earlier. Harry would have been 10 years old when his parents died.

Harry seems to have used Fowler from his mother's side. Her father was James Fowler Reid. By 1911 William and Elizabeth had been dead for 4 years. The 1911 census records Harry as **John Henry Westlake Kingdon**, age 14, occupation office boy in a Solicitor's office, and a boarder with Bessie Hobbs Adams at 2 Church Street, South Molton. Bessie, who was the head of the household, is shown as schoolteacher of a private school.

Poor little Harry, such a lot of tragedy in his short life of 20 years.

Contributed by Angela Bavidge née Kingdon – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014

**Sources:** North Devon Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1900  
Western Times, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1907  
North Devon Journal, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1907  
BMD Registers  
Census Returns  
Commonwealth War Graves website

\* William and Elizabeth Kingdon were Master and Matron of the South Molton Workhouse during the period 1897-1906. (Ed)

## Dates for your diary

- Sept 9<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. North Molton History Society **AGM**
- Sept 12<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive – Business Meeting
- Sept 24<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – Talk by The Exmoor Trust
- ALL MONTH** **WW1 Exhibition at South Molton Museum with display In Town Hall Foyer by South Molton Archive**
- Oct 17<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive **AGM + programme for 2014/15** at the Church Hall, Duke Street
- Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society – Talk by Mr. Paddy King-Fretts
- Nov 7<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. South Molton Archive - Talk by Trevor Wilson "Blight Brothers" + WW1 display at Methodist Hall, North Street.
- Nov 26<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 p.m. Filleigh History Society **AGM + programme for 2014/15**

Please send your contributions to the December issue of the News to Shirley, if possible via email – [ndlink@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ndlink@tiscali.co.uk)  
Deadline – November 25<sup>th</sup> 2014