

CHARLES CLARKE
(8.3.1891 - 3.1.1963)

Born: 8.3.1891.

Copy of birth certificate held.

Died: 3.1.1963.

Died of bronchitis, copy of death certificate held.

Father: John Henry Clarke 5.11.1847 - 19.3.1907.

Mother: Leah Rawlings 16.12.1856 - 16.12.1932.

Wife: Irene Oakley 12.3.1896 - 16.2.1978.

Married 16.2.1924 at the Parish Church, Walthamstow. He was aged 32, she was aged 27.

Children:

* Francis Albert Clarke. b.18.4.1925. Known as Frank. See separate entry.

Donald Charles Clarke. Known as Don. married Jean Cox (see entry for Lawrence George Gladwell) one son Stuart.

Occupation: Coal Agent.

Also, served as Second Lieutenant, Worcester Regiment 1914-19. Then worked briefly as painter and decorator in West London (six years maximum) after being demobbed.

Most of working life spent as a coal agent for Booth Brothers (collecting payment for coal which had been delivered to peoples homes). He wore a starched collar and a bowler hat.

Known Addresses:

Dundee, Worcester, Walthamstow, Isleworth and Twickenham.

4, Baxter Terrace, Dundee (born - address shown on birth certificate).

1, St. Clair Terrace, Campbeltown (c.1893).

77, Foley Road, Worcester (childhood, from appx. age 9).

129, Queens Road, Walthamstow (at time of marriage). Described by an

elderly resident in 1994 as 'an old cottage' demolished in the 1970's.

Tulson Road, Isleworth (Frank born there)

63, Godstone Road, St. Margarets, Twickenham (from 1928 to death).

Other Biographical Details:

Height 5'5" appx. Brown hair, blue eyes.

Served with the Worcestershire Regiment 3.9.1914 - 3.2.1919 (aged 23 to 28). Serial Number 200575. Enlisted at Kidderminster, discharged at Warwick. Reached rank of Second Lieutenant. Service included 1 year 184 days in France. Awarded 1914-18 War Medal and 1914-18 Victory Medal, Discharge Papers record two blue chevrons and 1914-18 star. He would undoubtedly have had a very hard time in France and have either witnessed or experienced great suffering. He never spoke of his time there.

He met his future wife Irene Oakley while he was stationed at Gidea Park in Essex undergoing officer training. Irene and a friend had gone to Gidea Park with a friend on their day off (Sunday) to flirt with the officers.

He was commissioned as an officer in 1918 and was discharged after the armistice; he did not actually serve as an officer. On discharge (on completion of his term of service) he was automatically appointed to the Territorial reserve.

After discharge at Warwick he returned to the family home in Worcester. During this time he only saw his fiance Irene (Renee) at Christmas, Easter and other holiday times. Later he moved to London to be near her and worked as a painter and decorator in the West End.

He later worked for Booth Brothers as a Coal Agent in the Twickenham area.

The family didn't normally have seaside holidays as the coal trade was slack in the summer.

He and his wife lived in rented accommodation all their lives. They did have an opportunity to buy in 1937 when Whitton was built, but they didn't take it.

He was always a healthy man, cycling regularly up to the time of his retirement. However he developed bronchitis in the late 1950's following a particularly severe smog. London winters of the 1950's tended to get a lot of smog (smoke and fog) caused by coal fire smoke trapped by fog. The smog was particularly bad at this time due to a government policy of encouraging the use of coal dust (marketed as 'Nutty Slack') from the mechanised mines. This was rolled up in newspaper and burnt like a log in an all night grate. This particular winter caused a lot of coughs and a lot of deaths (including cattle at Smithfield Market). It also led to the passing of the Clean Air Act, restricting

the use of Coal fires. After that he was never fully fit again and suffered from recurrent bronchitis, for the last two to three years of his life bottled oxygen was kept in the house for use when needed. His son remembers him propped up in bed blue from lack of oxygen. The year he died was one of the worst winters of the twentieth century in which the River Thames froze, it led to a final fatal attack of bronchitis.

Artifacts:

Many photographs. Army Commission Warrant and Discharge Papers.

Pre First World War sporting medals.