



Cecil Howard Curtis

Cecil Howard Curtis was born in Corby in April 1881. He was baptised on 8th May 1881. His father Henry Howard Curtis was Schoolmaster at the Corby Board School.

Family History

Henry Howard Curtis was born in Stockport in 1855, himself the son of a teacher. Henry Curtis married Jane James of Walworth, Surrey in 1878.

The 1881 Census records the couple were resident in Corby with two sons Arthur and the newly born Cecil Howard. The census records show also resident were Mary Bradshaw (servant) and Sarah A Jinks (Nurse SMS).

It was obviously not a wholly quiet life in Corby for Henry. The Northampton Mercury of 3rd April 1880 records that:-

“Charles Rowlatt, of Corby, was charged with assaulting Henry H Curtis, schoolmaster, at that place, on the 22nd ult. – Fined 10s., and £1 7s. 6d. costs.” The reason for the altercation is unknown.

A daughter, Edith was born in Corby in 1884.

By the 1891 Census the family had moved to Tottenham. Cecil Howard Curtis was recorded as a scholar and was now one of 6 siblings.

By the 1901 Census the family had again relocated, to Worthing, Sussex. Henry Cecil was recorded as being a Private School Master. Cecil Howard Curtis was now 20 but no occupation recorded; he was now one of 8 siblings.

In the 1911 Census, Henry & Jane and four of their children were still recorded as living in Worthing.

Cecil Howard Curtis married Amy Blanche Clifford in Southwark, London on 6th August 1910. Cecil's occupation was recorded as “clerk”.

In the 1911 Census Cecil and Amy were recorded as living in Deptford. Cecil's occupation was recorded as Piano Forte Tuner.

By the time Cecil enlisted he and his wife were living in Southampton.



Military History

Private Cecil Howard Curtis first enlisted in the Hampshire Regiment (28230) in Southampton.

He was later transferred to the 2/6th Battalion Territorial Force, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (242429). Private Curtis served in "B" Company.

The 2/6th Battalion was formed in Coventry in October 1914 as part of the 2/1st Warwickshire Brigade of the 2/1st South Midlands Division. In August 1915 they joined the 182nd Brigade of the 61st Division.

The Battalion was mobilised and landed in France on 21st May 1916. They transferred to the 143rd Brigade of the 48th Division.

Medical records show Private Curtis was briefly in hospital in May 1917 with a fever. Private Cecil Howard Curtis was killed in action on 31st August 1917. He was 36 years of age.

According to the battalion diary, they were stationed in the Ypres North area and had relieved the 2/7th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment on the front line the previous day.

He is buried at the Oxford Road Cemetery (Belgium). According to the citation from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, his parents were still recorded as living in Worthing, his wife Amy in Southampton.

The place name Oxford Road Cemetery may seem unusual to the reader. Given the complex and intricate system of trenches constructed on the Western Front, soldiers often gave names to trenches. These were sometimes taken from local landmarks or based on places/streets back in the United Kingdom.

Oxford Road was the name given to a road running behind the support trenches, from a point west of the village of Wieltje south-eastwards to the Potijze-Zonnebeke road.

Plot I is the original Oxford Road Cemetery and was used by the units fighting on this front from August 1917 to April 1918. In October 1917, another cemetery, known as Oxford Road Cemetery No.2, was started close by and now forms Plot V of the cemetery as it appears today. After the Armistice, Plots II, III and IV were added when scattered graves from the battlefields east and south-east of Ypres (now Ieper) were brought into the cemetery.



There are now 851 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 297 of the burials are unidentified and special memorials commemorate three casualties known to have been buried in the cemetery, but whose graves could not be located.

The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

C H Curtis is remembered on the Southampton Cenotaph.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Northampton Mercury

Lest We Forget

Cecil Howard Curtis
of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment

d. 31st August 1917

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