



Horace Edward Pearce

14378605 Gunner, 68 Medium Regiment, Royal Artillery

He died on 15th February 1945, in the Netherlands, aged 35

Horace is commemorated at Bergen-op-Zoom war cemetery

When I saw we had a Pearce to investigate I rather rubbed my hands with glee, assuming Horace came from one of the long-established families in Harleston. As it transpired, I was completely wrong and Horace's father, Henry Pearce, came from Shelfanger whilst his mother, Hannah nee Smith came from across the border in Bungay. The couple had both got married from Earsham in 1898; Henry Pearce, a bricklayer, was the third son of Arthur Pearce, a Carpenter, and he was marrying the daughter of Edward Smith a deceased bricklayer; a marriage within the building trade! Hannah Maria Smith, aged 28, was then a domestic servant, possibly at Earsham Hall.

1898. Marriage solemnized <i>after banns</i> in the <i>P</i> arish of <i>Earsham</i> in the County of <i>Norfolk</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
253	<i>March 21st 1898</i>	<i>Henry Pearce Hannah Maria Smith</i>	<i>29 28</i>	<i>Single Spinster</i>	<i>Bricklayer Domestic Servant</i>	<i>Earsham Earsham</i>	<i>Arthur Pearce Edward Smith (deceased!)</i>	<i>Carpenter Bricklayer</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <i>Church in England</i> by me <i>Ralph Woodhouse</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Henry Pearce Hannah Maria Smith</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>E. Lips Bedwell Charles Bedwell</i>		

Although the Pearce's oldest son, Eldred Henry George Pearce was baptised in Earsham, he had been born in Harleston in late December 1898, so we can fairly accurately gauge when the family had gotten to town. Indeed, since the couple married in mid-March of the same year it seems that Eldred was a 'honeymoon' baby.

<i>26th Sept. 1898</i>	<i>Dec^r 1898</i>	<i>Eldred Henry George</i>	<i>Henry x Hannah</i>	<i>Pearce</i>	<i>Harleston, Norfolk</i>	<i>Journeymen Bricklayer</i>	<i>R. H. Sneyd Rector</i>
<i>No. 34</i>		<i>son of</i>					
<i>8th</i>	<i>January</i>						

Our Hero's paternal grandfather, Arthur Pearce of Shelfanger, father of Henry Pearce, and his wife Emma seem to have popped out a child every other year for at least the first 15 years of their marriage – having 8 children by 1881, a total of eleven children were to be born to this couple all of

whom survived by the 1911 census! With all these siblings, Henry was spoilt for choice when it came to naming his own children.

Henry's oldest son, Eldred, was named for his parents eleventh child, (Henry's baby brother, his junior by 2 decades); his second child Eva for his parent's 8th child, his fifth child Horace for his parents second son – perhaps Henry's wife Hannah had some input in naming the other two children, Walter and Hilda!

SHELFANGER.

THE LATE MR. A. PEARCE.

The funeral of Mr. Arthur Pearce, who died last Thursday, aged 86 years, took place at Shelfanger Parish Church on Monday. Mr. Pearce had carried on business as a carpenter at Shelfanger for a number of years, and on the decease of his wife about eight years ago went to live with a son at Bressingham, where he died after a short illness. He leaves six sons, three daughters, thirty-six grand-children and nine great-grand-children.

The Rector of Shelfanger, the Rev. G. C. Paton, conducted the service and the mourners were:—Mr. Albert Pearce (Bressingham), Mr. Henry Pearce (Harleston), Mr. George Pearce (Colchester), Mr. William Pearce (Manningtree), Mr. Walter Pearce, Mr. Eldred Pearce (Great Bealings), Mrs. C. E. Piper, Miss D. Pearce, Miss M. Pearce, Mr. A. E. Pearce, Mr. Leslie Pearce, Mr. Albert Pearce, Mr. George Piper, Mrs. Albert Pearce, Mrs. Henry Pearce, Mrs. George Pearce, Mrs. H. Pearce (Colchester), Mr. C. E. Piper and Mr. A. E. Pearce.

Among those present were Mr. T. Green, Mr. W. Welton, Mr. Hazel, Mr. J. Munford, Mr. and Mrs. Self, Mr. H. Snelling, Mr. E. Snelling (Tivetshall), Mr. W. Ellis, Mr. E. Wright and others. A number of beautiful floral tributes were sent.

In the 1901 census, Henry, Hannah and family appeared in Harleston living up at Jay's Green, next door to Arthur Gower who was to lose his nephew, Austin Arthur Gower in the coming war. By 1911, the family had moved to Old Chapel Yard, behind Denny's.

Diss Express
30 Jan 1931

In 1930, son Walter married to Miss Dorothy Dove of Wortwell; the Doves of Wortwell were a prolific clan one of whom, Robert George Dove, died in the first world war and is also commemorated on our War Memorial. Walter survived the war and moved to his wife's home village of Wortwell where he followed in his father's footsteps and continued life as a bricklayer.

Diss Express
25 Apr 1930

The family's father Henry died in 1932, aged 62 and by 1933 the family had moved to nearby Exchange St; we know this due

MR. W. PEARCE (HARLESTON) AND MISS D. DOVE (WORTWELL).

A pretty wedding was solemnised at the Congregational Chapel, Wortwell, on Easter Monday, the contracting parties being Mr. Walter Pearce, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Pearce Harleston, and Miss Dorothy Dove, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Dove, Wortwell.

The bride who entered the church on the arm of her father, presented a charming picture in her dress of ivory white petal chine, with veil and orange blossoms. Her bouquet was composed of lilies and narcissi. She was attended by five bridesmaids, Miss Grace Dove (sister of bride), Miss Eva Pearce (sister of bridegroom), Miss Ivy Margetson, Miss Dolly Wilby and Miss Joan Godfrey. They were all attired in powder blue silk dresses, with silver net caps trimmed with silver leaves and wore black patent shoes. Their bouquets were composed of daffodils.

The service was conducted by the Rev. F. G. Rackham, the hymn being "How welcome was the call," and the organist, Mr. W. Margetson, played Mendelssohn's "Wedding March." The bride was given away by her father, and the duties of "best man" were undertaken by Mr. S. H. Ottaway.

to coverage of a slight mishap on the day of the wedding of Pearce's second child, Eva. The groom to be, Stoker Wiles, his step-mother Susan, his wife to be, Eve(a) Pearce and her mother, Mrs H. Pearce of Exchange St, were travelling in the car of the landlord of the Hope Inn, Mr George Chipperfield towards Long Stratton. It was quite common for the pub landlords of Harleston to make a bit of extra money by

supplying car hire.

Unfortunately, the wedding party crashed their car into another, coming from Rushall, at the junction of Swan and Wilderness Lanes; 'both vehicles were considerably damaged and had to be abandoned'. Luckily, a replacement vehicle was found, and the wedding still took place at Long Stratton registry office.

Diss Express
13 Aug 1943

LATE LEADING STOKER A. WILES

Further news has now been received by Mrs. Wiles, of Old Post Office Yard, concerning her husband, Leading Stoker Arthur Wiles, who, as reported last week, was accidentally killed abroad.

In a letter from the Lieut. Commander of the ship deep regret is expressed for the accident and the loss of a fine craftsman and good shipmate. Leading Stoker Wiles, the letter adds, was buried in a cemetery abroad with full naval honours, many of the ship's officers and men attending. A collection among the officers and men has also been made for his widow and three young children.

When Leading Stoker Arthur Wiles died in a tram accident whilst on shore in Alexandria, his wife and young family were living in Box Tree Cottage in the Old Post Office Yard. So, by the end of the war, the unfortunate Eva had lost both a brother and a husband.



WORTHAM

WEDDING.

The wedding took place at St. Mary's Church on Saturday of Mr. Horace Edward Pearce, youngest son of Mrs. H. Pearce and the late Mr. Harry Pearce, of Exchange Street, Harleston and Miss Lillian Olive Grace Kerry, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Kerry, of 3, Council Houses, Wortham. The ceremony was performed by the Rector of Wortham (the Rev. H. G. Hillier) Miss Phyllis Crowe (friend of the bride) was at the organ, and played Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" as the bride and bridegroom left. The hymn "The Voice that breathed o'er Eden" was sung. The bride, given away by her brother, Aircrafterman E. A. Kerry, R.A.F., was attired in a dress of tulle and satin, with veil and coronet of orange blossom and carried a bouquet of pink roses. Her trousseau was a pearl necklace. At 212 of the bridegroom.



Our Harleston Hero, Horace also married, on the eve of the coming war, in 1938, to Lillian Olive Grace Kerry from Wortham. Olive's brother was already in the Air Force; the photograph of the young couple and their attendants, all complete with their exuberant bouquets is really rather sweet.

Olive was one of the daughters of William George and Beatrice Margaret Kerry nee Gort; in 1911, when Mr and Mrs Gort were only two years married, they already had two children, eleven more children followed in the next 18 years including Olive, born in early 1916, and a set of twin boys. Olive may have been one of 13 siblings but sadly Olive and Horace had no children of their own. It looks as if Olive remarried to Harold A.J. Howard in early 1949, they *may* have then had a daughter but unless I purchase birth certificates it would be difficult to prove this!

On Active Service.

PEARCE.—On February 15th, 1945, Gunner Horace Edward Pearce, R.A., dearly beloved husband of Olive Pearce, formerly Kerry, of Wortham, killed while on active service overseas.

Diss Express
2 Mar 1945

Olive's father William Kerry was an agricultural worker, his father was too and so was the father of his wife Beatrice. Beatrice herself had started off her working life as a domestic servant; the Kerrys were a

large but respectable family who kept out of trouble and kept out of the papers although the 1940's saw an absolute spate of Kerry weddings!

St Mary's Wortham has a WW2 Roll of Honour bearing the names of Olive's brothers, Bartle, Eric, Frank, Frederick, Leslie and Sidney Kerry, all of whom served in and survived the war

Back to our Harleston Hero's mother; on the eve of the war, the widowed Hannah Pearce was living on Broad Street with William and Margaret Scarf; she was then described as a 'Companion', rather a grand title for a retired gardener and his wife. This retired gardener and his wife had lost one of their sons in the first world; William Scarf Jnr is on the same Harleston Memorial as Stoker Wiles and Horace Pearce. William and Margaret had a double funeral in 1941 having died within 3 days of each other when it was revealed Margaret had been an invalid for some years, probably explaining why Hannah had been living there as a 'companion'. Hannah outlived the Scarfes by some 14 years, achieving the age of 86 and was no doubt proud to see her son Horace's name alongside that of her son-in-law Arthur Wiles, and the son of her former companion, William Scarf.