

## Able Seaman William C PEARCE (1879 - 1915)

(H.M.S. "Pembroke," Royal Navy)



William Charles Pearce was born in Stepney, London on the 16th May 1879 to William Charles and Kate Pearce. William Charles Pearce junior married Ruth Taylor on the 3rd of November 1901 at Christ Church, Kensington, London. The groom was 22 years old and his occupation given as a Royal Naval Seaman. His father was a baker and is now deceased. Ruth Taylor is 20 years old and they both give their address as 392, Portobello Road, which is in the Notting Hill area of London.

In 1910 the couple move to 49 Oaks Road, Soothill, Batley a house with two rooms. They have 3 children; Eugenie Amelia (1904), Jesse (1906) and Herbert William (1907). Their first child, Ruth Catherine, was born in 1902 but died the following year. Ruth and the children all give their place of birth as Notting Hill, London.

William Charles Pearce enlisted at the outbreak of WW1 in August 1914 and disembarked on the 25th of December, 1914.

His death was announced in the Batley News and the following is the report from that paper.

‘Able Seaman William Charles Pearce of Oaks Road, Soothill passed away last Friday at Shotley Naval Hospital, Harwich after lying there ill for some time. He resided at Soothill for four years after serving 14 years in the Navy and was employed at Soothill coke ovens. Although of a reserved disposition he was nevertheless liked by all with whom he came into contact.

On the outbreak of war he accepted an invitation to re-join the service. He was rejected as physically unfit at first but learning where the defect lay he underwent an operation so that he might once again fight for his country and at Easter he was

appointed in H.M. torpedo boat destroyer 'Laverock'. Later he was transferred to another boat which was torpedoed some time ago and Seaman Pearce, although saved, suffered greatly from exposure in the water and was sent to Shotley Hospital where he passed away.

The funeral took place at Shotley Naval Cemetery on Monday, where the remains of another sailor were interred at the same time. Both coffins were mounted on gun carriages, draped with Union Jacks and pulled by blue jackets\*. The sailors lowered the coffin into the grave and the Last Post was sounded.

Pearce was 36 years of age and sympathy is extended to his wife, the mother of 4 children.'

\* Blue Jackets was a term given to an enlisted sailor.

Ruth married again in 1918 to Wilfred A Almond and they lived at 55 Primrose Hill, Soothill, Batley. She died in 1964 aged 84 years.

Able Seaman William Charles Pearce 187900, H.M.S. Pembroke, Royal Navy is Remembered with Honour at Shotley (St, Mary) Churchyard, Suffolk. His name also appears on the Soothill Upper War Memorial in St Paul's churchyard, Hanging Heaton.

Researcher:

Susan White, Batley History Group, April 2015.