

# EDWARD WHITLOCK (1896-1914) OF SALHOUSE, NORFOLK

Some years ago Pat Kelly of Victoria, BC. telephoned me to ask if I had come across a Ronald Whitlock from Victoria in my research. Pat had grown up in the Gorge area of Victoria in the 1930's and his best friend as a child was Ronald. At the time all Pat could remember was that there was a photo on the wall of Ronald's uncle Edward who died November 1, 1914 when the *HMS Monmouth* was torpedoed off the coast of Chile during the Battle of Coronel. Pat did not know where the family had lived in England before coming to Canada in 1934.

Over the years Pat plugged away at his research. He contacted the late Edward Whitlock in Regina who had several family members in the Gorge area of Victoria. Edward's family came from Chelsea, London but could not see any connection to the Edward Whitlock that Pat was trying to trace.

Pat searched the Commonwealth Graves Commission site and found Edward shown as a Sick Berth Attendant with a Royal Navy service number of M5448. There was reference to him on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. This gave Pat a service number and armed with that he wrote to the Imperial War Museum. They did not have the service records but directed Pat to where they could be obtained.

Through putting details on the Great War Forum in Feb. 2007 Pat was able to link with others researching WWI records. This group found that while Edward's birthdate was give as Sep. 4, 1893, he had lied about his age as his birth was registered in 1896 in Salhouse, Norfolk. This was later confirmed by checking the 1901 census. The forum listed several Whitlocks from Norfolk in the WWI files. William John Whitlock who served on the *New Zealand* turned out to be Edward's older brother born Jun. 4, 1894. There was also reference to a Herbert Frederick Whitlock born Sep. 5, 1881 Salhouse, Norfolk who was Edward's Uncle.

In February 2008 Pat contacted the Salhouse Village Magazine and website. They were able to provide 1891 census information and Salhouse church records showing the marriage of Edward's parents William John Whitlock and Hannah Watts Holden Nov. 16, 1893 and several baptisms and burials for Edward's family.

In March 2008 Pat was able to obtain a copy of the 1901 census entry for Edward Whitlock. It showed him living in Salhouse, Norfolk age 4 with his parents as William & Hannah Whitlock and his brother William age 6. A sister Jessie Agnes born in 1898 does not show on the 1901 census and it is assumed she had died.

Pat contacted the Coronel Memorial organization and they were able to confirm what he already knew but also provided information on how to obtain Edward's service record from the National Archives. Through the Great War Forum, Pat had also found that there were two service numbers assigned to Edward the M5448 he already knew plus K13540. Using information from these two organizations, in August 2008 Pat sent £3.50 off the National Archives and was able to download both of Edward's service records. These told Pat what ships Edward served on since joining the Navy Dec. 22, 1911 for a 12 year term. While the information he gave at the time said he was 18 in reality he was only just 15. Starting with the *Vivid II*, Edward served on five ships before transferring to the ill-fated *HMS Monmouth* on August 2, 1914.

The Coronel Memorial website includes a description of the last signal received from the *HMS Monmouth*

“A new incident in the last fight of *HMS Monmouth*, sunk by the German cruisers in the action off Coronel, is related by one of the crew of the Glasgow in a letter received at Newport, Isle of Wight. After describing how the [*HMS*] *Good Hope* caught fire and blew up the writer says:- That was the end of the Good Hope, and it did not make things very cheerful for our two remaining ships.

After about one and a half hours' fighting the Monmouth caught fire too, but fortunately got it under. She was badly damaged. We also had several big holes below the waterline, one funnel smashed and several men wounded.

Shortly after the Monmouth hauled off and we followed. The Monmouth then reported, “Am making water badly forward. Engines disabled and in a sinking condition, but am making towards the enemy to try and torpedo her.”

That was the last we saw of the good old Monmouth, and it made tears come into everyone's eyes when the captain told us of the signal. It was impossible to lower a boat or stay behind to render them assistance as we had all our work cut out to keep afloat, and there was a tremendous sea running.

So our captain ordered “Full speed ahead.” As the enemy were making us a good target, and if we had stayed much longer we should have shared the fate of the others. So we were defeated, but not disgraced by a long way.

Reproduced from a newspaper article dated 21 December 1914; the newspaper is unknown at present. Supplied [to the Coronel Memorial site] by J.D. Atkinson.”

The Coronel Memorial organization also provided Pat with an interesting BC connection. In the Chilko Lakes area of British Columbia there are several features that have names connected to the Battle of Coronel. Richard Preston Bishop, BCLS (British Columbia Land Surveyor) had suggested the names Good Hope and Monmouth for the names to be assigned to newly climbed peaks in the region. On May 6, 1924 the names were adopted for two mountains in the area.

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From the information Pat Kelly was able to uncover I was able to place Edward Whitlock as part of the WHITLOCK58 chart, The Whitlocks of Norfolk #2. Edward's father William John Whitlock shows born in 1870 in Salhouse, the son of William Fowler Whitlock and his wife Emily Coe. The records indicate that William Fowler Whitlock was the son of John Whitlock and Elizabeth Kirk who were married in Woodbastwick, Norfolk Oct. 18, 1808. We are not positive of John's parents but think they were Elizabeth Whitlock and Jonathan Landermore. Our thanks to Pat Kelly for sharing his research with us and hopefully this will help lead us to the elusive Ronald Whitlock.

SOURCES: R2789; X1232; X2165; X2166; X6629