

William (Billy) Fielding Hampson (1877 – 1955)



(30)

William (Billy) Hampson was born in Edgworth in 1877, the son of James, a labourer in a print works and Martha. The family initially lived at 113 Town Hall Street and later moved to 155 Bolton Road. Billy originally worked as a cotton operative but subsequently worked as a gardener at Greenthorne. He married Jane who was also born in Edgworth and they had one son Richard.⁽¹⁾

War Record

Unfortunately we have been unable to find any trace of William Hampson's war records. Someone of the same name (William F Hampson) served in the Royal Garrison Artillery as a gunner with the service number 112392 but we cannot be sure this was him, although Billy's photograph suggests he was in the artillery².

"In many photographs artillery gunners are seen wearing a leather bandolier of ammunition pouches diagonally across the chest. Their duties made wearing of normal infantry waistbelt ammunition pouches difficult."⁽¹⁸⁾

We can tell from Billy's uniform that he volunteered and signed up in 1914 or was already in the Territorials. This is because his tunic shows "rifle patches" on the front of the shoulder and pleats in the pockets, which were dispensed with in late 1914 as the need for cheap uniforms increased. If Billy was Service No: 112392, the record shows that he received the British War and Victory medals, but does not have the 1914-15 star which would indicate he had served in a theatre of war before December 31st 1915.⁽²⁾ Given that Billy would have been 37 at the outbreak of war, this may be the explanation.

Family History⁽¹⁾

The 1891 census shows the family living at 155 Bolton Road. Billy and his brother were "cotton operatives". No service records have been found for his brothers.

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|---------|------------|-------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Father | James | b1843 | Tyldesley | Labourer at Print Works |
| Mother | Martha | b1846 | Edgworth | |
| | William F | b1877 | Edgworth | |
| Sibling | John James | b1880 | Edgworth | |
| Sibling | Henry W | b1882 | Edgworth | |

The 1911 census shows Billy living at 14 Crown Point, Edgworth with his wife, Jane and son Richard. He married Jane Crook in 1905.⁽¹⁶⁾ By this time, Billy is working as a gardener at Greenthorne.

| | | | |
|------|---------|-------|----------|
| Wife | Jane | b1876 | Edgworth |
| Son | Richard | b1908 | Edgworth |

William Kingsley's diaries records:

"Billy Hampson was noted for writing humorous sketches and poems in the Lancashire dialect. He was William Kingsley's brother in law and lived on Bury Road. He worked at Greenthorne as a gardener".⁽¹⁴⁾

A press cutting from unknown source (dated 7th October 1938) showing Billy and his prize pineapples:



Billy was also known for his dialect poems. The following poem “Our Mary’s Chap is Coming for his Tea”⁽¹⁹⁾ was the winner of the “Scholes Trophy” for best Lancashire Dialect Poem, 1942.

“Eaur Mary’s Chap Is Comin’ to his Tay.

By gum, Aw never seed sich wark,
Mi yed it’s spinnin’ reawnd –
Aw dunnot think Aw’m gradely reet,
Aw’m feelin’ nowt-a-peawnd;
Aw’ve never had a minute’s peace
In aw this blessed day,
An’ aw becose eaur Mary’s chap
Is comin’ to his tay.

They're cleonin' things an' polishin',
An' t'vackum's gooin' too;
They're changing' t'pickthers on to th'waw
To mak' em look like new.
An' owt 'ats showin' shabby like
They're putting' eaut o' th' way.
An' aw becose eaur Mary's chap
Is comin' to his tay.

They're making' jelly an' blomonge –
An' fancy cakes an' o';
Yo'd think it were a tayparty
Or else a Lord Mayor's show.
They'n borrowed knives an forks an' spoons,
An' a gramophone to play,
An' aw becose eaur Mary's chap
Is comin' to his tay.

They'n towd me not to talk so broad.
Nor oppen mi meawth so wide –
To just say "please" and "thank you,"
An' little else beside.
Aw shannot ha' to smook mi twist,
Or use mi owd black clay,
An' aw becose eaur Mary's chap
Is comin' to his tay.

Aw'se ha to ha mi jacket on,
A collar, too, Aw'll bet;
Aw'se ha' to mind mi P's an' Q's,
An' wear a sarvyette.
If Aw blow mi tay to cool it
There'll be the dule to pay.
An' aw becose eaur Mary's chap
Is comin' to his tay.

They talk abeat a day o' rest
As Sunday owt to be
They'n kept mi gooin' aw day lung –
There's bin no rest for me;
Mi knees are feelin' shaky, an'
Mi yure it's turnin' grey
An' aw becose eaur Mary's chap
Is comin' to his tay.

W.F. Hampson

Greenthorne

“This ‘hard-to-find’ village has been attracting grand visitors ever since 1860, when James Barlow, the son of a Tottington handloom weaver who became Mayor of Bolton in the years after the Cotton Famine, opened a house called Greenthorne on the edge of the moors. Six miles away in Higher Bridge Street, thousands of spinners and weavers at Barlow & Jones made the best cotton blankets, bedspreads, satin quilts and Turkish towels you could buy. The 1890 defence of their Osman trade mark for ‘the towels that hug you dry’ is still a legal landmark⁽¹⁷⁾”

Probate for a will of William Fielding Hampson shows he died on 1st February 1955 when his address is given as Clare Bank Cottage, Markland Hill, Bolton.⁽⁴⁾

Research: Stephen Shields, Linda Spencer

Standard References: 1, 2, 4, 14, 30, plus:

- 16 www.findmypast.co.uk – England and Wales Marriages 1837 - 2008
- 17 <http://www.thelancashiremagazine.co.uk/outdoor/places/edgworths-remarkable-personalities/>
- 18 <http://www.photodetective.co.uk/RArtillery.html>
- 19 From the collection of J. Bentley