

## ***Gerald John Charles.***

### ***No. 425784 Labour Corps. Formerly Gunner no. 192278 Royal Field & Royal Horse Artillery.***

Gerald John Charles was born in Wellesbourne, as was his father William Henry and John, his father before him. Grandfather John, born in 1807, and his wife Ann (nee Fincher) farmed about 150 acres of land near to the village employing five men and three boys. For around thirty years they were also licensed victuallers of the King's Head Inn in Wellesbourne Hastings.

William Henry Charles, Gerald's father, following what appears to have been a boarding school education in Shipston on Stour, worked for his father on the family farm and for a short time also advertised himself as a Wine and Spirit Merchant<sup>i</sup>. He married local girl Katherine Emelia Overbury in the Wellesbourne parish church of St. Peter on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1877 and on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1881 their only child Gerald John was born.

William's described occupation over the years changed from one of a Commission Agent to that of an Estate Agent. The first record of Gerald's occupation is in the 1911 Census which records him as being an Assistant Estate Agent, to his father.

Gerald married Mary Catherine Emery in St. Gregory's Church Stratford upon Avon on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1908. On the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1909 their only child William Gerard was born. An event which could be argued as a possible cause of Gerald's failure to purchase a licence for his dog and for which he appeared at the local Police Courts a month later being fined five shillings plus costs<sup>ii</sup>.

Gerald was a Reservist and working as an Insurance Collector when he was summoned on 9th November 1916 to High Wycombe to be enrolled into the Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery. As his military record suggests at almost 6 Feet 2 inches tall he would have stood out amongst his peers. He joined 315 Brigade of the Expeditionary Force in France the following year and remained there for 16 months before returning home on leave in July 1918.<sup>iii</sup> Early in 1918 he had transferred to the 844<sup>th</sup> Labour Corps before moving to the 990<sup>th</sup> returning later to the 844<sup>th</sup>. He was discharged at the end of the war.

Gerald was awarded the British War and Victory medals.

Records indicate that in 1939 he was living with his family in Church St. Stratford upon Avon. He died in 1959.

*Researched by Grev Hudson. (July 2016) (grev.hudson@btinternet.com)*

<sup>i</sup> *Spennells Directory 1880- 1883 and 1881 Census,*

<sup>ii</sup> *Leamington Spa Courier 23/4/1909*

<sup>iii</sup> *Stratford upon Avon Herald 19/7/1918*

*Gerald John Charles Army service record (Ancestry.com)*