

Another Bradshaw mystery.

ERNEST EDWARD BRYAN 1877-1953
ELIZABETH JANE BRADSHAW 1881-1976

Ernest Edward Bryan was born in 1877 in south Shropshire and lived with his parents John and Louisa Bryan in the same general area until at least 1911 when they were living near Church Stretton. He appears on the 1911 Census in the same household; his occupation is shown as Plumber. He also worked as a cook at various times.

From the information on his death certificate it appears that he emigrated to Canada in 1911 or shortly after. He died in Jun 1953 and his death certificate shows 42 years of residence in Canada/Province - which was B.C. - (14 years in Municipality).

He enlisted in the C.E.F. at the start of WWI but I have not found his actual enlistment record. There is extensive correspondence in 1920 concerning his War Service Gratuity where his mother states that he stayed with her in Marchamley for "a few weeks before joining up." (Q.24 on the W.S.G form.) There is also a reference on Q.29 "From his arrival in 1914 till joining up in April 1915". He was in the Royal Army Medical Corps Reg. No. 29949.

In 1911 his parents were near Church Stretton - John Bryan is shown as a Farmer on the Census. By 1921 they had retired and bought a cottage in Marchamley at 20 Hodnet Road. Assuming they had moved before 1915 this is where Ernest would have stayed prior to his army service beginning. The reason they chose Marchamley is unclear - I have not come across any family connection in the Chidlow/Bradshaw families. However, on the 1891 Census when the Bradshaw family was living in Marchamley, there was a Bryan family living next door (or very close). These were William and Margaret Bryan and 4 children. These were not Ernest's parents but maybe there is some kind of remoter family connection which would have led Ernest's family to be familiar with the village. [Another research project].

There is a passenger manifest showing his return to Canada/Invermere after the war in August 1919.

In October 1922 he travelled to the UK and in May 1923 he married Elizabeth Jane Bradshaw in Kings Norton, Warwickshire; he was 45 and she was 41. He returned to Canada shortly afterwards in Jul 1923 but Elizabeth stayed in England until 1929. It seems that he did not visit the UK again.

Elizabeth Jane Bradshaw was born in Marchamley, eldest child of John Bradshaw (1836-1913) and Ann Darlington. John was a brother of Richard Bradshaw so she was a cousin of Emily (Bradshaw) Chidlow. She gave birth to Ronald Bradshaw on 27 Mar 1915 when she was 33 years old. She was not married and there is no father information on Ronald's Birth Certificate. The 1921 Census shows him staying with his widowed grandmother Ann (Darlington) Bradshaw; Elizabeth was working as domestic servant at a farm close by. Between 1921 and 1929 his whereabouts are unknown but it is likely he remained with her as it appears Elizabeth moved to be with her (see below on death details for Ann).

In Sep 1929 shipping manifests show Elizabeth Bryan and son Ronald Bradshaw traveling to Canada to join her husband Mr. E E Bryan in Windermere B.C. Why the delay in moving to Canada? There is one likely explanation. Her mother died in February 1929 - Elizabeth is shown as the informant on the death certificate living at the same address so she was probably the caregiver and unable to leave. (One of the causes of death was "Senility".)

How did Ernest Bryan meet Elizabeth Bradshaw in the first place when she almost certainly never left the area around Hodnet/ Marchamley?

One obvious explanation is that they met in 1914 when Ernest returned from Canada to start his C.E.F. service and was staying in Marchamley with his parents.

Why did he later come back to marry Elizabeth in 1922? One explanation is that he was the father of Ronald although this is not documented anywhere that I have found. Ernest's death certificate describes him as stepson. Either way the Ernest/Elizabeth relationship survived the 3 years separation after his army demobilization when he went back to Canada, and an even longer separation after they were married in 1923 when Elizabeth was presumably caring for her ailing mother and could not accompany Ernest when he went back to Canada.

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