

Henry Thomas HEMMING (HEMMINGS)

Born: 1884, Chipping Norton

Parents: Charles Hemming and Isabella Hewlett

Last known address: The Bungalow, 43 Horsebridge Hill, Parkhurst

Last known occupation: Drayman

Service number: 8960

Regiment: 3rd Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Service history summary:

- enlisted: not known
- rank: Private
- decorations: no record

Died: 15th December 1916

Age: 35

Buried: Parkhurst Military Cemetery

Family/descendants: Henry Thomas Hemming was born on February 16th 1884 in Main Street, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. His father, Charles, was an agricultural labourer born in Warwickshire in 1857. His mother Isabella Hewlett was born in Bishampton, Worcestershire in 1863. They had married there on October 15th 1879 and Henry's elder sister Louisa was born there. Charles and his family moved several times - to Draycot, Warwickshire, to Childs Wickham, Gloucestershire before apparently finally settling in Coughton, Warwickshire, near Stratford upon Avon.



On December 28th 1907 Henry married Florence Wesley at St Saviour's Church, Leicester. Florence, then aged 25, was the daughter of Stephen Wesley, a labourer (deceased). Both Henry and Florence were living at the same address, 113 Charnwood Street, Leicester. Their first son, Cecil Henry, born on March 26th 1914 and Henry Hemming is described on the birth certificate as a drayman. On 13th March 1917 Florence gave birth to a posthumous son named Thomas Henry after his father. He and his elder brother Cecil Henry were both baptised in St John the Baptist, church, Northwood on May 13th 1917. Florence married again in 1921 to Stephen George Bowers. Their son George Stephen Bowers was born the same year. Florence died in 1948 aged 65. Cecil Hemming stayed in the Island where he married Olive Emily Forehead at St John the Baptist Church, Northwood, in 1936 and died in 1981. A Henry Thomas Hemmings [sic] possibly Henry and Florence's son, married Dorothy M Church in Chippenham, Wiltshire in 1938 and died in Lancashire in 1984.

Brothers: Richard (c1887), Thomas (c1891) and William (c1895)

Sisters: Louisa (c1877), Lucy (c1885) and Florence (c1894)

Wife: Florence Wesley

Sons: Cecil Henry (1914) and Thomas Henry (1917)

Northwood/Gurnard connection: in 1901 Henry's family were living at Manor Farm Cottage, Bretforton, near Evesham in Worcestershire. Henry, now 18, was working as a groom and general servant. His father was working as a carter and his younger brother Richard, aged 14, was working as a 'horse boy'. Louisa had left home by this time. By 1907 Henry had left home and moved to Leicester where, using his experience with horses, he worked as a coachman. Henry's surname is spelt Hemmings on the marriage certificate and that version of his name is occasionally used thereafter. There is no record of where Henry and Florence lived after their marriage but their eldest son, Cecil Henry, was born in Chipping Camden, Shipston-on-Stour near Stratford-on-Avon. The family moved to Parkhurst when Henry was posted to the Island.

War record: Henry enlisted in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in Stratford upon Avon. Exactly when he did so is unclear as his service record is missing. He was assigned to the 3rd Reserve Battalion which was a home-based training battalion. It was formed in Warwick in August 1914, moved to Portsmouth in August 1914 and then to the Isle of Wight. This suggests that Henry enlisted either in or before August 1914, presumably as a volunteer. Henry and Florence lived at The Bungalow, 43 Horsebridge Hill. This was next door to the Forresters Arms (no. 41) which now houses the Island Computers business.

Henry died of 'lobar pneumonia' in Carisbrooke Military Hospital on December 15th 1916. After a service in the Garrison Church he was buried in Parkhurst Military Cemetery. His death certificate describes him as a railway goods porter, perhaps responsible for loading and unloading baggage and equipment for Parkhurst barracks at Newport station, possibly transporting them in a horse-driven cart. Lung disorders were common among coachmen and carters because of their exposure to the elements in their work. Henry may have been assigned to a home-based Reserve Battalion because his health was not good enough for service in the field.