John Hermann Howe





Rank: - Stoker 1st Class

Number: - SS/112643

Regiment: - Royal Navy "HMS Queen Mary"

Killed in Action: - 31st May 1916 at the Battle of Jutland aged 23

Memorial: - Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Portsmouth, Hampshire Panel 18

Batley News, 10 Jun 1916

Family Details

John Hermann Howe was born in Stanningley, Pudsey on the 28th April 1893 and baptised at St. Paul's, Pudsey on the 31st August 1895 when the family was living at Beckett Hill, Stanningley. His parents were Herbert Howe and Batley Carr born, Lizzie Riley. We have not been able to find a marriage for the couple.

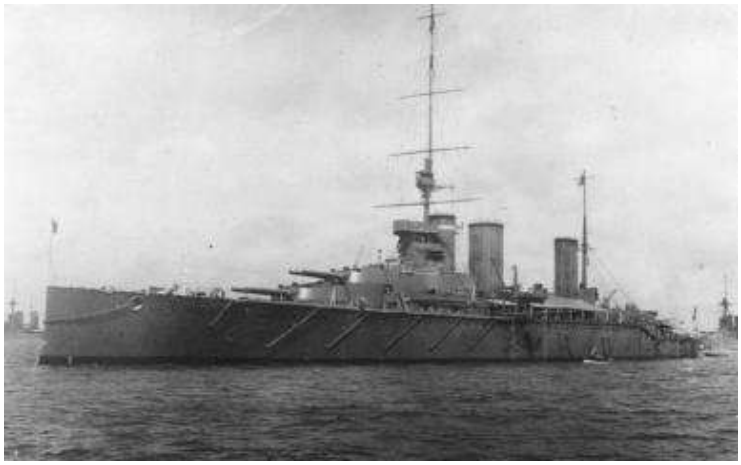
In 1901 the family was living at 10, Beckside Hill, Stanningley, Pudsey but a decade later the family was living at 32, Lidgate Lane, Batley Carr. Herbert was working as a blacksmith's striker, Percy Riley, born in Dewsbury on 12th May 1891, was working as a piecer, Hermann as a coal filler and Stanningley born Granville (1898) and Stainsby (1899) were at school. Fred Garner born 1895 died in late 1896.

John Hermann attended Carlton Road Council School before going to work for Mr. S. Naylor, coal merchants, Batley Carr. He was a friend of Thornton Parker who was also killed on the Queen Mary. According to his service details he did have an illegitimate child, Amy Jennings. His next of kin was his mother Elizabeth who lived at 1, King Street, Batley Carr.

Service Details

Hermann joined the Royal Navy on the 31st August 1912 and at first served on H.M.S. Victory for around three weeks as a stoker 2nd class moving to the Renown, back to the Victory, Revenge, moving to the Allemade where he was promoted to Stoker 1st Class on the 14th August 1913. He moved to the Queen Mary on the 4th September 1913. His records state that he was 5 feet 2 ¼ inches tall had light brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion.

He took part in the Battle of the Heligoland Bight on 22nd August 1914. He came home on leave February 28th 1916 and rejoined his ship the following week. The last letter home which was received on May 19th said he was quite well.





The “Queen Mary “was sunk at the Battle of Jutland on the 31st May 1916.

Officers and Men Killed in Action H.M.S. Queen Mary Jutland Bank, 31st May 1916.

Extract from the Official History; “Naval Operations" by Sir Julian S. Corbett. 1923

.... For Admiral Hipper was in action again. At 4.10, being then eleven miles away abaft the beam of the *Lion*, he inclined inwards a couple of points, and as Admiral Beatty simultaneously altered still more to port to press his van, he was able at 4.17 to re-open fire at extreme range. The *Lion* had not yet been able entirely to master the fire that was smothering her. To the Germans she must have been invisible, for the *Derfflinger*, mistaking the *Princess Royal* for the flagship, began firing on the next astern, which the *Seydlitz* was also engaging. Thus, the *Queen Mary*, at from 15,800 to 14,500 yards, became the target of both these ships. For about five minutes she stood it gallantly. She was fighting splendidly. The Germans say full salvoes were coming from her with fabulous rapidity. Twice already she had been straddled by the *Derfflinger*, when at 4.26 a plunging salvo crashed upon her deck forward. In a moment there was a dazzling flash of red flame where the salvo fell, and then a much heavier explosion rent her amidships. Her bows plunged down, and as the *Tiger* and *New Zealand* raced by her to port and starboard, her propellers were still slowly revolving high in the air. In another moment, as her two consorts were smothered in a shower of black debris, there was nothing of her left but a dark pillar of smoke rising stem like till it spread hundreds of feet high in the likeness of a vast palm tree. Two such successes were beyond anything the Germans had reason to expect. Admiral Scheer's plan had broken down, and yet they were gaining even more than he could have hoped for.

Foot Note: "The casualties were 57 officers and 1,209 men killed; 2 officers and 5 men wounded. One officer and one man were subsequently rescued by German destroyers."

John Hermann Howe was a Stoker 1st Class who went down with the ship.

His brother, Granville was killed on 6th September 1918.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial, Portsmouth Naval Memorial and Batley Carr Wesleyan Chapel.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group