

**241306 ERNEST VICTOR WHYMAN
OF GRIFFYDAM**

**SERIOUSLY INJURED IN FRANCE IN WW1
WHILST ON ACTIVE SERVICE WITH THE
NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
1/6th BATTALION**



NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENTAL CAP BADGE



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - NOVEMBER 2022
UPDATED APRIL 2024**

The author decided to write this publication as although research information on soldiers killed in battle in WW1 is freely available and they are generally commemorated on memorials and in numerous publications, there seems to have been little recognition for those who received life changing injuries, but survived, as was the case with Ernest Victor Whyman (known as Vic). It was only via a newspaper article that the author learned that Victor had to have his leg amputated through injuries received in battle and therefore decided to write this short publication in memory of him.

Ernest Victor Whyman's Grandfather and Grandmother, Thomas and Sarah Whyman who were both born in Worthington in 1822 and died in 1903 and 1879 respectively are buried in Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Graveyard



© Samuel T Stewart – November 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise without first seeking the written permission of the author.

VICTOR ERNEST WHYMAN'S BIOGRAPHY

According to the 1901 Griffydam census, the Whyman family were living in Griffydam (possibly on Vinegar / Brand Hill). Victor Ernest Whyman, aged 3ys 7mths at this time, is given as being born in Newbold. He was born to Thomas Whyman, a coal miner, born 1864 in Coleorton, and Sarah, born 1865 in Griffydam. Victor was the 4th born child and second son.

According to the Coleorton censuses from 1871 onwards, Victor's grandfather Thomas (b.1822 and a brickmaker), and Grandmother Sarah (b.1822) were both born in Worthington and they raised their family including Victor's father Thomas in Coleorton.

Thomas and Sarah had a total of 7 children - Precilla (b.1888) ; Edith (b. 1890) ; Joseph (b. 1893) ; Ernest Victor (b. 1897) ; Alice (b.1899) ; Roland Wilson (b.1903) and May Cecelia (b. 1907).

The 1921 census confirms the Whyman family were residing on Brand Hill (Vinegar Hill?) and Thomas Whyman was listed as a "Roadman" working for Leicestershire County Council. Victor was given as a disabled pensioner (caused by his life changing war injury while on active service in France - see below). His younger brother Roland Wilson was a pony driver at Coleorton No.3. Colliery (Bug & Wink).

The following is transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 22nd June 1917

GRIFFYDAM MAN WOUNDED

Pte. Victor Whyman, North Staffordshire Regiment, reported dangerously wounded on June 7th, has had a leg amputated. Pte. Whyman, whose home is at Griffydam, joined up from "Rangemore Hall", where he was a gardener in Lady Burton's service, in October 1915, being then only 17 years of age. He went to France in March 1916, and his marksmanship was so excellent, that he was soon made a sniper. He set a fine example of patriotic courage, and his many friends will all wish him a good recovery.

Presumably, Victor Whyman was living in at Rangemore Hall when he was a gardener there, hence the reason for him enlisting at Burton upon Trent.

RANGEMORE HALL

Rangemore Hall **dates back to the 19th Century where it was originally rebuilt for Michael Thomas Bass of the local Bass Brewery**, with stunning Italian inspired additions made by the first Lord Burton in 1898.

Rangemore Hall was rebuilt in the late 1850s, around an earlier 1822 core, for Michael Bass, head of the brewery Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton, and was first occupied in 1860. His son Lord Burton reconstructed and extended the house (adding the Edward VII south wing), in Italianate style in 1898-1901 for a visit of King Edward VII in 1902 (with a second visit on 5 January 1907, including Queen Alexandra and Mrs Alice Keppel, the King's mistress).



RANGEMORE HALL



**Party at Rangemore Hall, January 1907
for King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra**

MILITARY SERVICE

241306 Private Ernest Victor Whyman enlisted with the 1/6th Territorial Force Battalion which was part of the North Staffordshire Regiment, on the 25th October 1915 at the age of 17. The other Territorial Force Battalions were the 1/5th, 2/5th, 3/5th, 2/6th, 3/6th

The 1/6th Battalion was formed in Burton on Trent in August 1914. The battalion moved to the Luton area, and in November 1914 went on to Bishops Stortford. They subsequently travelled to France and on the 4 March 1915 landed at Le Havre. On the 12th May 1915, they formed part of the 137th Brigade in 46th (North Midland) Division, and in January 1916 they moved to Egypt, returning to France the next month.

Among the first Territorial Force units to go to France, these two battalions took part in the 1915 Battle of Loos, especially the battles around the Hohenzollern Redoubt in 1915, and at Gommecourt on the northern flank of the Battle of the Somme.

Based on the dates indicated when 241306 Pte. Ernest Victor Whyman received his leg wounds, it is almost certain that he received these during the Battle of Messines which took place from 7th to 14th of June 1917. The capturing of Messines Ridge was a preliminary operation that took place just prior to the Battle of Passchendaele (the 3rd Battle of Ypres).

The British attack at Messines on 7 June opened with the explosion of the mines, causing a virtual earthquake that immediately **killed as many as 10,000 German soldiers**. A hurricane bombardment by 2,000 guns preceded the advance of nine British and Australian infantry divisions, which proved a complete success. The artillery provided a highly effective "creeping barrage" that protected the infantry as they climbed up the ridge. The infantry met little opposition, with many Germans staggering over the battlefield in a confused state; some 7,000 prisoners were taken that morning. Once the ridge was in British hands, field artillery pieces were brought forward to help deal with the inevitable German counterattacks, which, in the event, were repulsed fairly easily. With the Messines Ridge in British hands, the focus of attention now moved to the Ypres salient.

1/6th Staff R. 4266 Pte

Name	Corps	Reg.	Rank	Date of Discharge	Cause of Discharge
<i>WHYMAN</i> VICTOR <i>Ernest</i>	<i>1/6th Staff R.</i>	<i>241306</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>25/10/18</i> Enlistment <i>25/10/15</i>	<i>Passchendaele</i> <i>2a</i>
Date of application	(a) Badge		(b) Medal		
No. of File	MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE		
Address of applicant	<i>VICTORY</i>	<i>F/104 B21</i>	<i>2570</i>		
Action taken	BRITISH	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>		
	STAR				

List 4/a/620

WB740—H522B 200,000 8/17 HWV(P688) KONG
1629—H12053 200,000(25) 5/18

100

241306 PRIVATE VICTOR WHYMAN'S MEDAL APPLICATION RECORD

HOSPITAL EXPERIENCES

Private Ernest Victor Whyman's medal card confirms that he was not discharged till the 2nd of November 1918, 5 months after he received his injuries. Having a leg amputated in this situation must have been a harrowing experience for him. He would have been brought back to the UK on one of the Hospital ships.

Battle Field hospitals were set up immediately behind the lines and were **often housed in tents** during the First World War, including wards and operating theatres. This was particularly true of Casualty Clearing Stations, with base hospitals further away from the fighting sometimes making use of existing or more permanent buildings.



A TYPICAL BATTLE FIELD HOSPITAL LOCATED BEHIND THE BATTLE LINE

The system for the delivery of medical care on the battlefield was based on the premise of providing a process of progressive treatment and evacuation. In practice, this meant the sick and wounded would receive care from the infantry division's medical units, such as aid posts, dressing stations and field hospitals. The purpose at each stage was to provide enough treatment in order to stabilize the patient and prepare him for transportation to the next level of medical care - the evacuation hospital.

The sick and wounded who required more medical care, as identified by the physicians of the field hospitals, were transported to a hospital located at the next level of the Medical Department's system for treatment and evacuation. This consisted of hospitals located within the command and control of the corps and armies. These facilities were located 5 to 10 miles from the field hospitals. Patients were generally transported by motor ambulances or in some cases by train.

MOBILE HOSPITALS



Later in the war, experimentation took place with a new type of unit. It was based on French Auto-chir and was designed to deliver lifesaving surgery close to the front. These small mobile hospitals were a dedicated surgical unit that possessed specialized equipment and vehicles, so it could be rapidly deployed where needed. This unit was not fully integrated into the system for delivering care on the battlefield and so by the end of the war the twelve units that were created apparently only treated 1% of the wounded.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

The 1939 register records suggest that the Whyman family were living in one of the two gardeners cottages at Coleorton hall. Earnest Victor (known by all as Vic) was aged 42 and was given as a market gardener, which seems strange as he only had one leg. He was of course a gardener at Rangemore Hall before he signed up. He is recorded as having a pension which he received as a result of losing his leg in the 1st WW. His wife Edith was 43 and born on November 5th 1896. They had a married daughter living with them named Barbara J Whyman, aged 24, who was born on September 1st 1915. She was an elastic packer at the time.

Transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 08 July 1955

.....THE CAPENOR NAME OCCURS IN THE COLEORTON PARISH RECORDS AS FAR AS THEY GO BACK TO THE EARLY 1600s AND IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THE CAPENORS CAME OVER FROM FRANCE WITH THE BEAUMONTS. Since the Beaumonts' left, their raised pews in the church—where Mr. Capenor senior is Rector's Warden—they have been demolished to make a children's corner. Its just as well," said Joseph Henry, pointing out the hot air vents that once respectfully gave a slight priority over the rest of the congregation. "No one seemed to want to sit there afterwards."

Another old retainer, **Ernest Victor Whyman**, who has worked for 40 (**incorrect - probably 30**) years in the hall grounds, has modified his style in the new era. Instead of producing downy peaches and grapes with a dusky bloom, he has turned his hand to border flowers for beautifying colliery yards. **For Vic, as he is known to all, the grounds are full of memories—of early married life with the girl who stood by him after he lost a leg in the first World War, became his bride and encouraged him with the gardening he thought he could never tackle again. His case was not suitable for the fitting of an artificial leg, so it had to be crutches.**





Staff at Coleorton Hall c.1925 during the time when the Abel Smiths' were leasing the hall (1901-1926).

- A- Mr. Henry Wilson junior (Head Gardener) – He was employed by the Abel-Smiths in 1902
- B- Mr. Arthur Brooks (Gardener) brother of Frank Brooks of Brook's Nurseries, Coleorton
- C- "Gas Man"
- D- Mr. Bayliss (Head Coachman)
- E- **Vic Whyman** (Gardener)