

Life of a chemist and stockist of photographic materials

By Janet Archer

Above the shop door in the calendar photograph (probably from the mid-1920s) we can see the name of Edward Jewell, chemist and druggist and stockist of photographic materials.



Edward had grown up in Reepham where his father George was a veterinary surgeon.

Edward joined the Royal Marines at the Portsmouth Depot in February 1871. Born in December 1853, he is listed as under age until December 1871. Eighteen must have been the qualifying age at that time. By 1881 Edward had been promoted to Colour Sergeant and had served on several ships including the Hecla. This ship was involved in the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882, an early action of the Anglo-Egyptian war, and Edward was awarded the Egypt Medal with the Alexandria Clasp and the Khedive's Star.

After a career in the Royal Marines, which had ended in 1893, Edward finally became a farmer in Derbyshire, marrying a local girl, Sarah Redfearn.

They were married in 1904 at the Friends Meeting House in Manchester. How long Edward had been a Quaker is not known but this may have been where he met Sarah since he was resident in Manchester in the 1901 census.

Edward and Sarah first appear in the Hackford-next-Reepham electoral rolls in 1924.

Edward died in 1934 and Sarah and their daughter Elizabeth continued running the shop and in the 1939 register still seem to be in the same premises.

The photo below from the Reepham Archive is a postcard where Sarah has written on the back, "I am sending you a photo of our shop, & I was so angry I got snapped just as I was going in!"



The business later moved across the Market Place to Ivy House, next door to the Sun Inn. Reepham residents may remember Elizabeth Grace Jewell still maintaining the shop after her mother's death in 1959.

Ivy House had previously been the site of Reepham's telephone exchange manned by Hester Wilton. By 1939 Hester had retired and the exchange was being managed by her daughter Gladys. A newspaper report from December 1944, after Hester's death, placed her as a "Woman in the News".



Evening Express April 24 1944

When the Jewells moved out of the 'Bank Building' the telephone exchange was moved across the Market Place to the house next to Gibbs's premises, and continued to be run by Hester's daughter Gladys and her husband Robert Claxton. A small plaque exists today just by the front door saying 'The Old Telephone Exchange'.

*Census information (inc. 1939 Register) from Ancestry.co.uk
Newspaper report from Find My Past.co.uk*