



Statham Family

90 Kedleston Road

John Statham and Elizabeth Homer originated from Belper, but moved to Derby in about 1887, following the birth of their second child. They had 8 children, seven of which survived infancy, born between 1885 and 1901: Harry, Ethel, Arthur, Jack, Mabel, Arnold and Francis.

John was a Clerk, then Manager in an elastic bandage factory – probably in Derby’s West End area and quite possibly at Frederick Longdon and Co. Ltd which operated from Agard Street from 1881 until the 1970s.

The family lived at 43 Kedleston Street, then 93 Markeaton Street, before moving to 26 Statham Street in 1905. Three years later they moved to 48 Statham Street, but by 1914 they were living at 90 Kedleston Road. By this date some of their children were no longer living at home, but we know from St Anne’s Church magazines that four of the five sons from the family had signed up for military service. In addition their daughter Ethel’s husband was away fighting with the Sherwood Foresters.

The following biographies give a sense of what large families with a number of sons away fighting must have experienced during the war: of four sons who were fighting one was killed in action (Arnold) and the three others (Harry, Arthur and Jack) were discharged as no longer fit for active service either because of injuries or sickness during service.

We don’t know whether the women in the family were involved in war work. Before her marriage Ethel had worked as a sewer in an elastic bandage factory and she may have been called back to work in such a factory, at a time when the bandages produced by the mills and factories in this area would have been in high demand. Although John, the father, was too old to be called up for the armed services it is highly likely that his post as factory manager in a bandage factory was a protected occupation to ensure that production targets were met for the war effort.

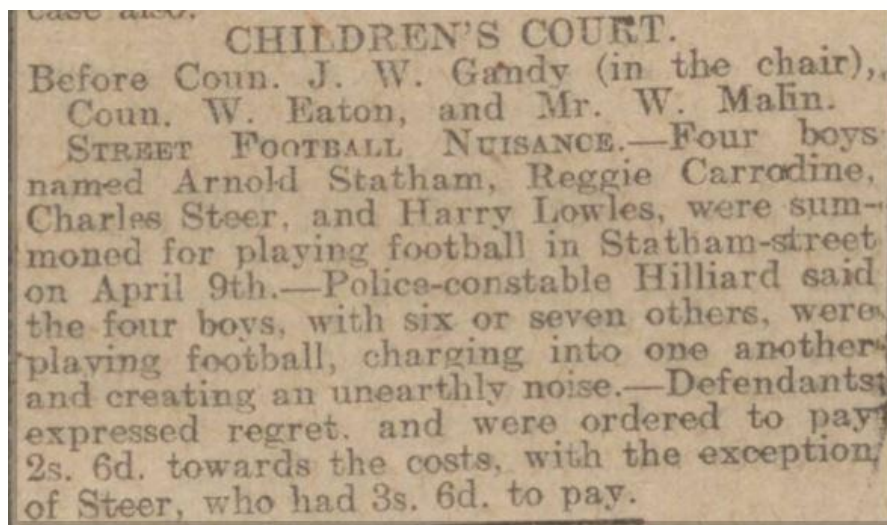
An underage recruit

Arthur and Arnold both signed up with the same regiment – the Seaforth Highlanders. Regimental numbers tended to be issued in order – a batch was given out to a regiment recruiting in one area and Arnold’s number (266304) precedes Arthur’s number (266339). Only 35 numbers apart, the brothers may well have volunteered on the same day. What is interesting is that Arthur’s pension record (following his discharge from the army after suffering a gunshot wound to his face) records that he signed up on 9 October 1915. At that date Arnold, his younger brother was barely 17 years old.



Arnold Statham

1898 – 1917



Derby Daily Telegraph, April 1912. This was when the Statham Family were living at 48 Statham Street. © Local World Limited , British Newspaper Archive

Arnold, fourth of five boys, was born late in 1898. Obviously a boy of some spirit he was one of a group sent to the children's court in April 1912 Derby and fined for playing an unruly game of football on Statham Street.

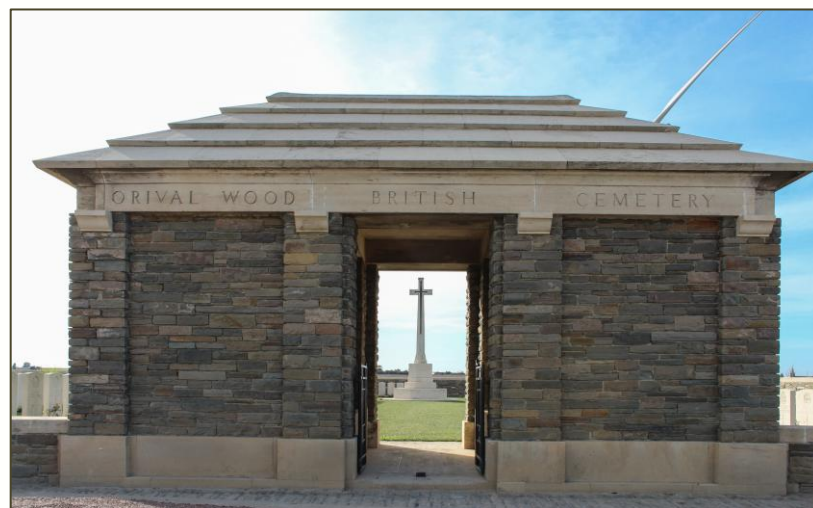
We think Arnold volunteered for service on 9 October 1915 on the same day as his older brother, Arthur, who had a regimental number (266339) close in sequence to Arnold's (266304). Both served with the Seaforth Highlanders. At this date Arnold was barely seventeen and this means he lied about his age. The recruiting officer may have turned a blind eye or encouraged him to give a false age. Army recruits had to be 18 and could only serve abroad when they reached 19.

His fellow footballer, Charles Steer, listed in the court report (who lived next door at 92 Kedleston Road) also signed up under age. (You can find more information about underage soldiers in his profile).

An article in St Anne's Church magazine from January 1918 states that Arnold had been sent to France after training and had been wounded. The magazine goes on:

"Being brought back to England , it was intended not to send him out again till he reached the age of nineteen, but, at his own entreaty, he was at length permitted to go, and he went to his death."

Sadly, on this occasion the magazine was recording his death in the Battle of Cambrai in Northern France on 20 November 1917.



Arnold is buried at Orival Wood Cemetery, Flesquieres near Cambrai in Northern France. (Image: Wikimedia Commons)



Harry Statham

Harry (1885 – 1957), the oldest of the Statham children, had left home and was married by the time war broke out in August 1914. He was working as a Solicitor's Clerk and had married Maude Betts in April 1914. They were living in Littleover when Harry volunteered for active service aged nearly 31 in December 1915.

He served with the Royal Garrison Artillery who, in addition to providing the heavy guns and artillery in the battlefields, also manned strategic defence points such as forts and coastal defences both at home and abroad. We are not sure whether Harry served at a battery or was part of a unit attached to an infantry regiment. From December 1916, after his training to July 1917, he was based at "home" which could have been within the UK or Ireland. In late July 1917 he was posted with the British Expeditionary force to France and in October 1917 he received a gunshot wound to one arm which hospitalised him in Rouen, before he was sent back to England to a hospital in Oxford, from where he was discharged in late November 1917. After his recovery he must have served again but his record is not clear where. In January 1919 he was discharged with VDH (valvular disease of the heart), which was a common disease at the time – it was often confused with DAH which was a disorderly action of the heart, often the result of stress, fatigue and anxiety. Harry's condition was enough to get him discharged as being not fit for service and he was awarded a small war pension.

He returned to work as a Solicitor's clerk and he and Maude had 2 daughters – Maude, who was born in September 1916 and Dorothy, born in 1921. Harry continued to live at their house "Deorby" in The Hollow in Littleover, until his death aged seventy two.

Arthur Statham

Arthur (1889 - ?), the second eldest son born in 1889, was working for Derbyshire County Council as a clerk when war broke out. He married Lucy Tatlow, a Shop Assistant early in 1915, and on 9 October 1915 volunteered for military service. He first served with the Seaforth Highlanders - St Anne's Church magazine lists him as serving with this regiment in the February 1917 edition.

At some point he was transferred to the Labour Corps where he served until 6 March 1919 when he was discharged as no longer fit for military service. His pension records reveal that he suffered from a gunshot wound to the face.

Arthur returned to his job as a clerk in local government. His only child, John, had been born in 1917. The family lived at 246 Duffield Road well into the 1960s.





Jack Statham

Jack (1891- 1971) volunteered for service at the outbreak of war – his military record states that he enlisted in Dublin on 2 September 1914 where he was assigned to the Hussars of the Line, who were still a cavalry regiment at this time. Unfortunately he soon began to experience heart pain and breathlessness on exertion, including “pain over the heart when grooming his horse”. It was thought that damage to his heart was the result of a childhood illness.

He was discharged as unfit for service in April 1915 and returned to Derby. At a time when it was common for some women to present white feathers to young, apparently able-bodied young men who were not wearing uniform, Jack was probably relieved that after September 1916 the Silver War Badge was issued to men who had been honourably discharged due to illness or wounds.

He married Sarah Rhodes in Spring 1918 and they had two daughters – Jean (born in 1922) and Anne (born 1933). The family moved around: in 1925 they were living on Markeaton Street, in 1939 on Duffield Road and from 1941 to 1945 at 45 Park Grove; later addresses are on Burton Road and Findern Close, Allestree. Interestingly in the 1939 Register Jack’s occupation is listed as Manager of a surgical bandage factory – a similar role to that of his father in World War One.



Silver War Badge

All three surviving brothers, Harry , Jack and Arthur suffered injuries or illness that meant they were discharged early from active service. They were entitled to wear this badge to show that they had served in the armed forces.

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