

Alfred John Bigwood (12 July 1891 – 6 August 1918)



Alfred was the son of George and Laura Gertrude Bigwood (nee Daniels) who married in Brentford in the summer of 1890. George was born in the West Lavington, Wiltshire. Alfred's mother Laura was born in Isleworth, Middlesex. George worked as a rollerman in a flour mill.



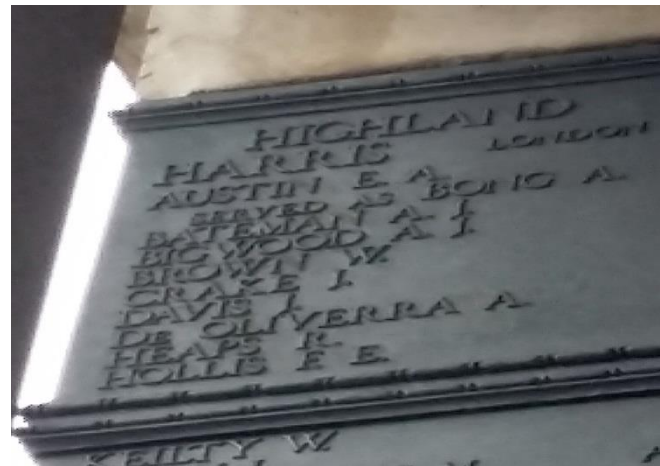
George and Laura had 7 children so Alfred had 2 brothers and 4 sisters. They were Florence Emma born in 1893, Dorothy Maud born 1895, Charles Leslie born 1897, Clara Victoria born 1901, Bessie Laura born in 1904 and George William born in 1906. Alfred was the eldest with a date of birth of 12 July 1891. All the children were born in Isleworth. In 1891 when Alfred was born, George and Laura were living in Percy Villas, Steele Road but later moved to 1, Hartland Road. **See left for a photo taken in 2016.** By 1911 most of the Bigwood family were living at 52 Hartland Road. However, at that time, Alfred was aged 19 and was working. He was assisting his uncle, Charles Bigwood in his bakery business, alongside his cousin Bessie. Uncle Charles was a master baker and his business was based in Woolwich Road, Charlton, London.



Alfred enlisted in the Royal Navy for the duration of hostilities on 10 December 1915. At that time he gave his occupation as a Cook. He became an Able Seaman in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve

(RNVR). He served mainly at naval land-based depots in Portsmouth (HMS Victory I) and Dover (HMS Attentive II) during 1916 and 1917. He also spent three months at the Royal Naval Gunnery Training School, HMS Excellent, at Portsmouth from April to June 1918.

By August 1918 Alfred was a crew member of the cargo steamship Highland Harris. On 7 August the ship was on a voyage from Liverpool to Rio de Janeiro carrying a cargo of general goods and livestock. Along the north west coast of Ireland, Highland Harris was attacked by an enemy submarine U-96. After the first torpedo hit the ship began to sink very quickly. A second torpedo sent Highland Harris to the bottom of the Atlantic, 82 miles north and 3-4 miles west of Eagle Island, County Mayo, Ireland. Twenty four of the crew were lost, including Alfred. He was aged 27. His body was not recovered for burial. He is commemorated both on the Chatham Naval War Memorial in Kent and at the Tower Hill War Memorial in London.



Tower Hill Memorial Plaque for
S S Highland Harris