



Frederick Ride

123 Kedleston Road

Frederick's family ran a Greengrocers' shop where the Post Office is now located on Kedleston Road. His parents, George and Harriet, had moved there in about 1911 taking over the business. At this date the Post Office was located with the Chemist's shop at the corner of Bromley Street.

Fred was born in December 1897 at 56 Whitecross Street. His sister, Edith, was nine years younger. In the 1911 census the family had a live-in servant Daisy Coe.

In May 1916 Frederick enlisted with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve aged 18 years and 5 months. He was sent for training to Crystal Palace (officially called by the Royal Navy *HMS Victory VI*).



© IWM (Q 53284) Members of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve on parade at the football ground of Crystal Palace, September 1914.

From his military record we know he was working as a "Fitter" so had obviously not followed his father into the greengrocery business. He was 5 foot 3½ inches tall, with auburn hair, blue eyes and a fresh complexion.

He started as an Ordinary Seaman but was promoted to Able Seaman after 3 months. In all he spent 6 months training and by November 1916 he had qualified as a Signaller.

Between November 1916 and June 1917 Frederick probably served on a small ship that was grouped for administrative purposes within a large land-based organisation known as a "stone frigate" – confusingly they were given ships' names. Fred's record lists him as attached to *HMS Pembroke I* which was at Chatham, Kent. We do know that on 4 January 1917 he was discharged to a hospital ship with suspected appendicitis but returned to duty 2 days later.

From 14 June 1917 to 30 April 1918 Frederick was posted with *HMS Knight Templar* and, as the ship's logs survive from this time, we can get a good idea of what he experienced (see extracts on the next page). *Knight Templar* had been built in 1905 as a cargo vessel and was commissioned as an escort ship between September 1917 and December 1918, helping to protect the shipping convoys carrying supplies and troops from USA and Canada to Europe. She was heavily armed with Howitzers – large artillery guns designed to fire upon threatening submarines and enemy warships.



Frederick Ride

continued

The ship's logs from give an idea of life on board a convoy escort ship:

18 October 1917

Norfolk (Canada) to UK; Lat 55.9, Long -10.2

4.00 am: Passing showers, rolling heavily

9.30 am: Enemy sub reported, crew called to action stations

3.40 pm: Signalled convoy to close in to five cables

9.20 pm: Observed loom of Inishtrahull Lighthouse

31 January 1918

Plymouth to New York; Lat 46.0, Long -18.0

4.00 am: Zigzagging all watch; rolling heavily

7.30 am: Moderate gale and heavy sea

*2.20 pm: Rolling and pitching and racing heavily
Weather moderating; rolling heavily*

In December 1917 she was berthed in the small port of Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada. Halifax served as an assembly and departure point for transatlantic convoys – the population grew as the port expanded to cope with an increase in shipping. New railway lines and terminals were nearing completion. The harbour was crowded with wartime shipping and convoys of ships loaded with supplies of food, munitions and troops were gathered in the harbour, ready to make the perilous journey across the Atlantic, escorted by armed warships to try to keep enemy submarines from attacking.

Shortly after 9 am on 6 December two ships the *Mont-Blanc* (a French ship) and the *Imo* (a Norwegian ship) collided in the harbour as a result of miscommunication. A fire

broke out on board the *Mont-Blanc* and a crowd of interested spectators gathered in the harbour to watch. Unfortunately, only a few of the officers on board knew that the *Mont-Blanc* was carrying a full cargo of explosives, and there was no time to warn the town. After burning for 20 minutes there was a massive explosion – on the shore 2,000 people were killed and 9,000 more were injured. The city was reduced to ruins and the harbour was in chaos. Crew from “Knight Templar” were dispatched to help. The ship set out on her home voyage on 11 December.

6 December 1917

Halifax; Lat 44.6, Long -63.6

9.15 am: Heavy explosion in harbour causing ship to shear about badly, eventually pulled posts out of wharf – adrift. Ran lines to other posts and heaved back alongside

*10.00 am: Landed party ashore to render assistance
Sub Lieut Mackie returned to duty from hospital
MO (Medical Officer) and SBA (Sick Berth Attendant) ashore rendering assistance to wounded*

7 December 1917

Overcast and continuous snow

8.00 am: MO and SBA ashore rendering assistance to wounded

4.00 pm: Moderate gale with blizzard

8 December 1917

Party of crew ashore searching for bodies

Doctor ashore all day attending to wounded

9 December 1917

Heavy rain and moderate breeze

Party of crew ashore on relief work

Doctor ashore all day attending to wounded and relieved by shore doctor





Frederick Ride continued



HMS Knight Templar

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After helping with the aftermath of the explosion *HMS Knight Templar* continued her Atlantic convoy duty, until 7 April 1918, when sailing from Plymouth for an unknown destination, she was torpedoed and damaged by a submarine about 170 miles SW of Eddystone Lighthouse and towed back into Plymouth. The next three weeks were spent clearing up the mess with salvage teams working on board, before the crew was released on 30 April 1918.

Ride's naval record tells us that he was transferred to serve with *HMS Colleen*, Queenstown, Ireland. This was the base of the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Approaches and a Signaller would be kept busy monitoring and sending signals between command base and ships. He may have been stationed at smaller signalling points along the coast or on small ships.

On 22 February 1919 Frederick was demobilised and he returned to civilian life in Derby. In August 1923 he married

Gladys May Holmes, of 53 Park Grove, and their wedding certificate gives his career as "Nurseryman" – he had joined the family business.

From a trade directory dated 1941 we know that G T Ride & Son rented land where Arthur Hind Close now stands. This land was owned by the Liversage Trust and used as allotments and smallholdings until the land was developed for housing from 1960.

Frederick and Gladys lived at 53 Park Grove throughout the 1920s and 1930s and their son John was born in 1927.



Advertisement from the Derby Daily Telegraph, 16 March 1938. (© Local World Ltd, courtesy of the British Library Board)

During World War 2 the Ride family took over the running of the Post Office - by 1943 it had transferred to 123 Kedleston Road. After his father died in 1951 Frederick continued running the sub post-office while working as a Nurseryman until the early 1960s. From 1964 to 1976 his address is listed in BT phone books as 43 Hall Farm Road, Broadway, Duffield. Fred died in 1978.