

## Herbert Jeffery 1895 - 1916

Cook's Mate Herbert William Jeffery (M/5049) of *HMS Indefatigable* was born at Cattedown in Plymouth on 7 April 1894 and was 21 when he died on 31 May 1916 at the Battle of Jutland, when his ship was sunk.

He was the son of John and Eliza (Dingle) Jeffery of East Liddaton. In 1911, the family was in Devonport and he was a messenger boy at the dockyard.

Herbert William Jeffery was the son of **John** and **Eliza** (Dingle) Jeffery, of East Liddaton, Devon. He had been born on 7 April 1894 in Plymouth where his father was a mason. **John**, his father, had been born in Northlew in Devon in 1866, the son of a farmer, also **John** Jeffery (b1833) and his wife **Jane** (b1833). On their 80 acre farm in Plymstock they raised their four sons, Thomas (b1862), William (b1864), **John** (b1866) and Harry (b1870). Harry had been born in Plymstock, but the others were listed as Northlew, later Oakhampton.

In 1881 North Horn Farm, Plymstock consisted of 122 acres with Herbert's grandfather, **John snr** (48) employing two men on the farm. Thomas 19, William 17 and **John jnr** 15 were also working on the farm. Harry 12, Herbert J 9, Jessie 5 and Emily J 3 were listed as scholars. All of the younger ones were born in Plymstock.

By 1891 **John** was a mason aged 25, married to **Eliza**, who was one year younger than him. They had married in 1887. Her birthplace was given in different censuses as Coryton or Mary Tavy. They had a two year old daughter Ethel Maud, born in Plymouth. The family was living at 36 Shaftesbury Cottages in Charles, Plymouth. In 1901 they were living at 6 Widy View in Compton Gifford. Ethel Maud was now 12 and she had three younger brothers: Harold John Dingle 8, **Herbert William** 5 and Frederick George 3

In 1911 they had moved to 14 Corporation Street in Devonport. **Eliza** was the head of the household on census night but her description of herself as married, rather than widowed, indicates that her husband **John** was elsewhere at the time. **Herbert** was 15 and a messenger boy at the dockyard and Frederick, at 13, was still at school. Later, Herbert became an engineer's labourer.

Not long after that, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1912 when he was 18, the minimum age, he signed on to serve 12 years in the Royal Navy. Strangely, throughout his naval career he was known as Alfred William. He joined HMS Vivid, Devonport, to train as a Cook's Mate. He was 5ft 4in tall, had dark brown hair, brown eyes and a dark complexion. In June 1913 he joined the crew of HMS Indefatigable, a battlecruiser built at Devonport in 1909 and they sailed to join the Mediterranean fleet. When war was declared Indefatigable was ordered to the Dardanelles where it shelled Ottoman fortifications. Shortly after it returned to Malta for a refit and in February 1915 came back to Britain to join the Home Fleet in Scotland where it was involved in fairly uneventful patrols of the North Sea.

Then on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1916 the British and German fleets engaged each other in what has become known as the Battle of Jutland. Just after 4pm, after a duel with the Von der Tann, the HMS Indefatigable was hit by two shells: one on the foc'sle and one on the fore turret. Both shells appeared to explode on impact. There was a delay of about 30 seconds with no sign of fire and then the ship completely blew up. The main explosion started with sheets of flame, followed immediately by a dense, dark smoke that obscured the ship from view. The shots that had fallen on her upper deck must have penetrated a magazine. She staggered out of the line, sinking by the

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stern when another salvo struck her; a second terrible explosion rent her, she turned over and in a moment all trace of her was gone.

The wreck of HMS Indefatigable was difficult to locate in recent times as commercial salvaging had reduced it to a collection of metal pieces. Belatedly it has been declared a protected place under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 to prevent further damage to the resting place of over 1000 men. As well as the Brentor War Memorial, Herbert Jeffery is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial.

By the time the Royal Navy Memorial on the Hoe was erected Herbert's name had been corrected and can be found on panel 17. His three medals, the 14 Star, the British War and Victory medals were sent to his father. The CWGC website records his parents as living at East Liddaton, Coryton in Brentor parish.

Before the First World War the Jeffery families were based in the Plymouth/Devonport areas but the Naval records give Herbert's parent's home address as East Liddaton. This is probably due to the strong local roots of the Dingle side of the family.

**William Dingle** was born in 1809. The first Census in 1841 shows him as an agricultural labourer living in Briscott with his first wife, **Sarah**, and three of their children, Ann, Elizabeth and William. **John**, Herbert's grandfather, was listed as a servant aged 11 at Great Hay with Farmer Richard Rowe and his family. Sarah died in 1850. The 1851 census shows **William** as a labourer living at Briscotts with **John** (21) and Ann (19), both born in Lamerton. In 1853 **William** married Mary Ann Arscott (1813 -1881+). **William** and Mary Ann continued to live at Briscotts described as being at Hurdwick in 1861 and 1871 and near the Manor House in 1881. **William** was an agricultural labourer of 52 in 1861, a herdsman aged 62 in 1871 and a farm labourer aged 72 in 1881. After Mary Ann's death William moved to 12 Bannawell and at 82 became a mole catcher. There was to be another move for him. In 1901 he is described as being 94, retired and living with his son **John** at Sparscott in Coryton.

The family of **John Dingle** and his wife **Eliza** are first recorded in 1861 at Parmers Corner in Mary Tavy. They had four children, William 7, Richard 6, Elizabeth Ann 3 and Mary Jane 11 months, all born in Lamerton. **John** was a road labourer. Ten years later, in 1871, they were living at Earland in Coryton, **John** was a farm labourer and the family had expanded with the addition of John 7 and **Eliza** 4, both born in Mary Tavy. The next census in 1881 shows John as being 51, an agricultural labourer with just **Eliza** (14) living at home with her parents at Earland.

After **Eliza**'s marriage to **John** Jeffery in 1887, her brother John, a slate quarry worker of 28, is shown living at home with his parents in 1891. **John** snr was 61 and a farm labourer, **Eliza(beth)** was 63. By 1901 **John**'s father **William** had joined the household, which is described as being Sparscott, with both Johns being general farm labourers. By 1911, both **William** and **John** had died, leaving **Eliza** 83 living with her son John 47, a slate quarryman, at Eastcott, Coryton.

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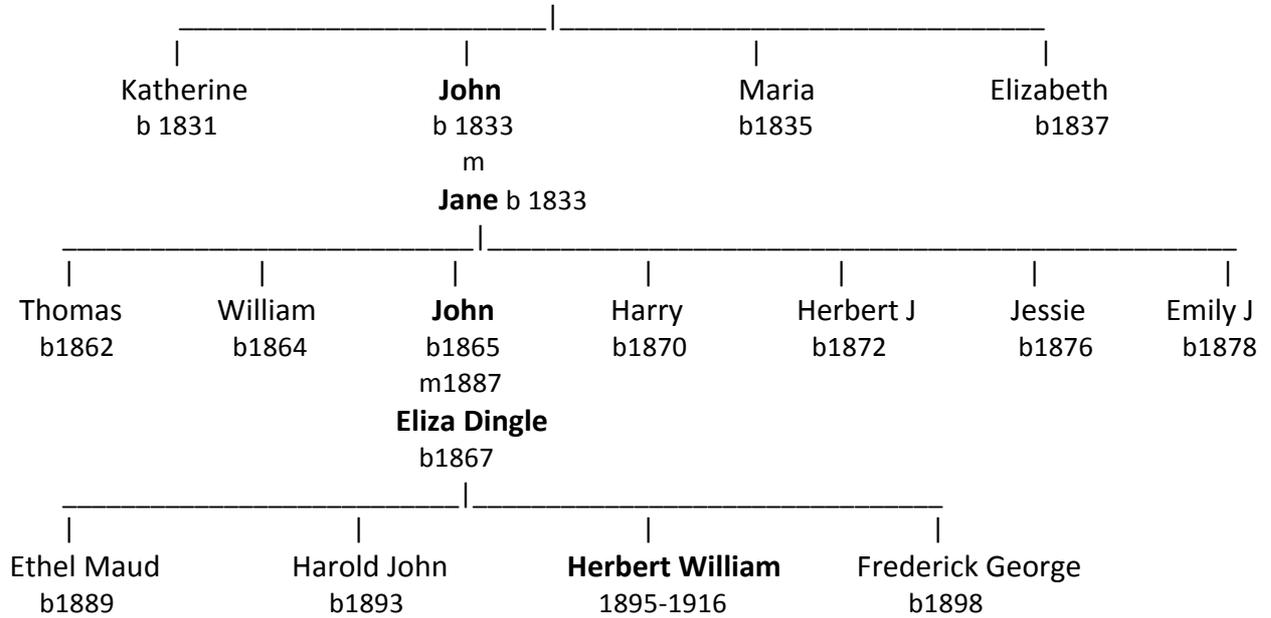
JEFFERY

**William** m1 Katherine m2 Mary  
b 1810 Black Torrington

1841 farmer

1851 farmer 194 acres employing 3 labourers and 1 boy

1861 farmer 183 acres employing 1 man



DINGLE

**William** m1 Sarah m2 Mary Ann Arscott in 1853  
1809-1901+ 1805-50 1813-1881

