

147: William Kemp

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: William Kemp

Rank: Second Steward

Battalion / Regiment: Mercantile Marine Reserve

Service Number: 550817

Date of Death: 01 October 1918

Age at Death: 29

Buried / Commemorated at: St Winefride's RC churchyard, Little Neston

Additional information given by CWGC: Was serving on H.M.S. "Eaglet" The son of William and Margaret Kemp of 12, Comer St., Birkenhead

William Kemp, who is buried at St Winefride's RC church in Little Neston, was a son of labourer / gas fitter William and Margaret Kemp of Birkenhead.

William Kemp snr married Margaret Rogan, a daughter of agricultural labourer Michael and Martha Rogan of Leighton, Neston, at Our Lady & St Nicholas & St Anne, the Liverpool Parish Church, in late 1886. Their first son, Albert Victor Kemp, was born in Neston on 5 May 1887 and baptised at St Winefride's on 12 June. William jnr was born in Neston on 24 September 1889 and he was baptised at St Winefride's on 13 October.

The Neston and Parkgate Gas Company had been formed in the town in 1881 and a gasworks, gasholder and manager's house had been erected on Church Lane by the end of 1882 when a supply was being piped to 33 customers. It is quite possible that William Kemp worked on the construction of the gas supply and that he had come to Neston for this purpose. However, the take-up of this new form of energy - it was used primarily for lighting - was slow and, by mid-1885 fewer than 50 consumers in the town were being supplied and there had been much criticism of the disruption and damage caused by the laying of pipelines. Although the number of consumers in Neston increased gradually, and a second gasholder was installed in 1887, it is possible that William Kemp moved to Birkenhead to work in the gas industry there; a gasworks had opened in the town in 1841 and the gas supply was well established.

In 1891 the family was at Quarrybank Place (now demolished, between Oxtan Road and Borough Road), Birkenhead:

William Kemp	Hesw	m	28	General labourer	X	Heswall
Margaret	Rogan	w	28			Thornton Hough
Albert	Rogan	s	3			Leighton
William	Rogan	s	1			Leighton

1891 census (extract) – 6, Quarry Bank Place, Birkenhead

William Kemp	28	general labourer	born Heswall
Margaret	28		born Thornton Hough
Albert	3		born Leighton
William	1		born Leighton

Ten years later the family had moved to Jackson Street on the west side of Birkenhead (also demolished):

William Kemp	Head	M	38	Gas Fitter, Gas Works			Heswall
Margaret do	Wife	M	38				New Ferry
Albert do	Son		13				do
William do	do		11				do

1901 census (extract) - 54 Jackson Street, Birkenhead

William Kemp	38	gas fitter, gas works	born Heswall
Margaret	38		born New Ferry
Albert	13		born New Ferry
William	11		born New Ferry

By the time of the 1911 census William was working on the railways and the family was living at Gomer Street (now gone, and not Comer Street as recorded by the CWGC) in the centre of Birkenhead by Grange Road:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

Number of Schedule 114
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after enumeration.)

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday and SEX.)		PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.						PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
		Male	Female	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted, if less than one year write "under one month," or "one month," etc.	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Total Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have Died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employed, Worker, or Working on Own Account.			
William Kemp	Head	48		Married	25	6	4	2	Labourer	Gas Works	Employed		Heswall		
Margaret Kemp	Wife	49		Married	25								Bromborough		
William Kemp	Son	22		Single					Railway servant				Birkenhead		
Laurence Kemp	Son	17		Single					?				Birkenhead		
Elsie Kemp	Daughter	12		Single					Shoemaker				Birkenhead		

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

Total		0
Male	Female	Persons
3	2	5

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature William Kemp

Postal Address 12 Gomer Street

1911 census (condensed) – 12 Gomer Street, Birkenhead

William Kemp	48	labourer, gas works	born Heswall
Margaret	49		born Bromborough
William	22	railway servant	born Birkenhead
Laurence	17	? (obliterated)	born Birkenhead
Elsie	12		born Birkenhead

William and Margaret had been married for 25 years and four of their six children were still living.

Whilst it is recorded that William Kemp jnr was a Second Steward in the Mercantile Marine Reserve, and that he was serving on HMS *Eaglet* when he died on 1 October

1918, just a few weeks before the end of the war, little else is known other than, at that time, HMS *Eaglet* was stationed in Salthouse Dock.

At the start of the war in 1914 the Admiralty controlled a Naval Reserve of upwards of 18,000 trained officers and men of the Mercantile Marine and Fishing Industry, besides nearly 24,000 officers and men of the Royal Fleet Reserve.

In the summer of 1914 the Admiralty had at its disposal, in addition to the regular personnel of the Royal Navy with its own reserve, not only 18,000 RNR officers and men trained in war duties, but the whole of the personnel of the Mercantile Marine, consisting of some 170,000 men of British birth, a larger number than at any previous date, together with 100,000 fishermen.

At the beginning of August 1914 the strength of naval personnel was 147,667; in November 1918, when the Armistice was signed, it had been increased by some 200,000 officers and men, in addition to making good wastage of about 80,000. It was largely from the 170,000 men of British birth belonging to the Mercantile Marine and the 100,000 men employed in fishing around the coasts of the United Kingdom that the required recruits had been obtained.

[Adapted from History of the Great War : The Merchant Navy - Vol. I Sir Archibald Hurd John Murray, London 1921]

HMS *Eaglet*, a 50-gun frigate, was previously HMS *Eagle*, renamed whilst a training ship and lost in a fire in 1926. It served Merseyside, North West England and North Wales. The Royal Navy Roll of Honour described the ship as an Auxiliary Patrol parent ship.

No details are known of William Kemp's death other than it was recorded as being due to illness.

In the 1939 Register William Kemp snr is recorded as living at 1 Greenfield Street (near Claughton Road) in Birkenhead:

Martha Kemp	born 8 February 1890	widow	
Mabel Kemp	born 9 July 1913	single	domestic servant
Elsie Kemp	born 29 December 1914	single	confectioner (cake maker)

One line of the record has been redacted

William Kemp	born 10 February 1863	widower	gas works mechanic (retired)
--------------	-----------------------	---------	---------------------------------



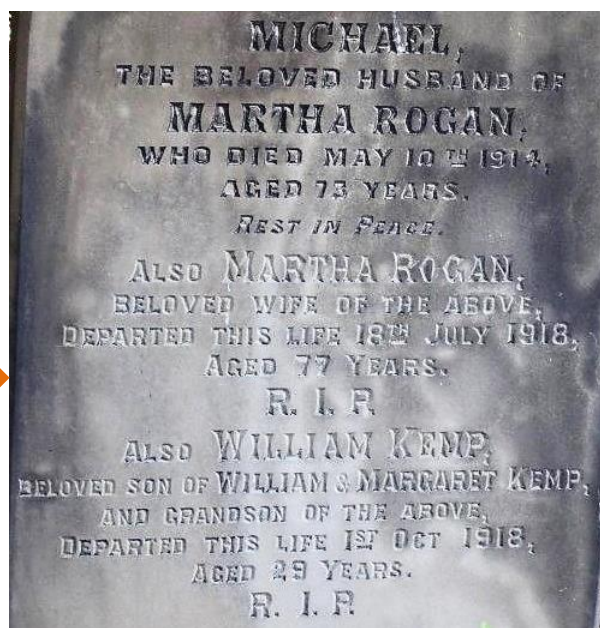
HMS *Eagle* in Brunswick Dock, Liverpool
[photo: <http://streetsofliverpool.co.uk/>]

Margaret Kemp, William's wife, had died in mid-1934, aged 72, in the Tranmere district. It is not known when William Kemp died.

Mabel and Elsie Kemp were Martha's daughters. Martha Edwards had married Albert Victor Kemp at St Mary's Church, Birkenhead, in early 1909 but Albert died, aged 51, in mid-1938 in the Birkenhead South district.

Laurence, the younger brother of William Kemp jnr, married Gladys Millward in mid-1927 at a Civil Marriage in Birkenhead and one daughter, Sylvia Mary Kemp, (registered in Birkenhead in mid-1929) is known. The family has not been located in the 1939

Register and the dates of Laurence's and Gladys's deaths are unknown.



William Kemp headstone, at St Winefride's RC church, Burton Road, Neston

The key sections of the inscription read:

MICHAEL the beloved husband of MARTHA ROGAN who died May 10th 1914 Aged 75 years

Also MARTHA ROGAN, beloved wife of the above, departed this life 18th July 1918 Aged 77 years

Also WILLIAM KEMP, beloved son of WILLIAM & MARGARET KEMP and grandson of the above, departed this life 1st October 1918 Aged 29 years

Elsie Mary Kemp, William's sister, married John Samuel Chesters at a Civil Marriage in Birkenhead in late 1925 but John died in Birkenhead in late 1930 aged 34. In the 1939 Register Elsie was living at 12 Gomer Street, Birkenhead¹:

Elsie Chesters	born 17 February 1899
	widow hospital cleaner

George A Syvret	born 12 July 1916
	iron worker

George Syvret was, most probably, a lodger. Elsie Chesters married Samuel Fulton at a Civil Marriage in Birkenhead in late 1939 and she died, in Birkenhead, in late 1974. It appears that Samuel Fulton, 50, died in mid-1943 in north Birkenhead.

¹ Gomer Street, which no longer exists, led off Grange Road.