



ABOVE AND BELOW: George and Catherine Knott enjoyed their retirement in Dover, maintaining good contact with their large family from their home on the slopes below Connaught Park to the west of the Castle. The town was like any other Victorian seaside town, with promenade, pleasure pier and thriving shops, with the added features of being steeped in military history, maritime duties and cross-Channel activities - in short, a microcosm of England at the turn of the 20th century.





Retirement

Extracted from: *Light On The Forelands* by Ken & Clifford Trethewey, Jazz-Fusion Books (2022)

A decade in Dover; A large family spreads itself far and wide as the old folk consolidate themselves as senior citizens of their community; George and Catherine Knott celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on 19 July 1899.

The Retirement Years In Dover 1890 - 1900

Nineteenth century Dover was not like the Dover of today, dominated - some might say, disadvantageously - by the cross-Channel trade with tarmac-covered lorry parks and their feeder roads snaking around the coastline. Only today are some of the people-centred features of the age of leisure being returned to those who call the town their home, rather than a transit station. Dover Castle remains, of course, but barely noticed as all travellers' minds focus upon the process of embarkation. It is only when the ferry has left the confines of the harbour that the traveller relaxes and gazes towards the White Cliffs of Dover lying across the restless white wake of the ship, that the castle regains its significance. It will feature briefly in the Knott Family story as we meet with the men who guarded Victoria's Empire in the Royal Garrison Artillery.

Dover was a place of history - its position as the nearest port and town to France made it inevitable. English kings came to Dover on their way to their domains in France, when the castle became their palace as their fleet assembled to carry them across the water. The town became accustomed to supplying royalty with their every need and gradually it attracted its own aristocracy

to live on the slopes of the castle's embankments. Some members of the Knott family would find employment in their service.

As always, there is a certain fog over the details of George's departure from the light keeping service he had known since birth. The Trinity House service was strongly influenced by the Royal Navy who regulated a man's life through his birthday. Most important was his 18th birthday when a Boy Seaman became an Ordinary Seaman and his 'time' in the navy counted from that day onwards. The minimum age of Trinity House recruits has never been clear, but we have often noted them aged 19 years old. As a consequence, the 'Entry into Service' (ES) date should be more prominent than it seems to have been. George Knott's birthday was the 23rd November 1890, yet his retirement on the 29th August was not linked to that date. How long he served is difficult to say as an ES date is unknown. George's circumstances were different from many keepers in that he had been born on a lighthouse and his father was a light keeper. It has been said that he would have assisted his father as any boy would have done, but the question remains - when was he entered onto the books of Trinity House? George was 18 years old towards the end of 1846. If he had been an Assistant Keeper at that date then he had served three months short of 44 years, yet at the time of his retirement in 1890 at the age of just 62

he could have served for longer. In his final years in service at Bull Point his health had suffered. His time had now come to retire as a 'Trinity Pensioner' and to forget about the daily responsibility of keeping a light in prime condition.

When they moved from Bull Point lighthouse in North Devon to North Foreland lighthouse in Kent in 1888, Catherine missed the opportunity to be present at her son Herbert Knott's wedding that took place in the year after they had left. In fact they had not been present at very many family weddings in spite of their large family, but then again, weddings were different in those days and were much smaller affairs. This chapter summarizes the main events in the lives of their children and follows their chosen paths during their parents' final years.

Herbert married Dinah Heal in Barnstaple's Baptist Chapel in Boutport Street on the 8th July 1889 and the marriage certificate reveals a lot of extra information. At 23 years old, Herbert was a carpenter living in New Buildings, Barnstaple where his new wife also lived and it was less than 5 minutes walk from the chapel. Dinah was 6-years older than Herbert and her father, John Heal (deceased) had been a boot and shoe maker. However, one of the witnesses at the wedding is very important to the story. It was Rosa Knott who had chosen to remain behind when her parents left for Kent. In July 1889 she had recently passed her 21st birthday (10th May).

Castlemount Road, Dover

George and Catherine retired to 10 Castlemount Road, Dover, and when I first saw the houses in 2005 I was astonished at the modern, semi-detached appearance with side 'front' doors. The 12 houses, all on one side of the road, had good views south westwards across the valley to the Western Heights, with the town nestling at the bottom, whilst behind them lay the Connaught Park and the fortified hilltop of Dover Castle that dominates the approach to the houses from the north. A number of the houses retained their original fret-worked fascia boards and the chimneys gave away the fact that there was a fireplace for each of their four rooms. Imagine my surprise when my investigations revealed that the building of the street had begun in 1870, and by the 1871 census the first six houses had been built and numbers 1 to 11 occupied. The road was then known as 'The Model Cottages on the Castle Hill Estate' and had been built by the Dover Cottage Building & Improvement Society based on a concept by Prince Albert to improve the dwellings



ABOVE: The centre two buildings in the image comprise numbers 7, 8, 9 and 10 Castlemount Road, Dover. Number 11 is on the far right.

of the labouring poor. However, the residents in 1871 looked anything but poor and almost every house had lodgers.

The population of the street in 1891 was exactly one hundred people and represented a broad mixture of quite ordinary occupations. Several residents had been born in St. Margaret's at Cliffe and among them was Ann Friend, the wife of William Friend, George's next door neighbour at No. 11. Their neighbour at No. 9 (the other half of their house) was John Fisher, a coachman and groom with his wife Jane and five children, and John had been born in St. Margaret's in 1853. Then there was a gardener called John Marsh (35) at No. 21 and both he and his wife Mildred had been born in George Knott's village. So, in their search for their retirement abode, George & Catherine might have been helped by any one of these neighbours who might have suggested a vacant house to them.

However, an important neighbour was found in the last house – No. 24. Its occupants on census night were a boatman in HM Customs named Arthur Knott with his wife Dorothy and their two daughters Florence aged 9 and Lilian, a 9-month-old baby. Arthur was the fourth child of George and Catherine and they were delighted to have the opportunity to live close to their two granddaughters, the youngest of whom was only just beginning to sit up. So Castlemount Road became important to the Knott family, yet there was one more piece of life's jig-saw sitting there, patiently waiting to be placed into the family picture and it was to be found at No. 7.



ABOVE: Four of the children of George and Catherine. Left to Right - Herbert Joseph Knott; Rose (Rosa) Ellen Knott; Arthur William Knott of HM Customs; George John Knott (also HM Customs) with his wife Georgina and a son.

When I first discovered the connection with Castlemount Road, the fact that George and Catherine moved from No. 10 to No. 7 seemed of little consequence. People often moved to improve their situation, but it was a different matter after I had seen the road for myself. I was now very puzzled. The two houses were adjacent to one another as well as being identical, so why move? It was also true that No. 7 was always considered to be the Knott Family home and No. 10 didn't seem important.

The resident of No. 7 was William Mannings Horton and his wife Elizabeth. With just the two of them in the house they had no lodgers. William Horton had been born in Ewell in 1818 and he had worked as a blacksmith throughout his residency of No. 7. They had moved into the house when it was new in 1871, but in 1891 he was 73 years old and it was no surprise to find that he died in 1894/2Q aged 76. His wife Elizabeth was much older and had been born in St. Margaret's at Cliffe in 1812, but she lived on as a widow until 1897/2Q when she died aged 85. So No. 7 didn't fall vacant until mid-1897. Why therefore, would George and Catherine move next door after seven years?

It was Elizabeth Horton from St. Margaret's at Cliffe who held the secret. In fact she held two secrets and both of them were her names. The name Edmond Horton Knott had always puzzled me, as the origin of his second name had no

obvious source, yet Catherine felt the need to use this name when Edmond was born. His birth in March 1872 occurred only a few months after the Hortons moved into No. 7, so why was this event so important? Elizabeth's hidden maiden name was the key, as we shall see.

On the 19th November 1862 two not very young people stood before the Rev. Arthur Collett in the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Biggin Street, Dover. They were William Horton and Elizabeth Goldsack who were 45 and 50 respectively. William was a widower, but Elizabeth had never married and she stated that her father was Thomas Goldsack, farmer. But the surprise didn't end there. One of the witnesses to the marriage was Mary Spice and everything fell into place.

Elizabeth Horton was Catherine Knott's eldest sister (b. 1811) and Mary Spice was her second sister (b. 1814). In 1861 Mary Spice was the landlady of the Forester's Arms, a beer house on the Worthington Lane, the address that Elizabeth gave on her marriage certificate, although she was not there at the time of the 1861 census.

So, Castlemount Road, Dover became the centre of the Knott universe to which all Knott travellers came and went, but there was a satellite in North Devon that would for two Knott brothers become the centre of their world and we, Ken and I, are two small asteroids who have been set adrift.



Above: Four more children of George and Catherine Knott. Left to right - Frederick Warner Knott (great-grandfather of the authors); Ann Dixon Knott; Walter Goldsack Knott; Mary Jane (Polly) Knott.

A New Equilibrium

As I continue to summarize the dispersal of the family during the retirement years it becomes quite complex, as not all of their children were married. Henry Thomas Knott, the only light keeper in the family in 1891, had lost his wife in 1886 and as a widower he had arrived at St. Ann's Head in Pembrokeshire with his children without any means of looking after them. This was solved by asking his enigmatic and unmarried sister Ann Dixon Knott to join him as his housekeeper, but this was not a permanent solution.

George John Knott and Georgiana were living in Radford Road, West Hoe, Plymouth with two children the youngest of whom, Olive, showed that they had been in the area since 1889. George described himself as a Commissioned Boatman which suggests that he was in the coastguard, but all other available censuses state that he was a Customs Officer. His address was only a short walk from the main entrance into the Millbay Docks and the pier where the Great Western Railway disembarked the trans-Atlantic passengers. Their first tender named *Sir Richard Grenville* was new in 1891.

As we have seen, Arthur William Knott and Dorothy were in 24 Castlemount Road with Florence and Lilian who was just 9 months old. Arthur was in the Customs Service like his older brother, but in a lower rank as a boatman. No doubt his duties took him into the docks at Dover for the cross-Channel ferries had to be checked.

Frederick Warner Knott and Helen (or Helena as she preferred at this period) were settled into their shop in Caen Street, Braunton, North Devon where Fred was a watchmaker, but he could not live on

that alone so he always had more strings to his bow including that of a newsagent for local newspapers. Their two boys, Frederick and George, were still at school and they had a lodger who was a young man, 18 years-old, working as a pupil school teacher.

Ann Dixon Knott who has already been mentioned with her brother Henry and Mary Jane will feature more prominently in a moment.

Herbert Joseph Knott and Dinah were also in North Devon, but they had been married for less than two years so nothing had changed except their address which was now 10 Bicton Street, Barnstaple.

Rosa Ellen Knott was 22 years old and was one of two general domestic servants in the household of a man describing himself as a 'house furnisher.' James Rowe and his wife Edith lived at 44 Prospect Court, St. James, Exeter and they had four young children, three of them daughters under 4 years old. Rosa's proximity to Barnstaple helps to explain her presence at the marriage of Herbert and Dinah, but she had chosen to remain behind when her parents left Devon for Kent.

Walter Goldsack Knott was in the Royal Navy and on that 1891 census night he was on board the *Hotspur*, a unique and obsolete ship classified as a coastal defence monitor that acted as the coastguard drill ship for the South Eastern Region based in Harwich. Walter had been promoted to Able Seaman on board in September 1890 and he would stay with the ship until the 8th May 1893.

Edmond Horton Knott was only 19 and his whereabouts have never been found. He did not join the Royal Navy as Walter had done and there is no evidence of any time in the merchant marine service.

Florence Matilda Knott was just 16 in 1891 and, as



ABOVE: Robert (Bob) Pilgrim and his wife, Mary Jane (Polly) photographed on St. Helena, around 1900.

the youngest in the family, was still at home with her parents in Castlemount Road. She would later marry John Clark in Dover in 1904 and have eight children of her own.

In concluding this heading, it is clear that there was a distinct difference in attitude to marriage by the Knott girls, who seemed, initially at least, to avoid the matrimonial stakes. The family had been six girls, but two - Ann and Matilda - had been lost and the four remaining girls, Ann Dixon, Rose Ellen, Mary Jane and Florence Matilda were all unmarried in 1891. Three of them were attracted to become cooks in households that some would call 'upper class' and all but Rose would eventually marry.

A Game of Domestic Chess

I have encountered many situations, even during my lifetime, when children have remained unmarried because they felt a duty towards their parents which became ever more acute in their twilight years. In large families it often befell the youngest child to 'look after Mum and Dad,' especially if that youngest was a girl. With four unmarried girls, there was ample scope for much

'manoeuvring,' but this story begins in 1891 with Mary Jane, always known in the family as 'Polly.'

Polly's last known location was in Wrafton Lane, Braunton in 1881 where she was a domestic servant in a small private school for girls. Where she went during those next ten years is unknown, except for the family story concerning her presence in East London sometime around 1886. She probably arrived in Dover in 1889 to join her parents in their retirement, but that is by no means certain. The census states that she was a 'cook,' which normally meant working for the household in which she lived. Catherine had always been the family cook and it has to be remembered that the census took place on a Sunday, the day servants were allowed to have to themselves, so Polly was not on duty.

Meanwhile on Monday 10th August 1891, a young man left his home in Ainsworth Street, Cambridge and travelled to the Norfolk coast at Great Yarmouth. He was 18 year-old William Robert Pilgrim and his destination was the No. 4 Depot of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) where he signed to serve for seven years under the colours. This simple, innocent action would ultimately lead him to Dover and into the Knott Family, but not just yet. It was Wednesday 12th October 1892 when 9 Company RGA was posted to Dover Castle and sometime between that date and September 1894, when he was with 20 Company RGA at Sheerness, William Pilgrim met, courted and proposed to Mary Jane Knott.

1894 was also the year when the elusive Ann Dixon Knott appeared in Dover and married in controversial circumstances that had probably been influenced by the situation she had recently left. When Sarah May agreed to marry Henry Thomas Knott at the end of 1891, she agreed to Henry's request to act only as his housekeeper and not his wife. As a consequence Henry's sister Ann Dixon found herself redundant after her brother's peculiar arrangement.

What she did and where she lived when she reached Dover is unknown, but by the late spring of 1894 she had met and agreed to marry Charles Smith, who was nearly twice her age and not a local man. Charles was a baker turned farmer whose home was in Cranbrook in rural Kent, forty miles to the west of Dover. In 1891 his household in that village included two adult daughters one of whom was acting as his housekeeper. Esther Alice Smith was 26 years old and the inevitable happened within the next three months - she married John Tribe in her Parish Church of St. Dunstan's on the 31st August



ABOVE: A postcard sent to the Castlemount address from Polly to 'M & A.' The first is mother, Catherine, now a widow. The second is probably Anna Maria (Annie) Knott, the unmarried sister of Henry Needham Knox Knott now the Dover Police Superintendent (see p341-2). The card is posted from Edmond's address in Watford in December 1907 and reports: "We have arrived safely at Edmond's and found them all well. It is pouring with rain here. I expect we shall be here a week."

1891. This left her elderly father without support around the house. It has already been shown at South Foreland that it was quite commonplace to insert a 'Situation Vacant' advertisement in a local newspaper and Ann Knott may have responded to just such an advert. How that led to marriage I will leave to my reader's imagination.

They married in 1894 when Charles Smith was 66 years old and Ann Knott was 33. The newly-weds seemed to return to Cranbrook without delay as there was no apparent reason to remain in Dover. Charles's home was at the bottom of The Hill (its literal address) on which the famous Cranbrook Union Windmill stood just a few doors away and it was not long before their first child was expected. Sydney Smith was born early in 1895/1Q and he was followed by four more children – Victor 1896/3Q, Reginald 1898/2Q, Frank 1899/3Q and Olive, their only daughter was born in 1902/2Q when Charles was an extraordinary 74 years of age. Unfortunately the Baptism Register for the local church, is not available to indicate how the family perceived each birth.

In December 1895 Walter Goldsack Knott returned home to Dover after having been invalided out of the Royal Navy at Chatham. This unexpected change of fortune probably upset his anticipated long service career. Instead he was unemployed and had to set about finding himself a job, but was there a room for him in the house at Castlemount Road? Mary Jane and Florence may have still been there, but there was always room for a returning prodigal son.

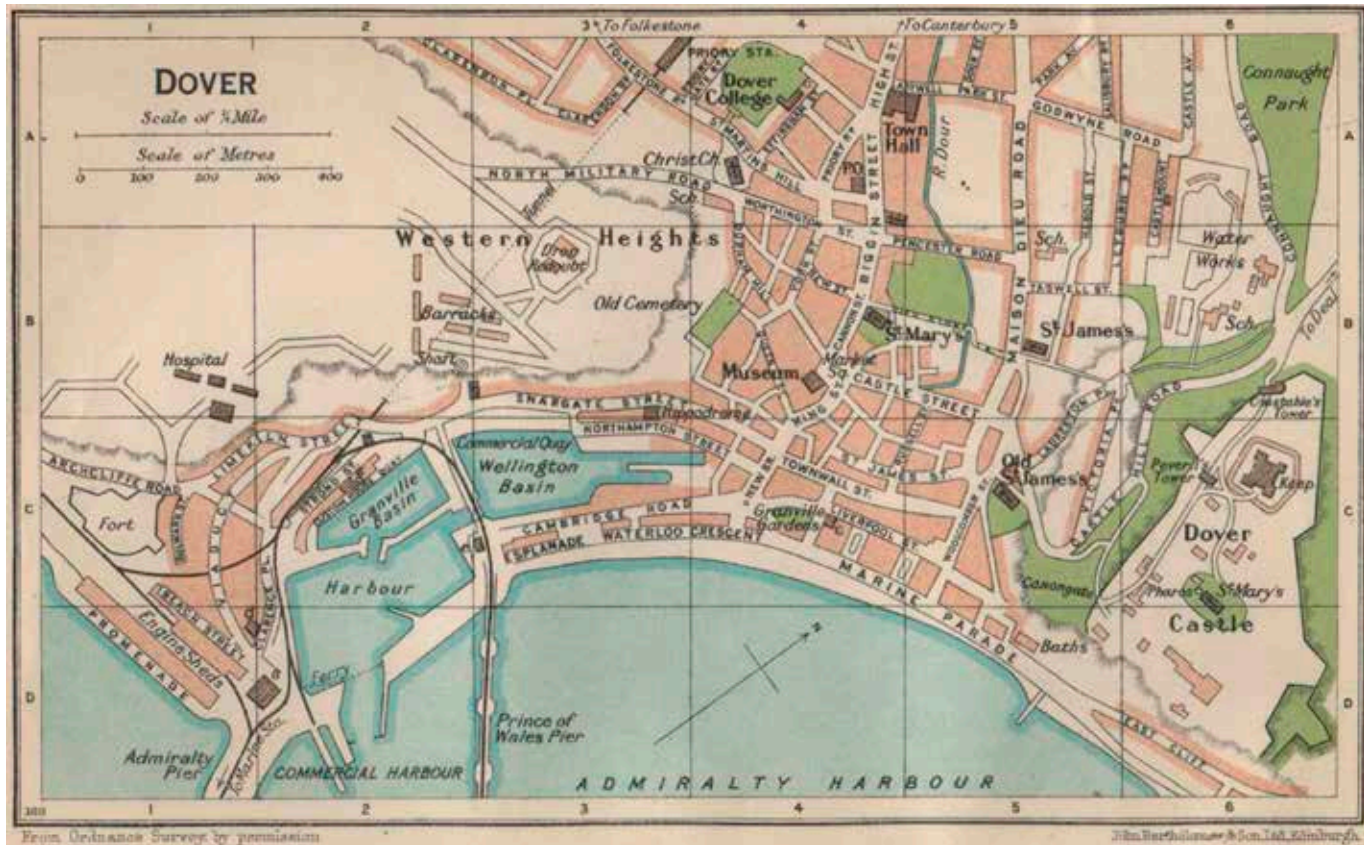
Mary Jane was eleven years older than Florence

and she had already spent some years in domestic service as a cook, but was she essential in the Knott household? In December 1895 Florence was approaching her 21st birthday and may have found a similar position in a local household. Servants in those days were expected to 'live-in' as their hours were long and their employers were very demanding, so it is possible that neither of them was living in Castlemount Road when Walter returned home in need of board and lodging. There could have been an empty room waiting for him.

A Turning Point

Occasionally there are moments in everyone's life that can be viewed as a watershed, when something changes and life is never quite the same again. The year 1897 may have been one of those 'moments' for George and Catherine Knott, and it all began in the summer. Three things happened within weeks of one another, but it is not yet known which of the events preceded the other. One event was the family move from No. 10 to No. 7 following the death of the widowed Elizabeth Horton in the early summer, but the reason for the move remains a puzzle as the houses were rented and ownership was not involved.

The next event took place on Tuesday 3rd August 1897 when the marriage of Mary Jane to William Robert Pilgrim, a Master Tailor in the Royal Artillery, was conducted at the Wesleyan Chapel in Snargate Street, Dover. William had travelled down to Dover from his posting at the Tower of London, whilst 'Polly' inevitably gave her home address as 7 Castlemount Road, but their respective ages stand



ABOVE: This old map of Dover shows the proximity of Castlemount Road to Victoria Park; also the location of the Wellington Basin alongside of which was Commercial Quay and Snargate Street where we believe the Pentside Chapel was situated.

out on their marriage certificate. Like her sister Annie, she was 33, but her husband, unlike Annie's, was only 23. The ceremony was conducted by the Minister Joseph Boulton and witnessed by George Knott, Rosa and Florence, but this marriage would inevitably separate Mary Jane from her family.

On the 12th December 1899, the General Officer Commanding the Home Division authorized her inclusion on the 'married establishment' register. This effectively gave her permission to live with her husband wherever he happened to be and that the Army would be responsible for maintaining her. She might even have had a place inside Dover Castle until early 1900 when her life drastically changed. She left Dover to go overseas - St. Helena it was later discovered - and no one knew when they might see her again.

'Polly' never had a family of her own and there may have been a natural cause for that, but she has always left me with the impression that she would have preferred to have been a boy. Her involvement with the Royal Artillery Company was as good as it was ever likely to get and the next ten years would test any woman of spirit.

The third event that occurred in Dover on the 6th September 1897 did not appear to affect the Knotts directly, but the opening of the new tramline

from Buckland Bridge to the Harbour by the Dover Corporation Tramways with four tram cars enabled Walter to find a steady job on the system as an electrical fitter's labourer (1901) at the tram depot in Manor Road and I will return to Walter in a moment.

Another Case of Who You Know?

The 12-roomed house at No. 3 Victoria Park was the residence of a retired Major General in the Royal Garrison Artillery, Campbell Hardy, who had been retired for over 20 years. He had lived at No. 3 since before 1891, when his cook at that census was Margarete McEvoy from Newry in Ireland. It is interesting, therefore, to ponder upon the possibilities that led to Florence Knott gaining an appointment as cook to that very same household. Did Mary Jane have a hand in it as a domestic cook herself, or did William Pilgrim get to hear of the vacancy on the regimental grapevine and pass the word to his senior officer that he knew of a reliable cook? Florence probably remained there until her marriage in 1904 and the Major-General probably continued to live at No. 3 until his death in 1919 at the age of 87.

At 25 years old, Florence was the senior domestic servant, higher in rank than the two housemaids, but there were nine people in the family to cook for

and only one of them was a child, grand-daughter Evelyn. Victoria Park was an unusual street. It was a long terrace of 26 houses that faced the wooded hill on which Dover Castle stood. There was little room for carriages and no stabling for their horses, yet their large gardens faced the harbour. The houses were often five floors high with attics and below stairs and occupied by most of Dover's upper class and the street was only a short walk from Castlemount Road.

However, there was another way that Florence could have heard of the vacancy at No. 3 and that was through a lady named Emma Holmes. She was working at the other end of Victoria Park at No. 23. At 31 years old she was a nurse/domestic in the household of a retired Master Mariner, but there were only three adults and a child in the house. Emma's position together with that of a sick nurse infers that someone in the household was not well. Emma's cook, Ellen Mitchell had the oversight of a housemaid and a parlour maid and Ellen may have been the source of the information that No. 3 was in need of a cook.

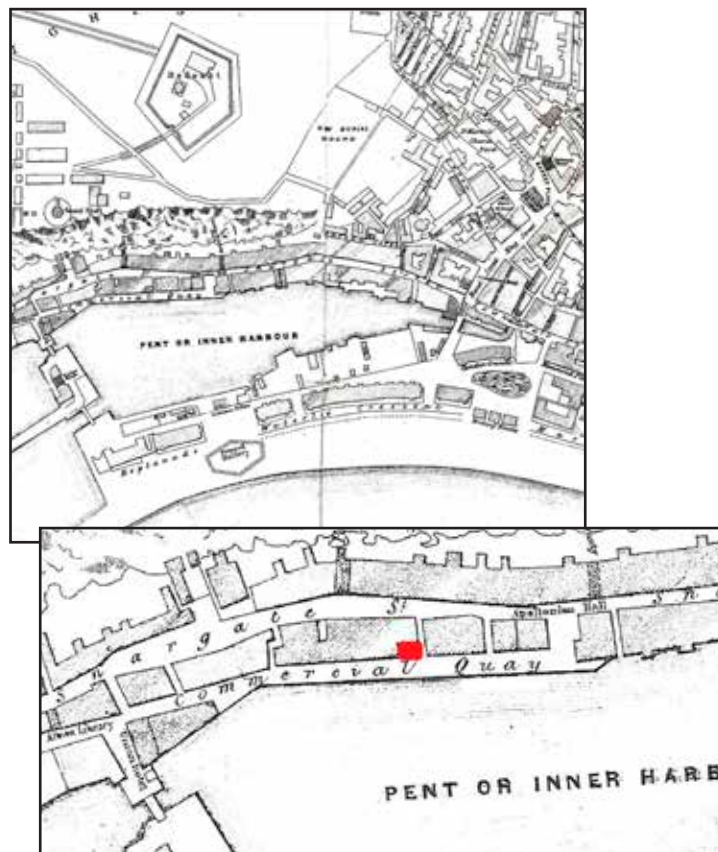
This scenario is entirely conjecture, but if it took place towards the end of the 1890s, Emma may have been already courting Walter Knott and passed the information to him for the benefit of Florence. Stranger things have happened.

The Pentside Chapel

On Thursday 19th July 1849, the two families of Knott and Goldsack had gathered in the parish church of St. Margaret's at Cliffe near Dover to celebrate the marriage of George Knott to Catherine Goldsack. Fifty years later they had eighteen grandchildren. It was now their Golden Wedding, an event recognized in at least two press reports:

*"On Wednesday evening (19 July) Mr. & Mrs. G. Knott of Castlemount Cottages celebrated their Golden Wedding by inviting the members of Pentside Baptist Chapel to tea in the schoolroom, Mr. Knott being a deacon of that place of worship. The Rev. Mr. Dale, the pastor, on behalf of the congregation, presented to Mr. Knott a timepiece in the form of a lighthouse (Mr. Knott having been formerly a lighthouse keeper) and the lady members presented Mrs. Knott with a brooch. A very pleasant evening was spent."*¹

"It may be interesting to those in the neighbourhood to know that Mr. Knott was the principal keeper at



ABOVE: An old map of the Pent or Inner Harbour with an enlargement inset below and the supposed site of the Pentside Chapel highlighted in red.

*Bull Point Lighthouse for many years before leaving for the North Foreland in Kent. He is now residing in Dover after spending forty-three years in the lighthouse service."*²

It did seem to be an odd name for a chapel and I took little notice of it at first. It was only when I set out to find its location that its name became clear – Pent Side – beside the Pent, but what was the Pent? It was the local word for a harbour. It was Dover's first harbour and it explained many of the newspaper reports I had been reading from the 1890s. Reports of policemen being called to altercations between soldiers and seamen near the Pentside Chapel, or some incident with a fishing smack moored opposite the Pentside Chapel. In 1896 the Town Lighting Committee was petitioned by the traders in Snargate Street for a lamp at the top of the passage leading to the Pentside Chapel (which was granted), but the impression I gained was that it was not in a place one would expect to find a chapel populated by genteel Victorian ladies.

The first warehouse beside the Pent can be dated from 1814 and the impression given by local historians is that warehouses gradually spread

1 *Dover Express* Friday July 21st 1899.

2 *North Devon Journal* on Thursday 3rd August 1899.



ABOVE: An old postcard of the Inner Harbour Wellington Basin, alongside which was the Pentside Chapel on Commercial Quay. Northampton Street also ran close by, out of view in the immediate foreground, and was known by locals as “up the Pent.”

along the harbour side, yet the Pentside Chapel and its congregation was founded in 1823. The congregation were known as Particular Baptists and they celebrated their 77th anniversary on Wednesday 24th October 1900 with a special service and an anniversary tea and George and Catherine must have been there for that occasion. So what kind of building was it? There is no answer to that, beyond the fact that it was not a converted warehouse, but at least I now know where it was. When the harbour was enlarged in 1844 and opened by the Duke of Wellington in 1846, it was renamed Wellington Dock and the road that ran along its north side was named Commercial Quay. The warehouses fronting the quay had Snargate Street running behind them and little alleys connected the two at intervals. It was a strange place for a chapel and as a consequence it wasn't the largest Baptist congregation in the town. That accolade belonged to the Salem Chapel, but the Pentside was the oldest and it was a long walk from Castlemount Road.

Every Friday during the 1890s, the *Dover Express* carried a column under the heading ‘Coming Events’ and every week the Pentside Chapel entered the

name of the preacher for both of their services on the coming Sunday. The names were rarely the same and often from London. This suggests that from 1891 they did not have a regular Minister. Unlike the Anglicans and the Methodists, the Baptists did not belong to a national structure and each chapel was responsible for its own activities which were managed by a small group of ‘deacons.’ A modern leaflet states:

“Deacons shall, with the Minister(s) (if any), be responsible for the leadership of the church, the fulfillment of its purpose, the pastoral care of its members and its day-to-day management and administration”

For a chapel to have its own Minister required a congregation of sufficient numbers and affluence to provide his salary and his accommodation. It is also true that the congregation made their own rules and as a consequence they decided how many deacons there should be and who they were and whether the positions were permanent or for fixed periods.

On the 30th September 1892 the chapel announced that Mr. Palmer of London and late of Ruston had accepted a unanimous invitation

to preach for three months beginning on the 2nd October with a view to a pastorate, which seems to have occurred.

At the beginning of 1893 the *Dover Express* received a very poignant letter from a Mr. George Bennett seeking to establish a Benevolent Fund to aid the family of the late Alfred Wilson. He was an engine driver for the South Eastern Railway and on the 30th January 1893 he had been crushed to death between wagon buffers at the SER Dover Station. He had left a widow and five children and Mr. Bennett was hoping to alleviate their distress. There then followed a long list of named subscribers and among the names of those who contributed 2 shillings were George Knott and E. Knott. There was only one suitable George Knott in Dover at that time but who was E. Knott? If it was Edmond where had he been and what had he been doing as he has not yet joined the Trinity House service.

On Wednesday 1st March 1893 a 'tea meeting' was held in the Pentside Chapel Schoolroom to publicly welcome their new Pastor the Rev. E. Palmer (sic). After tea an interesting meeting took place with the Pastor in the chair. The meeting was addressed by Mr G. Knott, Mr. Scott Senior and Mr. T. Knott and also by the Pastor. The addresses were given every attention and the gathered friends learned that the chapel had been recently fitted with a warming apparatus at great expense.

Attention is immediately drawn to Mr. T. Knott and as the newspaper had other errors in the initials of the Pastor, one wonders whether this was actually Mr. E. Knott above and that might mean Edmond was involved. It is also irrefutable evidence that George was a leading member of the congregation and perfectly able to address an assembled company.

In July 1894 the *Dover Express* carried a rare in-depth appraisal of the Rev. W. E. Palmer's preaching style. It was one of several that assessed the 'New Dover Preachers' but at the same time gave an insight into the chapel itself. The correspondent wrote:

"How really restful are the old world associations of the Pentside Chapel. Here neither the sound of the pipe, cornet, flute nor any other form of music is heard save the sound of the human voice led by the clear tones of the aged precentor occupying the central pew. Pentside is one of those places of worship where the much elevated pulpit, places the pastor and the people a great distance apart. But the preacher's altitude obviously enables him to

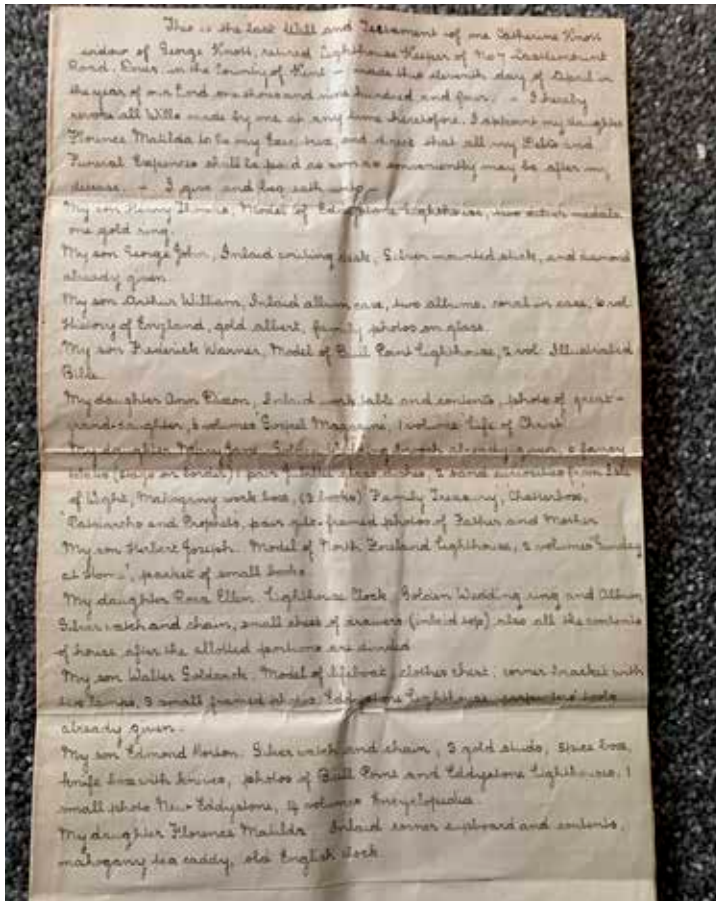
command equally the galleries and the floor. The Rev. Palmer does not in any way set himself at a distance from the people whom he addresses. His style is homely and earnest and his face fatherly and genial conveying the impression of an ideal Christian Minister. It is seldom that one finds a Non-conformist pastor who is not endowed with natural eloquence and Mr. Palmer is certainly a born orator."

The article continued to explain the easily identifiable technique that remains valid today and it drew my wife and I to regularly visit All Souls, Langham Place in central London to hear another Rev. Palmer – Hugh Palmer, its Rector – preach in exactly the same style. The use of this technique is rare and is an indictment of all those given to public speaking who are convinced that they are good speakers, when nothing is farther from the truth.

On Sunday 25th November 1894 the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Snargate Street was very full, but this was not unusual as the services were bright and unconventional. The theme for the Sunday was 'Temperance' a theme that was very much in the Wesleyan tradition. The minister preached in forceful terms of the social and moral injury caused by the drinking customs in the country, and after the service Mr. Atkins and Sergeant Knott gave addresses and took fifteen pledges. Sergeant Knott was Henry Needham Knox Knott and George's half-brother who also harboured a realistic faith and coincidentally, on this day, they were just a short walk apart in different chapels.

The week following this service a letter appeared in the *Dover Express* signed by every practising minister of religion in the town. In some ways it was an unusual declaration of unity, but all fifteen ministers were agreed on one thing – the abuse of Sundays for profit. They highlighted the opening of the pier for payment; the use of excursion brakes also called waggonettes and the sale of goods in shops. Their appeal was a simple one. These practices were contrary to the principle of Christian observance of the Lord's Day and they called upon every like-minded citizen to use their influence to prevent its encroachment. One of those fifteen signatories was the Rev. W. E. Palmer, Minister of the Pentside Chapel.

These brief insights into the life of George and Catherine can only give a glimpse of the days and evenings spent in a myriad of different ways and meeting many people in both a religious and social context. It is noticeable, too, that any reference to



ABOVE: The first page of the Last Will & Testament of Catherine Knott.

the chapel's activities mentions only the name of the minister or preacher. As a consequence it must be a measure of George and Catherine's status in the chapel that they are the only members named in the decade of the 1890s. As a deacon George was important, but we don't know how long he had served or how many deacons there were. No doubt this information could be found.

When Catherine Knott wrote out her Last Will & Testament in 1910 she left books on religious topics to three of her children. Frederick Warner Knott was given an Illustrated Bible in two volumes. Ann Dixon (Smith) received the *Gospel Magazine* in six volumes and a book entitled *The Life of Christ - A Continuous Narrative*. I am certain that I have a copy of this book by the Rev. A. E. Hillard that was published in 1894 and I was attracted to it for the same reason George & Catherine bought it for 2/6d. It is clear and straightforward and unusual in its day for not being theological, but historical. And finally Mary Jane (Pilgrim) was allocated a book entitled *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Perhaps it was a childhood favourite.

When Mary Jane and her husband left Dover early in 1900, their destination was St. Helena in the South Atlantic - miles from anywhere. There was a

garrison of the RGA on the island to which William had been posted, but there was another reason for a significant presence of Her Majesty's armed forces and that was to guard Boer prisoners taken during the many clashes with our own forces and inevitably these included some high ranking officers. William's arrival was timed to coincide with the first large batch of prisoners to arrive there and this was what Polly enjoyed. She was one of the lads and few people would be able to say that they had lived on St. Helena.

Fortunately for us she sent a photograph taken by Jamestown's only photographer with his name and address emblazoned upon it - A. L. Innes, St. Helena. But in retrospect, the fact that this photograph reached an album belonging to the Knott Family (possibly Frederick Warner Knott) must mean that someone in the family knew where she was.

From Beat to Banquet - a Knott Forgotten

It came as a total surprise to me to discover that one of our family was not only a man who watched over the citizens of Dover as a constable, but made his way up the promotion ladder to reach the top rung and become the man in charge of those who safe-guarded the town's citizens. His name was Henry Needham Knox Knott (b. 1848) and, as the son of Henry Knott and his second wife, Margaret neé Arnold, he had been born at the South Foreland Low Light.

In 1871 Henry Knott (23) was a painter and glazier living at 15 Wood Street, Charlton in Dover. He had married Jane Maria Collard and within the year a son was born and baptised Henry Needham. In 1872 Henry and Jane emigrated to Toronto in Canada where they stayed for about four years and had more children, but, for whatever reason, returned to Dover around 1876. Henry joined the Dover Police Force as a Police Constable on the 29th November 1877.

On the 10th February 1893 it was reported that Constable Knott had been promoted to the rank of Sergeant. His name appeared in the *Dover Express* two or three times in each of the three years from 1894 to 1896 as he seems to have been performing the role of Station Sergeant. He clearly impressed his superiors for promotion to Inspector came on the 25th August 1896 and five years later on 28th March 1901 Inspector Knott was promoted to Superintendent, the pinnacle of Dover police work reached in 24 years of persistent, professional duty.

The Queen is Dead – Long Live the King

In 1897, Victoria had written instructions for her funeral, which was to be military as befitting a soldier's daughter and the head of the army and white instead of black.

It was just twenty two days into the second year of the 20th Century. It was the 22nd January 1901 and Great Britain had new monarch. It was something that most people had never thought possible. Victoria had reigned for almost 64 years so a British citizen would be 70 years old before he could say that he remembered the old King William IV and George and Catherine Knott were two of those people. This is how the event was described in Wikipedia.

On 25 January, Edward, Wilhelm, and her third son, Arthur, helped lift her body into the coffin and she was dressed in a white dress and her wedding veil. An array of mementos commemorating her extended family, friends and servants were laid in the coffin with her, at her request, by her doctor and dressers. One of Albert's dressing gowns was placed by her side, with a plaster cast of his hand, while a lock of John Brown's hair, along with a picture of him, was placed in her left hand concealed from the view of the family by a carefully positioned bunch of flowers. Items of jewellery placed on Victoria included the wedding ring of John Brown's mother, given to her by Brown in 1883.

On Sunday 27th January 1901 every parish church and chapel in the land was sombre, its music restrained, its preaching devoid of anything but sorrow. At the Pentside Chapel, Mr. E.C. Monk from Tenterden made touching references to the late Queen and expressed his sympathy to the King and the Royal Family.

Her funeral was held on Saturday 2 February, in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and after two days of lying-in-state, she was interred beside Prince Albert in the Royal Mausoleum, Frogmore, at Windsor Great Park

Life in Dover Carries On

The census for 1901 was conducted over the weekend of the 30th/31st March as it had been 50 years earlier. The Enumerator's visit to Castlemount Road found No.7 very empty. Only Walter was at home with his parents, but he now had a job as an electrician's labourer at the new tram depot in Manor Road in Maxton, Dover.

Rosa was living under someone else's roof at No. 6 East Cliff. She was cook to Robert Naswell, a retired solicitor and his family of five to which must be added their housemaid Marion Pay, who also expected to be fed. Although there are some similarities to Victoria Park, it is a bizarre location. It is a dingy, narrow street facing the white cliffs which now cannot be seen for trees. It is back to back with Marine Parade and as a consequence seems to have little or no garden. The house seems to retain a single Georgian drop-light sash window on each of three floors with an additional floor below stairs which would have contained Rosa's kitchen.

Emma Holmes' household at No.23 Victoria Park was an entirely different arrangement as has already been written, but as she was courting Walter Knott in that year, none of the three locations were very far from each other, with Rosa being the farthest away from Castlemount Road in East Cliff.

Florence has also been described under an earlier heading, but although she was working hard in her kitchen preparing meals for twelve people, including herself, she seems to have been doing it without any designated kitchen helpers. The hierarchy of domestic service was quite inflexible and a housemaid would not normally expect to be told to do kitchen chores. Scrubbing pots and pans was the chore of a scullery maid, so without one, whose job was it? There can be little doubt that Florence was very hard working, but I am sure that she had her mind set on marriage. After all, she was 25 years old and the years were slipping away, but she had someone in mind. Her intended husband was no stranger to her. They had grown up together in Castlemount Road and his name was John Hamilton Clark. He was already at No. 14 with his family when Florence arrived there in 1888. He was a little younger than Florence, but in 1901 he was working with his younger brother George as a time-served sailmaker somewhere in Dover. However, marriage was not on the immediate horizon as she and John saved for their future together.

George and Catherine's grandchildren had increased by three since their Golden Wedding, as they continued to arrive occasionally and slowly increasing their number. It was true that 21 had been born up to and including 1901, but several had died. Yet 1901 would be the year in which they celebrated the arrival of their first Great Grandchild and George, for one, was smitten.

Hilda Elizabeth Grace Ballyn (known to us as Cousin Betty) was baptised to William Ballyn and Catherine Goldsack (née Knott) on the 10th July 1901

at St. Seiriol's Church in Holyhead. She was the first grandchild of Henry Thomas Knott as Catherine was his first child born in 1878. Her appearance on the Knott stage inspired George to get his craftsman's tools out once again and possibly for the last time, as he designed and lovingly made a spice box especially for her.

Fortunately that spice box survives to this day and consequently we can see the similarities between it and his wonderful model of Smeaton's Eddystone. He still remembered his old technique and when it was ready to be given as a present, he made an inscription inside that reads – 'Made by George Knott, aged 74, and presented to his first great-grandchild, for her birthday, 1903.'

It was also in 1901 that one member of the family found his plans for the future suddenly torn up, as Edmond was dismissed from the Trinity Lighthouse Service for falling asleep on duty at the South Foreland Low Light. That fateful day was the 5th July 1901 and Edmond was in need of lodging for his family and he eventually found one at Rose Dale Cottages in the Manor Road at Maxton, adjacent to the tram shed of the Dover Tramways. It was right alongside Walter's place of work and as these two brothers grew up together, sharing life's challenges as boys, there may have been times when that filial relationship re-emerged and this was one of those times. No doubt there were discussions concerning the best way to tell mother and father about Edmond's predicament. I am sure he dreaded it, but with Walter living with them it may have made its resolution a little easier.

The proximity of Rose Dale Cottages to Walter's work cannot be ignored, but evidence of Edmond's residence does not emerge until 12 months after Walter's marriage to Emma Holmes and that did not occur until the last day of the year. New Year's Eve 1901 was a Tuesday. That was the day that Walter took Emma for his wife at the Charlton Parish Church and both of them gave their home address as 7 Castlemount Road. This was very likely due to the fact that women in service were rarely married and Emma's impending marriage had rendered her unemployed and consequently she had found temporary lodging with Walter. With only one spare bedroom, the scene at No. 7 was never static as a steady stream of family members always seemed to be in need of a room. Whether or not Edmond was already using Rose Dale Cottages as a home cannot be said, but I would not be surprised. He certainly dared not show his face in Castlemount Road.

Two events dominated the national and local

news in 1902. The first was the cessation of hostilities against the Boers on the 31st May 1902 and the second was a children's muster in Dover on Wednesday 23rd July 1902 in which it was estimated that 9000 children took part.

The Coronation of Edward VII took place on Thursday 26th June, but it was a month later before Dover Town Council embarked upon its official celebrations beginning on Saturday 19th July with lunch for the older residents of the town. The report began by saying that 'never since the Town Hall was built has so large a number feasted there.' 900 citizens sat down to lunch in the Connaught Hall and the Maison Dieu Hall and it was said that they were supposed to be over 60, but many of them had seen 20 years more than that and begs the question – were George and Catherine there? Many of the towns 'guests' were brought by tram likened to an Arabian carpet, but the lunch, which was due to begin at 1 o'clock, was somewhat delayed by the press of numbers.

The next event was aimed at the young members of the town in the form of a Children's Festival and there were ten times more children than there were 'old folk.' Three of the six columns on Page 2 of the *Dover Express* were filled with description that can only be described as 'over the top.' The children assembled at Pencester Road, the location of the Jubilee celebrations in 1887 and from there they were to be marched, military style, to Northfall Meadow behind Dover Castle. However, skies to the north-west were black and threatening a thunderstorm and the parade hesitated. That was not a good moment, but it was decided to continue and in the words of the reporter, 'the children's army was on the march,' but this part of the ceremony was merely the assembly in front of the town's dignitaries.

At this point Police Superintendent Knott with two mounted sergeants directed a large body of policemen and servicemen to keep the crowd within limits, as the street filled to capacity. Only when the bands and the singing and the brief speeches were over did the march begin with every Sunday School led by a banner. It took forty minutes to clear the street and as the last of an estimated 9000 marchers turned into Biggin Street, the head of the procession was nearing the top of Castle Hill.

It was 2.30 when the Mayor, leading the procession, entered the gate of Northfall Meadow and as each school took up its place by its marker every child was given a bun. Inevitably it was well past 3 o'clock before every school had found its

marker, but as each did so the children were free to roam whilst the skies continued to threaten an imminent downpour which never quite materialised. The field was full of entertainments from a circus to gymnasts, Punch & Judy and a steam driven merry-go-round.

It was 5 o'clock when the children were brought back to their marker flags by a blast on the town's ancient trumpet which announced that tea was about to be served after which there was yet another circus performance. By this time it was 7.30 in the evening and the intention then was to give every child a commemorative medal and a book, but the process was so slow that it eventually became too dark for the distributors to see what they were doing and it had to be abandoned. Pentside School was among those who did not receive their gifts.

The article concludes by revealing the numbers in each school and Pentside assembled 135 pupils, but the very last sentence reads like this;

It should here be stated that the police arrangements were excellent. Every man did his duty well and Superintendent Knott personally exerted himself, being in the saddle all day and to his good judgement much of the success of the day was due.

Although it was not true in every case, a number of Sunday School contingents were led by their minister, but the Pentside School was led by Mr. J. B. Green and this brings me to an announcement in the *Dover Express* that the Pentside Chapel conducted a 'Service of Recognition' on Wednesday 1st October 1902 when their new Pastor D. Witton began his ministry. David Witton was 57 years old and he had brought his wife Eliza and daughter Edith to Dover from Aylesbury where they had been living at No. 3 Victoria Place, next to the cemetery. On this occasion George Knott did not take a leading role in the tea-meeting that followed the service, but it also highlights the possibility that their ministers were rarely permanent. The only reference to the 'Rev. Mr. Dale' that has been found, was his presence at George & Catherine's presentation in 1899.

However, new ministers are frequently 'new brooms' and become catalysts for change and the Pentside Chapel members were about to face their greatest challenge and I cannot help but wonder whether that challenge played a part in George Knott's demise.

It was the 27th March 1903 when news reached the *Dover Express* that a circular had been published by the chapel members which read;

"For some time past it has been felt by the church meeting at Pentside that situation of the Chapel at Commercial Quay was no longer a desirable one for a place of worship. The population of the district has very largely moved up town and the neighbourhood of the quay is more entirely being given over to stores and warehouses. The ground landlord having now given permission to sell the building, an effort is being made to do so and it is proposed to either erect a new Chapel or to purchase the one hitherto used by the Congregationalists and now on the market. The amount required in addition to that raised by the sale of Pentside would be about £1000 and towards this the church and congregation have themselves raised about £300."

The announcement of a subscription list added the names of six men to whom donations could be given, but George Knott's name was not one of them.

The Light Has Gone Out

It was only twenty seven days into the fourth year of the new century when George Knott put his religious faith to the test and went to meet his Lord. Unlike Queen Victoria's passing we are not told what time of day on that Wednesday that his spirit left his earth-worn body, but Catherine was there at his side. I would have expected nothing less and I have no doubt that she was holding his hand.

Thirteen children born over twenty four years were the living embodiment of an affectionate relationship. Catherine's loss was a bitter blow and although she would never be alone, she had lost something immeasurable – her husband. They had been close, as man and wife, for 54 years. They had shared life's joys and sorrows together. It had been a good life and they had wanted for nothing and their long retirement was something not given to many couples.

On the afternoon of George's death, his half brother and Chief Constable of Dover H.N.K. Knott attended St. James's Cemetery on Copt Hill for the burial of Mr Frederick Hicks, the Town's well-known Hackney Carriage proprietor who had driven the King as Prince of Wales when he had visited the Town to lay the foundation stone of the Prince of Wales' Pier. It was a busy afternoon for the vicar as he also had to attend the AGM of Dover's Royal Victoria Hospital along with the Town's Registrar Mr. H.G. Pain and George's doctor Charles Wood who were both present at the meeting.

Catherine walked down to Henry Pain's office on the following day and whilst she was there she put a 'Death Announcement' in the *Dover Express* which was published the next day – Friday 29th January 1904. Unlike Frederick Hicks and many more of George's townsmen, there was no description of his funeral, but George would lie in the front room with the curtains drawn as the family visited to say their last – goodbyes.

Dr. Wood decided that George had died from heart disease. No one questioned that diagnosis, but on what was it based? Had George been ill, or had he succumbed to a sudden heart attack. It was not uncommon among light keepers, but could it be said that this was an occupational disease? I doubt it.

When George Knott died, the house at No.7 Castlemount Road seemed devoid of any pleasure. It was not empty, as Rosa was there, but there seemed little point to life anymore without George at the heart of it. Yet, there was a point to life, as others thought of marriage and there was one person in the Knott Family with that on her mind and that was Florence. She was the last and she wanted a life that had been shown to her by her parents and she wanted to share that life with John Hamilton Clark

Marriage to her long-time neighbour John Clark came to Florence in the summer of 1904. Family bereavement in those days generally followed a strict code of mourning etiquette. Social occasions ceased and it might not have been thought appropriate to marry until the requisite period had elapsed. Books on mourning etiquette suggest that Florence should have dressed in plain black clothes for twelve months, yet that does not seem to fit the situation that we know existed. It is much more likely that George and Catherine were following their beliefs and George's passing was seen as a 'joy' and not a time for mourning.

It was only half a mile from the Knott's house to St. James's Cemetery on the Old Charlton Road. The family would have walked behind the horse drawn hearse. It would take no more than 15 minutes.

The Clark Family may have been among the mourners as they lived at No.14 Castlemount Road and in 1904 Hamilton Clark was 44 years old. He worked as a goods porter probably in the docks and with his wife Matilda, their four children had all found respectable trades in the town, so their first obligation was to their employers, whilst Matilda may have given support to Florence in her grief as her prospective mother-in-law.

Florence was the youngest of George & Catherine's enormous family of thirteen children,

yet she was the only one who indulged in a large family for herself. Her first child, a son, was born within a year of her marriage and they named him George Hamilton in keeping with the family tradition. Together with her husband John, she had eight children spread over eighteen years from 1905 to 1923, but Catherine would only live to see one more added to her list of grandchildren. Doris Myrtle was born early in 1909.

The Twilight Years

As I reflect on this very unusual family situation, Catherine's eldest grand children were in their mid-20s with children of their own, but as cousins to one another, there were still six cousins yet to be born and when the last one did arrive in 1923 and was named Harold Clark, his eldest cousin, Catherine Goldsack Ballyn, was already 45 years old. With this firmly in mind and with the fact that they were spread around the country, I am certain that Catherine could not have had any relationship with her grandchildren, nor they with her in the way that we would understand it today. Catherine's relationship was with her children and three of them were still in Dover with a fourth, Annie, forty miles to the west in Cranbrook, Kent.

It was Saturday evening 19th May 1906 when Annie walked down the road in Cranbrook to her nearest postbox. Her card would catch the last post at 10 p.m. and would be on the last train from Hawkhurst to the mainline junction at Paddock Wood. As it was the last train, the tank engine would probably have returned to its depot at Ashford with its two carriages taking the post with it. At Ashford, mail bags from surrounding stations would be gathered and transferred to the next train to Folkestone and Dover, but it would not drop onto Catherine's doormat until breakfast on Monday morning. Annie's message said:

Dear Mother

Should be pleased to see you both whenever you like to come. I have nearly finished the cleaning. Charles has a little painting to do but that won't hinder you coming, so let us know.

Love from Annie

It is no more than a text today, so little has changed except the ½d Edwardian stamp. There can be no doubt that Annie was including Rosa in the invitation and in 1906 all five of Annie's children

were still at home with Sydney the eldest at 11 and Olive the youngest at 4 years old. I wonder what they thought of Grandma Knott?

Another valuable insight came on a postcard posted in Watford in December 1907. It was from Polly and addressed to Mrs. Knott at 7 Castlemount Road. It read:

We have arrived safely at Edmond's and found them all well. It is pouring with rain here. I expect we shall be here for a week.

Love to you both Polly

The postmark for 7.45 p.m. has smudged the date which could be the 4th December and if so that was a Wednesday. It tells us that Polly was in England and that Edmond was in Watford, but as always there is so much unsaid. The picture on the postcard is Barnstaple and begs the question – where did Polly get it from? Surely she has not been carrying it around for nearly 20 years. Possibly she has been to see Herbert more recently.

From Pentside to Queen Street

On Wednesday 22nd July 1903, the members of the former Pentside Chapel opened their doors for worship in the building in Queens Street everyone knew as the Zion Chapel. The Rev. D. Witton must have been quietly satisfied that his plan had come to fruition. It was a remarkable achievement in such a short time, yet no one was expecting the sudden death of their Pastor sometime after May 1904. There is no report of his passing. There is no record in the GRO Index. There is no burial within Dover or Kent, so what are we to make of that? The only reason I know of it, is a bizarre occurrence towards the end of the year 1904.

A replacement minister for David Witton was found in the Rev. W.H. Bishop and he and his wife Martha had only been in Dover since September, barely two months. On Tuesday 15th November the Town's Coroner convened an inquest in the School Room of the Queen Street Chapel to inquire into the fatal accident that befell the Rev. Bishop a week previously. William Henry Bishop was 66 years old and they had left home at about 2.30 on the Tuesday afternoon (8th November) and were walking along the Barton Path towards the castle. Martha Bishop had a bag slung over one shoulder and a walking stick in the other hand. As the bag slipped from his wife's shoulder, somehow he had been tripped

by her stick and he fell heavily to the ground, but avoided hitting his head.

He was helped to a seat by a passerby who had seen him fall and although he said that he was alright he was very far from well and a cab was summoned to take them home. His wife was so distraught that she couldn't tell the Coroner when he had died, but his niece said that it was the Sunday (13th November). The Coroner concluded that the evidence suggested that he had died from a brain haemorrhage caused by his fall exacerbated by his age, leaving the Queen Street Chapel without a Pastor once again.

So, the new church in Queen Street was not proving to be a great success and following the unexpected and sudden deaths of two ministers, the church was again lacking leadership and direction. It was not until the Rev. W.D. Gill accepted an invitation to preside over the congregation that there was real hope of a better future, but Mr. Gill was another man who was not in the prime of life. He had already served the church for 41 years. Nevertheless he felt called to leave his church in Norwich, where he had served for nine productive years, and come to Dover to help Queen Street recover.

His Recognition Service and tea-meeting on Wednesday 23rd August 1905 followed the same pattern as the one in which George Knott participated in 1894, but it was felt that the present small congregation had reached a point where only a major 'awakening' would save it.

This situation gives me the distinct feeling that Catherine's involvement with the Chapel ended with its move to the new premises in Queen Street, which almost coincided with her beloved husband's death. They were a devoted couple and she had no desire to continue what they had shared together. When it became clear that the Chapel was destined to shut, it was no loss to Catherine. It was a part of her past.

The *Dover Express* does not reveal the date when the chapel closed. One report dated 30th July 1909 includes the phrase, the 'Chapel now closed' and one of its last services was conducted for the Emmanuel Lodge of the Freemasons on the 26th May 1909. Towards the end of the year it became apparent that it was to be renamed Queen's Hall and had been bought by the Dover Electric Pictures Company for £1250. On Christmas Eve they applied for a licence for 'Singing, Music & Dancing' which was granted with the usual provisos concerning Sundays, Christmas Day and Easter Day. On Boxing Day it opened as a cinema and that was a world away

from the life and beliefs of George and Catherine Knott and the worshipful atmosphere in the Pentside Chapel I described earlier.

The Knott Family Loses Its Matriarch

When Catherine Ballyn and her younger sister Hilda Phillips saw their father Henry Thomas Knott in Crewe on that July day in 1910, they were shocked at his condition. He would not survive and he did not survive. It was then someone's onerous task to inform Henry's mother Catherine. That responsibility may have fallen on Henry's wife, but she had not been there at the end. As Henry's second wife, Sarah's relationship with her husband's mother is unknown. It may have been distant and she may not have thought it proper to be the one to bear the news. However the news itself was all that mattered and it had to be an impersonal telegram, a modern mechanism that was already feared by many.

When the messenger boy propped his red bicycle against the front wall of No.7 Castlemount Road and hurried up the path to the side door, Rosa answered the knock and took the proffered envelope from the boy's hand in anxious silence. 'Shall I wait for an answer Ma'am?' This was the obligatory question, which usually received the response 'No answer' after the envelope had been hurriedly torn open and eyes had scanned the half dozen words on the glued strip of paper. The boy hesitated in the hope of a copper or two dropped into his hand before turning away from the doorstep, his mission accomplished.

As the messenger boy remounted his bicycle, Rosa closed the door silently and paused, wondering how best to survive the next few minutes, as the inevitable question came wafting through the parlour door.

Who was that at the front door?

It was just the postman Mother! Rosa responded trying to make her voice sound matter of fact.

Can't be. He's been through the street hours ago.

Catherine was having none of this deception.

Come on, girl. What is it?

Rosa took a deep a breath and said, *It's Henry. He's dead.*

Henry? Henry who? Who's dead?

Catherine paused her embroidering and looked at Rosa with a puzzled expression.

It's OUR Henry, Mother. He's dead.

Rosa's voice trailed off and she couldn't meet her mother's eyes as she wondered what to do with herself.

Catherine's embroidery fell to the floor and the colour drained from her face. Her eyes saw nothing as time stopped like an unwound clock.

It was Monday 25th July 1910 and Catherine could barely believe that one of her precious boys had died. She had lost two girls as children, but the boys were different. They had grown up strong and all had found good wives and married. It was not their time to go, they were too young. Henry wasn't 58, although that was only days away. There would now be a funeral – in Crewe. Who would go to that? Catherine couldn't go. Not to her son's funeral. It wasn't right. Henry should have led the family at her funeral. Who would do that now?

Four weeks after receiving the news of Henry's passing Catherine called for her Will. She realised that she ought to alter her Will and re-allocate those items that would have gone to Henry. Inevitably George John was next in line, so the model of the Eddystone Light and the two silver medals was designated to replace the inlaid writing desk which was to go to Arthur. The inlaid album case which was originally destined for Arthur was redirected to Edmond together with the gold ring that Henry would have had, but why was that? Why did Catherine ignore Frederick, Herbert and Walter in favour of Edmond? Catherine altered her Will on the 21st August 1910 – NINE days later she was dead!

Dr. Charles Wood decided that the cause of her death was an enlarged liver and colic. I am always curious to know how they arrived at their diagnosis in those days when consultations of any kind were very rare. Rosa walked down into the town on the next day to register her death. It was the last day of August. Tomorrow it would be Autumn.

Rosa, Florence and Emma invested all their cooking skills into the wake that followed Catherine's funeral. The kitchen table in the parlour was loaded down with cakes and sandwiches in good Baptist fashion. Everything was freshly baked and all the best china had been laid out for the mourners, but there was no list of who attended. Unlike the many funerals described in the *Dover Express*, Catherine's passing didn't attract a mention. She was just the widow of the Principal Lightkeeper of the Eddystone Rock Lighthouse, the most famous lighthouse in the world. But then again, dozens of men had done that job – it was just another job that had to be done. It was nothing special.

There weren't many tears in the house that day, and as the guests drifted away expressing their appreciation of the excellent food and their sympathy for Catherine's passing, there was nothing

left to do but clear everything away and to pack the left over cakes, sponge and buns into their tins and take them home for the children.

Florence was reluctant to leave Rosa alone in the house, but Rosa insisted that it was better to face it now than put it off. It had to be done. That emptiness was reflected on the page of the census that followed in April. Rosa's name was the only name on an otherwise blank page. Rosa was alone and she was 42.

War With Germany

The *Dover Express* was only published once each week, on a Friday, so it was the 7th August before it could announce news of the war with Germany. There were no banner headlines on any page. Its front page had its advertisements as usual. Someone had lost a key and a reward was offered for its return to a police station. A bathing hut was available to rent at St. Margaret's Bay and applications should be made to Cliffe Villa.

There was news of the war on the inside pages, but it gave a sense of something separated from normal daily life. It was in Europe – a long way away. Local stories were bizarre and almost laughable, as a deserter from the Royal Marine Light Infantry walked into the police station on Wednesday and asked if he could rejoin. He had run from his ship HMS Forth at Devonport in July 1913, but he realised his services would now be needed. In the wider county a soldier in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers had been killed by the Dover boat train whilst guarding a bridge over the River Medway at Rochester. Military Police had arrested a German spy near Dover's docks on Tuesday afternoon and on Monday the Harbour Master's men had detained two men photographing near the Admiralty Docks, but they were released only after their plates had been exposed. It was very perplexing.

Rosa was not alone in being concerned about the news. Her first thoughts were of the men in the family. Her brothers would not be affected due to their age, but what of her nephews? As she thought about it, Annie featured prominently. Her four boys would be caught up in this chaos and maybe Herbert's two boys as well, but she couldn't remember how many nephews she had. Some must be grown men by now, especially those of her eldest brothers who were not that much younger than Rosa herself. In fact Rosa had eleven nephews and the two from her eldest brothers were already well into their 30s. Frederick Warner's boys were in the

Royal Navy, but she had never met them, whilst Walter's boy was only 10 years old, such was the spread of the Knott Family. No, it was Annie's boys that worried Rosa. They would become caught up in it, somehow.

Rosa's fears were justified. It was Victor, rather than his elder brother Sydney, who was drawn to volunteer to join the colours. His 18th birthday coincided with the advertising campaign using Kitchener's famous poster. He joined the East Kent Regiment in Cranbrook and found himself in the 5th Battalion as No. TF/1790, a number he must never forget, but to a Navy man like myself, Army organisation is incomprehensible. On the 24th April they moved to Cambridge to join the 53rd (Welsh) Division before moving on to Bedford. They left the town on the 18th July heading for Devonport to embark upon the *SS Nordland* destined for Alexandria in the eastern Mediterranean. The passage took eleven days and they arrived there on the last day of July. They were intended to be a part of the 20,000 reinforcements promised by Churchill to break the stalemate that had developed on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The war there had become a trench war and something needed to be done, but the decisions were bad ones and the leadership was worse and 'boy' soldiers like Victor would bear the consequences.

Before Victor's unit left England, it was involved in an unusual game of draughts on the 14th June as one company from the 2/4 EKR and another from the 2/5 EKR were joined by one company each from the 4th and 5th Battalions of the Royal West Kent Regiment. Together these four companies became the 2/4 Royal West Kents and kept their own War Diary which is now lodged in the National Archive.

After reaching the assembly island of Mudros on the 8th August they were landed on the beach at Suvla Bay, facing the Aegean Sea at 3 a.m. on Tuesday 10th August 1915 and were immediately involved in digging trenches. Three days later they were in the firing line and stayed there until the 1st September when they were relieved and returned to West Beach.

The consensus of military historians is that Victor's unit saw very little action and was used for little more than labour for the Royal Engineers. It was true that the entire beach area could be swept by Turkish artillery, but in the four months they were there the unit lost less than 100 men to enemy action. When they re-embarked on their transport at Mudros on the 13th December 1915, the unit was reduced to 200 men and Victor Smith was not

among them.

The inference in this statement is that large numbers of men died from disease or accident but the statistics do not support this suggestion. The casualty statistics for August show that 645 other ranks died of disease or accident, whilst those killed in action or dying as a result of wounds inflicted in action topped 10,000. How Lance Corporal Victor Smith died is unknown. What is known is that he died on the 18th September in hospital in Malta and he is buried in the Pieta Military Cemetery Section B, Row 11, Plot 4. This is not far out of Valetta on the road to Sliema and the record shows that he was 19, but we know differently.

Rosa Ellen Knott died in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Dover on 7th September 1915, eleven days before her nephew and both had died before their time. It was as if their spirits had been entwined in an attempt to support each other on their last journey together. She had gone into hospital for an exploratory operation. It might have been exploratory, but it was major surgery. They found the cause of her illness, but it was the shock of the surgery that killed her. Had she not died she would not have survived for long. She had cervical cancer.

Florence was the one who registered her death the next day. She had caught the tram into town from her home at 20 Maxton Road. She told the registrar that her sister was 'a spinster and the daughter of George Knott, lighthouse keeper deceased.' While she was in town she visited the funeral parlour of Mr. Rowland Pepper at No.9 Victoria Crescent and arranged Rosa's funeral for Friday 10th September and at the same time she visited the *Dover Express* office and placed a death announcement that would be published on the same day. Curiously she described Rosa as the 'third' daughter of the late George and Catherine Knott, perhaps not knowing that their first daughter named Ann, had only survived a short time, but making Rosa their fourth daughter.

For some reason, Rosa's funeral did attract a small paragraph in the *Dover Express* and that gives us the benefit of knowing who was present at her funeral. Eight names are listed and as always they are in an order that reflects their kinship to the deceased and the first name is Miss Knott (Aunt). This lady can only be Anna Maria Knott, Rosa's father's half sister and sister to Henry Knott the one time Chief Constable of Dover, now also deceased. As a spinster of independent means, she had lived with her brother until his death in 1910, but she could not

have travelled very far from her current residence as she was 62 years old.

Annie, Walter and Florence were there with the latter two accompanied by their spouses Emma and John, but the two remaining mourners are not quite so obvious. The first was Mr. Sulby (sic. Nephew) and I believe he was Henry Herbert Sully the husband of Florence, the eldest daughter of Rosa's brother Arthur Knott. Harry Sully was a light keeper and he spent the First World War at South Foreland, but it was Florence who was the relative, Harry was the 'in-law.' The final name was William Goldsack (Cousin) and for him we have to look at Rosa's mother's family. As a cousin carrying the family name, he must have been born to a brother of Catherine's of whom I believe she may have had five, but this is uncertain.

The entry in the 1911 census that most closely fits this man William Goldsack was born in St. Margaret's in 1855 and lived at 28 Dour Street, Dover. He had been married to his wife Elizabeth for 32 years. They had had three children and two daughters were still at home and unmarried. Annie was 30 and Mabel was 24 and they both worked as dressmakers. However, it appears that this William was the son of Catherine's elder brother Thomas and his wife Maria as their son named William was baptised on the 18th June 1854.

In 1901 the family were living at 10 Priors Street which looked like a row of shops ending at a furniture warehouse and a coach builder's workshop. Everyone was working on their 'own account' and working 'from home,' a phrase familiar today in 2021, but William Goldsack was a fishmonger when his occupation in 1911 was indecipherable.

We have all been to gatherings like this one, when family members had not seen each other for some time and conversation is stilted and shallow. Maybe they each had memories of Rosa in a town that was quite small, but this large and extended family was focused upon Dover and it was probably the last time they would all meet at 7 Castlemount Road. However, it was a funeral against a backdrop like no other. Great Britain was at war. Our boys were dying in their thousands. There were no family gatherings like this, just a burying detail and a chaplain. There were no flowers, exactly as Rosa had requested, and as Annie sat there in the front room she would not be aware that her boy, Victor, lie dying in a military hospital in Malta. He would be dead by the following week and no one would be there – there would be no flowers – just a telegram.