

Fighting Frickletons

Born up the Braes



The above is a photograph of the youngest five children of a family of ten (7 boys and 3 girls) to Samuel Frickleton and Elizabeth Logan (centre), by 1912 three of the eldest five; John, Marion and Henry had immigrated to North America, Jean and Mary had married and lived locally.

William, Samuel and James were born at the old Lodge in Slamannan, Thomas was born at Blackbraes and Bert was born at Boxtton near Blackbraes, all were coalminers.

By 1913 Samuel senior had died, shortly after, Elizabeth took the remaining children above to New Zealand.

Eventually all would enlist to fight in the Great War and as part of the New Zealand Expeditionary forces were sent to the theatre of War in Europe.

William had initially served at Gallipoli but on the 28th of September 1916 William died of injuries he sustained a few weeks earlier during the Somme offensive.

On the 7th of June 1917 Samuel won the Victoria Cross at the battle of Messines in Belgium, during the battle he was badly injured and spent some time convalescing visiting relatives 'up the braes' around Blackbraes, Avonbridge and Slamannan, in September 1917 he was presented the VC at Ibrox Stadium Glasgow by king George V.

James was wounded at Gallipoli and was invalided home in 1916; he died in South Africa in 1957.

Thomas was discharged from the Army in 1916 after being wounded and severely gassed; he received a War Pension and died in New Zealand in 1959.

Bert was wounded in France and discharged from the Army in 1918. Incidentally, he was also wounded at Messines, the same day his brother, Samuel displayed great courage at Messines that would lead to him being awarded the VC.

Bert died from an accident while fishing off Stewart Island, NZ, in 1929.

Mary, an older sister to these brothers, also a native of Slamannan, lost her husband, Peter Symons, while serving with the 1st Battalion, Cameron Highlanders; he was killed in action on the 16th September 1914 at the battle of **Aisne**. A few months later, Mary took her children and left for New Zealand to live with her mother. She died here in 1943.

It is worth remembering that Peter Symons was one of the earliest casualties of the Great War, at the time of his death his wife Mary was with child, the child would be a son and was called after his father with an additional middle name, he was baptised; **PETER AISNE SYMONS**, which I guess was a fitting tribute from his family.

A cousin of these young Frickleton's was David Frickleton, who was born in California (Stirlingshire) in 1899 and was living at Avonbridge when the war began. David enlisted and died from his wounds somewhere in France

on the 25th Oct 1918, 17 days before the Great War ended. He had not reached his 20th birthday.

Another cousin, William Stewart, had been killed in action in 1916. His mother was Eliza Frickleton who was born at Blinkbonny, Slamannan in 1871 and had married William Stewart here at the Manse in 1890.

Samuel Frickleton, VC, returned to the UK in 1937, as part of a contingent to represent New Zealand, at the coronation of George VI. Again, Samuel took this opportunity to return 'up the braes' to visit his eldest sister, Jean, and other relatives. Jean died in Westquarter in 1950 and was the only child of Samuel and Elizabeth Frickleton that remained in Scotland.

In 1968, Samuel Frickleton, VC, because of bad health had to decline an invitation from her Majesty the Queen to attend a reunion of VC and George Cross winners at Windsor castle.

Three years later in 1971 Samuel died in hospital in New Zealand. He was 80 years of age and had died of a combination of chronic asthma from gassing received during the war.

Samuel is not just remembered in his home town in New Zealand but also at the Remembrance Garden in his native village of Slamannan and in the church yard at Messines Belgium.

The Fri(e)ckleton's came to Scotland from Ireland at the time of the great famine around 1845 and eventually settled in Slamannan.

Samuel and Elizabeth Logan Frickleton were married on the 1st January 1877. While preparing to celebrate their Silver Wedding Anniversary at Cowie after the Bells in 1902, they went to collect a visitor at Bannockburn Station. The visitor was an old man called John Orr Frickleton who was born at Keady in Ireland in 1835.

John Orr Frickleton was the son of a William Frickleton who served with the Royal Artillery at the battle of Waterloo in 1815. Prior to Waterloo, William was stationed at Leith Fort where his first two children were born.

At the home of Samuel Frickleton VC in New Zealand just after the Great War there was a kilt hung on the wall that dates back to the Napoleonic wars.

Another relative also called Samuel Frickleton joined the 72nd regiment of foot just prior to his 18th birthday around 1854, after a few weeks training he was off to the Crimea.

Samuel was married in 1866 at Keady, County Armagh, Ireland and his first child was born at Edinburgh Castle in 1867. His 2nd child was born at Limerick Barracks in 1870 and his 3rd child at Fort George in 1871.

Samuel served 21 years in the army.

His service record shows as follows, 3 Good Conduct medals, Crimea medal with clasp for Sebastopol, Turkish medal for Crimea, Indian Mutiny medal with clasp for Central India. Never wounded and Promoted corporal 19 Feb 1867,

During the 2nd World War at Achmagarry near Spean Bridge, over 25,000 allied soldiers were trained to be Commando's, (a new breed of soldier), the CQMS and PT instructor at Achmagarry was Alex Frickleton, (Alex's father was a cousin to Samuel Frickleton VC) Alex features in a book called 'Castle Commando' written by Donald Gilchrist and the foreword was written by Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

The book tells the story of how allied soldiers from around the world would attempt to become Commando's; the training was so vigorous that some soldiers lost their lives attempting to become a Commando? The commando's are remembered at the 'Commando' monument at Spean Bridge

Alex Frickleton who was born in 1919 attended Drumbowie primary school at Standburn, Alex is still alive and well today; he is 92 years of age and lives in Canada with his wife Anne.

This is by no means all the Fri(e)ckleton's that would feature in the Great War and including the 2nd World War; other Frickleton relatives not born up the Braes but not mentioned here are remembered in War Graves around Europe.

A relative John Frickleton who was serving with the Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery was killed in action in Oct 1917 at Flanders, John was the son

of Samuel and Elizabeth Frickleton who lived at the Mall Ballyshannon Co Donegal, Samuel was a school teacher and died at Clifton House, Shankhill Belfast.

George Cameron Frickleton while serving with the Seaforth Highlanders was skilled in action in 1915, George is a direct descendant of William Frickleton who was at Waterloo whilst serving with the Royal Artillery Other Frickleton's serving with the RAF, the Merchant Navy, Australian Regiments such as Infantry, Army Ordinance Corps and Tunnelling Corps also paid the ultimate price for their country.

A Hugh Frickleton who was born at Mowillan near Keady in 1875, married Elizabeth McEwen at the Malone Presbyterian church in Belfast, and in 1902 they moved to Brussels, Belgium to work in the Linen Industry. In 1916 Hugh returned to Belfast and enlisted in the Army Service Corps, Hugh was not sent to the European theatre of war but rather to places further a field.

His casualty record shows he had travelled to Durban, then on to Bombay and finally Iraq? A journey that would take over 3 months, in July 1918 he was admitted to hospital with Malaria, he was discharged 4 weeks later.

Hugh returned to Belfast to be discharged from the Army, he then lived with relatives at Northumberland Street and Majestic Street Belfast until he was repatriated back to Belgium, it appears his wife and daughter remained in Belgium throughout the war, Hugh a member of the Orange Institution died at a hospital in Brussels in 1925.

Hugh was the Grandson of Andrew Frickleton, Andrew was the younger brother of Henry who died in Slamannan in 1884, Andrew also died at Slamannan but it was years earlier in 1858, he was attacked underground at Balquatson Mine and died hours later from his injuries, his assailant was charged with Culpable homicide, found guilty and was sent to prison for **three** months??? Andrew was also buried at Slamannan, after his death his wife also called Margaret McCreary returned to Ireland with their 4/5 children, they had been married at the Temple Presbyterian Church at Mowillian near Keady in 1849.

Only recently a James Frickleton has been identified as fighting in the American civil war on the side of the Union, he enlisted on 14th Feb 1861 in the 60th Illinois Infantry and was mustered out in 1864, James a veteran of the Civil War is the son of Samuel Frickleton who died in 1849, although

listed as a farmer, his death was the result of an accident while working on the construction of a canal at Illinois USA.

Samuel, who was born around 1818 at or near the Temple Keady, Co Armagh, was the elder brother of Henry; it was Henry born 1824 who brought our line of Frickleton's to Scotland around 1845. Henry died at Slamannan in 1884 and him and his wife Margaret McCreary is buried within the old church graveyard at Slamannan.

It is worth noting that Henry was married twice, his first marriage to Jane Stewart in Keady Armagh in 1845 (these are the grandparents of Samuel VC) and his 2nd marriage was to Margaret McCreary at Drumgelloch near Airdrie in 1859, the McCreary family arrived in Scotland from Ireland around the same time as the Frickleton's.

In total Henry had 16 children of which 15 were boys, the only daughter was called Eliza and she married George Stewart at Slamannan as stated earlier, Eliza gave birth to 13 children, the eldest William as stated earlier was killed in action in 1916, the youngest was called 'Edward Carson Stewart' born in 1914.

One final comment; The New Zealand press interviewed Elizabeth Logan Frickleton, the mother of the 'Fighting Frickleton's' after the war was over, the government had reduced Thomas's War pension and she was openly very critical of them and fought to get the pension reinstated.

When a reporter stated that one member of the government had indeed assisted her with the fight, she replied **“yes that is correct but he was like the cow who gave a good bucket of milk, then kicked it over”** when asked about her son being awarded the VC, she replied;

“What means more to me than the VC is that my boys did their duty?”

When asked how she felt about losing her son, William, at the Somme, she replied;

“I am like any other grieving mother who has lost a child, but is there a better way to die than when fighting for your country?”

Robert Frickleton Jack

“When I am no longer even a memory, just a name, I hope my voice may perpetuate the great work of my life. God bless my dear old comrades of Balaclava and bring them safe to shore”.

Florence Nightingale.