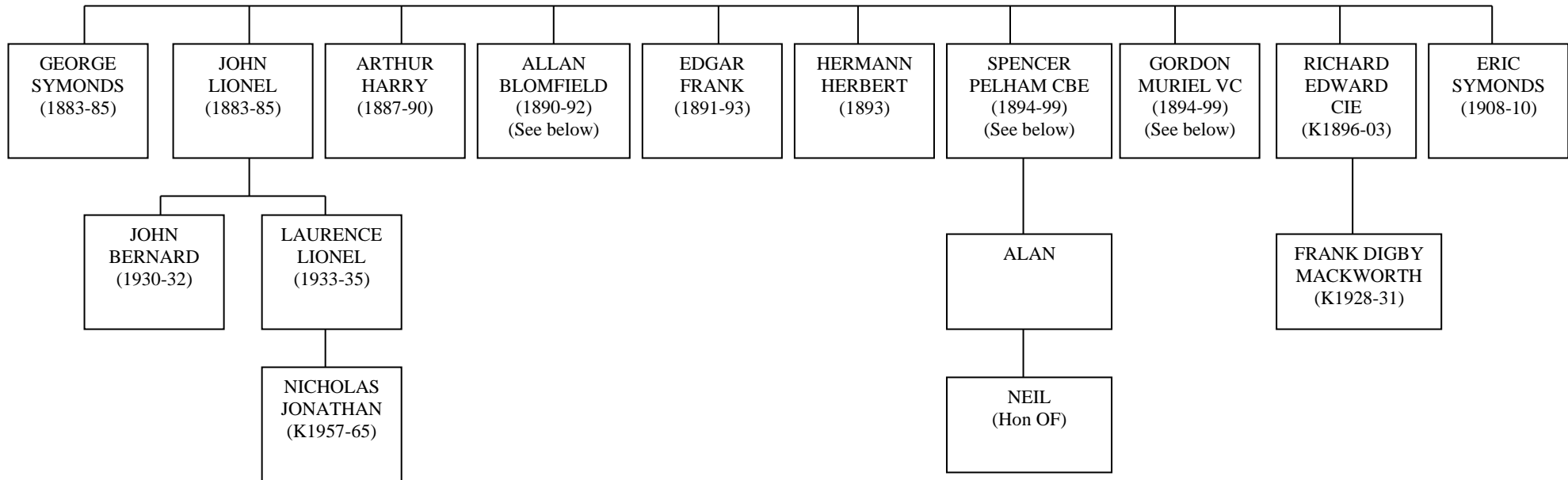


FLOWERDEW BROTHERS (Dates shown are years at Framlingham)

All 10 sons of A J B Flowerdew of Billingford Hall in Scole, Suffolk attended the College, including Gordon Flowerdew VC



[Allan Blomfield Flowerdew](#) is mentioned on the Boer War Memorial in the Chapel

[Gordon Muriel Flowerdew](#) won the VC

[Richard Edward Flowerdew](#) was awarded the CIE

[Spencer Pelham Flowerdew](#) was awarded CBE VD

[John Bernard Flowerdew](#) is mentioned on WW2 Memorial

[Frank Digby Mackworth Flowerdew](#) was an accomplished squash player

Neil Flowerdew (Hon OF) provided the following additional information on the Flowerdew family.

The Billingford Fifteen

A Family Record

An Explanatory Note

This is an early version of a document about our Victorian Flowerdew family, specifically the fifteen children of Arthur and Hannah Flowerdew. They were born at Billingford Hall and lived their young lives there. Hence, my colloquial title of *'The Billingford Fifteen'*.

This document is not a draft, if anything, it is a concept demonstrator.

Presenting it as a series of loose pages in an A4 binder may seem very amateurish – and I am, of course, an amateur at producing anything like this, but there is a tinge of method in my madness. For those who receive a copy in this state and are content to browse it and store it on a shelf, that will be fine. On the other hand, it is possible that some may want to add a piece on their particular family, and that will work fine as well. Neither is a right or wrong response to the document and I do not hold any precious thoughts of ownership of the whole.

The basic work started when my Mother (Ruth – Audrey's daughter) was still alive. She had known many of the Fifteen and added anecdotal comment in some cases. Later, I came across bits and pieces that filled in a couple of gaps, had an extraordinary visit to Julianna on Coll, and found out some gems about Eric from an unexpected source in Canada.

I'm fairly sure that there will be errors in historical detail, but the essence of the lives of the Fifteen is pretty close in the context of a family document.

Essentially, in this base version, there is a sort of biographical page on each and then some additions at the back end. These additions are:

- Transcripts of two letters from Gordon to a lady called 'Isa' who was a friend of his in Walhachin – copies came to my Mother from Isa's granddaughter some years ago.
- Transcript of a letter from Gordon to Arthur written on 5 Mar '18 on his way back from leave.
- Transcript of what could be read of a letter from Allan to George – the original is very faded in parts but it is of interest as we know so little about Allan.
- A note from Ella in her old age reminiscing briefly about life in the Nursery at the Hall.
- A contribution from Arthur about his life – we could assume that others tramped about in similar fashion, so it is quite a useful snapshot.

The latter seems to indicate that there was an attempt at some stage to create some form of family journal – my bet would be that it would have been driven by Lorna. There may be other scraps about. If there are they will probably turn up on Coll in Julianna's treasure trove.

I intend, over the next few months, to put together a sort of picture annex to slip in at the back. Any recipient of this document who would like a copy of that can contact me at bnfdew@yahoo.co.uk. I would caution that I don't work very quickly on this, but it sits on my shoulder in my study, readily to hand. So it will happen.

Neil

By Way of Introduction

Arthur John Blomfield Flowerdew was born on 14 Oct 1833 at Wortham in Suffolk. He was the second child of John Symonds Flowerdew and Emily Blomfield. Both his parents were of farming/stock. The Blomfield's, Emily's people, kept Hall Farm, which entitled them to live at Billingford Hall, although they did not own it. John's parents lived at Redgrave, which is near Rickinghall, where Arthur's seventh son, Pelham, eventually was to own the Cottage, a house which played a minor role in the next generation's history.

The Blomfields died out, as families sometimes do, and Arthur either had to take on Hall Farm, or let it go. He was, at that time, living with his mother at Hinderclay Hall, his father having died. Emily ruled Hinderclay and he elected to move. This coincided with his marriage to *Hannah Symonds*. The recurrence of 'Symonds' is purely coincidental; there was no family link. *Arthur and Hannah Flowerdew* lived for many years at Billingford Hall and had an extensive family, who I now call, for convenience, the Billingford Fifteen. The Fifteen were probably ordinary people living in extraordinary times and, by chance, getting involved in many of the minor events that make up history.

The Billingford Fifteen are listed below and brief outlines of their various lives are included in the following pages. Pelham was my paternal grandfather, and Audrey my maternal grandmother. Arthur and Hannah were my paternal and maternal great grandparents.

The **Bold** lettering indicates each individual 'known' name

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | George Symonds | 26 Nov 1869 |
| 2 | John Lionel | 7 May 1871 |
| 3 | Eleanor Mary (Ella) | 25 Jun 1872 |
| 4 | Florence Hannah (Florie) | 17 Dec 1873 |
| 5 | Arthur Harry | 22 May 1875 |
| 6 | Allan Blomfield | 27 Aug 1876 |
| 7 | Edgar Frank | 13 Sep 1877 |
| 8 | Hermann Herbert | 18 Oct 1878 |
| 9 | Louise Mildred | 26 Feb 1880 |
| 10 | Spencer Pelham | 6 Oct 1881 |
| 11 | Charlotte Audrey Emma | 27 Apr 1883 |
| 12 | Gordon Muriel | 2 Jan 1885 |
| 13 | Richard Edward (Dick) | 26 Sep 1886 |
| 14 | Lorna McNaught | 10 Sep 1888 |
| 15 | Eric Symonds | 6 Jan 1896 |

Neil Flowerdew

The Billingford Fifteen - and their Second Generation

This second table lists the Fifteen and their offspring. Following a discussion with Will H-S, we realised that most of Generation Three, Four and beyond, would have most chance of finding their place in the mix through grandparents or great grandparents, rather than the maze of their Victorian ancestors. I hope it helps.

| | Name | DofB | Children | Year of Birth |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | George Symonds | 26 Nov 1869 | Audrey Ao Tea Roa Arthur Kenneth George Hannah Arete Richard Allan (Dick) | 1903 1904 1906 1909 |
| 2 | John Lionel | 7 May 1871 | John Lawrence Patrick John Bernard Lawrence Lionel (Larry) | 1911 1913 1920 |
| 3 | Eleanor Mary (Ella) | 25 Jun 1872 | - | |
| 4 | Florence Hannah (Florie) | 17 Dec 1873 | Eleanor Viola | 1894 |
| 5 | Arthur Harry | 22 May 1875 | Gwendoline Nina (Wendy) Nancy Mapleton | 1914 1917 |
| 6 | Allan Blomfield | 27 Aug 1876 | - | |
| 7 | Edgar Frank | 13 Sep 1877 | - | |
| 8 | Hermann Herbert | 18 Oct 1878 | John Merman (Jack) Norman Eric Alan Raymond | 1911 1915 1916 |
| 9 | Louise Mildred | 26 Feb 1880 | - | |
| 10 | Spencer Pelham | 6 Oct 1881 | George Douglas Hugh John Pelham Blomfield (Jock) Alan David Alexander | 1910 1911 1913 1916 |
| 11 | Charlotte Audrey Emma | 27 Apr 1883 | Audrey Ruth Symonds | 1920 |
| 12 | Gordon Muriel | 2 Jan 1885 | - | |
| 13 | Richard Edward (Dick) | 26 Sep 1886 | Frank Digby Mackworth | 1913 |
| 14 | Lorna Me Naught | 10 Sep 1888 | - | |
| 15 | Eric Symonds | 6 Jan 1896 | Gordon Eric Sydney Joan Doremy Arthur Herbert (Barney) Norman Douglas | 1919 1923 1928 1937 |



This is the most complete picture I have ever seen of the Billingford Fifteen. George, the eldest, has gone on his travels, little Louise died when only a few months old, and Eric is yet to be born. We can date it reasonably accurately as Lorna is the infant on her Mother's knee – was it her first birthday (Sep '89)? It is also safe to say that this is in the garden at the Hall – but who took the photograph?

So we have:

Standing (in the back row): Ella, Florie, Arthur (Father), Arthur (son)

Middle row: Audrey, Lionel, Hannah (Mother), Lorna on Hannah's knee, Richard

Sitting on the ground: Allan, Hermann, Pelham, Gordon, Frank (with the bat)

Individual Short Biographies

The following pages consist of short biographical records of the Fifteen.

Name: GEORGE Symonds

Order in Family: Oldest

Date of Birth: 26 Nov 1869

Date christened: 30 Jan 1870

Date Died: 23 Aug 1947

Age at death: 77 & 9 mths

Details of Education: Boarded at Primary School at Banham in Norfolk (recorded on 1881 census);
Banham was a 'Commercial Primary School'
Framlingham College for High School

Occupation: Farmer

Married: Yes

Spouses name: Hannah Elizabeth [Moore]

Date of Marriage: 11 Jun 1902 (?)

Spouses DoB: 16 Mar 1871

Age at marriage: 33

Married at Masterton - New Zealand

Offspring:

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Audrey Ao Tea Roa | (1903) | at Hoxne, Suffolk. |
| Arthur Kenneth George | (1904) | at Hoxne, Suffolk |
| Hannah Arete | (1906) | at Hoxne, Suffolk |
| Richard Allan (Dick) | (1909) | at Hoxne, Suffolk |

Emigrated?: No, but travelled widely

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

Left Billington on 16 Apr 1890 and sailed for Canada. He went to Winnipeg, before moving on to British Columbia, Washington and then California. Aunt Florie got married in 1894 and one of the family wrote a letter which unsettled him and so he came back to Suffolk in 1895, but he again couldn't settle and went straight off to Perth, Australia. Gold called and he followed the Rush, unsuccessfully. He then joined the mounted police in Perth in 1898 but moved on to New Zealand in 1899. He returned to the UK after he married Hannah and moved to Eye, where he farmed Oak Lawn Farm until he died. He was twice (or perhaps three times) Mayor of Eye.

Ma's Comment: He was apparently a very fierce individual who terrified Ma, who could never really speak to him. Her subjective view is that he may have, gone on his travels to get away from the following hordes of kids.

Note: Oak Lawn Farm passed out of the family when George died, but Peter West, his grandson, a reasonably wealthy farmer in Suffolk, recently bought it - admitting to Ma that it was partly for sentimental reasons.

Further Note: In 2010, Peter published a memoir – *Memoirs of a Farmer* – which gives, amongst many other things, more detail of George's life. To Peter's great surprise the book was a best seller in Suffolk. ISBN 978-1-904136-32-3

Name: John **Lionel** Order in Family: Second
Date of Birth: 24 Mar 1871 Date christened: 7 May 1871
Date Died: 13 Feb 1937 Age at death: 65and 11 mths

Details of education: Boarded at Primary School at Banham in Norfolk (recorded on 1881 census) Banham was a 'Commercial Primary School'
Framlingham College for High School

Occupation: Farmer, Army (Corps of Dragoons) and then Indian Army

Married: Yes Spouses name: Honoria [Lawrence]

Date of Marriage: 10 Aug 1910 Spouses DoB: 27 Mar 1890
Age at marriage: 39 Where Married: Bangalore, India

Offspring:

- John Lawrence Patrick (1911) born and died at Ambala, India
- John Bernard (1913) born at Billingford; became aircrew - died in WWII as a Sqn Ldr at the controls of his Wellington
- Lawrence Lionel (Larry)(1920) born at Mussorie, India

Emigrated: No - but went travelling on his Army duties

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

Lionel was a Census Enumerator at Billingford in 1891, when he was working for his father. In Mar 1896 he went off and joined the Army (6th Dragoon Guard); his father bought him out for £12 in Sep. In Oct 1899 he again joined the Army, and was refunded the £12. He went out to the Boer War briefly, coming back from South Africa in 1901, returning to England. He is first recorded in India in 1903, at Bengal. In 1905 he was a Sergeant in the Dragoon Guards, based at 'the Depot'. In Sep of that year he took exams to qualify for 'the Military Farms' in Allahabad. He was assistant overseer of the Military Farms from 1905-1910. In 1908 he was overseer at Bangalore, where he married 'Honor' In 1910 they were in Ambala, where their first child died, and he was also somewhere called Sehore Gantts. He retired in 1924, eventually as a Captain, but he was by then ill, and remained so for the rest of his life. They retired to Sudbury, to live with his sister Aunt Ella, and remained there until he died. Great Grandmother also lived there, and did not die until 1930.

Comment

The first time Ma met him was when she came back from Canada to live in England in 1932 with her father and went to visit Aunt Ella, who collected the waifs and strays of the family. Ma was introduced as 'Audrey's girl'. There she met this gruff old man who sat in a red armchair but did not speak to her. It was very sad. He had been a very good looking young man.

Further Note: in what is probably Allan's last letter home, he mentions that Lionel had fallen off his horse and was very fed up about it. Lionel is, of course, one of the four Boer War brothers whose letters Lorna collated and we have at least the first half – and possibly the second book as well – hidden in Juliana's stash.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Name: Eleanor Mary (Ella) | Order in Family: | Third |
| Date of Birth: 25 Jun 1872 | Date christened: | 15 Sep 1872 |
| Date Died: 13 Jul 1961 | Age at death: | 89 |

Details of Education: Early details not known, but spent some time in school in Germany, for reasons not clear.
Nursing training at St Thomas' London.

Occupation: Nurse

Married: No (but she had a long term companion)

Offspring: No - she may not have married because of insanity in her companion's family, which was already inter-married with the Flowerdews. His name was Thomas Brook Drage, who left her a significant sum of money.

Emigrated: No - but went travelling

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

Ella was one of the last tranche of candidate nurses personally interviewed by Florence Nightingale. She finished training in 1906. In 1910, Lorna got married and 'they' were all at the wedding. Gordon was already in Canada, at Walhachin, and a group of the family, including Audrey, Ella, Florie and Ernest Hudson, her husband, went out to see him. Audrey never returned to England. Florie and Ernest decided Canada was not for them and continued back to India. Lorna became ill (with savage depression) shortly after marriage and Ella returned to look after her. She did, however, go back to St Thomas' and was there during WW I as an Assistant Matron. She left St Thomas' after the war. By this time her father was dead, and she travelled with her mother back to Canada for a visit sometime in 1919. Drage died in 1923, leaving her his money, and she could afford to live in Chilton House in Sudbury - a large house. Here she settled with her mother. This is the house Lionel retired to on return from India, and where Ma met him. A Mr Brown moved in to assist with Lionel's care when he became incapacitated - more than a servant, but not a man about the house. He was married, but no wife ever appeared. After Lionel died in 1937, Ella moved on and went to Gissing in Norfolk taking Mr Brown with her. Pelham built Little Close for her in the garden of The Cottage in Rickingham and they moved there in about 1948. She was there, as a frail old lady, in 1954. She stayed in Little Close until Mr Brown died in about 1956. She was eventually persuaded to move into The Cottage, which didn't work out, particularly after Pelham died. When his wife, Angel, moved in 1960 to live with their son, Douglas, Ella went to Lorna at Eye for some five months before going into Scole Nursing Home, where she died in Jul 1961.

Comment

Ella appears to have been loved by all the family, and, as mentioned elsewhere, collected the waifs and strays. Pelham did not care for Mr Brown, which must have exercised everybody a bit. This was further complicated by the fact that Angel and Ells did not get on at all.

Name: Florence Hannah (Florie) **Order in Family:** Fourth
Date of Birth: 17 Dec 1873 **Date christened:** 22 Feb 1874
Date Died: Jan 1963 (Cape Town) **Age at death:** 89

Detail of education: Nothing known

Occupation: No

Married: Yes **Spouses name:** Ernest Hudson
Date of Marriage: 19 Jul 1894 **Spouse's DoB:** Apr 9 xx
Age at marriage: 20 **Where married:** Billingford

Offspring: Eleanor Viola (1894) at Murrie, India

Emigrated: Yes, to initially to India, but ended up in South Africa.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

Little is known about her early life, but after leaving school she met Surgeon Captain Hudson, of the Fifteenth Bengal Lancers, a prison doctor, who was 'Home' on leave. He was a Norfolk man from Harleston. They became engaged and married all in a fortnight, and she went back to India with him.

Remarkably, she 'did' the flowers in the Allahabad Church when her much younger brother, Pelham, married Angle Knox – which suggests a family link in the days of colonial India.

He died very suddenly in 1916, on a visit to where Viola, then approaching her 21st birthday, had been born. Florie, left with a reasonable income, travelled extensively, mainly between India and Africa. She did, however, go to Canada in 1910 Ernest, Audrey and Eric to visit Gordon in Walhachin – possibly with a view to settling over there. It appears to be probable that this expedition was set up at Lorna's wedding, which was a family gathering of some note.

In the event, she and Ernest returned to India.

She did not get on with her daughter, who never married and died in her early 40s (I think).

She ended up in South Africa, for a time in Rustenburg growing oranges and remained there for some time. By 1947, when 'we' emigrated to Nyasaland, she had moved to Cape Town, living at Camp's Bay in the foothills of Table Mountain. She remained there until she died. She had her pension, and invested well, which allowed her to live as she chose.

Comment

Florie was an alarming lady, who used to paint; possibly very badly. She had been beautiful in her youth and was a striking old lady in 1959. She had, however, been 'difficult'.

Neil's Comment: I am lucky enough to have inherited Ernest's tiger hunting whisky set – politically incorrect but what the hell!

Name: Arthur Harry **Order in Family:** Fifth

Date of Birth: 22 May 1875 **Date christened:** 1 Aug 1875

Date Died: 15 Nov 1953 in Nairobi **Age at death:** 77 and 5 mths

Detail of education: Primary school possibly at a little establishment in Harleston
Framlingham College - Secondary School

Occupation: Started as an apprentice machine maker (Census entry 1891), joined the RN, attended
Camborne School of Mines and became a mining engineer.

Married: Yes **Spouses name:** Nina Flora Clara [Hoskins]

Date of Marriage: 29 May 1913 **Spouses DoB:** 30 Jan 1877 - died 1950

Age at marriage: 38 **Where married:** Lagos, Nigeria

Offspring: Gwendoline Nina (Wendy) (1914) at Eltham, Kent
Nancy Mapleton (1917) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Married: Yes, a second time **Spouses name:** Florence (nee Bastard)

Date of Marriage: 17 Jul 1951 **Spouses DoB:** 23 Oct 1888 (?) - died 1974

Age at marriage: 76 **Where married:** Oxford

Emigrated: No, but he travelled extensively – he just did not really stay anywhere

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

In 1890 he left Framlingham and at some stage joined the RN. In 1891 he was certainly at Billingham on Census Night. He saw service in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 in the Far East. He was part of the crew of HMS Pygmy, a Yangtse River gun boat; his rank was Engineer Lieutenant. On leaving the RN, possibly in about 1902, he went to Southern Rhodesia, where he worked as an accountant at a mine and saved the fees for the next stage of his education. He is recorded by his sister, Lorna, as being in Rhodesia for eight years.

He then returned to the UK and attended Camborne School of Mines from 1909 to 1912. He met Nina at Camborne where she had her own school. After Camborne he went out to Nigeria, possibly to a mine at Joss. Nina went out to join him and they were married by the Bishop of Lagos. In Feb 1914 he headed to Malaya as a Mine Manager at Tronoh Mines, Perak. He moved on to Kuala Lumpur in 1918 and stayed until 1938 as a consulting mining engineer. Australia beckoned and he became Mine Manager at Tronoh Mines, Harrierville, Victoria. When the war ended in 1945 he returned briefly to England before returning again to Malaya to help in the rehabilitation of the country. Nina had meantime stayed in Australia to sell up, before joining him again in Malaya. She returned to the UK on her own at some stage and died in England in 1950. After his second marriage he and his second wife moved out to Nairobi, where his younger brother, Dick, lived. Arthur died in Nairobi.

Ma's Comment

He was a stern man, who liked doing horoscopes. Pelham's wife, Angel, did not approve and threw them on the fire. By repute he was a very able man, with a particular skill in mathematics. He was also a very gifted athlete, who never smoked or drank. His second wife was, by repute, something of a socialite in the ex-pat community in Malaya.

Family Footnote: Arthur was one of the family group who visited Framlingham College in 1945 and gave the College (or more probably the OF's) Gordon's VC and Death Penny.

Name: Allan Blomfield **Order in Family:** Sixth
Date of Birth: 27 Aug 1876 **Date christened:** 5 Nov 1876
Date Died: 23 Mar 1900 **Age at death:** 24 yrs 6 mths
Detail of education: Primary School possibly at Harleston
Framlingham College 1890 -1892
Occupation: Bank clerk in Bury
Joined the Imperial Yeomanry in 1899
Married: No
Offspring: No
Emigrated: Only to go to war.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

After school, which he left when he was 16, he joined Barclay's Bank in Bury St Edmunds. Along with many others he signed up for the Boer War and died on service in South Africa at Zeerust in the Transvaal. Again like many of his colleagues, he died of 'enteric'. Enteric was a polite term for cholera.

He was a Trooper in the 43rd Company Imperial Yeomanry; his Service was 6825. Little is known about him, except that he won a carving set in a bicycle race at Botesdale, which suggests, like his brothers, he was something of an athlete.

Ma's Comment

There is nothing much about him. On joining the Yeomanry he recorded as being 5ft 8 and weighing 150 lbs. None of the family ever made a negative comment about him.

Later Footnote: Since writing the bare bones of this in 2002, the original of probably the last letter he wrote has turned up and, perhaps more informatively, the first book (probably of two) of Lorna's transcription of the letters the Boer War brothers wrote home. Once digitised, those letters may tell us more about him.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Name: | Hermann Herbert | Order in Family: | Eighth |
| Date of Birth: | 18 Oct 1878 | Date Died: | 15 Dec 1964 |
| Date christened: | 6 Dec 1878 | | |
| Age at death: | 86 | | |
| Detail of education: | Primary School unknown Spent one term at Framlingham, but didn't like it | | |
| Occupation: | Clerk at a Brewers City of London Volunteers for Boer War Finally an Estate Agent in Vancouver for many years | | |
| Married: | Yes | Spouses name: | Gladys Maude Farrer |
| Date of Marriage: | 7 Sep 1909 | Spouses DoB: | 5 May [?] |
| Age at marriage: | 31 | Where married: | Unknown |
| Offspring: | John Herman (Jack) | 17 Jan 1911 in Vancouver | |
| | Norman Eric | 23 March 1915 in Vancouver | |
| | Alan Raymond | 18 Oct 1916 in Vancouver | |
| Emigrated: | Yes | | |

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

After school he went to London and worked as a clerk for a company of brewers. He then joined the City of London branch of the Imperial Yeomanry and served, like three of the others, in the Boer War. On his return from the war, he rejoined the brewing company, but could not settle. He briefly went out to Bulawayo, in Southern Rhodesia, as a Mine Accountant and Secretary at a gold mine, but returned to the UK on medical grounds.

He tried Canada next, going to Queen's Bay in 1903, with Gordon, to their mother's sister (Alice Mahood). Hermann moved on to Vancouver. He settled down as an Estate Agent's accountant for the next fifty years or so. He died in Vancouver.

Ma's Comment

Hermann was Ma's Godfather, and Gladys one of her Godmothers. They lived at 1730 Nelson Street Vancouver. He was splendid bloke, who was a keen cricketer and general lover of life. He had hated school, which is why he was only at Framlingham briefly.

Name: Louise Mildred

Order in Family: Ninth

Date of Birth: 26 Feb 1880

Date christened: 7 Apr 1880

Date Died: 10 Apr 1880

Age at death: 3 months

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| Name: | Spencer Pelham | Order in Family: | Tenth |
| Date of Birth: | 6 Oct 1881 | Date christened: | 4 Dec 1881 |
| Date Died: | 22 Mar 1959 | Age at death: | 77 yrs 6 mths |
| Detail of education: | In 1890 he was at the Redenhall Commercial School Harleston 1894-1899 Framlingham College 1899-1902 Cooper's Hill; Royal Indian Engineering College Qualified as Member of Institute of Civil Engineering | | |
| Note: | This quite different education pattern may have been influenced by Florie's husband Ernest Hudson | | |
| Occupation: | Civil Engineer (specialist in Railway construction) | | |
| Married: | Yes | Spouses name: | Angel Knox |
| Date of Marriage: | 17 Nov 1908 | Spouses DoB: | 13 Jul 1884 |
| Age at marriage: | 27 | Where Married: | Allahabad |
| Offspring: | George Douglas Hugh | 12 Jan 1910: | Lucknow |
| | John Pelham Blomfield (Jock) | 4 Aug 1911: | Billington (home on leave) |
| | Alan | 9 Apr 1913: | Between Faizabad & Gorakpur (in a railway resthouse) |
| | David Alexander | 11 Aug 1916: | Simla |
| Emigrated: | No - but lived in India between 1902 and 1930 and then Nyasaland between 1930 and 1935 | | |

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

Joined Indian State Railways in 1902 as Asst Engineer. He also joined the United Provinces Light Horse as a Trooper in WWI, but was never released by the Railway, even when he later joined the Volunteer battalion of the Royal Berkshire and Middlesex Regt, which must have existed in India. He also held the rank of captain in the Railway Rifles at some stage, and saw action in skirmishes with the natives. He did valuable work keeping communications open at the time of the Amritsar Riots (1919). By 1925 he was Divisional Superintendent of a division of the railway. In 1925 he was appointed Chief Engineer of Indian State railway. He became Director of Civil Engineering (Railway Board) in 1929.

In 1930 he retired from the Indian Railways and selected as the Chief Engineer of the Northern Extension, Nyasaland Railways. This was the extension of the railway from Limbe to Salima, He was awarded the CBE after this period. He had the C of E church in Limbe built, and also one in India. He retired to Rickinghall in 1935, where he owned The Cottage. He was heavily involved in local government after he retired, and was Chairman of the Rural District Council of Thedwastre during the war. He was also on the County Council, and a Magistrate. During the War he was a member of the Observer Corps and ran salvage and savings schemes.

Comment

He was very clever and (in Ma's opinion) became de facto head of the family. *George's clan may not have seen it that way.* Aunt Ella ended up in Little Close at the bottom of the garden of The Cottage, and his three daughter's-in-law spent time at The Cottage during WWII. Both Felicity and I were born there.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Name: | Charlotte Audrey Emma | Order in Family: | Eleventh |
| Date of Birth: | 27 Apr 1883 | Date christened: | 29 Jul 1883 |
| Date Died: | 21 Feb | Age at death: | 83 yrs 10 months |
| Detail of education: | Started in Botesdale at 'Mrs Taylor's School' - there as a boarder in 1891 Entered Nottingham High School for Girls in Spring Term 1897. Left in 1902 (she possibly lodged with cousins over this period). Obtained her Higher Certificate in 1901 and Matriculated in 1902 | | |
| Occupation: | Possibly became a stenographer | | |
| Married: | Yes | Spouses name: | William Miller Higgs |
| Date of Marriage: | 20 Feb 1911 | Spouses DoB: | 23 May 1878 |
| Age at marriage: | 28 | Where married: | Ashcroft BC |
| Offspring: | Audrey Ruth Symonds | 17 Dec 1920: | born Sooke BC |
| Married (second): | Yes | Spouses name: | Hector Maclean |
| Date of Marriage: | 17 Aug 1929 | Spouses DoB: | 1866 |
| Age at marriage: | 46 | Where married: | Vancouver |
| Emigrated: | Yes, but she may have meant to come back. | | |

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

After she left school, she may have worked in an office job in London for a time. The first definite fact is that she went to Canada in 1910 with Ella, Florie & Ernest, and Eric after Lorna's wedding to see Gordon in Walhachin. She ran the hotel in Walhachin for a while, and met William Higgs, who she married. They went together to Sooke, where they cleared land and built a house and had a poultry farm. He joined up for the War, but the marriage collapsed and they separated in 1922. She moved to Vancouver to live with Hermann, but released her daughter to her father, and went to Lulu Island, where she had another poultry farm. She gave this up on her second marriage and joined her husband in his market gardening venture. He died of cancer in 1946 and she stayed on in Canada until her death.

Further Note by Neil: Audrey was my Granny-in-Canada. Many years after she died I was contacted and told that a lady called Charmaine Henderson, who lived in Vancouver, had a family item which related to me. This proved to be a hand painted miniature portrait which now hangs on my study wall. It was a gift to my Mother from her father when she was three. It had obviously remained with Granny when the marriage failed. Charmaine found it when an 'old lady' was taken into care and her small house was left empty. She kept it safe for fifty years before identifying the link through the internet.

A further note: There is an oddity about William Higgs' participation in the Great War. I have a small photo album showing William and Audrey on their farm in 1915 – which doesn't quite tie in with him being in France at the time. A puzzle for another day.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Name: | Gordon Muriel | Order in Family: | Twelfth |
| Date of Birth: | 2 Jan 1885 | Date christened: | 1 Mar 1885 |
| Date Died: | 31 Mar 1918 | Age at death: | 33 yr 2 months |

Detail of education: Village schools and then Framlingham College - 1894-1899
(He didn't do well at school!)

Occupation: Farmer

Married: No

Emigrated: Yes

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

He went out to Canada in 1903, sailing on 15 Oct. He was 18 and Hermann, who travelled with him, was days short of his 25th birthday. It isn't obvious what Gordon did between leaving school and emigrating; possibly he worked on the farm. Initially he and Herman were at Queen's Bay with their aunt, Alice Mahood. Moving on, Hermann went to Vancouver and Gordon headed for Ontario, working on various farms. At one stage he had a piece of land, but that does not seem to have worked out. He moved up to British Columbia in 1909, ending up at Walhachin, where he remained until he enlisted as a trooper and went to the War. In early 1915 his Regiment were billeted on family land near Billingford, and both he and Eric are mentioned as visiting the Hall in Great-Granny's 1915 diary. The Regiment crossed to France in mid-1915, initially as infantry, but later being re-united with their horses and serving in their prime role as cavalry.

His wartime service is recorded in detail in many documents, but suffice to say that he was awarded a posthumous VC after a brutal action at Morieul Wood. He remains a revered figure in Canadian Army lore.

Further Comment: Peter West's book, *Memoirs of a Farmer*, covers the remarkable relationship between the Regiment and the family farms, which supplied all their horse feed during the war years – a weekly delivery from Ipswich to wherever the Regiment was to be found.

Name: Richard Edward (Dick) **Order in Family:** Thirteenth

Date of Birth: 26 Sep 1886 **Date christened:** 7 Nov 1886

Date Died: 9 Dec 1971 **Age at death:** 85 yrs and 2 months

Detail of education: 1886-1903 Framlingham College
He did very well at school.
Read medicine at Maryshill College, Aberdeen - qualified in 1908.

Occupation: Doctor of Medicine.

Married: Yes **Spouses name:** Caroline Jane Mackworth
Date of Marriage: 4 Oct 1912 **Spouses DoB:** 14 May 1881
Age at marriage: 26 **Where married:** (prob India)

Offspring: Frank Digby Mackworth 1 Oct 1913 - Kafauli India

Emigrated: All his working life was in India

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

He joined the Indian Medical Service (of the Indian Army) in 1909. In 1910 he was at Sialkot, Amballah and Sehere Gautts. In May 1914 he went to the Andaman Islands in civil employment as Medical Superintendent of Cellular and Female Jails at Port Blair. Recalled to military duties in Oct 1914 and posted to Mesopotamia [Iraq] as Medical Officer (MO) of *the* 76th Punjabis and was present at Shaiba, Karun River and Nasarielh. After these actions he was invalided back to India. In 1916 he became Senior MO Delhi cantonments. He did occasional trips to the Persian Gulf on the Hospital Ship Elloa. He joined the 2nd Battalion 113th Infantry in 1917 as MO at Dera Israel Khan. He was in a Medical Staff Appt in 1918 at Northern Command and on active duty at Wazir Iatan on the North West Frontier in 1919. His wife may have been in England during the war - she features in her mother-in-law's diary entries in 1916.

He was again, or still, on the North West Frontier in 1921 and later returned to Delhi as head of a hospital unit. His services were placed at the disposal of the Gaol Dept of the Govt of Burma in 1922. He was Supt of the Rangoon Gaol for several years and featured in the Rangoon Gaol riots in the 1920s. 1931-1936 saw him in the same role at Calcutta

He was awarded the CIE (Companion of the Indian Empire) for his efforts. In 1937 he reverted to military duty and went to the North West Province at Bannu - as Officer Commanding Combined Military Hospitals. He retired in Apr 1939, but was recalled and was posted to Meerut for hospital and station duties. He was invalided to England in 1940 and the following year was appointed medical officer of the Internee's Camp on the Isle of Man. He finally retired in 1944 and went to Kenya because his son Digby, also a doctor of medicine, was already there. He died in Nairobi.

Ma's Comment

His older brother, Arthur, moved out to Kenya in 1951 and also died in Nairobi. Dick was a short Flowerdew. In his retirement he took up 'petits point' and created beautiful small tapestries.

Name: Lorna McNaught **Order in Family:** Fourteenth
Date of Birth: 10 Sep 1888 **Date christened:** 30 Sep 1888
Date Died: 1981 **Age at death:** 93
Detail of Education: Junior Boarding School and one year of High School
Occupation: Farmer's wife plus
Married: Yes **Spouses name:** Stamford Tillot
Date of Marriage: 20 Apr 1910 **Spouses DoB:** 29 May 1878
Age at marriage: 21 **Where Married:** Billingford
Offspring: None
Emigrated: No

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

She was ill after she got married, which was why Ella returned from Walhachin. Stamford joined up in 1916 leaving Lorna to run the farm at Yaxby near Eye. On his return from the war they were separated for a time, but rejoined each other and lived into their dotage.

She did a great deal of local social work in the area. They left Yaxby in 1926 or so [reputedly] because he refused to pay the increased farm workers wages. They eventually moved to a house called The Beeches in Eye itself. It is noteworthy that he retired when he was only 48. [Julianna heard that Stamford sold his farm just before the Depression for a terrific price and lived on the money ever after] During WWII he was on the Committee that may have confiscated Frank's farm [Peter West does not think this happened]. Lorna went on into great old age, and eventually moved into the Nunnery, a Care Home in Diss, where she died.

She was held in sufficient esteem for her to merit a Memorial Service in Eye and a short piece in the Eastern Daily Press. The latter records that she had been Chairman of the Women's Section of the Royal British Legion, was a keen member of the WI, the Eye and Hartismere Blind Association, the Eye Conservative Association, and she helped with voluntary work at the Hartismere Hospital.

Comment

There are more general observations about Stamford than Lorna, but they may help to fill in the picture. He was considered to be rather frugal with money, and they never went anywhere. On a personal family note, he commented that he thought he would never see Ruth again as she disappeared off to the depths of Africa in Feb 1947, and remembered the comment when we visited Home in 1954. Lorna, once she was over her depression, stayed put and was very content with her lot.

Name: Eric Symonds **Order in Family:** Fifteenth and last

Date of Birth: 6 Jan 1896 **Date christened:** 28 Mar 1896

Date Died: 1972 **Age at death:** 76

Education: 1908 won a Mantle Scholarship to Framlingham and went to Eastward Ho College

Occupation: Youth, soldier and very successful poultry farmer

Married: Yes **Spouses name:** Annie Doremy Bilbank Hall

Date of Marriage: 12 Feb 1919 **Spouses DoB:** 28 Jan 1896

Age at marriage: 23 **Where Married:** London - Bishopgate

Offspring:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Gordon Eric Sydney | 9 Dec 1919 | Vancouver |
| Joan Doremy | 27 Feb 1923 | |
| Arthur Herbert (Barney) | 5 Jan 1928 | |
| Norman Douglas | 28 Feb 1937 | |

Emigrated: Yes – to Canada

BRIEF SUMMARY OF LIFE

Shortly after leaving school he joined Gordon in Walhachin – it was 1910 and he was 14 years old. In 1914 he joined up in Lord Strathcona's Horse at the same time as his elder brother – Eric now aged 17. He stayed with the Regt until Feb 1918. He saw a great deal of action, sometimes as infantry, as the Regt were without their horses for a period. He was promoted to Corporal in 1917 and was commissioned into the Artillery late in the War. He missed the events at Moreuil Wood because he was under training for that shift to the Artillery. After the war he started on a Soldier's Settlement ranch near Vancouver, and later went to Cognam in the Fraser Valley

He was the first British Columbian poultry breeder to win the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, egg-laying competition which was open to the world. He stayed poultry farming, at which he became a very noteworthy forward thinking expert and remained in Canada until his death.

Comment

Eric, the youngest, may have been a bit of a handful. He reputedly mixed too much with the men on the farm in his youth. His parents may have encouraged him to go out to Gordon. He was a bit difficult to get on with, and even Pelham found him rather tricky. *[On the other hand, emigrating at 14 is probably fairly challenging, and there are no obvious clues as to what he did at Walhachin – we must assume he was under Gordon's eye]*

Another Note - Gordon, in what was almost certainly his last letter dated 5 Mar 1918, written to Arthur as he returned to the Regt after a spell of leave at home, comments that *'Eric is safe for about six months, I did not get down to Brighton to see him, he was very keen so I hope will do well.'* Those comments suggest that Gordon felt a duty of care that was fairly deeply ingrained.

Family Point of Interest - Hannah had a brother, Ernest, who was described as a liberal Anglican vicar. He plied his trade in Canada rather than the UK, where he was not much appreciated by the Church hierarchy. Intriguingly, he officiated at Eric and Doremy's wedding in London, which suggest he made a special trip over.

Oddments

The following pages contain oddments of family history, including odd notes and letters

A scrap of a letter written by Allan from the Boer War shortly before he died of enteric. The original survives but parts are illegible.

6825 43 Coy 12 Battalion.....Fitters [?] Hoof [?] 23 Oct 1900

Dear George

Thanks for your letter had meant to write before but not much time to oneself here

.so have to get a c.....or go by Police

.....all found, but it had theto start both, anda long time to.....

So as before..... think I shall be home by Christmas. We don't expect to do any more marching. I think we have done our share. Of course, there is a lot of money to be made out here only you want money to get it with a lot of money in farming only the [??] are too lazy to work, don't think there is much work for a white man on a farm here as blacks do all the work. I shall see what they will do for me in a Bank out here. We shall go home from Mafeking, have been there once, have not seen Pretoria

..... This war looks like lasting a good bit as yet, can't do anything with these small bands, they generally get one or two of us as well every day, one even shot through the heart, they are a, we have been out after them once this a.m. and had a few shots, they have no end of cheek, come quite near our camp. As yet I have been very fortunate have kept very well. It is getting very hot in day now. Lionel has been very unfortunate meeting with an accident from his horse he wanted to see a little fighting; he will be off for soon. You do not seem to be able to do much good where you are, one thing you would be bound to get a living out here and it is a splendid country. I should certainly try it before England again I think. Governor has had a quiet time of it while all us been away. I wonder how he likes it. He did not like us coming out especially me, have not heard a word from him yet. Well, I have nothing more to say. Remember me to Mr Platt. Hoping you are quite well, with better luck.

I remain your affectionate Brother,

Allan B Flowerdew

A Remnant written for a lost family chronicle.

Contribution by Arther Harry Flowerdew

Family Chronicle - Chapter V

This story opens at Billingford Hall, on the 22nd May 1875, and will proceed without words for eight years, when I commenced my school experiences at Hoxne, in Mrs Ward's select preliminary establishment, as a day-boy, and helped to whiten the dear old lady's hair for the space of one year, leaving her for Mrs Hall's School, Aslacton, which, for obvious reasons was called "Tree House". I used to think, at the time, how much I shall like to revisit the place when I am an old man, say in twenty years time - I merely recall this sentiment to show what a nice little chap I was. (Dear Editor...that is the right kind of thing to say, I hope.)

The School was removed to Redenhall, a year after I first honoured it, which patronage was continued for two more years, when I had the fortune to win an entrance Scholarship at Framlingham College.

Of three years spent at Framlingham, I haven't much to say, owing to the usual methods of teaching and the awkward shape of my head. I worked, all my prep time, at languages, and remained bottom of the class, and no time at Mathematics and floated about top of my division. Finally before leaving, I reached the pinnacle of a Junior Cambridge Certificate.

A few months at home was enough to convince everybody that I did not like farming; and, after a false start or two, I am apprenticed to Murton and Turner, Kenninghall, learning the wheelwrighting trade, for four years - completing the term on the 1st March, 1895.

On the 18th I went to Harwich and joined the Royal Navy, aboard the ST. M. S "Mersey" as a Carpenter's Crew; and was sent round to Chatham Depot to await my turn for sea, which came eighteen months later; although during that time, I had two short experiences in the Annual Mobilisation of the Home Fleets.

My first ship was H. M. S. "Champion", a Corvette, attached to the Training Squadron for young seamen; there, for two years, I learnt a lot more sail drill than I wanted to. We went for two cruises each year; in the winter to the Canary Islands and the West Indies; and in the summer to the Channel Islands, Iceland and Northern Europe; we also took part in the Diamond Jubilee Review, at Spithead.

In September '95 I was drafted to H.M.S. Edgar for the "Pigmy", a gunboat of 755 tons, on the China station. We commissioned the "Pigmy" in Hong Kong, on New Year's Day, 1899, and proceeded to the Philippine Islands, and found that the Americans were fighting the insurgents, consequently we had a lot of running about, rescuing Traders, etc by "bluff" and very little leave on shore.

After six months we returned to Hong Kong, and then went to Shanghai, thence up the Yangtse Kiang, for 650 miles, to Hankow calling at all the Treaty Ports on the way. Our next destination was Wei Hai Wei, where we wintered, returning to Hong Kong via Japan.

In June 1900 we were recalled from the Philippines, on account of the Boxer rising, and first went to Shanghai and Chuin Kiang, but were soon sent to add our few pounds to the Allied Fleets at Taku, Newchwang and Shan Hai Kuan. At the last place, Admiral Seymour played us with grand "finesse".

Our next trip was to Singapore and the Straits Settlements, where we cruised for six months; taking part in the Eclipse of the Sun Expedition at Sumatra, in May 1901. This was followed by another trip to Canton and then up the Yangtse Kiang to Kiu Kiang, 500 miles up, for two months, refitting at Hong Kong again; and, finally, bringing the "Pigmy" home in February-April 1902.

After paying her off on the 20th May we had 7 days leave; and I returned to Chatham Depot; but was soon afterwards drafted to HMS "Ganges", at Harwich, and shortly purchased my discharge from the Royal Nave - 20th August 1902.

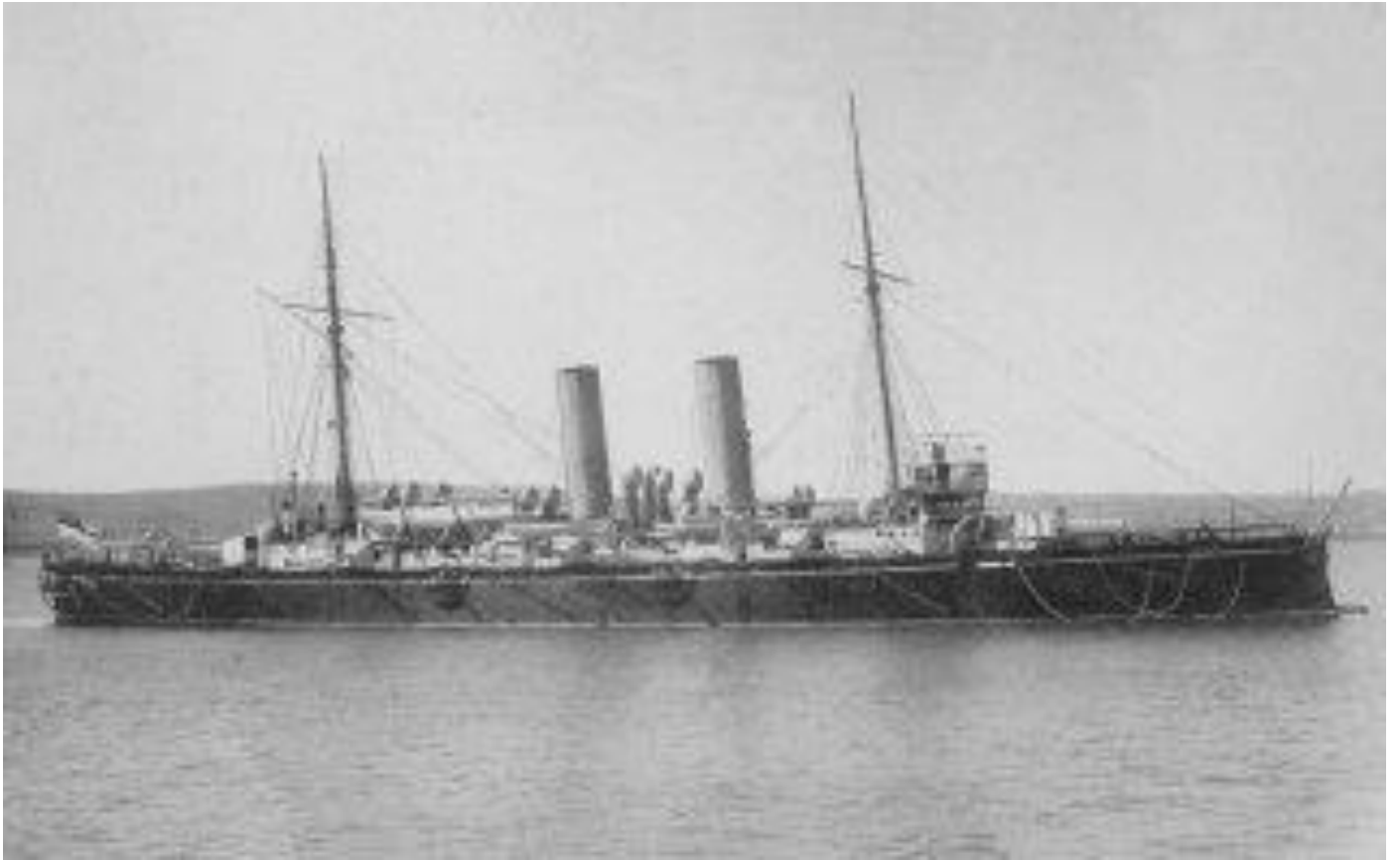
In the following month I was again afloat, but as a passenger on the "Braemar Castle", bound for Cape Town, en route for Bulawayo, Rhodesia. [*Neil's Note – In Feb 1947 my Mother, Ruth, took her four young children to Africa to join my Father in Nyasaland aboard the self same Braemar Castle – I was four months old*]

Bulawayo, a town of 5000 inhabitants, exists chiefly as a mining centre, on a spot chosen purely for the sentimental reason that Lobengula, the late king of Mataberland, had his kraal there; latterly, railways have enhanced its importance.

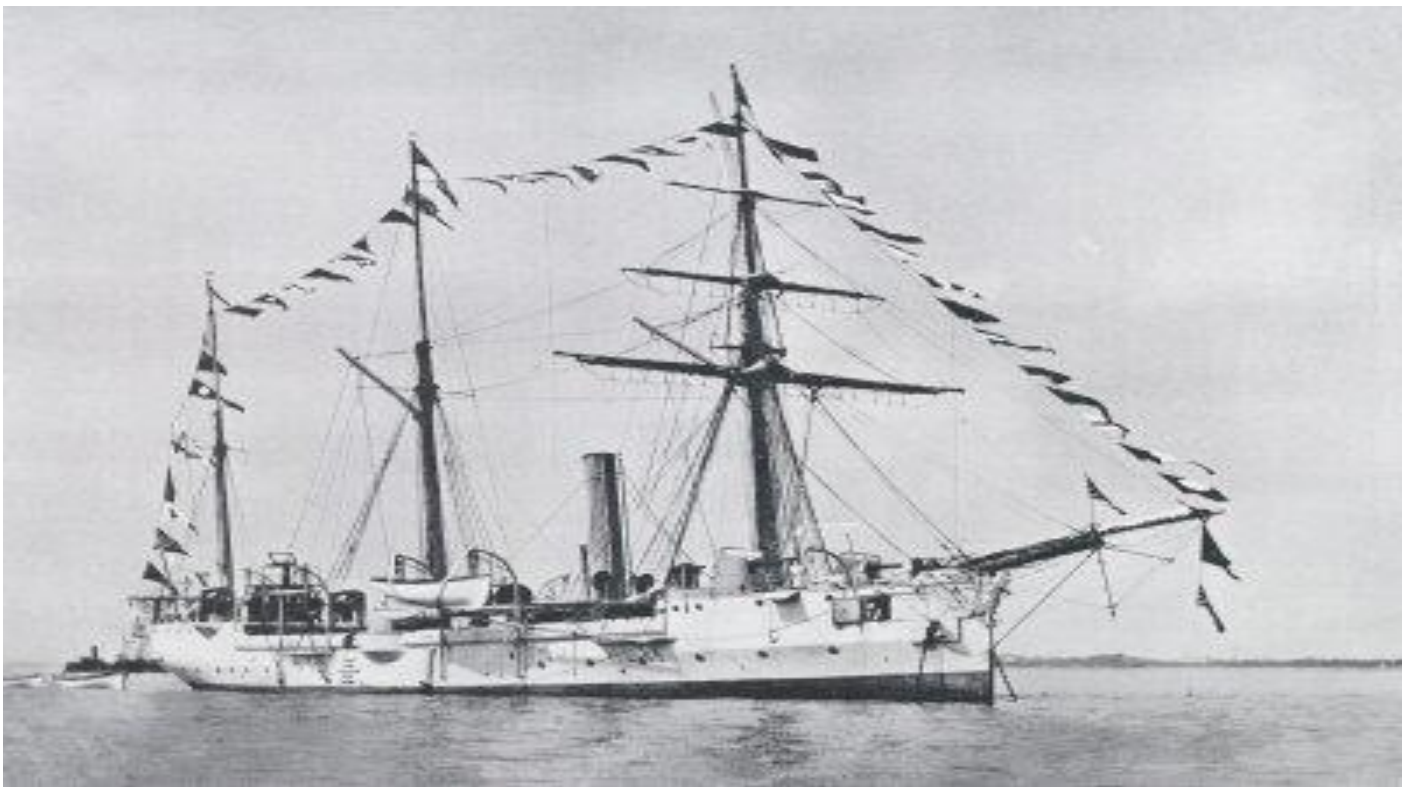
After a few months work as a wagonmaker in the town, and a few weeks at the Ayrshire Mine in Mashonaland, I got the temporary post of Storeman and clerk with Messrs Johnson and Fletcher for seven months. In 1904, Williams and I thought to try our luck in Northern Rhodesia; so took train to the Wankie Coal Mines, which are 212 miles from Bulawayo and 76 from the Victoria Falls. We travelled half the distance from Wankie by Construction train, and walked the rest of the way. It being the end of the rainy season, the Falls were obscured to a great extent by the spray. We both got well soaked and probably laid a good foundation down for the malarial fever to work on.

We crossed the Zambesi at Livingstone, 5 miles above the Falls. This is north of the river, and the next day, started on a 100 mile trip to Kalomo, which is the capital of N. W, Rhodesia. As we could not get carriers for even our small lot of baggage, we had to go with some transport wagons. We reached Kalomo in ten days and interviewed the Acting Administrator, who was on the point of leaving, as the Administrator was returning from a trip home, where he had been arranging a farm settlement scheme. As we could hear of nothing definite, and had both had good doses of fever, we left Kalomo after 12 days, with 3 carriers, and reached Livingstone in a little over 4 days. We left again next day and travelled to Wankie with an empty wagon, and reached Bulawayo on the 2nd April having been away six weeks.

The ships mentioned by Arthur



HMS Edgar



HMS Pygmy

Remnants possibly written for a lost family chronicle by Eleanor – the oldest of the girls.

1957

I am Eleanor Mary the eldest daughter of Father and Mother and 3rd child born 1872 - on June 25th. All my life I have been called Ella. My baby brother Eric called me "Ulla".

The happy young days in the nursery with George and Lionel at the ever exciting nursery window looking out on to the yard, and further away the pig yard, with the ever happy big barn, and stairs up to the granary where the man carried up huge sacks of mash and bran for the bullocks and cows and horses. We watched the cows sauntering to the [milking shed] from their various meadows to be milked.

We were taken out for walks by Nurse in a wonderful 3 wheeled pram, where with a squeeze, 3 of us could sit on the one seat. When another Baby arrived a tired elder could sit on the ledge over the front wheel.

One day I well remember falling on a sharp stone cutting my right knee, the scar is still there.

On wet days we played lions - more frightening to me. George could make appalling roars. Our round table we covered with dust sheets and that was the den. The very wide window sill was our lookout, the wall getting kicked unmercifully especially by Allan who with a stick and a piece of string was the swiftest little coachman that ever was.

Father and Mother drove over to see mother Father and Mother nearly every week taking one of us.

September 8th 1954

Strange to say now I am 82 last June. My thoughts have been running back to childish days in our nursery with its wonderful large window which had a very broad sill, on which as soon as we could sit on it safely we gradually grew to a sill full. Of course little feet loved to kick into the wall, when to the Nurse's grumbles to the mess we made of the wall, Father had a large board put up, which, I am sure must have been Mother's idea as who could stop children from kicking.

Allan especially was so fond of horses he always managed to get a piece of string which he put under his little feet and with another bit of string for a whip would drive at a tremendous rate, saying he was going to be a "coachman".

The games that George and Lionel got up to [created] lions and tigers by draping dust-sheets, when we could get them, over and around the nursery round table. I was always too scared to join in; the roaring and screams were too realistic. We had no games to play with so had to imagine.

One of our great joys when mother had made a large bowl of syllabub, she had the crock sent up to us. It never went down to the kitchen below us with a vestige of syllabub left inside, little fingers saw to that.

The window sill gave us great entertainment as it looked over the front yard and beyond to the stables and yard. One day Father and Mother had arranged to take Lionel with them for their weekly visit to Grandfather and Granny at Botesdale. Lionel was strutting about the yard in a new suit and lace collar, very proud of his coming drive and rather showing off to those of us on the window sill, when he walked backwards into the pigs' pail so - poor boy - no drive that day. We were taken for walks every afternoon with the large pram with 3 wheels. Three could sit in a row with our backs to the nurse. No such pram is seen in these days.

A little older we had lessons with a Mother's help, till George and Lionel went to school. I followed when 9 to Mrs Taylor's in Botesdale. Florie soon following.

Gordon was fond of walking and seeing about under the cart horses in one of the stables. The man was up for his beer. Florie was so clever after supper party at spelling. I said OT.

Gordon when two or 3 years old always threw everything out of his bed. One day we found him lying on his knees with his face buried in his pillow.

Two Wartime Letters from Gordon Flowerdew to 'Isa'

These two letters are transcribed from photocopies of the originals. Following the letters there is a note explaining how Isa was and how copies of the letters found their way back to Ma.

The first one also appears in abbreviated form on P 92 of 'Catastrophe or Camelot', a pamphlet recording the history of a settlement near Vancouver which was publicised as ideal for fruit farming – it attracted an interesting group of English emigrants. Sadly, it collapsed completely due to men leaving for the war and unsuitability as a fruit growing site (there was no water to hand!)

The following are mentioned and recorded among the residents of Walhachin in 1914 in that book – the link is used to illustrate that, especially in their early days in France, there was quite regular contact with others from the Walhachin community.

Miss I N Twining
Gordon Flowerdew
Eric Flowerdew
A Kinch
L Blair
B Parkin (Ben)
W S Tennant
G Calder (possibly George)
T E Hollerton
A L Green
W P Knatchbull
Eric Wilkinson
Louis Pajet
Capt R E Pajet
Basil Loyd
M A Gruen
J L Melkuish
(there are several who may be the 'Robert' referred to)

Walhachin was recorded as having the highest enlistment percentage of any 'city' in Canada - 43 men left in the first month (p 87)

May 24th is significant because it was Empire Day (p40 & p41).

The letter dated Jun 1915 would have been written about 6 to 8 weeks after the Regt went out to France as infantry – the horses followed some time later. The Jul 1916 letter is a harsher read – the pseudo glamour had faded.

Jun 30 1915

Somewhere in Belgium

Dear Isa,

Many thanks for your letter and cigarettes. They arrived at a critical moment we were just going to move to the trenches again and none of us had any smokes - so they will be enjoyed. We either all have parcels at once or at or no one has any at all. And its much the same with the fighting.

Its either hells a popping or just as peaceful as sitting on the river bank at Walhachin.

Your Gala Day was a great success in spite of rainy weather - our 24th May was quite different - we were in the reserve trenches at Festibert the day before Mr Tennant was killed and we were heavily shelled on and off all day, is fact quite the most exciting 24th any of us had spent (a man has just gone by walking his head all bandaged he had been hit in the eye by a piece of an explosive bullet) which by the way is banned or was banned by international agreement - This country has been occupied by small farmers so there are plenty of old stables etc where we sleep, if no stables we sleep on the meadows, we are in reserve just now, laying behind a hedge - I think I'm qualified now for a professional transfer, how we are going to settle down to work again I don't know.

Home correspondence schools are very useful, I take one myself 'commercial book-keeping' but did not tackle shorthand. They seem to be more easily understood than the masters at school could show you.

We saw Kinch, (Beb), Blair, Geo Calder and Ben Parkin, they were looking a bit worn out, they had had a very tough time. Kinch has since been wounded, now in England, but has nearly recovered -Arthur Green has been wounded in the legs by shrapnel. Mr Hollerton has joined a British field artillery and is at Canterbury. Miles Clarke also went into the artillery and is out here. We saw him about ten days ago. Louis Paget is also out here and his regiment is not far from here.

I heard from the Knatchbulls a few days ago. They are at Exeter he is in the Artillery - we still hope to get the horses back sometime in the future. Eric Wilkinson and I are in Mr Pajet's troop. Basil Loyd Rose(?) & Robert are in another troop of the same squadron, it was Mr Tenant's troop and Melkuish is a corporal in the machine gun section - Mike Gruen is in A squadron my brother[Eric Flowerdew] is in C squadron - and all still flourishing.

Basil and Eric ask me to thank you for the smokes which they are sharing [in]. I hope the weather has been decent since you started [camping] out. Basil and I are going to order a box of Walhachin apples to be sent out - the majority of fruit trees are pears but not ripe yet, they won't last long when they do get ripe. I enclose a couple of stamps, if Andrew is collecting they are parcel stamps or receipts stamps I don't know which, I think the latter - I guess he is still enthusiastic over chickens and boxing(?) I hope he bet his money on Willard in the last fight - hasn't your father decided to come home yet or will the war make him busier than ever - shall expect to hear you have started a shell manufacturing plant in Walhachin. We often talk of Walhachin and recall some of the many pleasant happenings - there have been lots of them.

I must finish now. My kindest regards to you all -

Sincerely yours,
Gordon

Jul 21 1916

My dear Isa,

I have just got a new pad so will answer your very interesting letter. I'm sorry I forgot about the typewriter, I 'm very glad you have been using it. I told Tom Edwards in a letter a few days ago - if you paid \$12 to the church warden, if there is one, you can use the typewriter for as long as you like -I really don't want Jim to pay anything to me. It would probably be more satisfactory to you to pay something so we would get around the difficulty that way, I hope you will get all the use out of it that you can.

I think you are very sensible to take the course. They are usually very good and sound up to date.

I'm glad to hear your mother is better again and I hope this time the cure will be permanent. Andrew must be getting a giant, I expect he is getting a handful to keep in order. I expect you are all keen on the news. It is getting more interesting every day. From where we are we can ride up about one and a quarter hours and see everything. Officers are allowed up any time, in fact we are encouraged to go so that we know our way about when we go up for business.

There are thousands of guns and they are roaring all the time. The Germans are getting what they have been giving our men since the war began. Last night while we were having supper a shell burst about a quarter of a mile away, we don't know if it was from a gun or dropped from an aeroplane.

The work going on is wonderful. Gangs of men follow up the fighting men, picking up all the equipment ammunition tools bombs etc, another party burying all the dead, others making roads, filling in trenches or bridging them, others laying telephone wires and water pipes for drinking water then the big guns have shifted up - lorries following with ammunition, rations etc, its a tremendous affair and the wet weather has made it much more difficult.

I guess we all went to war to finish, and it looks to be in the last stage, but how long this stage lasts can't be seen yet. We see a great number of prisoners and they are a big strong looking lot of men.

The [.....] visitor was rather interesting. I heard from Eric W and Basil Loyd. They were both fit. Basil is out here I have not seen his name in any list so I hope he is alright so far. Melkuish is in the gun section, I do not see him as often as I used. Roberts is in the same squadron as I am, also Shaw. Roberts is Sergeant and Shaw is Colour Sergeant. Jack Clarke is in B Squadron and is the same as ever. My brother is very fit, we all have steel helmets - we look a fierce lot.

Well I wish you best success with your course. My kindest regards to you all.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Flowerdew

The following note identifies Isa and explains how the letters came back to my Mother.

84 Chapman Place, Kamloops, B.C., V2C 4R2, Aug. 29,
2001

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Flowerdew:

A good friend in Victoria sent me the article Jim Hume wrote about his trip to England, and visiting you and your connection to Walhachin.

My grandmother, mother and uncle came out to Walhachin in 1911 from Gorebridge, Scotland, and they presumably would have known Charlotte Flowerdew. My mother made a scrapbook about the War, and in it are two letters written to her, Isa F. Bennie, from Gordon Flowerdew in 1915 and 1916. There are also a number of newspaper accounts of his bravery and his V.C.

It occurred to me that you would like to have copies of these letters and articles, I phoned to Jim Hume and he kindly gave me your address. As you know, his son is writing a book, and I have sent copies of the above to him also.

I grew up hearing about Gordon Flowerdew and his remarkable history. As you know, I think 100% of the men in Walhachin enlisted, and my mother received a letter she had written to a soldier returned to her, marked "Missing in Action".

I remember my mother saying that one had to be properly "dressed" in order to dine in the Walhachin Hotel, and if anyone at any of the parties had any smell of liquor, he was ostracized!

I am very much looking forward to Mark Hume's book, and I hope he will not be too long in writing it, once the research is all done. It is wonderful that this remarkable, brave, mad saga is being recorded.

With very best wishes to you both.

Yours sincerely,
(Peggy Gilmour)

Probably the last letter written by Gordon Flowerdew VC.

EFC (*Expeditionary Force Canteens*)
Officers Rest House and Mess

5 Mar 1918

My dear Arthur,

I have never thanked you for sending me the £1 for Christmas, which I combined with one from mother and bought a vest pocket camera - but the weather on leave was hardly bright enough to take any pictures – I am on my way back to regiment now, have had a most enjoyable leave at home that it extended to 14 days, you have a little more time to turn around in.

Everyone is looking very well – and mother is wonderfully active, she has two nice rooms near St Thomas's – the streets are a bit frosty looking, but her rooms inside are very nice and I think she thoroughly enjoys herself there. The food problem is very hard on some people especially poor managers – and perhaps on men who are used to a lot of meat and work very hard, otherwise I should think conditions are beneficial to your health.

George seems to be doing well and works very hard and the children are growing fast. I wasn't able to see Frank, I was going and they wired they would be out, and I couldn't fit in another day – he is milking fifteen cows so must be working hard.

I drove mother over to the Armstrong's where Digby is, he is a fine little chap and going to be clever, they couldn't have got a better home for him. I stayed with Lorna and Stamford, Lorna is a wonder on the farm, and Stamford has nearly recovered from his wounds. Florie and Viola are living in a flat and both working in a Herb producers place, learning the names of all the weeds that can be used for making medicines – they have great difficulty in getting enough of the different roots – they even buy old spear grass and some kinds of nettles, and dandelions and poppies are to be cultivated crops.

The really big push hasn't started yet. I wonder if all our newspaper talk is scaring the Germans off it. The war is getting more complicated as time goes on, and, if it is to end by fighting, can't finish this year. Travelling I suppose is almost impossible till after the war. Eric is safe for about six months, I did not get down to Brighton to see him, he is very keen so I hope will do well.

I saw a number of Billingford people – Blomfields at the Hall, John Fisher and Joe Race, George Race, Battley, Dike (?), are all working nearly the same. Joe Race has had two sons killed and now has two still serving, one of the Fishers was taken prisoner in KUT.

Best love to you all,
Your affectionate brother,

Gordon

Note: Arthur was in Kuala Lumpur in 1918. He would have been 42 years old when this letter was written. I have the original (via Julianna) and its survival is extraordinary