

John Cresswell



John Cresswell was born in 1895 in Harefield on the barge, Tiber. He was the eldest son of James (John) Cresswell, a canal boatman and Betsey Ann Cresswell nee Ralph, married in 1885 in Tipton in Staffs. . The family were continually on the move. The two eldest children on the 1901 census, Maria and Eliza, were born in West Bromwich, John in Harefield, Harriet in Linslade and William in Braunston. Thomas, born in 1901 and William born in 1899 were baptised at St Lawrence's Church, Brentford on October 23rd 1901. In 1901, the family were living on the canal boats "Mary Ann" and "Perseverance" and were moored in Brentford. In the 1911 census, some of the children were living on barges with their married siblings. William was on the White City barge with his sister, Maria, and her husband, John Alford; Harriet was on the 'Lark' with her sister, Anna (Hannah) and her husband, William Webb.

John and Betsey Ann had a large family and in 1912 suffered the loss of their daughter Elizabeth, born in 1903, in a tragic accident from their barge near Bletchley, reported on August 24th 1912. See below. William Cresswell, born 1899, also died in WW1 on 30th May 1918 and served with the 8th Battalion, Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)



August 24th 1912 Bucks Herald:- "A sad drowning fatality occurred in the Grand Junction Canal on Monday evening a few miles from Bletchley and close by the village of Stoke Hammond. It seems that a young girl, Elizabeth Cresswell, aged 8, daughter of Mr John Cresswell, of Marsworth, neat Tring, was on a barge owned by Emanuel Smith of Brentford and as the barge was passing the Dairy Farm at Stoke Hammond she by some means fell into the water. The alarm was at once given, and a man who was in charge of the boat, plunged into the water, but although he dived several times he failed to find the girl. Information was sent to the police at Bletchley, and Inspector Dance and two constables were shortly on the spot and proceeded to drag the canal and later recovered the body about thirty yards from the scene of the accident"

Above left:- London Road, Brentford End, Ordnance Survey Map C 1915

Private John Cresswell (18678) enlisted in Hounslow and was posted to the 5th Battalion, Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He died of wounds on 18th January 1916 and is buried in Etaples Military Cemetery. His parents were living at 5 London Road, Brentford when his death was commemorated on the CWGC and also on the 1935 electoral register. John is also remembered in All Saints Church, Church Street, Isleworth.

