



## John William Stone

E/490 Lance Corporal, 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers

He was killed in action on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1916, in France, aged 24

John was buried at Maily Wood Cemetery, Maily-Maillet, Somme, France

The Stones were a railway family. Our hero John William Stone Jnr was named for his uncle John William Stone Snr. In the 1911 census John Jnr's father was the Station Master in Harleston, John Jnr's uncle was the station master at Reedham with his nephew, John Jnr's brother, Henry Thomas working under him! John William Snr and wife had only 2 children, both of whom reached adult hood, James Stone, Harleston Station Master, and his wife Fanny had produced an eyewatering 15 children, of whom 4 had died by 1911. Mind you, by the time of the 1911 census, only 22 years old Mabel and baby of the family, Cecil, 15, were still at home at the Harleston Station House. Later that year Mable was to marry Charles Sayer who lost his own brother, Thomas Edward Sayer, in the war that was looming over the horizon.

Way back in 1850, James Stone Snr, a farm labourer from Carlton Colville's coastal neighbour, Pakefeild, managed to marry slightly above himself to Richenda Gooch, the daughter of a small farmer of 6-acres in Carlton Colville, John Gooch. The couple set up home with the elderly couple (John Gooch 66, wife Ann, 62) who I am sure were delighted to have some extra, young strong arms on the farm. Indeed, the family were still there in 1861 by which time James (Valentine) Jnr, Richenda Jnr and baby John Stone Snr had been added to the family; father James Stone Snr was not at home for this census.

## CARLTON COLVILLE,

*About Two Miles from Lowestoft.*

To be Sold by Auction, by

**M**R. W. T. BALLS, at the Crown Hotel, Lowestoft, on *Wednesday, April 26th, 1876.* at Three for Four o'clock in the Afternoon, by direction of the Trustees for Sale, under the Will of Mr. John Gooch, deceased, the following Valuable PROPERTY, desirably situate at Carlton Colville, in One Lot:—

A Brick and Tile Built COTTAGE, containing 2 Bedrooms, Sitting Room, Kitchen, and Wash-house; and adjoining, a small Brick and Tile Barn, and a Boarded and Thatched Neat House, Stable and Cart Shed, with Front and Back Gardens, planted with Fruit Trees and Bushes; also several pieces of Arable, Meadow, and Marsh LAND and Rand, containing (with the site of the Buildings) 5a. 2r. 22p. or thereabouts, as in the occupation of Mr. James Stone, at the low Yearly Rent of £27.

The above Property is pleasantly and advantageously situated, with a considerable Frontage next the Turnpike Road from Lowestoft to Beccles, and extends to the margin of Oulton Broad.

It is near the Carlton and Mutford Railway Stations, and within a short distance of Lowestoft, and its position and convenience and advantage of Road, Rail, and Water Carriage render it equally adapted for Mercantile or Gardening purposes, and a Site for the erection of a Fishing and Shooting Box.

Freehold and Tithe Free.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale, with Plan, may be obtained of Mr. R. H. Reeve, Solicitor; or of the Auctioneer, Lowestoft. [6196

10 years further down the line and in 1871, James Snr is now the head of his small household on the 5 ¾ acres that he and his wife would have taken over from John Gooch Stone's widowed mother in law is still in the household but no longer the head. A farm that small is not going to support many people, and 20 years old James Stone Jnr had already set of down the line, as it were, and was working as a Railway Signalman, lodging in Blythburgh.

The sale of the farm in 1876 reveals that it had been the actual property of Richenda's father, he was not just a tenant framer. We can also infer that as long as his widow was still living, the farm could be worked for her benefit and that of her daughter but, once Richenda's mother died, the property was sold and the proceeds distributed amongst the legatees.

Norfolk News Norfolk, England

22 Apr 1876

James Snr married to Fanny Bloom in 1871 and by 1881, they already had 4 children living with them, Ada, James III, Richenda III and Ellen, all born in Hethersett where James Jnr was proudly able to claim he was the Station Master, a responsible job for a man less than 30 years of age.

I carefully said that James Jnr and Fanny (Frances) had 4 children living with them. The 1881 census show that James Snr had given up the farm, was just a general labourer and, as well as him and his wife, his 25 years old daughter, Richenda Jnr, and a 5 years old granddaughter, Annie B(eatrice) were also in the household. I am afraid to say I rather assumed little Annie was Richenda's illegitimate child but in fact she was the oldest surviving child of James Jnr and Fanny. Baptised in Carlton Colville in spring 1877, she had been born in Heathersett and her father was already the station master. Her older sister and (deceased) name sake, also Annie, had been born and baptised in Carlton Colville in 1874 when her father described himself as a labourer. The lad had done well in 3 years!

## SERIOUS CHARGE AT LOWESTOFT.

On Wednesday, at the Lowestoft Police-court, before W. F. Larkins, Esq. (chairman), the Mayor (Col. Seppings), Colonel Stewart, and W. Youngman, Esq., George Pearson (16) of Somerleyton was again brought up, in custody, charged with attempting to feloniously assault Ada Florence Stone of Haddiscoe, at Herringfleet, on the 18th inst. Mr. Alfred Kent appeared for the defendant.

Complainant said she was the daughter of James Stone, stationmaster at Haddiscoe, and was twelve years old. She and her sisters were in the habit of going to school at Herringfleet. On the 18th inst., at about half-past four in the afternoon, when returning from school with her sisters, Susan and Nelly, down the road leading from Somerleyton to St. Olave's Station, the defendant came out of a plantation by the side of the road and walked past them. He then turned back, put down his bag, took hold of her, throw her down on the bank by the side of the road, and committed the assault complained of. Complainant called out, but defendant said if she continued to do so he would kill her. One of her sisters ran home whilst the other one stopped with her. After the defendant left her, complainant went home and told her mother what had occurred.

In reply to Mr. Kent, complainant said she knew the defendant very well, but had not played with him. She had not called after him, neither did her sisters. Complainant had only met him once before coming from school, when he ran after them. She could give no reason for his turning back and meeting them on the date in question.

Ellen Harriet Stone, aged 9 years, sister of the complainant, corroborated the main points in complainant's evidence.

Cross-examined by Mr. Kent, witness said she had never spoken or played with the defendant, neither had her sisters.

Fanny Stone, mother of the complainant, stated that from what the last witness told her she went after her daughter and found her near St. Olave's Bridge, crying, and she made a communication to her. Some of her clothes were torn from her.

Police-constable John Newson deposed to taking the defendant into custody on the following Wednesday. Witness cautioned him, and he made no statement. On the day after the assault he had a conversation with the defendant whilst the complainant was present, and he then admitted pulling her about, but denied tearing her clothes.

In reply to Mr. Kent, witness said he found no indication of a struggle near the spot where the assault took place on the following morning.

After the Bench had consulted together, Mr. Kent urged that the charge should be altered to indecent assault, as being best for both parties.

The Bench refused to do this, and the defendant was committed to take his trial at the next Assizes on the attempted felonious assault. Bail was allowed.

Baby brother John, 10 years younger than James Snr, was following in his brother's footsteps and like his brother 10 years before, was working as a railway clerk, in his case lodging with a signal man near Beccles.

James' family then moved onto Haddiscoe sometime between 1882 and 1884; it was a good thing that James Jnr had a steady job as by 1891 there were 10 children in the house and a nurse to help with the youngest new born; this does not include oldest daughter Annie Beatrice who was living with her grandparents.

Back in those days there were a lot of people employed on the railways, as could be seen when over 60 men from the local stations sat down to their annual dinner in 1886

## HADDISCOE.

**RAILWAY DINNERS.**—The men employed at Haddiscoe, St. Olave's, St. Olave's Junction and Bridges, including the men from Somerleyton Station, sat down to their annual dinner on the 28th ult., and 4th inst at the Queen's Head Inn, Haddiscoe, and Bell Inn, St. Olave's, when upwards of sixty men including platelayers, spent a very enjoyable evening on the two occasions. Hosts Dingle and Sparrow catered very satisfactorily. The usual loyal and patriotic toasts were duly observed, as was that of "The Donors." Mr. Stone and Mr. Skeet ably filled the chair and vice-chair.

*Norfolk News*  
13 Feb 1886

*Norfolk News*  
30 Nov 1889

The Stone girls had a very horrid experience in 1889; three of them including Ada, then 12 years old and the oldest of the girls at home, were walking

back from school in Herringfleet when a local youth assaulted her. The boy was 16 and it seems as if the assault was very serious and took place in front of her two younger sisters. One of the girls ran back to fetch the mother, the other stayed with poor Ada who had some of the clothes torn from her and was hugely distressed. At the initial hearing (and there was no privacy accorded to minors at that time) the boy, George Pearson, admitted pulling her about but denied tearing her clothes and made no comment about his alleged threats to kill the girls if they told anyone.

Bizarre as it may sound, until 1875, the age of consent was set at 13 and it was not until 1885, 4 years before this case, that it was raised to 16.

The family stayed in Haddiscoe for at least another 10 years, appearing there for the 1901 census before turning up in Harleston, a very busy little station with the lively cattle markets.

In contrast to James' voluminous family, in 1891 John Stone Jnr was the Station Master at Florden with the only two children he was ever going to have.

Also, a bit of a head scratcher but the 1891 census states that John Stone Snr, born and raised in a coastal parish, now 69 was a mariner! His only daughter, Richenda, remained single and remained in the household with her parents and little Annie B! Not too surprisingly, the next census states James to be retired, his wife had died but his daughter, Richenda Jnr and his granddaughter, now a seamstress, remained in the house.

Roll on 1901 and brother John Stone Snr was the station master at Foulsham with his only son working as a Railway Clerk; no great surprise but James Jnr's son, James III was doing exactly the same with his father at Haddiscoe.

Norfolk News  
14 Mar 1903

**HARLESTON RAILWAY  
DINNER.**

**SOME INTERESTING FIGURES.**

The annual dinner to the G.E.R. employees at Harleston took place on March 5th at the Swan Hotel, when a company of about thirty sat down to a repast provided in first class style by Host Youngman. Mr. E. J. Broughton presided, and was supported by Captain Robinson and Messrs. G. Stebbings, W. J. Robertson, H. C. Nuthall, W. E. Smith, H. Dade, W. O. Brock, W. Cordwell, E. Baillie, &c. The vice-chair was occupied by Mr. James Stone, the newly appointed station master; and much disappointment was felt at the unavoidable absence of Mr. John Coker, the late stationmaster. After the loyal

In 1903 James Jnr was appointed as the Harleston Station



master, we know this due to the minutes of yet another Railway

dinner when he is described as the newly appointed Station Master, regrets were expressed for the passing of his predecessor but two years later, in 1905, James was described as much respected! In 1911, another one of James' sons was pursuing a Railway career; it was this Henry Thomas Stone who was working under his uncle John!

*Fanny Stone*

It was not just the boys who found it difficult to resist the lure of the railways. The fourth surviving child, Harriet Ellen, or Ellen Harriet as she liked to be known in later years, married William Moore, a Lowestoft lad, in 1907. And surprise, surprise, he too worked for the Railways. In Moore's case he was, in 1911 at least, a railway signal man. I wonder if, like his father in law and Ellen's uncle John, he too wrked his way up to being a station master.

The family had settled in Carlton Colville, home of Ellen's father. Using the children to date the photo, William was born in 1908, Kath in 1910 so I would take a guess that this phot was taken in 1912 or 1913, shortly before Fanny died. Have to say she does not look well and that is quite a protective arm that Ellen is putting on her mother's shoulders.

One of James' lads, probably Cecil, had a very narrow escape in April 1913. Taking a boat on the river Waveney when the waters were in full spate following heavy rain is not smart at the best of times; 6 local lads, including a 'Stone' did just that and managed to capsize as they swept round a bend. More by luck than judgement, they all survived although Stone, a non-swimmer had a closer shave than most.

A few months after this exciting event, the matriarch of the family, Fanny Stone died at the age of 58. It is amazing she lived as long as she did, 15 live births and raising 10 children (excluding the lass living with grandparents) would have exhausted anybody! A late photograph shows a tiny woman, well dressed.

Our Harleston Hero. John William Stone chose not to join the railways although he did go for a white-collar job. 1911 finds John lodging with a delivery driver for a sewing machine manufacturer up in London, Dalston to be more accurate. This is a slightly odd set up, the elderly married couple who headed the household, had their adult daughter and 5 young men, all working for a wholesale draper, boarding with them. Boarding indicates that their food was provided for them; I suspect this was an informal hostel with a revolving cast of young men, working for one particular drapers, passing through the doors of this 8-room family home. I would think it extremely unlikely that the Inghams, the heads of the house, actually owned this property, instead the job may have been a bit of a sinecure for an old steady and trusted employer who would keep the draper's staff, far from their homes, in line!

Dalston was given as Stone's address when he enlisted, perhaps he had set up his own establishment but more likely he was continuing to lodge. The Edwardian man was not very house trained and convenience foods had yet to be invented!

Whilst Fanny did not survive to see the outbreak of World War 1, but she would have died proud of the job she had done in raising such a large family. Not a family that were wildly social or, frankly, wildly anything, instead they were the sort who form the backbone of our country, quietly and efficiently getting on with their lives.