



Charles Edward Liesching 1862-1920

Volunteer researcher: Helen Booth

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Charles was born in 1862 in Ceylon. His father was Charles Ferdinand Henry Louis Liesching (sometimes written as Carl Ferdinand Heinrich Ludwig Liesching) who was born in Cape Town, South Africa on 7 February 1833. Charles Sr and his elder brother Louis were sons of a medical man in Cape Town and grandsons of an officer who had gone out to the Cape with a German or other mercenary regiment. Through friends of the family's influence they were sent out to Ceylon, Charles, aged 18 receiving a free passage on a Royal Navy ship.

In Ceylon both brothers eventually obtained appointments in the civil service. Charles served in a number of places, being over the years: a Commissioner of Requests, a Police Magistrate, an Assistant Government Agent, a District Judge and possibly Registrar General. He also appears on the Planters Registry of the Ceylon Tea Industry as a planter. He died in Colombo on 18th May 1900.

On the 7th September 1858 Charles Sr married Louisa Sophia Layard (born 4th March 1835 in Trincomalee) in Colombo. Her father was Sir Charles Peter Layard, KCMG, who after many official posts in Ceylon, had risen to become the British Government's Agent in the Western Provinces.

Charles Sr and Louisa had the following children:

Norman George, Francis Charles, Eva (died young), Charles Edward, Arthur Stuart and William Enright.

There is no record of Norman or Francis in the Blundells Records but Charles, Arthur and William were educated there. Charles was a pupil from 1876-1880, Arthur from 1878 -1882 and William from 1880-1884. Arthur and William are recorded as their guardian being Miss Edwards of Hensleigh Cottage.

The 1881 Census records that William (then 14) was living with his great aunt Henrietta Edwards (66) at Hensleigh Cottage in Tiverton. She was 'living on interest of money' - along with two of her nieces, a further six great nieces and nephews, a governess and four servants.

After leaving Blundells, Charles Liesching studied medicine at St Georges in London obtaining a MRCS and LRCP. He practised for a time in Stroud and then came back to live and work in Tiverton. In 1891 he married Annie Katherine Roe (born in Ireland) in Weymouth. She was the daughter of Deputy Surgeon General William Carden Roe of Loran Park, Co Tipperary (he appears in the list of landed gentry of Ireland)

Charles and Annie had 10 children – all of them born in Tiverton:

Eva 1892, Charles 1894, William 1895, Emily 1896, Nora 1898, Arthur 1900, Robert 1901, Annie 1902, Nona 1904 and John 1909.

(Son William, who was educated at Blundells, had a very successful career in the army. He was wounded twice during World War I and was awarded the Military Cross and the Cross of the Legion of Honour.)

In Situations Vacant in Western Morning News January 5 1895, is listed:

'Wanted, experienced NURSE with good character, to take charge of three young children, including baby from the month; nursemaid kept. Wages £16 to £18. Address Mrs Liesching



Tiverton.'

In the 1894 -5 Tiverton and District Commercial Directory, Charles is named as Charles Edward Liesching MRCS, LRCP (Lon) living at the Great House in St Peter Street. He is said to be a medical officer for Tiverton, Halberton, Sampford Peverall and Uplowman. He appears to have had a partnership – Liesching and Welsford with George Frederick Welsford BA MB (Cantab)MRCS, of Gotham House.

In the 1911 census Charles is living in Tiverton with his wife and 10 children. His occupation is given as Physician and Surgeon.

Charles Liesching played a very active role in the life of Tiverton. He was an honorary medical officer at the Tiverton Infirmary and Dispensary, a Member of the Town Council, and Secretary of The Working Men's Club of Angel Terrace. He was also a church warden at St Pauls, a sidesman, a lay reader and superintendent at the Boys' Sunday School. He appears in many newspaper reports giving evidence at inquests.

Charles died on the 4th March 1920 in Tiverton. The service was at St Pauls and the internment at Tiverton Cemetery. His obituary in the Western Times on the 5th March 1920 said that it had not been generally known that he was seriously indisposed and the news caused quite a sensation in the town. It also commented that he had been in practice in the town and district for many years, and that he was a valued member of Tiverton Town Council and was interested in all philanthropic movements.

It was said that he was a great loss to the town and that the district was poorer without him. A piece in the Plymouth Gazette was entitled 'Tiverton's Loss'.

Annie Liesching continued living at the Great House and died in 1931. Charles' brother William also lived in Tiverton at some stage. When he died in April 1926 he was described as 'a well-known citizen of Tiverton and a retired tea planter' with his address given as The Chalet, Tiverton. Three of his sons - D'Arcy, Charles and Frank - attended Blundell's after his death. They and their mother were then living in Tiverton. Several of his children went on to live long lives. Mercy Hope Liesching died in Devon in 2003 aged 98.