

HARRY BLAKEY

Harry Blakey was born in 1889 in Partney. His father Harry was a journeyman miller. In this instance, "journeyman" usually denotes a qualified (served indentured apprenticed) tradesman who travels job-to-job plying his skills. Some millers worked on their own and others employed a son or a journeyman miller to assist them.

He lived at the Mill Houses with his four sisters, Hannah Maria, Sarah Ellen, Kate and Fanny Elizabeth. All the children were baptised in St Nicholas Church on 9th September 1894 by which time Harry senior was a Miller's Drayman.

By 1901 Harry junior was still living at the Mill Houses working as a Drapers Errand Boy. One of the Mill Houses was being used as a lodging house. There were 8 boarders there in 1901, from Surrey, Essex, Birmingham, Scotland and Ireland as well as Lincoln, Spalding and Skendleby. Five were licensed hawkers in general goods, one was a general labourer, one a journeyman tailor and one a sergeant.

The 1911 Census shows Harry's mother now working as a lodging house keeper whilst his father worked as a general labourer. Harry was now working as a printer's machineman. The 8 boarders hailed from East London, Yorkshire, Spilsby, Nottingham and Italy! The latter two were both street musicians.

During the First World War Harry was a Bandsman with the 5th Lincolnshire Regiment. The 5th Battalion was a Territorial Army battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment, recruited in Grimsby and northern Lincolnshire and came into being on 1st April 1908, as the result of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907, according to the scheme which required two Infantry Battalions to be raised in the County of Lincolnshire.

It is interesting to note the widely different character of the population in the various districts. The Grimsby recruits were chiefly drawn from men employed in the fishing industry and in the docks; Louth, Spilsby, and Alford were purely agricultural centres; Gainsborough furnished chiefly mechanics employed in the Engineering works; Scunthorpe recruited from the sturdy workers in the iron-stone and smelting industries, and from agricultural workers in the Brigg district; Barton-on-Humber provided recruits chiefly from the mechanics in the cycle works, of a type similar to those of Gainsborough. This great diversity of civil occupation proved of immense advantage on mobilization, as the necessary skilled men were comparatively easily obtained for all the "specialist" duties required.

It was not unusual during the First World War for a bandsman to become a stretcher-bearer, sent unarmed into the most dangerous places where casualties lay.

The 1918 Electoral Register for Dalby shows Harry now resident in the village.