

WILLIAM DEVONPORT BERRY, Trooper 4454, 1st Life Guards (Machine Gun Corps)

William was the third generation of the Berry family with this name. His grandfather was born in Devonport (hence the name?) in about 1834; in 1881 he was living at Road Farm with his wife Margaret and children Elizabeth, James, William Devonport junior aged 14, and Alice; William senior was a well-known cattle dealer.

In May 1897 William junior married Mary Pike in Whitestaunton; he was a dealer and the landlord of the Rising Sun Inn. William Devonport the youngest was born on September 19 1898. He was the only child, and by 1911 the family were back in Buckland. Young William was 12, and still at school.



A wedding at Buckland St. Mary, 18th November 1897: Samuel James Hoare, aged 66, widower, of Castle Beacon, to Emma Berry, aged 40. The man seated on the left is Devonport Berry, a well-known cattle dealer living in Buckland. From a photograph in the possession of Mr. G. Mutter. BBA

His name is on Buckland St Mary School's Roll of Honour, written up at the back of the School's Log Book; he's in the Life Guards, and his father is again noted as a dealer, and living at Newtown. William was at the school for about 18 months, leaving in November 1906.

We are fortunate in that the Guards' records were stored separately from the general Army Service Records, and are now kept, undamaged, at the National Archives, so that we have a full record of William's service.

He attested on September 16 1916 shortly before his 18th birthday. Why the Lifeguards? A glance at his Attestation papers gives us the probable explanation: he was 6'1¾", weighed 15 stone with a 33/35 chest measurement and 20/20 vision. The Medical Officer wrote "Fit - nice clean boy" on his medical! He was placed in the Army Reserve; his service was reckoned from May 5 1917. Interestingly, his mother Mary is noted as Next of Kin on his papers, although his father was still alive.

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
BERRY	L Gds	Sgt.	4454
William			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	1HG/10131	14	Dis
BRITISH	— 25 —	25	
STAR			
J. W. B.	1HG/59		Deleted from list 1HG/61
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

On May 5 1918 he was transferred to the No 1(1st Life Guards) Machine Gun Battalion, which had been formed in March that year. He arrived in Boulogne on June 28th, and joined the Machine Gun Depot at its base at Camiers, Pas de Calais on June 29th. Camiers was adjacent to the huge base camp at Etaples. Further mention of this transfer is dated August 23; he joined the Battalion in the field on

December 6 1918 – by which time of course the Armistice had been signed.



Silver War Badge

He was transferred back to England on March 4 1919 as "no longer physically fit for War Service", and in August appeared before an Invaliding Board at Bath War Hospital. His disability is given as D.A.H.

– Disordered Action of the Heart; it seems that this would now be categorised as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. One is left to wonder what can have happened to this fit young man, who served only at the tail end of the war in France, to leave him in this state. He was awarded a Silver War Badge and a pension. The last instalment of his pension was assessed on January 5th 1921, with a final payment of 7/6 for 35 weeks, based on a "6-14% Degree of Disablement", down from an earlier assessment of 20%.

William was married at Christchurch in 1923 to Gertrude Florence Day; they had 3 children. They farmed near Bridgwater; in the 1939 Register they were at Crossways Farm and later at Boomer Farm. William died in 1960 aged 61. His son Eric and daughter Margot Spearing were his executors.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the												
Civil Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parish or Township of	Town or Village or Hamlet of	Urban Sanitary District of	Rural Sanitary District of	Electoral Ward or Division of	[Page 17]				
Buckland											51	
No. of House	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf-and-Dumb (2) Blind (3) Imbecile or Idiot (4) Lunatic			
89	Station	1	James Manning	Head	M	85	Prapther	Somerset Buckland				
90	Battle comfort		James Good	Head	M	41	Farmer	Devon Taverton				
			Walter	Wife	M	41		Somerset B.I.H				
			Mary	Son		7	Labourer	"				
			Mary	Son		6	"	"				
91	Road	1	W.D. Burg	Head	M	47	Little Dealer	Devon Devonport				
			Margaret	Wife	M	50	Laundress	Somerset B.I.H				
			Elizabeth	Son	W	19	"	" B.I.H				
			James	Son	W	16	"	"				
			William	Son	W	14	"	"				
			Police	Son	W	14	"	"				
			Charles Brooks	Son	W	10	Scholar	"				
92	Large	1	Elizabeth Paul	Head	W	50	Blacksmith	" B.I.H				
93	"	1	James Paul	Son	W	61	Blacksmith	" B.I.H				
			Elizabeth	Son	W	70	"	" B.I.H				
			James	Son	W	4	"	" B.I.H				
94			Elizabeth	Son	W	14	"	" B.I.H				
95			James	Son	W	14	"	" B.I.H				
96	Boards	1	James	Son	W	18	"	" B.I.H				
97			James	Son	W	18	"	" B.I.H				
10	Total of Houses...	5	Total of Males and Females...		8	13						

NOTE.—Draw the pen through such of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

Eng— Sheet B.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Reference—

RG 11/2385

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Administrative County Somerset The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the County Borough of Taunton Page 6

Civil Parish Whitestown Ecclesiastical Parish Whitestown County Borough Municipal Borough, or Urban District Whitestown Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District Whitestown Rural District Whitestown Parliamentary Borough or Division Whitestown Town or Village or Hamlet Whitestown

House No.	ROAD STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	Where BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame (4) Insane, feeble-minded
29	Howley	1	Caroline Long	Head	43			born Whitestown	
			George	son	33			born Whitestown	
30	"	1	Samuel	son	41	Wood Sawyer	Worker	born Whitestown	
			William	son	41	Wood Sawyer	Worker	born Whitestown	
31	Clare Hill	1	Samuel Tollet	Head	65	Farm Labourer	Worker	born Whitestown	
			Lucy	Wife	59			born Whitestown	
32	Lowthay	1	Abel Lee	Head	65	Agricultural Labourer	Worker	born Whitestown	
			John	son	15			born Whitestown	
			Frank	son	13			born Whitestown	
			John G. Lee	son	9			born Whitestown	
33	"	1	John Phillips	Head	47	or	or	born Whitestown	
			Edwin	Wife	49			born Whitestown	
			Arthur Sparks	son	11			born Whitestown	
			George Phillips	son	8			born Whitestown	
			Samuel	son	5			born Whitestown	
34	Howley	1	Alfred Knight	Head	72	or	or	born Whitestown	
			Elizabeth Allen	Wife	31			born Whitestown	
			William C. or	son	3			born Whitestown	
35	Rising Sun Inn	1	William D. Perry	Head	35	Publican & Dealer	own account	born Whitestown	
			Mary	Wife	30			born Whitestown	
			William D. or	son	2			born Whitestown	
			Tom Sparks	son	18	General Farm Labourer	Worker	born Whitestown	
7	Total of Schedules of Houses and of Tenements with less than Five Rooms	7	Total of Males and of Females	16	8				

NOTE—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

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CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged 15 years and upwards	BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every person	INFIRMITY
William Perry	Head	43	Married	Cattle Dealer	974	born Whitestown	
Mary Perry	Wife	39	Married			born Whitestown	
William Perry	Son	12				born Whitestown	
Robert Knight	Servant	16	Single	General Labourer	974	born Whitestown	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief

Signature William Perry Postal Address Buckland St Mary

TRANSFERRED TO—

Form No. S.B. 36.

REGION. _____

Surname BERRY Christian Names William

Unit and Regiment or Corps Amherst Cavalry Regt. No. 4454 Rank Plc

Regional No. 8/M B/ No 1900

NEW REGIONAL NO. _____

Date of Discharge 25. 2. 19 Year of Birth 1899 Marital Status { S. = Single
W. = Widower } S.

M. = Married

OTHER ACTION.

Address Benja Lane, Amherst St. Kemp

Date of commencement of Pension _____

Disabilities:—

1. lost 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

State whether attributable to or aggravated by Service or non-attributable:—

1. attrib 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

Particulars of Awards for previous Service (if any) _____

POST-AWARD CORRESPONDENCE.

Date of Letter	ACTION TAKEN. NOTE.—In this column are to be entered particulars of action taken before a definite reply can be given, e.g., date of acknowledgment, date of reference to Local Committee or to Records, and date of their reply.	Date of final Disposal	REMARKS
<u>YDA 24/11/20</u>			
<u>E m 3.20.20</u>			
<u>Reply for Out 12.10.20</u>	<u>OK 18/5/25</u>		
<u>BT 28.9.11.20</u>			
<u>Reply for Out 16.11.20</u>			
<u>BT 28.9.11.20</u>			
<u>Reply for Out 7.12.20</u>			
<u>M.2 Out 20.8.10</u>			
<u>Reply 28.12.20</u>			
<u>P.2 (14) 6.1.21</u>			

Wt 17685/2787 5070 lbs 8/10 J. II. & S. E3392 CS7612 SB86

Form No. S.B 36.

.....REGION

Surname BERRY

Christian

William

Regional No. 8/M B/ N° 1900

NEW REGIONAL No.

25-8-10

...Regtl. No. 4454

Rank Plc

OTHER ACTION.

Address Perris Farm, Luskland St. Johns

Marital Status { S. = Single
W. = Widower

(S. = Single
W. = Widower

Date of commencement |

Disabilities:—

State whether attributable to or aggravated by Service or non-attributable :-

1. Kraft

1. Admission

Particulars of Awards for previous Service. (If any)

POST-AWARD CORRESPONDENCE.

[illegible]

E.D. Letter Code

WPHT

Borough, U.D. or R.D.

Bridgewater

Registration District

and Sub-district

306/2

ADDRESS.	SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.	G. V. S. P. or L.	M. or F.	BIRTH.		S. M. W. or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION.	See INSTRUCTIONS.
	No.	Sub. No.				Day.	Year.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Aspley House	103	1	Parish Thomas J.	-	M	22 Aug	04	M	Worths Manager Lester Factory	John Ambulance A.R.P. 1st class
		2	Parish Kathleen V.	-	F	25 Sept	07	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	Domestic Land Army

This record is officially closed.

Wardway	104	1	Brown Helen M.	-	F	7 Mar	67	S	Unpaid Domestic Duties	
		2	Terry Eliza Gertrude	-	F	28 Jan	64	S	"	"
		3	Lukes Amy	-	F	22 Mar	77	S	Teacher of Music	
Crossway Farm	105	1	Berry William S.	-	M	19 Sept	98	M	Farmer	
Crossway Farm		2	Berry Gertrude L.	-	F	4 Mar	97	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	

This record is officially closed.

This record is officially closed.

This record is officially closed.

"		6	Day James	-	M	14 Oct	62	M	Retired	
"Shovel"	106	1	Nelson Herbert	-	M	3 Sept	75	M	Private Means	
"Shovel"		2	Nelson Edith F.W.	-	F	25 Sept	84	M	Private Means	
		3	Halewell Smith Edith M.	-	F	13 Mar	31	M	Private Means	Bird hunting Reserve

This record is officially closed.

		5	Aldridge Constance W.	-	F	28 Sept	09	M	Private Means	
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This record is officially closed.

This record is officially closed.

This record is officially closed.

		9	Abelwhite Vera M.	-	F	23 Sept	14	S	Governess	
		10	Talbot Evelyn R.M.	-	F	12 Oct	16	M	Parlourmaid	
		11	Whithead Nilda M.	-	F	15 Dec	75	S	Housemaid	
		12	Churchill Elsie E.	-	F	4 Oct	24	S	Between maid 10/3/11	

This record is officially closed.

Shovel Cottage	107	1	Buddle Sidney	-	M	3 Dec	08	M	Chauffeur	
		2	Buddle Mary	-	F	11 June	11	M	Unpaid domestic duties	
		3	Buddle Denis S.	-	M	31 Oct	36	S	Under School age	
		4	Buddle Elizabeth	-	F	10 Mar	62	M	Incapacitated	
		5	Blyth Minnie Victoria	-	F	16 Dec	11	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	
		6	Blyth Edward C.	-	M	35 Sept	27	S	Under school age	

This record is officially closed.

This record is officially closed.

Goodings Farm	110	1	Lang Frances J.	-	M	27 May	05	M	Farmer	
		2	Lang Ethel	-	F	8 May	06	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	

This record is officially closed.

This record is officially closed.

		5	Lang Edna D.	-	F	15 June	39	S	Under School age	line below
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This record is officially closed.

Mill Farm Cottage	112	1	James Edwin A.	-	M	25 Aug	92	M	Farm Porter	
		2	James Clara	-	F	2 May	90	M	Unpaid Domestic Duties	

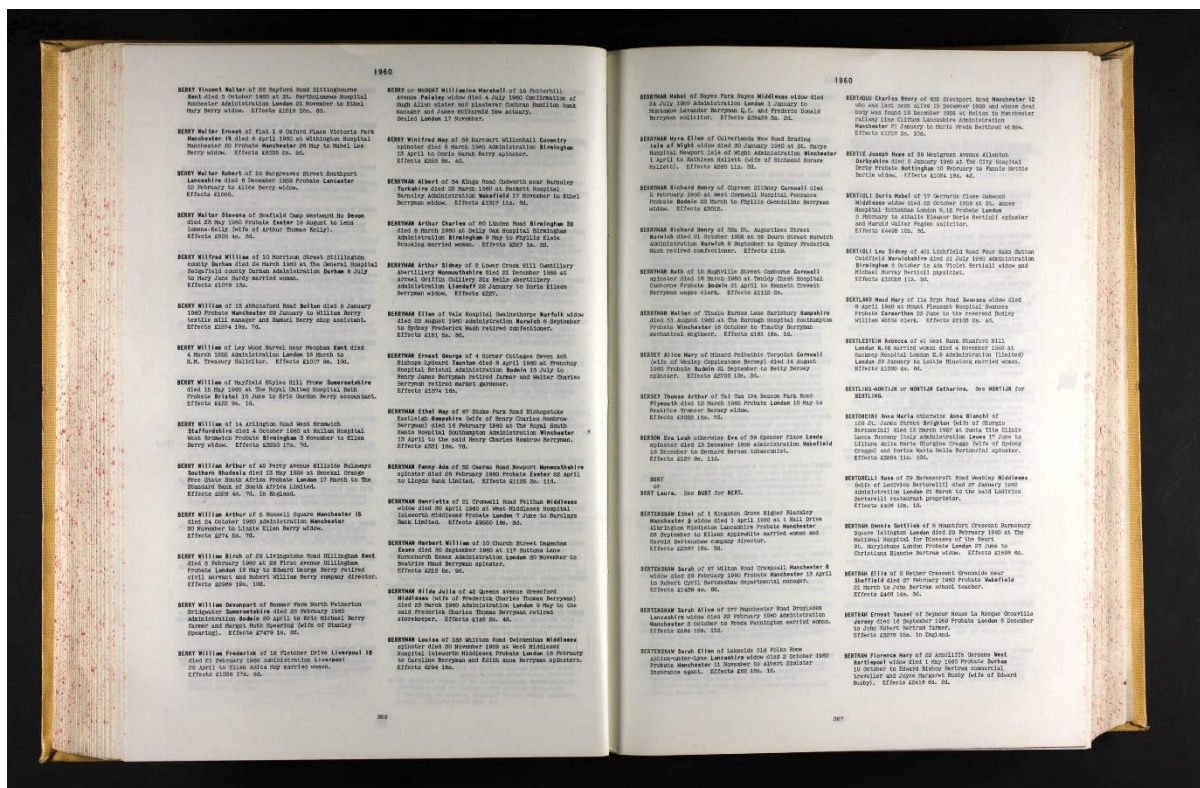
This record is officially closed.

		4	James Harold A.	-	M	31 Aug	29	S	At School	
--	--	---	-----------------	---	---	--------	----	---	-----------	--

This record is officially closed.



A wedding at Buckland St. Mary, 18th November 1897: Samuel James Hoare, aged 66, widower, of Castle Beacon, to Emma Berry, aged 40. The man seated on the left is Devonport Berry, a well-known cattle dealer living in Buckland. From a photograph in the possession of Mr. G. Mutter. B8A



Name.		Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
BERRY		L Gds	2 nd Sgt.	4454.
William				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	1HC/101B1	14	Dis	
BRITISH	— a5 —	a8		
STAR				
J.W.B.		1HE/59	Deleted from list-1HE/61	
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				

built about 34 inches as well as narrow into a bay window of

A PATRIARCHAL POLITICIAN

Walked to Poll at 91

Talk with Buckland St. Mary Veteran

HEALTH ON THE HILLS

A CHALLENGE AT CHARD

(County Gazette Special)

Not the least remarkable of many interesting incidents reported on polling day comes from Buckland St. Mary, a secluded village on the Blackdown Hills, about five miles from Chard, and included in the Yeovil Division, where Col. Aubrey Herbert easily retained his seat.

It transpired not long before the poll closed that Mr. William Devonport Berry, a veteran of 91, had refused a lift from his home nearly a mile away, preferring to walk to and from the polling station in the village.

READS WITHOUT GLASSES

To describe Mr. Berry, or "Devonport", as he is more familiarly known, as hale and hearty and in the pink of condition is no exaggeration, for he is upright, walks without a stick, reads without the aid of glasses, and still on occasions transacts his own business. Indeed, there is nothing he likes better than a deal, for all his life he has attended markets in the West Country, buying and selling live stock, principally calves, pigs, and horses.

When seen this week by a "County Gazette" reporter Mr. Berry, who lives at Road Farm - "an old house for an old man", as he put it - was engaged in his orchard gathering apples, of which he has had a goodly crop. He seemed amused that his walk to the polling booth should cause surprise, declaring, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, and an exhibition of shadow boxing, that he felt fit enough to walk to London, and had no doubt about his ability to get there on foot if given the time. Very readily granting an interview, and leading the way into his house - "I came here when I was married, 68 years ago", he remarked - Mr. Berry recalled his younger days. "I was born at Devonport," he said, "and that's why I was christened 'Devonport'; but my parents settled in Buckland when I was about 18 months old, I have lived in the parish ever since, and I shall be 92 on the 14th February next".

"NOT A BAD SCHOLAR"

Mr. Berry's wife died about 15 years ago; a widowed daughter now acts as his housekeeper. He has had a family of three boys and three girls, the sons following their father's occupation of farming and dealing in cattle. Very proud is the old fellow of his youngest daughter, who has, he told his visitor, been a schoolmistress at Netheravon, Wilts, for over 30 years. "I was not a bad scholar myself," he went on. "As a young man I taught at Buckland Church Sunday-school, and I'll show you the prize they gave me". He exhibited with pride a heavily bound volume of the Bible, bearing the inscription, "Reward for William Devonport Berry, July 24th, 1849 - 'Search the Scriptures. John v. 39' ".

In further conversation Mr. Berry, who has a rich sense of humour and no little knowledge of the world, told of his experiences at the various auctions he was wont to visit. Many years ago he regularly attended Exeter market, until, as he put it, the city became "too thickly populated". He then transferred his custom to Basingstoke, picking up batches of calves on the way, and doing "a regular trade".

"A MAN OF GIRTH"

Sherborne retains his affection as the town where, 40 years ago, he won a prize at a fete given by Lord Digby in the grounds of Sherborne Castle. "There was," he said, "a competition for men of girth. I had no intention of entering, but my son persuaded me to do so, and my chest measurement was found to be 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. I always have been a man of strong constitution, and don't remember having a headache or suffering from indigestion. That I put down to hard work and plenty of fresh air. Dr. Munden, of Ilminster, says that people never die on these hills. Of course, that's a bit of a 'stretcher'; but it is a fact that people up here live to be a good old age".

NON-SMOKER ALL HIS LIFE

Mr. Berry has been a non-smoker all his life. He has never smoked a pipe, cigar, or cigarette, but does not object to others enjoying the fragrant weed. He is not a teetotaler, and has no liking for Pussyfoot, though strongly of opinion that much of the drink sold nowadays is inferior in quality, and often in the case of spirits injurious. "This has been a good year for apples," he remarked, "and I have made a tidy few hogsheads of cider. That, at any rate, is pure liquor. Noah knew a thing or two when he came out of the ark and cultivated a vineyard, though it is true he got drunk on his own grapes. That has always amused me, and it shows that people got drunk even in those days. I have only been drunk twice in my life, though, mind you, I have always been a man who could carry his liquor".

£50 WAGER GOES BEGGING

Referring to the visits which he still pays to local markets, Mr. Berry told an amusing story, the accuracy of which he vouched for. "A fortnight ago," he said, "I was in a certain hostelry in Chard having a chat with a few friends. There was some talk about my fitness, and I threw out a wager that I would outbox, wrestle, run, or jump any man for £50. When those in the room had stopped laughing, I explained that, as the lawyers would say, there was a codicil to the statement, contained in the stipulation that the man I was to meet must be my age to the minute and weight to the ounce. No one took up the challenge".

ENJOYS THE "GAZETTE" SERIAL

Mr. Berry, in wishing his interviewer "Good-day", mentioned that he had taken the "County Gazette" for over 50 years, deriving much enjoyment each week from the news and reading the serial story. The story just concluded - "Three Men Who Came Back" - he considered a rare good yarn, and said that judging by the title of the new serial - "The Mystery of Room 75" - it would provide the right kind of reading for the winter evenings. Our readers will join us in the hope that Mr. Berry may retain his health and spirits, and enjoy his simple pleasures for many more years.

(Somerset County Gazette, 1922)

