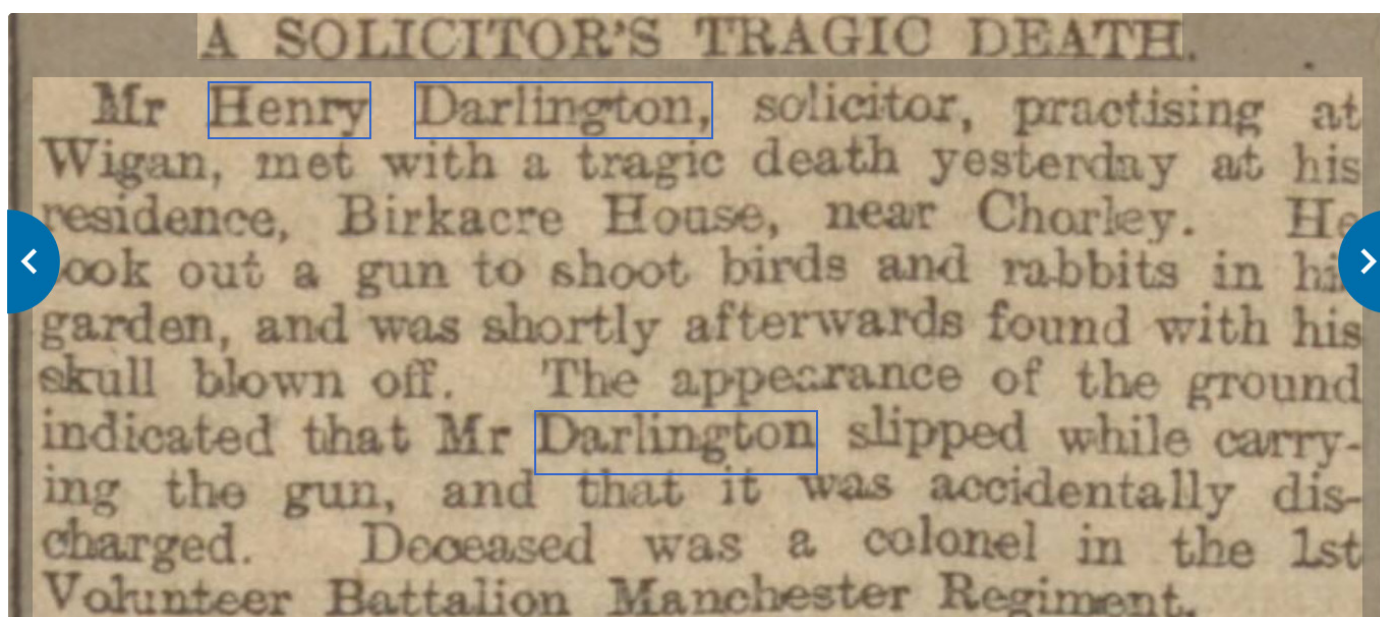


SIR HENRY CLAYTON DARLINGTON (1877-1959)

Sir Henry Clayton Darlington was from 1928 to 1946 the fourteenth owner and occupier of Melling Hall. Before and after World War 1, he practised as a solicitor in Parbold, Wigan. From 1914-18, his war service as Brigadier General took him to Egypt, Gallipoli and France, where he received an award for gallantry. He was knighted in 1925.

His direct ancestors can be traced back to the early 1700s in Cheshire, and from the early 1800s in Lancashire, where his grandfather **Ralph Darlington** (1823-1890) was three times Mayor, and then Town Clerk, of Wigan. His father **Henry Darlington** (1852-1904), head of Messrs Darlington & Sons, Solicitors in Parbold, Wigan, was killed in a shooting accident on 22 August 1904. The amalgamated law firm of Peace and Darlington, of Liverpool and Wigan, was formed in January 1905.



Report on death of HCD's father

There is a tablet in Christ Church, Parbold in memory of **Henry Darlington**, and of his son John St Clair Darlington, Lieutenant, 6th Jat Bengal (Light) Infantry, who died of appendicitis at Secunderabad, India, on 18 July 1911.

GROWING UP

Sir Henry Clayton Darlington was born at Elm Bank, Wigan on 27 June 1877. (His second name, Clayton, was the maiden name of his grandmother Anne Darlington.) He

lived in Wigan with his parents at Elmfield Road, and then at Common Road, Parbold. From 1891 to 1896, he was a pupil at Shrewsbury School.

From 1900-02, he served in South Africa with the 1st Battalion, Manchester Regiment. In 1903, he was a Lieutenant in the 1st Volunteer Battalion, Manchester Regiment, where his father Lt Colonel Henry Darlington was commanding officer.

In June 1903, he passed the final exam of the Incorporated Law Society, and was admitted as a fully qualified solicitor in 1904. In November 1904, he was prosecutor in a case in Wigan.

In 1909, he married Mabel Anne Hirst, and they had 4 children between 1910 and 1916. (Their son Henry John Darlington, born in 1912, also attended Shrewsbury School, and then Christ Church Oxford; in 1935, he joined the King's Own Royal Regiment, Lancaster; from 1938-39 he was a Lieutenant in Palestine, and in 1944 he was with the 6th Airborne in Normandy. In 1961, he was Colonel of the Lancaster Brigade. He died in 1982; his grave is in Melling churchyard.)

THE GREAT WAR

During World War 1, Henry Clayton Darlington commanded the 2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment in Alexandria (August-September 1914), and then the 5th Battalion, Manchester Regiment at the Suez Canal (October 1914-April 1915), and then saw service at Gallipoli (landing at Cape Helles in May 1915) until January 1916, when he was evacuated for ill health. In June 1916 he was awarded the Order of St Michael & St George for military operations in the field. In 1936, he published *Letters from Helles* (Longmans, London), describing his service in Egypt and Gallipoli. The book was dedicated to "The Officers, 2nd Battalion, The King's Own Royal Regiment, from Henry Darlington".



Sir Henry Clayton Darlington in uniform

Tragically, Mabel Anne Darlington died on 4 September 1916, a month after giving birth to their fourth child. Their four children were then cared for by Mabel's sister Daisy Hirst, a Red Cross nurse, who gained a Royal Red Cross award in October 1917.

From November 1916 to early 1918, Henry was on active service in France. A collection at the Imperial War Museum of 'Private Papers of Colonel Sir Henry Darlington CMG TD DL JP' (see: www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1030014870) includes 12 letters he wrote to Daisy, describing his service as Brigadier General at Gallipoli, and later in France, where he mentions a persistent cough due to gas poisoning. He notes that the intense German shelling is something he is accustomed to and no longer concerned by (October 1917). He writes of his pride in Daisy's Royal Red Cross award (October 1917), his anxiety over the presentation of a gallantry award (January 1918) and preparations for his marriage to Daisy. Henry and Daisy married on 10 June 1918, and had five further children.

He remained as commander of the 5th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment until 1920, and commanded the 127th Infantry Brigade of the Territorial Army from 1920 to 1924.

FROM PARBOLD TO MELLING

In 1921, he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for Lancashire, and was appointed CB (Companion of the Bath, Civil Division). In 1925, he was knighted (KCB: Knight Commander of the Bath, Military Division).

From 1921 to 1927, (Sir) Henry and (Lady) Daisy Darlington were on the electoral roll for Croasdale House, Parbold, Wigan. In October 1925, Sir Henry attended the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Wigan; in April 1926 he opened the Chorley Parish Church Bazaar, and in July 1926 he was on the bench at Wigan County Police Court.

By 14 January 1928, they had moved into Melling Hall – with a large household: the 1939 Register lists 11 others, mainly servants. Soon after moving in, Sir Henry joined the Vale of Lune Harriers (President: Brigadier-General Bordrigge North, Field Master: Edward Tempest Tunstall North). In September 1929, Sir Henry, 'indisposed', was unable to attend the Bentham Show, of which he was president.

At Melling-with-Wrayton Parish meetings, Sir Henry took an interest in the modernisation of the village's infrastructure: in 1930, he proposed a resolution, seconded by Richard Culpin, 'That a supply [of water from the Manchester Corporation water main from Haweswater] for the parish be obtained [...] subject to satisfactory arrangements [for the cost]'; the vote was tied 11-11.

In January 1934, at a Parish meeting to mark out Rights of Way of all Footpaths (as requested by the County Council), Richard Culpin reported on a meeting at Hornby on the Electricity scheme for underground cables; the Hornby meeting had been in favour of the scheme. Sir Henry proposed a 'hearty vote of thanks [to Richard Culpin] for his interest in the question'.

In 1934 and 1935, Sir Henry was Vice-chairman of the East Lancashire Territorial Army Association. In 1938, he was appointed a Foundation Manager of Melling C E School, and he was High Sheriff of Lancashire for the year March 1945 to March 1946.

The family left Melling Hall on 27 September 1946, and moved to East End House, Fairford, Gloucestershire. (In October 1946, Melling Hall was purchased by Mr George Victor Johnson; a Hotel Licence to sell alcohol was granted to Mr & Mrs G V Johnson in February 1948.)

Sir Henry's last address, from 1950 to his death at Christmas 1959, was Tanglewood, Milford on Sea, Hants. A prayer desk in Manchester Cathedral bears the inscription 'In Memory of Colonel Sir Henry Darlington KCB CMG 1/5 Battalion (Manchester Regiment)'.

Lady Daisy Mary Darlington died on 12 October 1978, and is buried at St Margaret's at Cliffe, Kent.

Sir Henry Clayton Darlington was an incomer to Melling who involved himself deeply in the life of the village, while remaining faithful to his roots. In 1948, when Wigan Golf Club celebrated its 50th anniversary, Sir Henry ('of Gallipoli fame, and author of Letters from Helles') is mentioned in the Manchester Evening News of 1 November as one of the 15 surviving founder members of the club. In 1949, Sir Henry returned to Melling to open the annual Melling Hall fête.



1935 - Presentation of the Darlington Challenge Cup for Billiards:

Front:with cup: Lady Darlington; Mr Newton

Others: L to R: Mr Bell; Rev Wm Burrow; Sir Henry Darlington; Mr L Gibson; Mr Rosier; Mr Culpin