

A Norse Saga

To my last report!

Last November I was asked if I would help a visiting Norwegian trace his late grandfather's stay in Frodsham during 1939-1945 and I arranged to meet him in the archive room in Castle Park House.



Henning Eriksen, a tall athletic Norwegian, wanted to find a Woods family of 34 Ellis Lane and a Bradley Orchard Farm family of Dobson, who had known his grandfather in 1939-1945.

Serendipity and coincidence played their parts once more.

Our conversation was somewhat chaotic - two languages backwards and forwards - but after listening to his careful English and with the aid of the Town Council's map of Frodsham, Henning was able to find where these places were.

I contacted Simon Longden who lives by Ellis Lane and found that he knew the Woods family and their house. The two arranged to meet in The Old Hall Hotel in Main Street, where Henning was staying and by coincidence where Simon happened to be dining there that evening. This meeting proved very rewarding with Simon telling him so much about the Woods family.

I contacted Nick Smith and found that he too knew the Woods family, and was able to contact a number of his friends who had long memories about the Second World War. Emails soon began flying around the village and over the next few days this project grew like Topsy. Heather Powling mentioned the Norwegian's quest to a group of ladies of the

right era in the Parish Hall, and one lady asked if he was called Hans. Astonishingly, the answer was, 'Yes'!

So, here is a copy of Henning's own typed story given to me on that first day and followed by fascinating answers to some of his questions.

Whaling - War - England - Scotland - Home

Grandfather liked to tell stories from his whaling days and time in England over supper. As a 13 year old boy, these stories stuck to me and after watching the Easter Quiz in 2015 with Rune and Oystein from Dumfries, all these stories came back to me. It was then time for me to collect papers, photos, and, not least, to travel to see all these places.

Bessa [grandfather?] was 15 years old the first time he went to the Southern Ocean to whale. At 22 he went every year as a sailor. He usually departed from Tonsberg [A Viking city SW of Oslo] sometime between September and November and returned between April and May. He worked for Abraham Larsen (the 'Rokke' [boss?] of those days) and hunted whales on the same boat as Durban Karlsen.[?] They could catch 3-400 whales in a season, and when they were whaling there was no time for sleep. They made a good year's salary in six months, and they worked accordingly.

In 1939 he travelled out as usual, knowing well that something was brewing. On his way home from the field in 1940 the Second World War is a fact and the fleet was taken to South Shields/Newcastle. There he worked from May 7th to June. It may be here that he met an older Norwegian lady. In any case, before June ends he was working at Bradley Orchard Farm (Frodsham) and was lodged with the Woods family, who owned one half of a recently built 2- family house 15 minutes away (34 Ellis Lane). Agnes Woods was the old lady's daughter, married to Bill, and together they had four children. Bessa [grandfather?] worked at the farm of the Dobsen family until the fall of 1941.

In December 1941 he reported to service in the Norwegian army, and was stationed in Dumfries, Scotland (The Mill). He became one of the first in the newly founded Company A with about 200 men. In the beginning they had neither equipment nor firearms, but marched in the streets with brooms. Some of the sailors had a lot of money after the profitable season, and they bought cars that they sublet to the army. Granddad served as a chauffeur and mechanic. From 1942 to 1943 the company moved to Fortrose in North of Scotland. Here training with both Scotts and allied forces commenced. By 1943 Bessa was in the operational brigade as a fully trained commando. The training was based on close combat techniques and parachuting, as well as code signalling. By 1944 he attained the rank of corporal and drove among others King Hakon to various missions. Much of the time was spent practicing for D-Day. When he was on leave, which happened 12-15 times during the war, he often travelled to Frodsham or Warrington a week at a time. His company did not participate in D-Day but was held back as a reserve force to be deployed later in Norway. When peace arrived May 1945, he was given one week's leave of absence, but was withheld in the army, and was only released from duty in November the same

year. He was then offered to serve as King Hakon's driver in Oslo, but declined and instead became a farmer in Slagen, and later a car mechanic, a skill he learned during his time in England.

Hans Karsten Kamfjord, born in 1910, had two children and five grand children, and died at an age of 81. He enjoyed fishing, traveling with a caravan in Norway, and do light work in the garage, forest and in the fields. Family parties and meals were high lights. He was very good at orienting himself in the landscape, a skill also learned in Scotland. In 1955 the Woods family visited Bessa in Norway with the twins, Pauline and Peter. Grandfather never travelled back to England, but described his time there as exciting and overall a good time, except for missing his wife and son back home in Norway.



Grandfather cherished his mother highly. Ever since his first whaling tour at the age of 15, she always put a Bible at the top of his sack. She spoiled all her eight children, and once, when he was caught by the tide during training in Scotland, he said, " It was just as if my mother had come along and pulled me ashore" While in Scotland he weighed 12 stones (76 kg)and was 170 cm(?) tall, two facts he always liked to point out. He wasn't very pretty, as grand mother said, but there was something about him.... I agree."

The Trail!

Many may not be familiar with the Frodsham-Norwegian connection but the history goes back a long way as you will see. In recent years, Anglo-Norwegian sisters living in Frodsham, attended Frodsham High School in the 1970s, and I once spent two half days invigilating a young boy sitting his Norwegian (GCSE equivalent) exams.

Henning returned to Norway the next day, after visiting Ellis Lane and Bradley Orchard Farm and seeing where his grandfather found work on the land, but he and I have continued to exchange email information occasionally.

I decided to record some of the information as it flew directly between everyone so that it becomes a more immediate and unusual link. Henning's spelling is as received.

After meeting Simon Longden and learning much about the Woods and his grandfather, you can feel Hennings growing excitement in this first message;

Henning 22. 11. 18 Frodsham.

Simon know!

The lady was Agnes woods, her son is Roy. My grandfather met Agnes June 1940. From ellis lane to bradely orchard farm there is A little road...

Nick Smith and Heather Powling

Olinda Anne Tonnette Cecilia Hansen married Allen Whitfield in 1912 (marriage registered in Chester). Agnes Olinda Whitfield was born in 1913 - and Olinda lived in Frodsham and died in May 1950 - address given as 40 Hillside Road. Allen Whitfield died on 20 January 1934 - probate granted to his widow who was then living at Norton Railway Cottages in Runcorn.

Kath Hewitt to Henning

Such an adventure! Were you able to find any photographs? How long did your Grandfather work on the land? Were there other European nationals there? Do you know why he was working there? Dates?

Henning

Hans Karsten kamfjord, born 1910 worked at bradley orchard farm from 29/6-1940 to late 1941. Familiy Dobson (bickley malpas sy14 8ep)

Was metodist and give work to many irisch and diffrent nations). If there is no Iren in woods family its likely too think that it is in Dobson.

Amacing!

Visit the farm today and they remamber dowson, got the adress. Nice too see the longfield where grandfather set poteto and turnips

Nick Smith

This becomes fascinating!!

Agnes Wood died about 3 years ago aged 99. She and Bill lived in Ellis Lane then removed to Churchfield Road. He died a good while ago. She had 4 children- Sylvia, Roy and twins Pauline and Peter. Sylvia lives in Luxembourg. The sons somewhere down south and Pauline in Australia.

Now the interesting bit. Agnes mother was Norwegian!

From what we know she was in service to the Talbots at Aston Hall. How she arrived here I have no idea but I think she came from Kristiansand, Norway.

Please pass this on. I would be intrigued to have the follow up

If it is the Agnes Wood whom I knew, I might have some more information for you but I will check my details of her with someone else first.

Kath.

Henning leaves Frodsham today but I've got his email address. He's very proud of his grandfather who served with King Hakon in Dumfries, Scotland.

Simon Longden

Pauline & Peter Woods born June 1946.

Simon Longden.

Some random info. Peter Moss' Aunt Norah was sister to Agnes Woods. We don't know her mother's name but will find out. There was a sail maker in Runcorn called Greig who was Norwegian. Runcorn being a sea port had connections with Norway and other foreign ports and that could have been why there are people of Norwegian origin in this area.

Kath to Henning.

Hello again, I've contacted The Imperial War Museums in Manchester and London and asked for information about Frodsham's war time activities which might shed more light on why your grand father stayed here.

I've also asked for any new released WW2 information involving Frodsham .

I've asked [Heather Powling] for information about the Woods Family which might be in the Parish Church of St Laurence' Records.

I will let you know any information as soon as I can. It has been a pleasure to meet you and hear about your grandfather. I would be very pleased to add your story to Frodsham History Society archives eventually, as it is so important.

Heather Powling

Hi Kath, I have managed to find Agnes Woods and her mother Olinda Anne Tonette . If Hans met Olinda in South Shields, why was she there?

Nick Smith

As a youngish girl she [Dorothy Smith] knew Olinda Whitfield. When Olinda lived at Norton she worked for the Earp family who lived in a big house in Norton. Probably late 1920s early 1930s. When Aston Hall was demolished she probably went to live in a Norton cottage. The Earp family had a tannery business at Preston Brook.

Henning

Sendt fra min iPhone

Den norske sjømannsorganisasjonen hadde et stort rekreasjonshjem

–Broadlands i Hereford i

Wales. Det ble gitt anledning å sende et par av våre soldater på rekreasjon dit for noen uker

etter bombingene. Jeg tok noen dager sommerferie der også da jeg skulle der bort likevel å hente en av guttene tilbake. Broadlands var et herlig sted.

Kath.

Hello Henning,

Quite a surprise when your email arrived in Norwegian!

I understood the English names of places, bombs, soldiers and recreational place but I hope you won't mind translating rest for me.

Henning

The place was the thing. One little place where some few norwegian soldiers have some rest.

Henning. I talk with A old man who know hans from 1955. He told that hans was in combat in A boat, A granat (grenade?) got right tru the boat widout explotion. So know we have to stories that connect him to military action.

Heather Powling

How fantastic to have Olinda's link back to Norway. So she came here about 1895, which explains why she is on the 1901 census for Aston Hall - then she married and stayed here. Arthur Harvey Talbot, living at Aston Hall in 1901 had a Norwegian laundress called Olinda Hanson, aged 23 (so born in 1878). She is listed as a foreign subject, so doesn't appear on the Ancestry.

Kath

The Salford Imperial War Museum curator wasn't able to help with any Norwegian / Frodsham connections, which is only to be expected but it was a try and very kind of him to look into the enquiry.

Henning

Ok, i have sent a letter too public record office, too hear after namelist.

Total unknow norwegian soldier at 52 divisjon is:

46 liason

20 free commandos/Salford reserve commandos in troop 5. Very cold in norway thise days, minus 42 at night

Henning

Sendt fra min Huawei-mobiltelefon

Lars is also listed on the following website :<http://home.online.no/~gestrom/history/nbrigfrm.htm>

where it indicates that 46 Norwegian officers were attached to 52nd Division during the Walcheren landings, 6 as platoon commanders, one of whom was killed in action. Two were awarded the MC and six others, including Lars, were "Mentioned in Despatches".

Henning

The Norwegian army had a rekreasjon home few miles from frodsham. today we sing the christmas in our church.

Kath 2018

The recreational station may be Delamere Park as there was a huge camp there for years of Polish and other nationals surviving after 1945. Much on the internet and explanatory boards around Delamere Park. One Polish ex soldier remained living in a caravan hidden amongst trees just outside the camp and was looked after by villagers until he died a few years ago.

Henning

Well, the nathional arkiv has no informasjon about action at the continent. But the say: try london. But a have read a book from 1997 and there I found the history told from the men who served close too Hans, and it mach wat he told me.

Henning 11 2 2018

Norwegian army have around 2400 men in Scotland 1944. They train for d day and liberatiin of Norway. 100 Norwegian commandos (troop 5) was in combat at Wahleren/Belgia. But around 50 men in Norwegian operative brigaden was so fit for faight at they Ask overkommando to join higlander 52 divisjon. This men is unknown i Norwegian register,

but maybe it will be found in Scottish register... And maybe my grandfather shows up...as corporal Hans Larsen Kamfjord.

Norske liaisonoffiserer som var med avdelinger av «52 Mountain Division» under «Operation Market Garden» (Arnhem) og på Walcheren. De fleste gjorde tjeneste som etterretningsoffiserer eller annen stabstjeneste, men noen (7) førte også tropp. Av dem ble en drept og tre såret. Tre fikk «Military Cross» og en «mentioned».

This means that it was 46 Norwegian that was in action for "4/5 or 7 batt. KOSB" [Kings Own Scottish Borderers]

Will it be possible too find the name, my grandfather was corporal and at the same camp as this man...and he has told his son that he was in action at the continent, he was in company A and he was in operative brigade staff in 1944

Kath

I'm sorry Henning, but I haven't had any response from the KOSB Regiment or their Regimental museum. Do you have his serial number?

Henning

His serial nr was 2359, kp A

Kath

Hello Henning, Nick Smith has given me some more information for you which you might find useful and interesting about Agnes Woods' daughter in Luxemburg - I will send you her address.

Henning

Letter from Sveits, Sylvia remembers grandfather Hans as a big, quiet man with blue eyes and blond hair. He learned Agnes and Sylvia the Norwegian alphabet. Now the interest, Agnes' mother Olinda Tonette f. 1877 in Kvinesdal Norway and her father was Hans and he helped the Englishmen at fishing salmon...her sister goes to USA, and Olinda goes to UK as a 18-year-old girl.

In these days there is a film at NRK about the Norwegian commandos at Walcheren 1944.

Kath

I have forwarded your information to my brother-in-law, John, a retired journalist living in Edinburgh, Scotland who may know how to get into the K O S B Regiment's military WW2 records. I'll try all different ways of getting answers for you.

Emails from Henning continue to arrive, the latest being that his friends are also wanting to trace their own grandfathers' WW2 military records in Scotland. I have been unable to gain access to Norwegian military records and relevant websites on the internet have been of no detailed help. However, Henning has found that Norse Television programmes and books have, and are, documenting this important era.

The Free Norwegian Army and King Haakon's role in wartime Scotland, is riveting should you wish to read up about it on the internet.

This has been a fascinating project, one which has been truly absorbing, providing answers for the Norwegian Henning Eriksen and his family and information perhaps known to few Frodsham folk.

I wonder if Henning's children will be fired with the same national interest and family pride after learning so much about their great grandfather Hans Karsten Kamfjord, an Anglo-Norwegian family, and this English village of Frodsham in Cheshire in WW2. Watch this space!

The WW2 photographs of Hans and his comrades record the event in England and Scotland - Hans has a circle drawn around his head in the group photo, and is first on the right in front of a car with two soldiers. Other soldiers and friends are not known now. The identities of the Woods family on the river bank are not certain but Henning thinks they are of Bill, Agnes, Peter, Silvia, Olinder and Hans.

Message received October 7th 2018 from Henning who visited Scotland recently.

Talk with A history man who told:

In fort rose they move the sivilian, buildt A tankfactory, ship the tank om boat in evening an practic d day at nairn next morning.

They was force s, s for sword.

Henning

(Sword -one of the code words for invasion of Normandy)

Message received May 11th 2019 fom Henning.

“At last I got the hole picture of grandfather:

He was together with 69 Norwegian in A liason corps who train british for winter war in norway (force 134)

He join 52 lowland divisjon for 2 years as a orderly (korp Larsen) and he seen arnhem, walcheren and ardenner.

He enter Oslo in mai 45 with Roy urgarth.” [Major General Roy Urquart, depicted in the film “ A Bridge Too Far”]

Henning Eriksen's account of his grandfather, Hans Karsten Kamfjord's connection with Frodsham families and his WW2 wartime service with the Free Norwegian Army is an interesting and important addition to Frodsham History Society's archives.

Henning

Kath Hewitt.



Commando soldat Hans K. Kamfjord. 1942 England