

A Postcard with Several Stories to Tell

It is strange how one story leads to another. Whilst writing a piece on the medallion *below*, issued to commemorate the Bombardment of Scarborough in 1914, I decided, as you do, that I needed a photograph to go with it. As it was December I decided against a day trip to the coast and opened eBay instead.



It seldom disappoints and ten minutes later my order was in. The words in the caption *below*, "Shopkeeper's wife killed inside door", made it a lot more interesting than a simple picture of a damaged shop.



On Wednesday 16 December 1914 at 8 am three German warships emerged from the mist and shelled the undefended town of Scarborough. At the same time, another group attacked Hartlepool., which was able to defend itself. Whitby was shelled by the Scarborough ships on their return journey. Around 150 people were killed, mainly civilians, and about 500 injured. Hartlepool was able to fire back, killing eight German sailors and wounding twelve.

Several books have been written on the subject, so I will be brief. The Germans failed to cause panic amongst civilians and, recruitment increased, using the slogan "Remember Scarborough!" They also failed to ambush any ships of the Royal Navy. On the other hand the Royal Navy failed to force a decisive action on the Germans and, as subsequent battles showed, did not learn from the mistakes they made that day.



Emily Merryweather (nee Mason) *Left*, had been born in 1885 and married George Merryweather in 1912. She had only just returned to the shop when the shells started falling and was, according to the Inquest evidence of her husband, helping two friends take shelter in the shop cellar when the explosion occurred. She was killed and he was covered in debris from the explosion.

The inquest recorded verdicts of "Killed by Bombardment" on the victims. The Coroner was unwilling for them to bring in a verdict of "Murder" because he felt that there was no possibility of being able to charge anyone for the crime.

Emily is buried in the Dean Road and Manor Road Cemetery in Scarborough. Seventeen victims of the bombardment are interred there and in 2014 the graves were marked with memorial plaques. In

several cases, including Emily's, this modern commemoration is the only marker on the grave.

The figure to the right of the picture *previous page*, with apron and drooping moustache, appears to be George. He appears in other photographs of the shop after it has been boarded up *below*. He was still working as a grocer in 1939 and died in 1945.



The site of the shop is now occupied by a newer building housing Nishat Spice Tandoori at the junction of Prospect Road and Columbus Ravine.

In 1917, more bad news was delivered to the Mason family. Robert, Emily's younger brother, had emigrated to Canada shortly before the war but returned with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1916. He was killed in action with the 50th Battalion CEF at the battle of Vimy Ridge 10 April

Loyal North Lancashire Regiment.

BROTHER AND SISTER KILLED BY GERMANS.

The death is reported whilst serving with a Canadian regiment, of Corporal Robert Mason, son of Mrs. Mason and the late Mr. Thomas Mason, 141, Prospect Road, Scarborough.

Deceased's sister, Mrs. George Merryweather, was killed in the bombardment of Scarborough by the Germans.

MORE MAILS LOST AT SEA.

It is announced by the Postmaster-General

1917, leaving a widow and two young children. On the same day, Pte John Pattison won the battalion's only Victoria Cross.

The sender of the postcard – 3164 Pte W. Boalch of the 6th Royal Irish Regiment, as he conveniently tells us – writes nothing of interest regarding Scarborough. However, he does have an interesting story of his own.

Many men of the Guernsey Militia volunteered to serve with the Royal Irish Regiment, having been impressed with them when they garrisoned the island before the war. The Guernsey men formed D Company and a Machine Gun section of the 6th Battalion. Boalch served in France from 17 December 1915 to 3 September 1916, when he received a gunshot wound to the left arm and chest at the Battle of Guillemont. He was transferred to the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, had a further operation to correct the scarring in 1918, and was discharged to Class Z at the end of the war.

The card must have been written between September and 17 December, as this was the time the battalion spent at Blackdown Camp.

Sunday 3164 Pte Boalch
10 Comp 6 Batt Royal Irish Regt
Alma Barrack
Blackdown Surrey
England

POST CARD
THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE
WRITTEN HERE

My dearest Alf
I am sending you a few
PC which I pay 2^d for 6
You will see what they are
and a PC from Alf he is back
and he tell me that they
have a baby girl just before
he left so he is daddie now
he says it is a fine baby
what do you think of the
photo of him and the other