



# Harry Lowles (senior)

## 24 Statham Street

Harry Lowles, born in 1863, was the son of a coachman who worked at Wollaton Park in Nottingham. By the 1881 census Harry, aged 17, was working as a Railway Clerk and living in Darley Abbey. In August 1891 he married Sarah Jane Harrison and in December their first child Albert was born. By the 1901 census the family were living at 34 Markeaton Street, with daughter Jane born in 1894 and son Harry arriving in 1899. Sadly, another daughter Annie died shortly after birth in 1893.

1906 saw the family living at 24 Statham Street with Harry still working as a Railway Clerk. Contemporary newspaper articles suggest he was active in various railway and community events, including the Midland Railway Stores Department Rifle Club and the West End Bowls Club. At the outbreak of war in 1914 Harry was over 50 and we assumed too old for active service but it appears that he did volunteer and served with the Royal Engineers Inland Waterways Division. The Inland Water Transport section was formed late in 1914 to develop transport systems on the canals and waterways of France and Belgium. At first it as part of the railways, but as the water transport network developed and expanded a special directorate was set up in October 1915. With experience in the movement of goods on the railways Harry would be a valuable asset to such a team.

Using evidence from medal cards and newspapers we have been able to piece together some of his service history. There are references to his role as treasurer of the Midland Railway Rifle Club in September 1915 so we assume he was still at home at that date.



Troops of the Royal Engineers Inland Water Transport Unit on barges passing through a lock. This photograph was taken in England but many IWT units served in Europe and the Middle East © IWM (Q 53953)

At some time after this he volunteered for duty, and on 18 September 1916 he was granted the rank of temporary Lieutenant. In May 1917 he was promoted to Captain (temporary). He resigned his commission in July 1918 due to ill health, leaving with the rank of Honorary Captain.

Harry and Jane were to enjoy a long life together at 24 Statham Street; they were both living there in 1939, by which date Harry had retired. He continued to take an active role in the Bowls Club and was a member of a local Freemasons' Lodge. He died on 2 October 1944 aged 81.



## Albert Edward Lowles

Albert, the oldest son of Harry and Sarah, was born on 28 December 1891. By the 1911 census Albert (aged 19) was working as a Railway Clerk, presumably with the Midland Railway where his father worked. We get a glimpse of his life outside work with a mention of him in the Derby Daily Telegraph in 1912 as a member of Derby Rowing Club.

The medal records for Albert Lowles say he was a private with 1<sup>st</sup> battalion East Surrey Regiment with his service abroad starting on 22 October 1914. This earned him the 1914 star medal so he must have enlisted or was serving with the territorial reserves before the war.

The East Surreys joined the British Expeditionary Force in northern France and Belgium in autumn 1914, so we know he experienced life in the trenches during the winter of 1914, going on to fight with his regiment at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. This battle saw the first use on the Western Front of chlorine gas as a weapon by the German army. On 15 May Albert received a bullet wound to his hand and he was transferred to No. 8 Casualty Clearing Station, Bailleul in northern France.

From the local newspaper we learn that Albert married May Dicks in Derby on 18 August 1915 by special licence, probably whilst on sick leave. The announcement states he is a Lance-Corporal with 10<sup>th</sup> Reserve Cavalry in the Curragh, in Ireland.

The Curragh, a large camp near Dublin was a training unit for various regiments. Maybe



Ruins in the Square, Ypres, May 1915 © IWM (Q 56699)

at the time of his marriage Albert did not know which regiment he would be serving with after his recovery.

Albert was posted to the Hampshire Regiment on 10 September 1915 but as his medal records state that he served with both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Hampshires we cannot be sure where he served for the remainder of the war: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion were based in Gosport; whereas the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, after training at the Curragh, embarked for Gallipoli in the summer of 1915 and then spent the rest of the war in Salonika fighting the Bulgarian Army, ending the war in Macedonia.

By mid 1919 Albert was home to start his life with Mary, and their son Kenneth was born in 1920. He returned to work with the Railways as a Clerk in the Stores Department. By 1939 the couple were living in Wembley and Albert worked at Euston Station. Albert died on 17 November 1953.





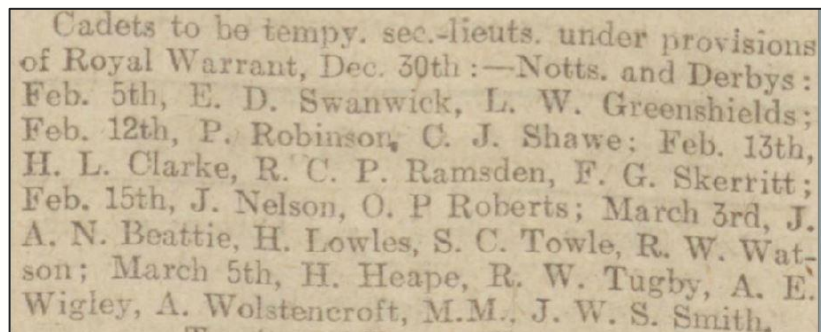
## Harry Lowles (junior)

Harry, the youngest child of Harry and Sarah was born in November 1899 which only made him eligible for military service in November 1917.

A newspaper reference from 1939 enabled us to establish that he joined the Artists' Rifles regiment for officer training and, once this was complete, was transferred to the Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby) regiment in March 1919 as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. The Artists' Rifles originated in May 1860 as a corps of volunteers formed by an art student, Edward Sterling, from members of the artistic professions. In 1908 after military reforms which created the Territorial Force, the regiment became 28th (County of London) Battalion of the London Regiment, but was still known as the Artists' Rifles. During the First World War it became an Officers Training Corps, both in France and Essex until the cadet school was transferred back to Britain in the summer of 1917. More than 14,000 recruits passed through the regiment between 1914 and 1918. The poets Wilfred Owen and Edward Thomas and artists Paul and John Nash all trained with the regiment.

After leaving school Harry had worked at the Midland Railway and he returned to this job after demobilisation in mid 1919. In 1922 he obtained a job as chief storekeeper on government service with the Tanganyika Government. Tanganyika was formerly part of German East Africa placed under British control in 1922 following a League of

Nations mandate. The territory later formed part of independent Tanzania.



*Derby Daily Telegraph* for 17 March 1919 announces Harry Lowles' transfer to the Sherwood Foresters ©Local World Ltd (image created courtesy of the British Library Board)

Harry made visits home and travel details of his voyages have survived. While on one of these stays he met Dorothy Gent when visiting his Uncle John in Sutton Coldfield. In November 1930 they married before travelling back to Tanganyika in January 1930. Their son John was born there in June 1935. At the outbreak of war in 1939, Harry, by now Deputy Assistant Director of Supplies with the Railway, took up a posting as Major in the army defending the territory. The war made travel back to the UK for visits unlikely and a daughter Jane, born in 1943, probably never met her Derby grandparents who both died in 1944. In November 1945 the family returned to England, which may have been an extended visit before Harry took up the post of Stores Superintendent with the Kenya and Uganda Railways and Harbours Service in Mombasa in August 1946. He retired in 1953 returning to live in the West Midlands. Harry died in Worcester in February 1975.







# Family research is for detectives!

It has taken many hours of research to discover how the Lowles family were involved in World War One. Electoral Registers suggested that all three males in the family were absent on military service at some point – but with two men called “Harry” – one barely 18 at the end of the war and one 51 in 1914 we wondered whether there might be an error.

Lowles proved to be an uncommon name which helped narrow down our searches, but still we couldn’t track down the military records of Harry father and son – we even enlisted the help of a professional genealogist!

A breakthrough came when we started to search local newspapers. A report about the West End Bowls Club AGM in the Derby Telegraph for April 1919 saw Harry Lowles welcomed back from his recent military service as Captain with the Royal Engineers; this meant we could confirm that a surviving medal card did belong to Harry senior. Searching the London Gazette where all military promotions were listed revealed a reference to his service with the Inland Waterways Division.

**Harry Lowles to be temp. Lt. (on prob.) for service with Inland Water Trans. 18th Sept. 1916.**

Name	Corps	Reg. No.	Rank	Date of Discharge	Cause of Discharge
Lowles Harry	R.E General List		Hon Captain		Enlistment
Date of application	(a) Badge	(b) Medal			
No. of File	"147750/1"				
Address of applicant :-					
Action taken					

W6749—H5226 200,000 8/17 HWV(Pess) K936  
1523—RP2053—200,000(25) 5/18  
Slip 3.7.18

NEWS from Tanganyika, in which part of the world quite a number of Derby people are domiciled, shows the practical interest which His Majesty's liege subjects in East Africa are taking in the war.

Germans in the Colony have been interned, and the British are placing themselves on a warlike footing, although there is no fear of invasion or even of attack.

Among those who have attained military status is Mr. H. Lowles, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lowles, of Statham-street, Derby. He served throughout the last war, and was granted a commission in the Artists' Rifles. He then took up a position on the Tanganyika State Railways, and has now been appointed Deputy Assistant Director of Supplies, with the rank of Major. He will return to his railway duties at the end of the war.

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Above: Harry (senior) : medal card ©The National Archive  
 Above right: Harry (senior) : promotion listed in the London Gazette, 1916  
 Right: Harry (junior) : Derby Daily Telegraph for 25 October 1939 ©Local World Ltd (image created courtesy of the British Library Board)

Harry junior proved just as elusive, but we knew from our genealogist’s research that he went on to work in Tanganyika and, in a newspaper article from 1939 describing his work in Africa, his service with the Artists’ Rifles in World War One was mentioned. From this clue we searched for records relating to the Artists’ Rifles and found his name; information that was backed up in the London Gazette.