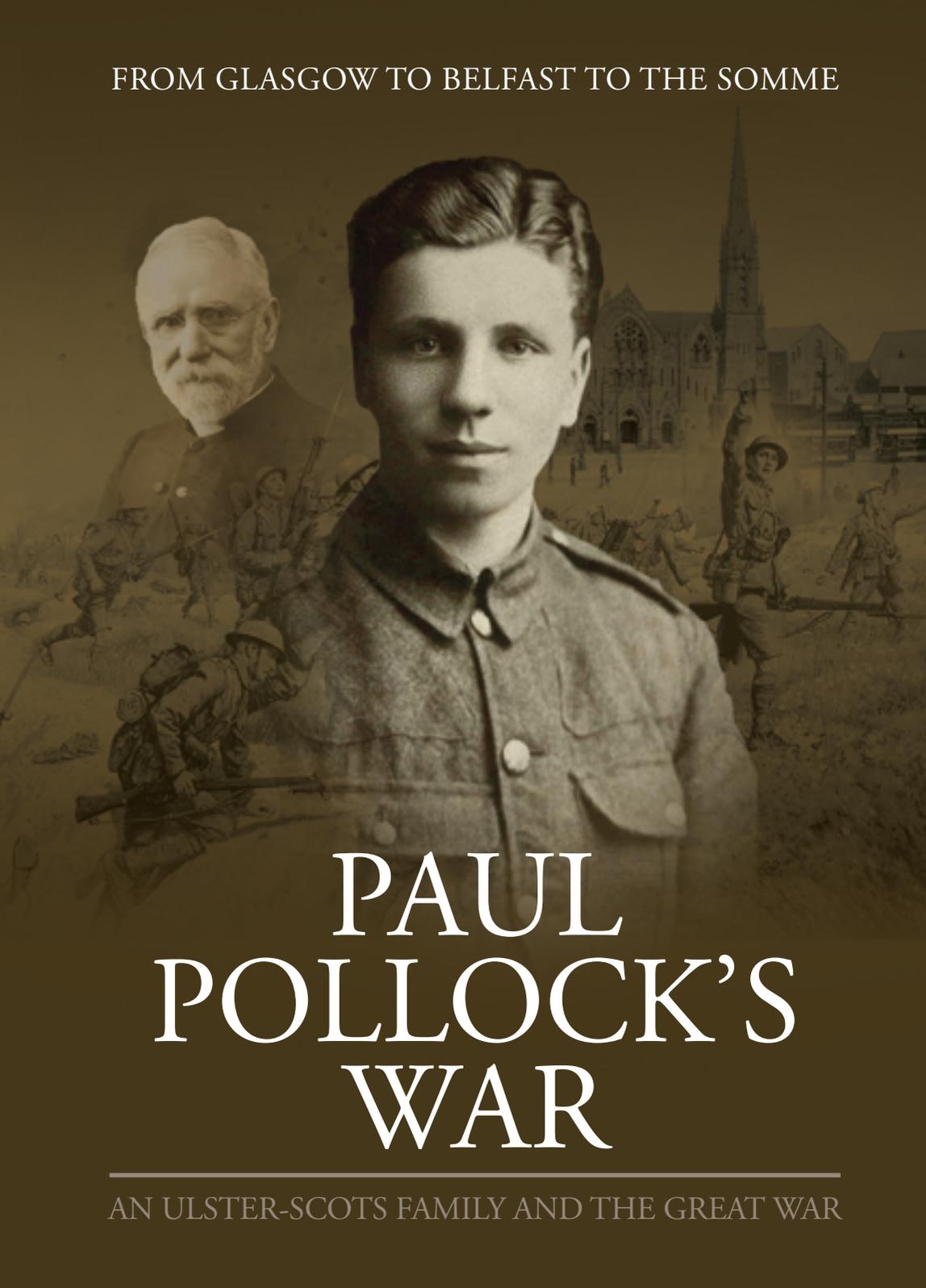


FROM GLASGOW TO BELFAST TO THE SOMME



PAUL  
POLLOCK'S  
WAR

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AN ULSTER-SCOTS FAMILY AND THE GREAT WAR

View of billet with group of soldiers lining up alongside their beds, kit laid out for inspection, July 1915. Photographed by George Hackney

BELUM.Y26402.18. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum



# PAUL POLLOCK'S WAR

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AN ULSTER-SCOTS FAMILY AND THE GREAT WAR

Peter Fisher  
with Elizabeth Bridges

  
**Ulster-Scots Agency**  
Boord o Ulster-Scotch

2015

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“The Attack of the Ulster Division” by J. P. Beadle  
courtesy of Belfast City Council.

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	iii
PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION	1
1    ALEXANDER POLLOCK (1824–97)	3
2    JOHN POLLOCK (1853–1935)	11
3    PAUL GILCHRIST POLLOCK (1896–1916)	34
4    POSTSCRIPT: THE POLLOCK FAMILY	54
APPENDICES	
I    St Enoch’s Presbyterian Church: origins to 1900	60
II   The Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Reunion, St Enoch’s, 4 July 1884	64
III  Rev. John Pollock and Christian Endeavour	66
IV   George Hackney, Belfast Soldier Photographer	68
V    ‘Our Boys at Seaford – a Message from the Camp’, An address by Rev. John Pollock	72
VI   Rev. John Pollock’s letter to George Hackney, 30 August 1916	76
VII  Presbyterian Memorials and the Great War	80
VIII Inst and the Great War Inscribing Paul Pollock’s name in Belfast and Thiepval	82

POLLOCK, Pte. A., 14007. 11th Bn. Royal Scots. 22nd Oct., 1916.

POLLOCK, Pte. Campbell, 6014. 2nd Regt. South African Inf. 16th July, 1916. Age 17. Son of Capt. John Campbell Pollock, of Far View, Ngutu, Zululand, Natal.

POLLOCK, Pte. Charles, 30586. 11th Bn. Royal Scots. 30th July, 1916. Age 24. Husband of Annie Ling (formerly Pollock), of 66, Livingston St., Lancaster, New York, U.S.A.

POLLOCK, Lce. Cpl. James, 19548. 107th Coy. Machine Gun Corps (Inf.). 15th June, 1916. Age 22. Son of David and Letitia Pollock, of 55, Legionel Place, Belfast.

POLLOCK, Lt. John, 13th Bn. Royal Irish Rifles. 1st July, 1916. Age 23. Son of John and Margaret Pollock, of The Priory, Marino, Co. Down.

POLLOCK, Pte. John, 28067. 12th Coy. Machine Gun Corps (Inf.). 1st July, 1916. Age 28. Son of John Pollock, of 49, Finnieston St., Glasgow.

POLLOCK, Pte. Neil Morrison, 6524. 3rd Regt. South African Inf. 26th July, 1916. Age 26. Son of Alan and Margaret Pollock, of 49, Auckland Rd., Doncaster, Yorkshire, England.

POLLOCK, Pte. Robert, 332414. 9th (Glasgow Hdrs.) Bn. Highland Light Inf. 21st Aug., 1916.

POLLOCK, Pte. Thomas, 2050. 3rd Regt. South African Inf. 17th July, 1916. Age 33. Son of Jane Murdoch (formerly Pollock), of Mawer, Saskatchewan, Canada, and the late Hume Pollock.

POLLOCK, Pte. William, 1294. 7th Bn. Seaforth Highlanders. 12th Oct., 1916.

POMAN, Pte. Francis Richard, 22118. 8th Bn. Royal Berkshire Regt. 31st Aug., 1916.

POMEROY, Cpl. William George, 2015. 1st Bn. Queen's Westminster. 1st July, 1916. Age 24. Son of Frank Louis Pomeroy and Annie Louise Pomeroy, of 64, Maybank Rd., South Woodford, Essex.

POMFIELD, Pte. Alfred George, 28245. 8th Bn. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 9th Sept., 1916.

POMFRET, Pte. Benjamin, 12324. 2nd Bn. East Lancashire Regt. 23rd Oct., 1916. Age 24. Son of John Thomas and Lydia Pomfret, of 1, Briggs St., Darwen, Lancs.

POMFRET, Pte. Job, 29451. 2nd Bn. Lancashire Fusiliers. 16th Oct., 1916.

POMFRET, Pte. Victor, 40510. 2nd Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers. 12th Oct., 1916.

POND, Pte. Arthur, 17746. 13th Bn. Essex Regt. 25th July, 1916.

POND, Pte. Edward Ernest, 3/6038. 5th Bn. Dorsetshire Regt. 26th Sept., 1916.

POND, Serjt. Rowing, 47628. 1st Bn. Essex Regt. 1st March, 1917.

PONSPORD, Pte. Albert, 37931. 10th Bn. Sherwood Foresters. 6th Aug., 1916. Age 29. Husband of Annie Ponsford, of 32, Ophim St., Belgrave Rd., Leicester.

PONSPORD, Pte. Alexander James, 11956. 2nd Bn. Coldstream Guards. 12th March, 1917.

PONSPORD, Pte. Francis, 7243. 1st Bn. Dorsetshire Regt. 21st Aug., 1915.

PONTING, Lce. Cpl. Alfred William, 17721. 15th Bn. Royal Scots. 1st July, 1916. Age 35. Son of Mrs. E. J. Ponting, of 3, Talbot Rd., Twickenham, Middx.

PONTING, Rtn. Geoffrey, 302061. 1st Bn. London Rifle Brigade. 9th Oct., 1916.

PONTING, Pte. Harold J., 5400. 1st/6th Bn. Gloucestershire Regt. 22nd Aug., 1916. Age 31. Son of George and Harriet J. Ponting, of Well Hill, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Glos.

PONTING, Pte. Harry, 6060. 13th Bn. Royal Fusiliers. 9th July, 1916. Age 22. Son of Mrs. E. J. Ponting, of 3, Talbot Rd., Twickenham, Middx.

PONTON, Pte. Arthur, 5/13501. 7th Bn. Cameron Highlanders. 17th Aug., 1916.

POOK, Pte. Frederick William, SR/7456. 8th Bn. Royal Fusiliers. 7th July, 1916. Age 20. Son of Frederick and Elizabeth Pook, of 10, Rodney Buildings, Hoxton Market, London.

POOL, Pte. Fred, 22668. 6th Bn. King's Own Yorkshire Light Inf. 15th Sept., 1916. Age 25. Son of Thomas and Charlotte Pool, of Kelfield, York.

INDEX No. M.R.21  
THIEPVAL MEM.  
PART XXXV

Pollock, Lce Cpl. Paul, 15780  
with Royal Wn Regt.  
1 July 1916.

993

Paul Pollock's details belatedly inserted in to the Grave Registration Report for the Thiepval Memorial. (Commonwealth War Graves Commission, www.cwgc.org)

## FOREWORD

*Paul Pollock's War* tells the story of a remarkable Ulster-Scots family, their reaction to and involvement in some of the major social movements and historical events of their time. In many ways they were representative of the Ulster-Scots community in Belfast in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Their easy movement across the water from Glasgow to Belfast and their ability to become quickly established in a community with whom they shared so much in common has been typical of our people over the centuries.

Their ability to connect seamlessly with Ulster-Scots/Scots-Irish communities in America, up to and including Woodrow Wilson, the 'Presbyterian President', exemplifies the outward looking and international nature of the Ulster-Scots community in those days, as they migrated and traded around the world.

Their involvement in the movement against Home Rule also shows that within a short time they became imbued with the Liberal Unionist outlook on political matters which was largely shared by the Presbyterian, Ulster-Scots community in Belfast.

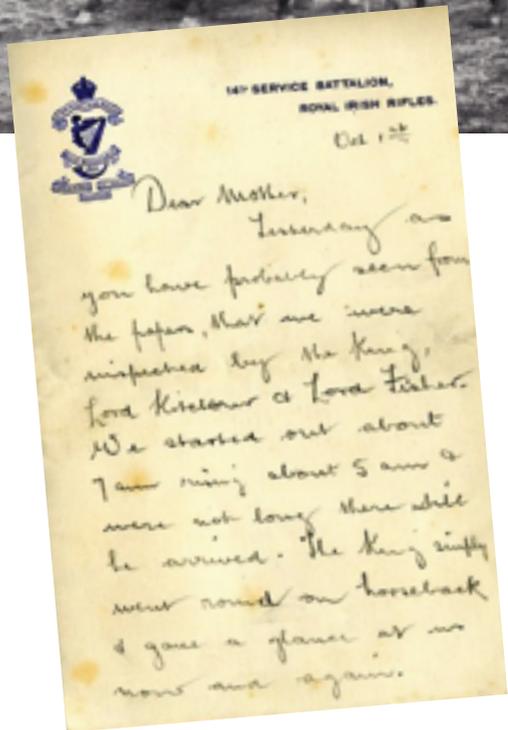
Interesting as the book is as a picture of social and political life in Belfast at that time, its greatest contribution is as a testament to the life, service and death of Paul Pollock, a young Scots-born Ulsterman whose sacrifice, until relatively recently, was not recognised by his country: and thousands of young men like him, who answered their country's call and never returned home.

The Ulster-Scots Agency is indebted to Peter Fisher, for his extensive work on this project; and above all to Elizabeth Bridges, who has provided access to the precious family heirlooms which have opened the door on the world of Paul Pollock and his family in Glasgow and Belfast.

Ian Crozier  
Chief Executive  
Ulster-Scots Agency  
Belfast, May 2015



The King and Earl Kitchener at the Ulster Division Review (Aldershot Command) on 30 September 1915. Paul Pollock refers to this event in a letter to his mother dated 1 October. Image from *The Great War 1914–1918: Ulster Greets her Brave and Faithful Sons and Remembers her Glorious Dead* (Belfast, 1919) – the official memorial publication for Ulster’s war effort.



## PREFACE

The origin of *Paul Pollock's War* is just a little obscure. I freely confess to being neither a professional writer nor qualified historian. The book was brought into existence using a fair measure of native wit; a little military knowledge and experience of working with people for most of my life.

Twenty years ago, my then, teenage daughter and I moved into an old farmhouse on a hill in Somerset. The garden around us had been untouched for decades so I advertised for a gardener. She came: her name was Mrs Bridges. Later, to us, she became Elizabeth Bridges; later still, just Elizabeth. Elizabeth, the family friend quickly established herself as a talented gardener and a font of other knowledge besides. Later, in retirement, I researched and wrote my family history but that job done, in 2008, Elizabeth descended and delivered a pile of her own fascinating family documents: certificates, a few photographs, correspondence and interestingly, a bundle of letters written by a soldier of the Great War.

I began reading what turned out to be the history of Elizabeth's Scottish and Ulster ancestors; unknown territory for me. Information flowed from the Internet to complement the documents and enquiries were made in Scotland and Ulster. Finally there emerged stories of three remarkable men, grandfather, father and son. These should interest those who are: aware of Scotland's links with Ulster; interested in the history of the Presbyterian Church; or the sacrifice made by the men of the 36th Ulster Division on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916. All are linked in this family history.

Alexander Pollock, born 1824 was Elizabeth's great-grandfather and from a large Glasgow family. At age 15 he was a grocer's boy working for Mr Meiklem, a tea merchant of Oswald Street, Glasgow. A few years and Alexander thought enough of himself to have his portrait painted in watercolour and within a short period of time, he was himself a tea merchant. He fell in love, married had children and thereafter became a self-made man; good husband, father and employer. In addition, he went on to become a director of The Heritable Bank; trustee of a charity for working people; served on the committee that organised the police service for the city and became a Freeman of the City of Glasgow.

These were exceptional achievements in the days when the world belonged to the few; and to the very few. He died in 1897 and was greatly missed.

One of Alexander's sons, John Pollock trained in the Presbyterian Church and served as curate at Freuchie, Fife. He had great religious conviction and a powerful intellect that allowed him to become one of the great theologians of his generation. As a young man, he was also a romantic and family man. He could interrupt his frequent sermon-writing to compose a beautiful love letter and then digress into perfect verse before returning to the sermon. Above all, he was pastor of his flock and at the centre of church life.

After marriage to Marion Gibb, John Pollock served in Glasgow and Edinburgh but his higher calling was to come and in 1901 crossed to Belfast and took up the appointment at St Enoch's Church, Carlisle Circus, north Belfast and held this post for the next 30 years until retirement. He is buried on the slopes of Cave Hill. John Pollock's sermons were legendary. He and his wife stood at the centre of an active church community but his influence spread beyond north Belfast to Ireland, Great Britain, Europe and North America.

He was the European President of the United Society of Christian Endeavour for 19 years and Vice-Chairman of its American organisation. He was able to converse at the highest levels with men as diverse as Thomas Edison and the US President, Woodrow Wilson about the post-war international situation. John Pollock could rise to his feet and join any public occasion then guide the discussion to the heights of debate without the slightest preparation. He was a preacher who committed his notes to memory; a churchman who understood liturgical music, composing several anthems and a man of letters who has left a wonderful treasury of articles in the Christian Endeavour archive. Above all, he stood at the centre of his flock at Carlisle Circus: a giant of a man without parallel.

John Pollock's son was named after the great apostle, Paul. He attended the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and on leaving followed a more prosaic rise by becoming an assistant in what must have been one of the first car showrooms in Belfast, Birch and Workman of Chichester Street. Paul Pollock became a Young Citizen Volunteer and quickly found his way into the 14th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles and the 36th Ulster Division. He went to France and after nine months of marching, counter-marching and living rough, found himself in the forward trenches at Thiepval Wood on that beautiful July morning in 1916. He was never seen again after 7:30 on 1st July and is presumed to have died fighting in the German lines during the very opening of the Somme offensive. He has a grave 'known only unto God'.

John and Marion never accepted their youngest son's death but his voice remains in the form of wonderful letters that provide not only a fascinating insight into the 36th Ulster Division but also into the lives of those left behind in Belfast. Paul Pollock's name was missed from the magnificent Lutyens memorial to the Fallen of the Somme – for those without a known grave but in very recent years, his name has been placed on it to the satisfaction of his surviving descendants.

Peter Fisher

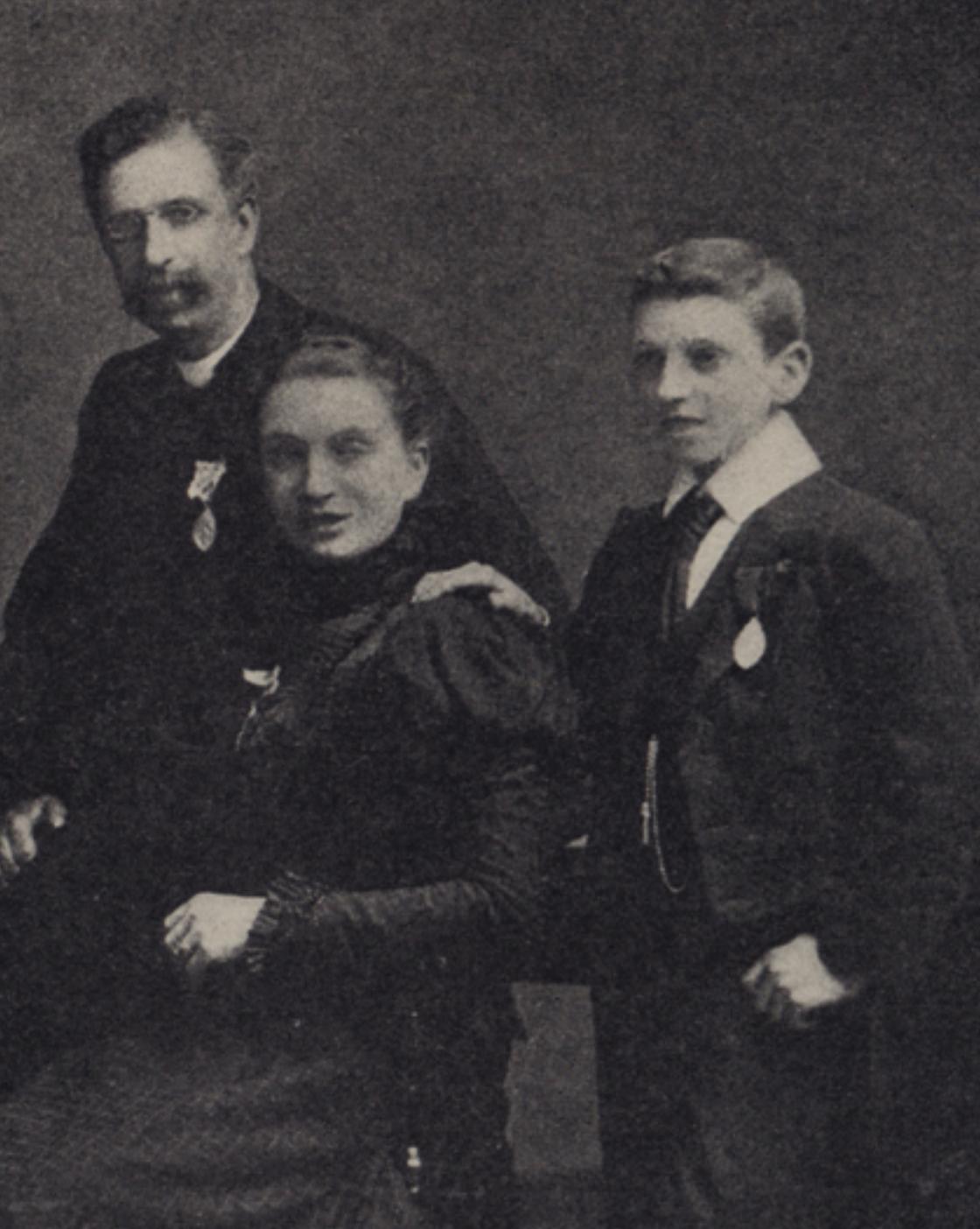


The Pollock family grave, Carnmoney.

In loving memory of  
 the Rev. John Pollock, D.D.  
 for 35 years Minister of St Enoch's  
 died 4th January 1935 in his 82nd year.  
 Also his son Paul Gilchrist,  
 killed in action Battle of Somme 1st July 1916.  
 Also Marion Forrest Pollock, beloved wife and mother  
 died 23rd August 1946 in her 84th year  
 Laid to rest in Eastleigh, Hampshire  
 With Christ which is far better.

Also infant daughter interred in Edinburgh.  
 Also infant daughter interred in Glasgow.





Christian Endeavour founder Francis E. Clark pictured c. 1905 with Elsie Pollock in white dress, and Rev. John Pollock, Marion Pollock and Paul Pollock on the right of the group, wearing C.E. medals. From *Memories of Many Men in Many Lands; An Autobiography*, Francis E. Clark (1922)





Mine crater at Messines. From *The Great War 1914–1918: Ulster Greets her Brave and Faithful Sons and Remembers her Glorious Dead* (Belfast, 1919) – the official memorial publication for Ulster's war effort

87 Sallowgate.



THE  
Grocers Company of,  
GLASGOW

have admitted

M<sup>r</sup> Alexander Pollock a. Member

Glasgow 12<sup>th</sup> Feby  
1867

Robert Smith (Preses.)

John Craig (Treasurer.)

Alexander Pollock's certificate from the Grocers' Company of Glasgow, 1867

## INTRODUCTION

This family history examines some of the personal papers of Alexander Pollock, his son, John Pollock, and his grandson Paul Pollock. In their own ways Alexander and John achieved an eminence in their professional lives and made a strong contribution to their communities. Alexander was from Glasgow but John, for the last 30 years of his life, lived and worked among the people of Belfast. Their combined lives exceeded a century and during this period Britain came to world prominence as father and son pursued their Christian ideals at home. Alexander was a practical man with little education who made the most of opportunities that came his way but he also concerned himself with the welfare of others less fortunate. John went beyond this by eschewing commercial life to become a church minister. He was very much a family man; essentially practical but with a strong faith and intellect. He suffered a personal loss when his youngest son, Paul, was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Paul Pollock, like so many of that generation, who gave their lives in the First World War, did not have the opportunity to reach his full potential in life. Just twenty-one years old when he went missing on the morning of 1 July 1916, he was never seen again. Despite his parents' hopes for his safe return, Paul became one of the 'fallen' and only recently has the omission of his name from the official war memorials been addressed. Paul's story unfolds through the letters that he wrote home to his family and friends.

The family documents are all well over one hundred years old and the property of Mrs Elizabeth Bridges of Thame, Oxfordshire, the granddaughter of Rev. John Pollock. The family papers do not relate to the men's professional business – they are merely sentimental items of a personal nature kept by Elizabeth's mother, Elizabeth Pollock née Cheal who died at Sunbury-on-Thames in 1979. In the case of Paul's letters, it would seem they were placed safely in a box and never read again, such was the pain felt at his loss.

The content of this history has been supplemented by other sources available in the public records or, in John's case, church records. A special word of thanks goes to Mr Robert McClung, the former clerk of session of St Enoch's Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Peter Fisher



Alexander Pollock aged about 15 in 1841 by an unknown Glasgow water-colourist

## CHAPTER ONE

# ALEXANDER POLLOCK 1824–97

Alexander Pollock was born in 1824 on the eastern outskirts of Glasgow at Ballieston-Old Monkland. A family tree, believed to have been prepared by John and in the document collection, shows that he was the son of a John Pollock. Alexander appears to have been one of seven children – the others being: James, Thomas, Agnes, Sarah, Marjory, and Margaret. Little more is known of old John Pollock other than that his own parents were a J. Pollock (probably also John) and a Sarah Herron.

The 1841 census shows that Alexander by this date had left home and embarked on what was to be a successful career in trade and public service. In the year of the census, he was one of two 15-year-old grocer's assistants, working for a Mr Meiklem, a tea merchant of Oswald Street, Glasgow St Peter. It was here that young Alexander learnt his future trade to become one of the leading tea merchants in the city of Glasgow. This led to success in other walks of life ranging from: the organising committee of the local militia; a directorship of charitable seaside convalescent home; a bank directorship; and finally, church elder of St James', Glasgow. In about 1840, we have a glimpse of what young Alexander looked like in the form of a charming water-colour portrait. This must have been a 'leaving home gift' from his parents and perhaps they foresaw that he was going to make something of his life.

In May 1844 at the age of 20, Alexander decided to pursue his fortune elsewhere and entered service with a Mr Campbell Blair of Gushet House, Anderton, Glasgow. At the time Gushet House was a prominent building dividing Stobcross Street from Main Street. Mr Blair must therefore have been an important citizen, trader and employer. The papers include an employer's reference from Mr Campbell dated 23 February 1846. It confirms that Alexander worked for him for only five months from 28 May 1844 and that he then returned to Mr Meiklem. It is not clear what the nature of Mr Campbell's business was but his reference describes Alexander as a steady, sober, industrious and trustworthy young man. Alexander either asked Mr Meiklem for a return to

his former position or an attractive enough offer was made for him to go back. On this point we are not sure. In July 1846, at the age of 22, Alexander finally left Mr Meiklem's service. He had been employed by him for seven years, less the five months working for Mr Campbell. In his own employer's reference, Mr Meiklem described Alexander as a 'sober, honest, steady and a mature young man who never once told a lie or falsified in any way'.

Alexander disappears from the records between 1846 August 1851. He does not appear in the census of that year but on the 21 August 1851, writing from 43 Gallowgate, he asked a Miss Janet Riddell to meet him 'at past 9 of clock' that very night at the junction of Clyde and Calton Streets. If we assume that Alexander really was a sober young man of regular habit then an un-chaperoned meeting with a lassie at such a late hour strongly suggests the couple knew each other well. If it were otherwise Alexander risked compromising Janet Riddell's reputation. The mystery of the meeting is helpfully resolved by the next document, a certificate dated 11 November 1851 confirming that the Alexander and Janet were married that day by a minister. Alexander was aged 27 and described as a 'grocer' which implies that he was in business on his own account. The next record is a simple will dated 25 April 1859, made without witness or legal advisor but which probably had force in Scottish law at the time. Alexander wished to leave his entire interest to his wife in the event of his death.

In the 1861 census we learn a little more about Alexander and his family. He was born 'about' 1825 at Ballieston, Lanarkshire. Today this lies on Glasgow's eastern outskirts and Gallowgate is on a direct line between his birthplace and the city centre. In the census, he is described as a 36-year-old grocer, living with his wife Janet (also aged 36) and eight-year-old son, John. The family had living with them a 14-year-old servant, Robert Callen, and Janet's mother and sister.

Another letter from the 1860s is from Robert Mundie, senior clerk to a Glasgow church, and dated 11 January 1864. The letter offers Alexander, now aged 40, the office of church elder and advises him that he had been elected by the congregation. Mr Mundie urges him to accept the office. There is no clue as to what the church was or for that matter where but we now know that this was Free St James' Church, Glasgow. Alexander also advanced his position within his trade and there is a certificate confirming that he was admitted to the Grocers' Company of Glasgow on 4 February 1867. A pencilled note on the certificate provides confirmation of the family's address at this time, 87 Gallowgate.

The document collection has an impressive waxed parchment which is called a 'ticket' and confirms that Alexander Pollock had been admitted to the City of Glasgow as a burghess and 'Brother of Glasgow'. He had paid his fee or 'freedom

fine', possibly of 5 shillings, and had become a 'Freeman' of the city on 27 April 1868. The document was endorsed on 9 May that he was also a member of the Incorporation of Weavers. It is not clear what this means and it may have been an honorary enrolment to secure the Freedom of the City. The Weavers were incorporated by a charter by the Archbishop Gavin Dunbar, the feudal lord of Glasgow, in 1528, but the 'Weavers' had existed since 1514. In former times their main purpose was to control standards in the weaving trade, but they also had a charitable role 'to help and comfort of their decayit brethereine ... and other godlie shows.' The significance of being granted the freedom may mean that it was Alexander's charitable works as well as his position of city grocer that had been recognised.

There is small engraved print of Alexander Pollock's house and shop. It appears to have been a substantial three-storey building, constructed in the Georgian style with a double shop front and side entrance. An enlargement of the small engraving shows that the property had the number 87 and so is almost certainly 87 Gallowgate. The side entrance in the picture may be for horse-drawn vehicles and possibly there was stabling and a yard to the rear. The print bears the name of a court and so this may have provided separate entrances for the tenants living above the shop. If the Pollocks had tenants then part of their income was independent of the tea and coffee business. On the reverse of this print someone has produced a highly detailed sketch of Alexander Drysdale's shop, who was either a grocer or wine merchant. The sketch in turn is taken from an engraving of Drysdale's shop. The sketch is almost certainly the handiwork of John Pollock who had a habit of working with fine detail. Alexander's granddaughter, Elsie has written below the sketch, 'Date 1870[?] Alexander Pollock Tea and coffee Merchant' but this must refer to the engraving on the front of the card. The original engravings of both shops can today be found at the Glasgow City Council Libraries and Archives. John Pollock, Alexander's son, was given to detailed sketches and was capable of producing tiny scripts with a pencil. Why he chose the Drysdale shop engraving to copy is not known. The sketch remains one of only two surviving pieces of John Pollock's artwork. The unusual style conveys something of John's extremely detail-conscious mind.

The collection also includes a business card describing Alexander Pollock as a 'tea and coffee merchant' and bearing the address 45 London Street but the card also has printed, 'From 87 Gallowgate'. This may mean that Alexander had opened another shop or may have moved residence. The reverse of this card is even more intriguing. There is a printed address, 'Drill Hall, Greendyke Street'. Beneath this is a testimonial of sorts and the date 16 August 1878. It reads,

'John Smith is out of work and is willing to do any thing and at any wage – the Committee will feel obliged to any one giving him work and will assist him till he gets a wage'. The explanation seems to be that Militia drill halls were administered by local committees of influential civilians. John Smith was obviously unemployed but probably a valued Militia member. If this is the case then Alexander Pollock used his business card, adapted for committee work to provide a personal testimonial. It is yet another fascinating glimpse into his public image and his preparedness to help others. Clearly his business must have been doing well at this time and he was able to devote attentions elsewhere.

The family is missing from the 1871 census but in the 1881 census the Pollocks are living at 125 Greenhead Street, Glasgow in the parish of Bridgeton. Alexander and his wife Janet were then 57 and he was described as a tea merchant, born at Old Monkton, Lanarkshire. No other members of the family or domestic staff were at home on census night. By 1884 Alexander had retired from his tea business. In the 1891 census, the family still lived at 125 Greenhead but now had Mary Riddell, 67, and Isabella McEwen, 72, both described as sisters-in-law and annuitants, living with them.

The final documents give details of Alexander's business standing at the time of his death. There are two special minutes from very different boards of directors of which he was a member. The appointments he held went beyond the tea and coffee trade and he must have enjoyed the confidence of many business and community leaders. The minutes speak warmly of Alexander's contribution to their organisations at every level and provide fascinating glimpses into his dealings with others. The sentiments are warm and it seems he must have been greatly missed by colleagues. These documents help to confirm his year of birth as 1824 and indicate that he died on 1 December 1897, aged 73. At the time, the Pollocks lived at 125 Greenhead Street. The two extraordinary minutes were sent to Mrs Pollock as a mark of respect.

Alexander Pollock had been a director of the West of Scotland Convalescent Seaside Home at Dunoon, a convalescent home that served the working class of Glasgow in the 1880s through to the twentieth century. The company appeared to have had an office at 4 Hanover Street, Glasgow, and since 1876, Alexander had been a director – a long period of some 21 years. He clearly had a very deep sense of Christian duty that he was able to translate into real and lasting practical arrangements for the poor. In addition to the directorship, he had been a convener of the Dunoon Homes, House and Supply Committee since 1890.

The second minute was from the directors of the Heritable Investment Bank and dated 8 December 1897. Curiously the date of death in these minutes is

ALEXANDER POLLOCK,  
*(FROM 87 GALLOWGATE)*  
*Tea and Coffee Merchant,*  
45 LONDON STREET,  
GLASGOW.



Alexander Pollock's tea and coffee shop at 87 Gallowgate about 1870

2 December, one day's difference from the first minute. He had joined the board of directors in 1890 at a critical time for the bank. Alexander's counsel was described as 'sagacious and prudent' and apparently had a 'kindly and amiable' disposition.

By coincidence on the very day these notes were written, the present writer heard of the demise of the Heritable Bank. It had moved to London some years ago and had been bought by an Icelandic interest which itself became a casualty of that country's banking crisis in 2008. What Alexander Pollock's view of this business calamity would have been, can only be imagined.



John Pollock's sketch of Alexander Drysdale's shop



A couple, believed to be Alexander Pollock and his wife Janet Riddell Pollock



John Pollock, photographed by Stuart of Dunoon, c. 1875

## CHAPTER TWO

# JOHN POLLOCK 1853–1935

Unlike his father Alexander, John Pollock's life is remembered in Elizabeth Bridge's own 1982 family history, *Each Day is Given*, revised in 2002. This history should be read in conjunction with Elizabeth's excellent book as they do offer new information and some analysis.

John Pollock's mother was Janet Riddell Pollock but there are no traces of her family in the census of 1841 or 1851 and so little more is known about them. But there is a fascinating set of reminiscences by James Gibbs on the Gourlay family, part of her own ancestry.

John was born at Glasgow on 27 October 1852 and was baptised by Dr David Brown in Free St James' Church, where his father, Alexander, was an elder. The first sighting we have of him is in the 1861 census when he was an eight-year old scholar living at his parents' shop at 49 Gallowgate, Glasgow. Young John was born into a devoutly Christian home and place of trade yet his career was to follow quite a different path from that of his father. Correspondence in the collection suggests that he was sent away to school at an early age and there are several delightful letters from the small boy to his parents written now almost 150 years ago. They are strangely timeless and could have been written today by any young boarder to parents when far from home. There are no useful dates or addresses on the note and so it is not possible to identify the school but on one there is a clue about where it was. In April 1861 John was at home on census night but he may only have been there for the holidays. There is no evidence of a young John Pollock in either England or Scotland in the 1871 census nor do his parents appear. John's schooldays now seem lost in the mists of time but the three short letters, have quite remarkably, survived.

In what appears to be an early letter written around 1860, John writes and asks after his 'Grandmamma', Isabella Riddell then living with the family in Glasgow and aged 82 – a very good age for the period. In the letter, like any young boy away from home, he asks after 'Oscar' and whether 'he is still

jumping about'. This is taken to be a reference to the family dog or cat. He also asks after 'his old playmate, John Minto'. The next note is simply dated 10 November but without a clue as to where his mysterious school could be found. The note is addressed from a place called Killarn. This presents something of a problem in identifying the correct location. There was a school in the parish of 'Killearn', Stirlingshire, that was run by the Free Church of Scotland and the Pollocks belonged to the Free Church. Thus logic would seem to indicate that this is the place where John Pollock was educated, and which is mentioned in his letters home.

However there is a townland called Killarn in north County Down between Dundonald and Newtownards, in the parish of Newtownards and barony of Lower Castlereagh. This may be a plausible connection because in later life John was to spend 33 years living in the north of the city of Belfast. John's school was possibly a church foundation and by attending it probably led him to form an early attachment to the north of Ireland.

The third note tells us a little more and would seem to support the suggestion about the school being located near Belfast. In the note John asks his parents to visit and says that 'Mrs Pinkerton can arrange accommodation and will come and meet you when you arrive'. Finally John asks, 'what boat they will arrive on'. He finishes the letter with a brief line which says, 'I am well cared for here'.

There are two points worth making. Alexander Pollock had the desire and the means to send his young son to school. Perhaps favourable terms had been offered by the Church. The advantage in sending John away at such an early age – to a rural townland east of Belfast – is that it was far from Glasgow. At the time, Alexander's home city must have been an extremely rough place for sensitive people and although he had a respectable business, perhaps he wanted something 'better' for his son. The second point concerns the Church and Ireland. There were very strong connections between Scotland and the north and east of Ireland. Settlement across the water was often a way forward for many Protestant church men and women: some had the vision of a 'evangelical mission' to a largely Roman Catholic and by 'mainland' standards, under-developed country lacking in ready natural resources. Belfast was the exception and had more in common with the industrial cities of the north of England than elsewhere in Ireland. The consequences of Protestant migration to Ireland are still apparent today. Thus in conclusion to this particular matter, at this point in our research into the Pollock family story, Killearn, Stirlingshire, would make the most sense as the location of John's school, but County Down is not an unrealistic alternative.

John was to eventually choose the church for his personal calling but this was not how he began his adult life. His parents' home was Christian and observed strict temperance but Free Church values at the time also embraced ethics like hard work, enterprise and self-sacrifice. These influences must have been part of his home background given that his father had been a successful merchant and by 1873, company director. John began work in the trade and seems to have demonstrated similar business skills to those of his father. He has been described as having a serious, methodical and detailed business brain. John's desire for order and detail can be glimpsed from his papers and in later life he was described as having 'a craving for methodology and a tireless industry'. In this John must have matched his father but in reality he was far more. His early business career is reflected in the collection and a parchment issued by the City of Glasgow, dated 14 September 1875, confirms that John Pollock, like his father before him, had also paid his five shilling fee and had been admitted as a Burgess and Guild Brother of the City. In it, he is described as a weaver which we now know was not literally true and this lends credence to the earlier suggestion that notional membership of a traditional craft guild was one way by which a man of trade might become a Freeman of the City. He enrolled retrospectively as a weaver on 3 November 1876.



City of Glasgow parchment confirming John Pollock as a Burgess and Guild Brother

In 1871 John laid down the foundations of his spiritual and intellectual life that were to serve him and others so well during a 53-year ministry in the Presbyterian Church. In 1871 when 19, John attended the Faculty of Arts, at the University of Glasgow but left without graduating in 1876. He had been brought up in the Free Church of Scotland but appears to have joined the United Presbyterian Church at university and went on to study at the United Presbyterian Theological Hall, Edinburgh. He was licensed by the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Glasgow and was ordained at Freuchie, Fife, on the 7 January 1880 at the age of 27. The census of 1881 shows that John Pollock, aged 28, was staying at Riggs Farm House, Freuchie, and that he was the junior minister of Freuchie United Presbyterian Church. Looking after him at the same address was Jane Morton, 36, a servant. There are some interesting contemporary accounts of Freuchie from the period: all but the last pre-date John's arrival.

**1843** *New Statistical Account* states of Freuchie: 'Narrow, dirty streets cross each other in every direction, and the primitive, but most odious custom of making dunghills in front of houses, is still maintained. Inhabited principally by 'feuars' engaged in handloom weaving. There is an excellent subscription school, which confers immense benefit on the village.'

**1857** Nearly 600 inhabitants, many manufacturing window blinds.

**1860** William Lumsden and Son erected a powerloom factory containing 100 looms. In addition they employed 320 handloom weavers.

**1868** Rev. J.W. Taylor wrote: 'A quaint place is Freuchie. Its frequent squares and courts and bullet paved closes and tortuous streets give it a character of its own, these twisting, narrow, tortuous streets represent a time when there were no wheel carriages and all goods were conveyed on packhorses.'

**1869** New UP church built at a cost of £1,555.

**1875** Parish Church built at a cost of £1,100.

**1881** 1,059 inhabitants.

John Pollock in 1880



These notes describe well the world of John Pollock, a young clergyman. We can see that the United Presbyterian church was relatively new to Freuchie and there must have been much to do in the circumstances.

The next document in chronological order is a marriage certificate dated 23 April 1884 in which John is described as a United Presbyterian Church Minister and still living at Riggs House which according to the document was in the parish of Kettle, adjacent to Freuchie. Presumably he was now the minister and was aged 31. His bride was Marion Forrest Gibb, 22, originally of 4 Regent Terrace, Stirling Road, Glasgow. She was the daughter of Archibald Gilchrist Gibb, a Commission Agent, and Elizabeth Torbet Gibb, née Alexander. They were actually married at Marion's home 'after publication of the forms of the United Presbyterian Church'. The marriage was then recorded in the District of Blackfriars, Glasgow, on 25 April 1884.

The Gibbs had a large family and Archibald seems to have worked in the woollen trade. At the time of the marriage, her father's income would have been based on his sales and so the family probably had limited and uncertain circumstances. Marion's papers contain a colourful certificate confirming that she had joined the Whiteinch 'Band of Hope Society'. In so doing she had 'signed the pledge' to abstain from all intoxicating liquors. This happened on the 15 December 1876 and just in time to avoid the Christmas and New Year alcoholic revels! Whiteinch is at the west end of Glasgow and in the nineteenth century had many churches. It is quite likely that Marion was a member of the Methodist Church. The Band of Hope, a temperance organisation for working-class children, was founded by the Methodists at Leeds in 1847. All members took a pledge of total abstinence and were taught about the 'evils of drink'. Youngsters were enrolled from the age of six and met once a week to listen to lectures and participate in activities. Music was an important part of the Band of Hope and competitions were held between different choirs. Members of the local temperance societies also organised outings for the children and with the growth of the railways, trips were arranged to the nearest coastal resorts.

While a minister at Freuchie in the early months of 1884, John wrote a letter to Marion in anticipation of their marriage, which has survived in the papers. It is a charming love letter written during the preparation of a sermon and John's thoughts had been interrupted by those of his lady-love in Glasgow. He writes about their planned wedding day on 23 April and their intended life together. John speculates on how many presents she may get and how he counts the days. He looks forward to Marion moving to Freuchie and 'what a favourite she will be when she gets there.' Finally, his words give way to a spontaneous love poem that provides an insight not only into the depth of John's feelings but also his literary skills and command of language. The poem also describes his exact situation on a winter's afternoon: the light fading; the fire burning low; his legs getting chilled and the clock 'speaking softly to itself.' His thoughts were far from his sermon but he ends his poem, 'Thoughts will then my pen outride, when I have my darling bride – by my side'. He must have found the assonance of the last stanza a little challenging but it is nevertheless a natural and beautiful piece of spontaneous romantic verse.



Marion Pollock and Rev. John Pollock, outside their home at 547 Antrim Road, Belfast, *c.* 1930

HMS *Hibernia*, c. 1912

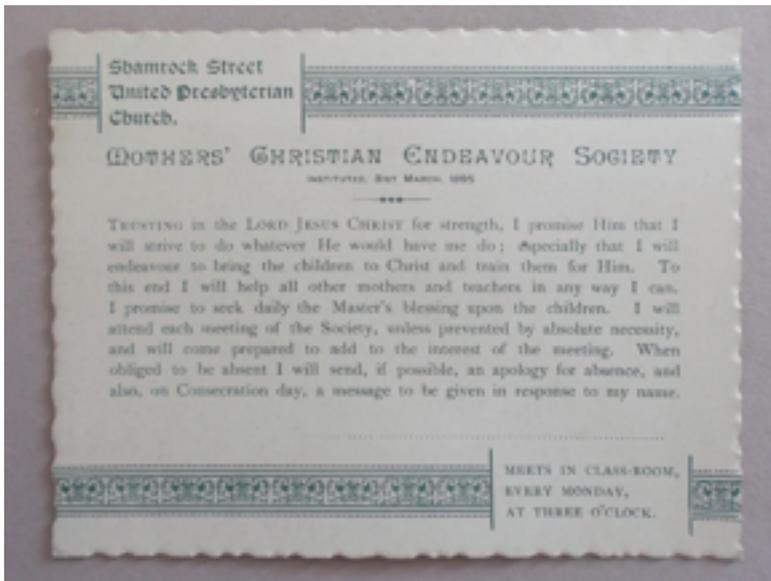
John was transferred to the John Ker Memorial Church, Merchiston, Edinburgh, on 26 February 1885. Three of John and Marion's five children were born in Edinburgh. The first was Alexander Norman (known to the family as Norman) in 1886 and destined for a career in the medical profession. From 1914 he was in the Royal Navy as a ship's surgeon, principally on HMS *Hibernia*, a battleship that served in home waters. The next child is likely to have been an infant girl who died before the family even had a chance to register her birth but she was remembered on John's gravestone when it was erected in the mid-thirties. Elizabeth, known as Elsie, was born on 29 April 1889 when the family lived at 3 Mardale Crescent. She would train as a nurse; serve in the Ulster Volunteers' Military Hospital, Belfast, during the Great War; marry a Quaker doctor and live for many years in Formosa (Taiwan) as a church missionary. The census of 1891 records that John and Marion lived at 4 Ronan's Terrace, Merchiston, and that John Pollock was the minister at Merchiston Church. It is not clear whether this is a different church or had simply been renamed.

On 18 June 1891 John took up the ministry at Shamrock Street United Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, and his third child, Paul, was born on 29 February 1896. His young life was to be cut short in the Great War of 1914–1918. Finally on 1 May 1893 at 8:50 am, Janet Riddell Pollock was born at presumably the family's next home, 3 Cambridge Drive, in the Maryhill district. This child died as an infant and like John and Marion's earlier infant death, she is also remembered on John's gravestone. The records show that on the 25 January 1895 the family were now living at 2 Oxford Drive, Kelvinside,

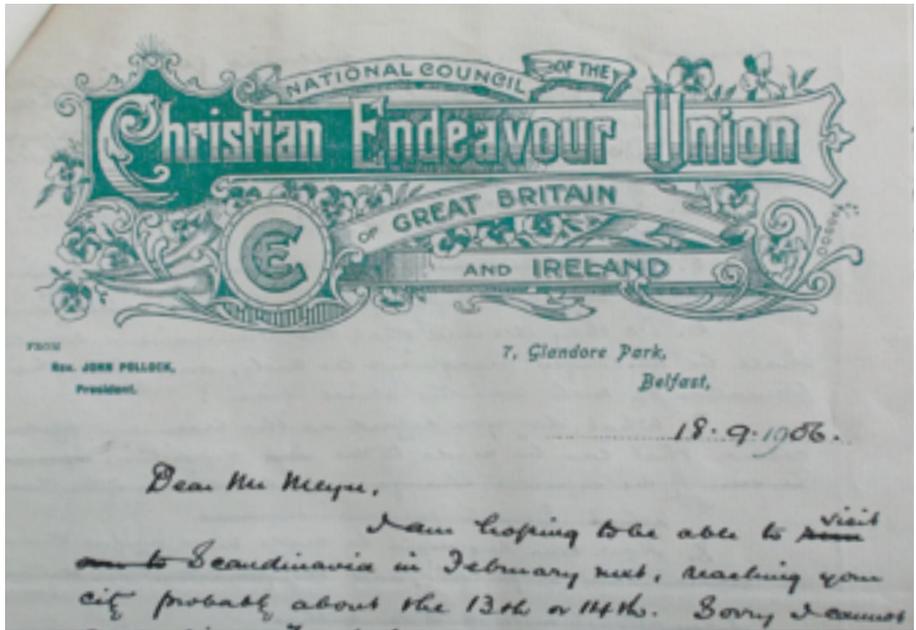
Glasgow, and on that date John prepared a will of just five lines on headed notepaper leaving all of his estate to Marion. Like his father's before him, this will was without a witness and apparently legal advice. Oxford Drive has since been renamed Oban Drive and its buildings remain attractive, three-storey terraces in a light sandstone.

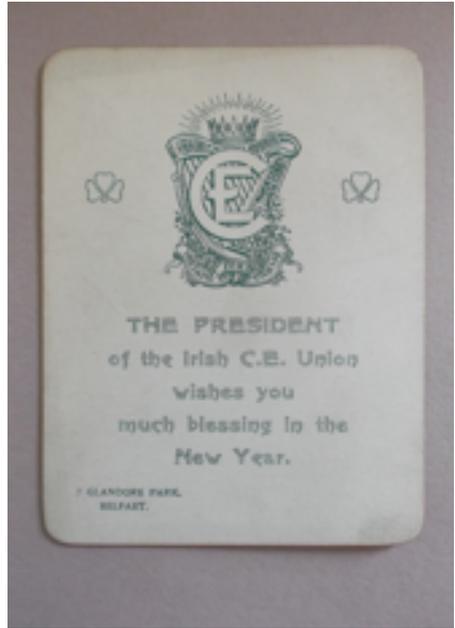
Two more of John Pollock's poems survive in the papers. The first, a touching piece, written about 1895, describes his young daughter, Elizabeth, or Elsie as he called her. The second, written about 1915 is dedicated to Paul then serving with the army in France and it is described later. The poem to Elsie is cleverly done and every line begins with a letter from her three names: ELIZABETH ALEXANDER POLLOCK. The poem is intensely moving and written when she was a young child in the 1890s. Its sentiments show John to be a loving father who recognises fully the beauty of his own child and seeks her protection from the Lord. Elsie was to lead a full and active life and died at Sunbury-on-Thames, England, in 1979.

During his years in Scotland, John Pollock earned a reputation for being an evangelical preacher, temperance reformer and leader in the Christian Endeavour movement. He was also the President of the Scottish Union and Chairman of the British Council of Christian Endeavour.



From the Rev. John Pollock archive. Courtesy of Christian Endeavour, Belfast





From the Rev. John Pollock archive. Courtesy of Christian Endeavour, Belfast



St Enoch's Presbyterian Church, Belfast, was built in 1870 and was the largest Presbyterian church in the British Isles. It was named after St Enoch's Church in Glasgow

In early 1901, just after the death of Queen Victoria, John left Scotland for Ireland and on 7 February became minister of St Enoch's Presbyterian Church at Carlisle Circus at the junction of the Antrim and Crumlin Roads in north Belfast. He would hold this position for over 30 years. Throughout this period and the three years of eventual retirement, the family lived at 7 Glandore Park, a terrace of fine Victorian villas on the Antrim Road. It is now 547 Antrim Road. John's sons Norman and Paul entered the Royal Belfast Academical Institution (RBAI) in 1901 and 1905 respectively.

John Pollock was called to Belfast at a difficult time. There were to be tensions over politics within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland from 1903 until its assemblies of 1912 and 1913. Then followed the First World War and finally in

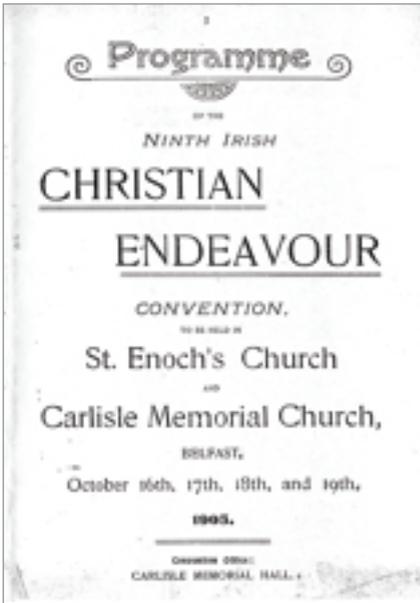


Rev. John Pollock in 1901, the year he moved to Belfast to become minister of St. Enoch's

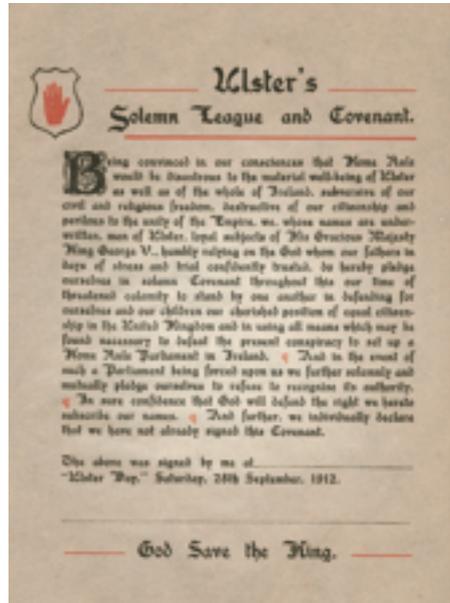
1920/22, the renewal of political tensions when Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State (later the Republic of Ireland) were created.

The St Enoch's Church Annual Reports provide most of the information known about John Pollock in Belfast. The 1901 report shows that from the outset he launched himself with great fervour into the task of energising and directing the activities of the church. The congregation numbered 1,100 families – over 4,000 people and they represented various groupings within the church, such as the Junior Society, the Intermediate Society, the Bible Class, the Women's Group, Men's Group and later the Boys' Brigade. There was also a temperance group. The reports speak of John Pollock as having an intense sympathy with the young and he was particularly adept at devising and delivering 'sermonettes' with

'simple language and homely illustrations that appealed to both young and old alike.' The principal themes of the sermonettes were regeneration, holiness, obedience and good manners. He delivered a monthly sermon to young men and his weekly bible class was attended by up to 500 people. John also expended a great deal of time and energy in visiting the sick and the 1909 report records that in that year he made 2,300 sick visits. The business background of his parents' home and early life were obvious in the way he confronted the congregation's debt of £2,500. He set up a committee and incentivised it with a personal contribution of £200 in meeting the target of £2,800 which now included the provision for a heating apparatus for the church. In 1905 John visited Wales to review the way the Presbyterian Church operated there and in 1906 became President of the British Council of the Church and Chairman of the European Council of Christian Endeavour. He was also invited to attend the annual convention of the American Council of the Church. John Pollock's preaching is described as having vigour and freshness. In 1911, the congregation marked the tenth anniversary of his installation at a St Enoch's social. He and Marion were presented with an illuminated address, purse of sovereigns and silver rose bowl.



Christian Endeavour Convention programme from St. Enoch's Church, 1905



The Ulster Covenant of 1912 was signed by over 470,000 people

The 1911 census shows the family as living at ‘221 Antrim Road’, although this was probably the census enumerator’s sequential number for the dwelling. In reality this was still 7 Glandore Park and a very substantial dwelling it appears to have been with 16 rooms and 13 windows at the front. John and Marion were photographed around 1930 standing at its entrance and some idea of the house’s size can be gained.

At the time of the 1911 census, John Pollock seems to have been away from home possibly for a period as Marion is described as head of the family. Robert McClung of Belfast has investigated the fate of the Pollock’s home and reported that the building now houses a community development team.

By 1911, considerable unrest within the Presbyterian Church centred on the British Government’s policy of pursuing ‘Home Rule’ for Ireland – a form of self-government within the United Kingdom. The Protestant majority in the north of Ireland were in the main implacably opposed to such devolution and some elements threatened to take up arms to prevent what they saw as a sell-out to the Catholics of the south. Within the Presbyterian Church, a group of churchmen unofficially produced a covenant for signature and great pressure was put on all churchman to sign the declaration opposing Home Rule. John Pollock refused to sign the document insisting that only the Presbyterian Church Council could decide such a policy.

On the evening of 21 May 1912 there was a well-attended public meeting in opposition to Home Rule at the Synod Hall in Edinburgh. Several Presbyterians from Ireland were present to deliver addresses to those gathered. They included Thomas Sinclair, widely regarded as the leading Presbyterian layman of his day, the Rev. John Pollock of St Enoch’s, and Sir William Crawford of Inchmarlo, a successful Belfast businessman. Sinclair referred to the recent Presbyterian Anti-Home Rule Convention in Belfast and the concluding statement of that gathering: ‘There is no course open to Presbyterians but to stand together as did their Scottish forefathers in Covenanting days’. Pollock admitted that he had been a supporter of Home Rule, but was now firmly opposed to it. In March 1912 Crawford hosted the US Ambassador to Britain, Whitelaw Reid, on his visit to Belfast when he delivered his speech on ‘The Scot in America and the Ulster-Scot’.

## REV. JOHN POLLOCK.

Rev. John Pollock (St. Enoch's, Belfast) said it was a great delight to him to stand on that platform and let his voice be heard once again in that Synod Hall, where for twenty years he had sat as a member of the Supreme Court of his Church. At that time, like most of his brethren, he was a Home Ruler, but he gave up Home Rule when so many of his brethren did—when Parnell's removal from the scene revealed what manner of men he had behind him. He was still as firm a Liberal as ever he was, but he was strongly opposed to the granting of such a measure of self-government to Ireland as that proposed in the present Bill. (Hear, hear.) He knew scores of Belfast men, some of them on the committee under whose auspices he had come to address that meeting—men who were prevented from supporting the Government on account of Home Rule. It would be untrue to say that the opposition to Home Rule in Ireland arose solely from religious causes, though they believed that their religion would be laid open to insidious attack. But there was nothing of religious bigotry or intolerance in their opposition, which was due to the conviction that Home Rule would enormously strengthen the most bigoted and intolerant section of the community. However much they might disagree with the doctrines of the Romish Church, they interfered with no man's religious opinion. (Hear, hear.) But they objected to the political claims of the Vatican. Home Rule in the real sense was impossible in Ireland; what was nominally Home Rule would be in reality foreign rule. What they objected to was a Romish Parliament in Dublin controlled from the Vatican. (Applause.) And while claiming to be still an up-to-date Liberal, he had to deplore one recent change in the party. At one time British Liberalism was the bulwark of Protestantism. Rome had not changed. Under Home Rule, as Dr. Horton admitted, the life of Irish Protestants would be intolerable; yet sons of those who fought for civil and religious liberties had nothing but sneers for their danger, and he was ashamed in this respect of his party. But some might ask, he had often been asked, What about Belfast Protestant bigotry and intolerance? But the public sentiment of Belfast was only intolerant of intolerance. He indignantly protested against the unfairness of objecting to any criticism of Romish intolerance, while ridiculing any symptom of irritation amongst a long-suffering Protestant community. (Applause.) The new attitude of Scottish Presbyterians and English Nonconformists towards the Vatican was a ghastly caricature of Christian charity. The present Irish policy of the Liberal party must sooner or later prove detrimental both to the party and to the State, and the sooner it was changed the better. (Applause.)

Report from the *Belfast Newsletter*, 22 May 1912, summarising Rev. John Pollock's address at the public meeting held in Synod Hall, Edinburgh.

## Against Home Rule.

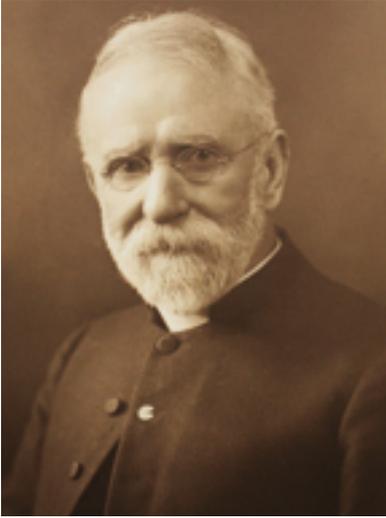
### Unionist Meeting at Hamilton.

ADDRESSED BY BELFAST CLERGYMAN

The "Toronto World" of 19th December contains the following account of a meeting against Home Rule held in Hamilton on the previous evening:—"The proposed Home Rule measure for Ireland was subjected to a veritable vivisection at a meeting in the Orange Hall in North James Street last night. The critic was Rev. John Pollock, of St. Enoch's Presbyterian Church, Belfast. With caustic comment and laudatory phrases he alternately attacked Home Rule, hurled invectives at the Roman Catholic Church, and eulogised the Orange Order in Canada. His opposition to Home Rule was made all the more remarkable by the admitted fact that he was a Scotch Liberal. He confessed that he had already changed his mind on the question twice, the first time, "when the grand old man Gladstone made the blunder of his life." At the outset the speaker proclaimed that he was "a Home Ruler on principle, but thought Irish self-government impossible under present conditions." He said "the Irish people do not know what political liberty is. I have no objection to a free Parliament on College Green, but I do object to Italian rule. The Irish of the South and West are incapable of governing themselves. Dr. Pollock continued to say that "Home Rule would be the end of Liberalism and social progress. The Roman

Catholic Church is essentially conservative." He defended a Protestant as one who protests against Rome getting in her little finger, knowing that her body will follow. "I have nothing against the religion of St. Peter, but I protest against the politics of the Vatican," said the speaker. "The Church of Rome is far more a political body than anything else. Her spirit is that of domination. She is a persecuting Church. Rome has a perfect right to hold intolerant principles, but we are not intolerant in protecting ourselves. The South and West of Ireland leads to nowhere. The people are protected from twentieth century progress by a thoroughly organised priesthood. Home Rule will strike the knell of temperance reform in Ireland. Those who are clamouring for Home Rule are disloyal, was the next charge brought by the speaker. He said that the advocates of Home Rule toasted the Pope first at banquets, and the King afterwards, if at all. "Ulster's representation in Parliament is smaller than it would be if we had proportionate representation." Mr. Pollock then drew a picture of what would happen if Home Rule became a reality. He contended that until the Scotch and English public had been lulled into a false sense of security the Protestant minority would be treated with perfect toleration. "Then when the pin pricks begin the Protestant protest will be regarded as the mere recrudescence of Ulster's bigotry," said the speaker. He continued: "If Home Rule becomes law, persecution in its most insidious form could not be prevented. It would mean the revival of the Ne Temere in its most insidious form." In conclusion, Mr. Pollock intimated that he was ready to shoulder a musket against any interference with civil and religious liberty. Rev. Dr. Nelson, who presided at the meeting, said a few words, mostly in praise of the Orange Order.

Report from the *North Down Herald* reported a 'meeting against Home Rule' at North James Street Orange Hall in Toronto on 18 December 1912 where Pollock described himself as a 'Scotch Liberal'. He drew a distinction between the religious and political implications of Home Rule for Ireland, and said that he was 'ready to shoulder a musket against any interference with civil and religious liberty'



Rev. John Pollock in 1931

In 1913 John went to Canada on a lecture tour to raise funds for St Enoch's and the Annual Report suggests that he was successful in this venture. In 1914 the Great War broke out and his youngest son Paul who had been working for a garage and car dealer joined the army. The second of the surviving poems dates from this period and is dedicated to Paul and his eventual anticipated triumphant home-coming. It is also quite revealing about John Pollock's own sense of patriotism: since coming to Ireland, he seems to have become an Ulsterman and his wartime sentiments reflect this. He addresses the poem to 'My own dear boy' followed by 'I'm proud to call you mine!' It is an inspirational and patriotic piece of writing, not anti-German in itself but expressing strong opinion about the Kaiser and the military elite who ran Germany at the time.

In the poem, he looks forward to a new Germany after the War. John became an 'Ulster convert' – politics and religion must have fused in home and church as elsewhere in the north of Ireland. Like many older men of his time, John's thinking about the war did not seem to recognise its true reality yet each week he must have faced many families who had lost loved ones. The poem does not acknowledge the appalling death rates and horrific conditions in which men like his son lived and died. There is not the slightest trace of regret about the war and the poem is intended to be an inspirational anthem of praise and thanksgiving to celebrate a safe return. In actual fact it may have been written before the heavy casualty lists became known to the wider public. It describes Paul as being safe and anticipates a triumphal march past the Belfast City Hall: the traditional way heroes return to that city. This was not to be.





Memorial stained glass windows to Rev. John Pollock in St Enoch's Church, with the memorial plaque to Paul Pollock between

Young Paul Pollock was killed at dawn on 1 July 1916 on the first day of the Battle of the Somme; just one of 60,000 British casualties that day. It was the biggest battle in British military history and was to last for many months. There was little tactical success to show for it but over the long-term it significantly weakened Germany, helped to prevent a collapse in the French Army and prepared the way for Germany's eventual defeat. Paul's death meant that he never received his father's poem: it was most poignantly intended to be given to him on his eventual safe return to Ulster.

Paul wrote many letters to his parents and they provide a fascinating insight into life in an emergency battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles. The first men to join Paul's particular battalion, the 14th, had been in the pre-war Ulster Volunteer Force – an organisation raised to fight the imposition of Home Rule. It is unlikely that Paul would have been a member of the UVF, because a prerequisite for membership was that the individual had signed the Ulster Covenant, which Paul had not, probably because he was too young at the time. At the time of writing, Paul has no known grave and his death has been overlooked by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who should have commemorated it on the Thiepval Memorial, France. Someone, however, as yet unknown, has notified the authorities of the omission and this 93-year old oversight is about to be corrected.

An uprising against British rule in Ireland took place in Dublin at Easter 1916. This was seen by many people as a stab in the back at a time when Irishmen of both traditions were fighting and dying in great numbers in France

and Belgium. Attempts to reach agreement on Ireland's future intensified when the First World War ended in November 1918 and were accompanied by widespread violence as Irish republicans used force to try to win independence from the United Kingdom. The arguments that all or part of Ulster, with its Unionist majority, would have to be treated differently in any new political arrangement became ever stronger. In 1920 the Government of Ireland Act was passed and came into force on 1 May 1921. This created Northern Ireland, comprising six of Ulster's historic nine counties, with its own parliament in Belfast. This was rejected by republicans and it was not until after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 that the Irish Free State, composed of the remaining twenty-six counties of Ireland, came into existence. The early years of Northern Ireland witnessed considerable unrest and there were many instances of sectarian violence in Belfast and elsewhere. The congregation at Rev. John Pollock's church of St Enoch's must have been affected by these activities to a greater or lesser degree. In fact, church records from 1924 show that the church council were fearful of incendiary attacks against the building and wanted to organise a night watch scheme among its younger members. In the more recent Troubles, St Enoch's found itself in the midst of an area that was badly affected by civil disorder with frequent acts of violence against people and property. Sadly, some 113 years after it opened, the building was severely damaged in a malicious arson attack on 10 September 1985 by persons unknown.

John Pollock was a friend to other churches in Northern Ireland and managed to walk a tightrope between conflicting positions of a theological or ideological nature. We can conclude that he must have been quite astute and able to sense feelings and sentiment to build bridges with other persuasions. He certainly seems to have avoided controversy in what were highly controversial times. John became the leader of the inter denominational Christian Endeavour movement and developed his international credentials by attending the World Conference at Seattle in 1907. This was one of many visits to the United States and Canada that he was to make during the course of his lifetime. St Enoch's was a garrison church and the relationship between the congregation and the British Army remained close throughout the period 1901–33. He remained a chaplain to the garrison until 1931.

John Pollock was a physically active man and his favourite pastime was cycling. In 1920 at the age of 68, he cycled from Land's End to John o' Groats! The 1929 church report speaks of his 'unabated physical and mental vigour' but it was a fact that his eyesight was failing and that retirement beckoned. In the same year he received an honorary doctorate from the Presbyterian College at Montreal which was associated with McGill University. On 30 June 1930 he

retired from his active ministry but continued to take an interest in church affairs until 1931 when he finally retired after 30 years' service in north Belfast. He had ministered at St Enoch's in days that were trying both politically and theologically. He was an eloquent preacher, able to debate and there were few who could provide such a devotional rendering of other people's prayers. Administratively he was very sound and was a strident social reformer. On a personal level, John had tremendous patience, charity and the enviable gift of being able to make friends easily. On 4 January 1935 he died at the age of 82, but 7 March 1937 saw two beautiful memorial windows unveiled at St Enoch's Church in celebration of his long and eventful life. Sadly, these and the memorial plaque to his son Paul, were destroyed in the arson attack in 1985.

Within the document collection is an invaluable obituary from the *Belfast News-Letter* dated 8 January 1934. John Pollock had been buried the previous day, the 55th anniversary of his ordination. His was a most impressive funeral service and central to it was a moving address by the Right Rev. Dr T.M. Johnstone, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The headlines of the news report described John Pollock as a 'Poet, Author and Preacher' and the address as a 'Striking Tribute to a Gifted Minister'. Dr Johnstone's eulogy has been paraphrased:

On a personal level, John was a Scotsman with a strong personality, voice and manner. These qualities were never lost during his 33 years in Belfast and only when viewed alongside his spiritual, intellectual, musical, literary and international achievements, can one begin to appreciate the rugged individualism of the man. He was a champion of both the North Belfast Temperance Council and the Charitable Institution; he wrote hymns; received an honorary doctorate from the Montreal Presbyterian College and had books published. He travelled extensively and met prominent people ranging from President Woodrow Wilson, with whom he discussed world problems to the inventor Thomas Edison. His post bag often contained the letters of internationally eminent people and his oratory could turn a public meeting. Above all, he was a devout Christian and never lost the power of prayer.

John is buried at the Carnmoney Cemetery, just north of Belfast. The grave records that Marion died on 23 August 1946 and is buried at Eastleigh, Hampshire and that Paul fell at the Battle of the Somme. Remembered too are the infant girls who died in Scotland. The grave is sited below an intensely green escarpment, typical of the Antrim Hills and faces the sea and Scotland just across the water.



Above: Rev. John Pollock's funeral at St Enoch's Church on 7 January 1935. He was buried at Carnmoney cemetery



Left: Obituary from the Belfast News-Letter

1935

# THE REV. DR. JOHN POLLOCK

## IMPRESSIVE FUNERAL SERVICE

Moderator's Striking Tribute to G.D.F. Minister

### POET, AUTHOR, AND PREACHER

The funeral of the Rev. Dr. John Pollock, senior minister of St. Enoch's, Belfast, took place yesterday in Cemetery, after a special service had been held in St. Enoch's Church in the presence of a great congregation who had come to pay their last tribute of respect to one who had served their faithfully for about thirty-four years.

A hotel service was also held at deceased's late residence, 7, Clarendon Park, Ardara Road, conducted by Rev. W. James Johnson (Moderator), who offered prayer; Rev. A. Wylie Ross\* who read the Scripture lesson; and the Very Rev. Dr. T. A. Francis, who conducted the service.

The remains were then conveyed in a richly-appointed coffin to the church, Clarendon Church, where the pulpit was draped with purple, white draperies of distinction and seven lines were introduced, in accordance with the expressed wishes of the late Dr. Pollock. The congregation stood with bowed heads as the coffin was carried up the central aisle to rest in front of the altar space.

Rev. Dr. Woodhouse, Moderator of Presbytery, presided, and was assisted in the reading of the service by Rev. Joseph Curran, B.D., who read the appropriate portion of Scripture; Rev. James Mann, who offered prayer; and Rev. John McCay, United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, who pronounced the benediction.

### MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

The Right Rev. Dr. T. M. Johnston, Moderator of the General Assembly, in the course of an eloquent address said that life was made up largely of courage and grief, of weakness and heroism. And no matter how long the separating interval in any particular instance might appear to others, to those who intimately acquainted it was but a passing moment.

"Many of you who watched him in St. Enoch's cup, I am sure," concluded the Moderator, "sincerely believe that thirty-four years have elapsed by which you witnessed the Rev. John Pollock in the ministry of this humble parish. I can understand in a measure your difficulty. The results of the labours and the abiding character of his services seemed the same to almost past like a life in the

public domain, to which he devoted himself unflinchingly was the great work of Christian Endeavour.

### LIFE-LONG SERVICE

"With a facile pen and fluent tongue he combined in a magnificent and lasting service, the chief many of his highest efforts, including that of the European Presidency for six consecutive years, as well as that of Vice-President of the American Baptist Society of Christian Endeavour. In the services, he devoted to himself a lifetime of his energy, his strength, his intellect, his resources, his gifts, and his own talents, such as 'Ireland for Christ,' and 'Holland for Christ,' are among the shining jewels in his golden treasury of uncounted years.

By no means here Dr. Pollock's life is summed, but a man of remarkable intellectual attainments. He was well versed in many subjects, and in the course of his long life and wide travels, he had enriched his mind through acquaintance with many of the world's outstanding men. He had conversed on world problems with Benjamin Disraeli and Wilson. He sat on the laboratory with an inventor like Edison. Even in recent days he had corresponded in regard to the stars with an original discoverer like Hubble, and his post bag often brought him letters from the most prominent people. His public meetings I have seen him give, and in a manner quite hitherto had the coming to the highest heights.

He had his compass in the devotional rendering of a people's prayers. Dr. Pollock was a student of study, a warrior for a better world, of singular effectiveness. For though the prices of his personality and opinions were occasionally expensive and giving, as we would expect from one of his original work, like the gifts of the universe, yet his eye remained wide and clear. That explained his influence for the offering of vision and reform of others—his explanation lay in the purging and purging by which he could not keep the world in trouble. Through his ministry many generations were made to live, and many hearts came his way. None, however, gave him to his double more precious pleasure than the Degree of Doctor of Divinity, which in 1920 was conferred on him by the House of National Presbyterian College.

### DAYS OF SHADOW

Thus far we have spoken of the life of one found every man's friend. It had, like all others, its days of shadow. And the shadow of that was that, which took, by way, from his happy circle first, a promising and gifted son, and he was made only gauge of his personal feelings by the personal way in which he gave himself to the ministry of mercy. Today you thought you got to see, the people of St. Enoch's, in the great hall you have gathered in the presence of your highly-esteemed and greatly-beloved senior minister. Though we rejoice that the work of the congregation is unimpeded from him by the fact that during Dr. Pollock's absence, you were divinely guided



Paul Pollock in uniform

## CHAPTER THREE

# PAUL GILCHRIST POLLOCK 1896–1916

Paul Gilchrist Pollock was born at Glasgow on 29 February 1896 and in 1901, his parents John and Marion Pollock moved to Belfast where they were to live for the rest of their married lives. Paul's father was the Rev. John Pollock, a Presbyterian Church minister whose strengths lay in his sound organisation, physical energy, intellect and devotion to the Scriptures. Paul, like his elder brother Norman, attended the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. He was not as intellectually gifted as Norman and joined the office staff of Birch and Workman, a prestigious car dealership. This must have been one of the first in Belfast.

When Germany invaded Belgium in August 1914, Britain inevitably became involved and a general call to arms went out to young men everywhere. Paul volunteered immediately and became a private soldier in the 14th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles, part of the newly formed 36th Ulster Division. The men of the Ulster Division were already organised and part-trained, as nearly all, before the war, had been part of Carson's 'private army' – the Ulster Volunteer Force. This organisation had been created in early 1913 to resist, by force if necessary, the granting of Irish Home Rule by the London Liberal Government which was under pressure from the Nationalist Party at Westminster.

Due to his age at the time, it is unlikely that Paul would have been a member of Carson's organisation before the war, but given the conservative nature of the Presbyterian Church, it is likely that his early thoughts on Irish politics were strongly influenced by unionist sentiment. The UVF instantly produced 13 battalions of 'organised men' for the newly created 36th Ulster Division. The enormous sacrifice that these men made on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, some 20 months later, helped to ensure the emergence of a separate Northern Ireland after Irish Home Rule was finally agreed in 1920.

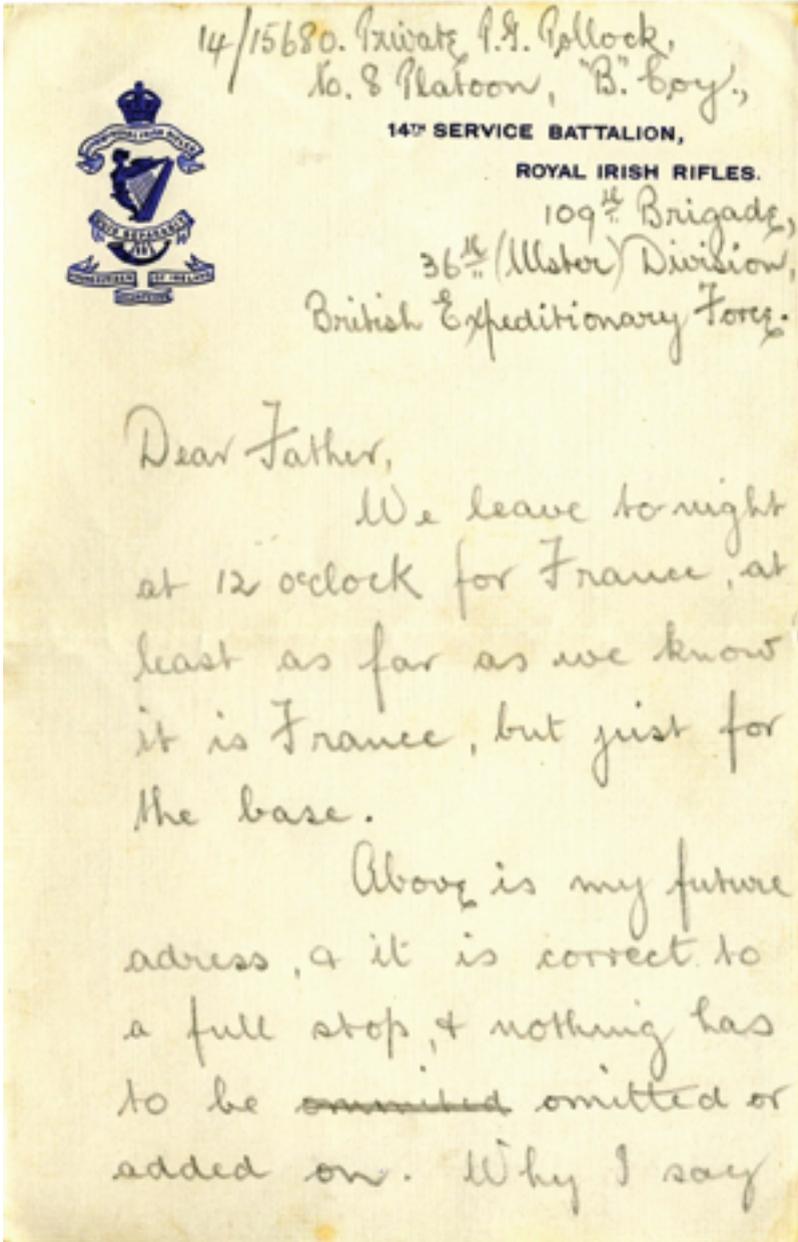
Paul was to die on the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916 when the 10,000 men of the 36th Ulster Division rose from their trenches at Thiepval Wood in northern France and sprinted into 'no man's land'. On that

day, the Division suffered 5,000 casualties of which 2,000 died or were missing. The men succeeded in seizing their principal objective – the enemy bastion of the Schwaben Redoubt – but had to abandon it towards the end of the day through lack of ammunition, inadequate reinforcements and a developing German counter-attack.

Paul has no known grave and his name was missed from official memorials in France and Ulster. Even the memorial tablet at his father's church was destroyed when the church was burnt down towards the end of the recent Troubles in Northern Ireland. Paul is remembered in Northern Ireland on the memorial tablet of his old school and at his father's gravestone in a cemetery near Belfast. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission will shortly acknowledge Paul's death on an addendum stone at Thiepval War Cemetery, France.

Paul has left to posterity his letters, written at regular intervals to his immediate family from 8 July 1915 when at Seaford, Sussex, until 11 June 1916 from the village of Lealvillers near Albert, France. For the first time, side by side with the letters, we also have the transcript of the official Battalion War Diary which recorded key incidents as they happened. We are fortunate that in the Diary, the commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel F. O. Bowen, and his adjutant, Captain Mulholland, were men given to expressing personal feelings on a range of subjects, some minor, others the stuff of history: the diary records it all. Nor were these officers without compassion for the hardships endured by their men which they of course shared. The Diary and letters make this personal experience of the Great War real. It is without recourse to the morbid satire of war poetry. The documents transcend too the efforts of contemporary television historians who often capture the imagination of peacetime audiences but fail to describe the enormous threat faced by every man, woman and child in these islands at the time.

From France Paul was never able to tell his family where he was or details of casualties but he wrote candidly about the enemy and the awful conditions he endured. He did not spare the sensitivities of his parents with the detail of daily life. When his letters are read alongside the War Diary, Paul's war emerges vividly. This history should interest those not in a position to read the documents at first hand. It is hoped too that it is a fitting tribute to a young man who died almost 100 years ago, although the freshness of his letters suggest that he could be with us still. The extraordinary personal freedoms and security we now enjoy would be beyond the wildest dreams of Paul and his fallen comrades. Remember this and their deaths will not have been in vain.



Paul's letter to his father on his departure for France, 1 October 1915

12-11-15.

My dear dear Mother,

I received your & Elsie's very welcome letters with all the good news.

We are now at a different part of the line (the I.C.V.'s) in a regular Brigade, who came through the retreat from Mons, so we are getting on, but it is only for a short time & in future do not put 109<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division, in my address, at least at present.

The weather here just now is fairly wet but I think it will soon clear up. To-day we had a Brigade march & a small manoeuvre at the end of it, & a foot inspection after we came in, & that reminds me, that if you ever send me any socks send me socks made of pure wool with no dye in them as my feet get very dirty with the other socks, as we often get our feet wet.

I was awfully sorry to hear about Norman being ill. I have written to him. I had another parcel from him. it is very good of him to send me so many.

Paul's letter to his mother of 12 November 1915

## The Letters

In August 1915, Paul Pollock received a letter from his old employer, Guy Birch who owned a prestigious car showroom at Chichester Street, Belfast. In it, Mr Birch gently chastises Paul for leaving it 12 months since he left the Company before writing. This is our only clue as to when Paul joined the Army and it seems he did so in those tumultuous few days of August 1914. We know from the history of the 36th Ulster Division that he spent his basic training period at the Dufferin and Ava Estates at Clandeboye, County Down but we pick up his first letter dated 8 July 1915 within days of arriving at Seaford, Sussex. From this we can see that the Battalion had been stationed at Randalstown, County Antrim to the north of Belfast. There are no letters surviving from his year in Ulster and presumably he had made frequent visits home and regular correspondence may not have been necessary.

In the Seaford letter, Paul tells us that while at Randalstown, he and an Army friend spent a wonderful day with the Elliots (presumably family friends); walked in their impressive gardens; had afternoon tea and then sang hymns in the drawing room. The Battalion had entrained for Dublin and then sailed under wartime conditions to Holyhead. It is not known whether Paul had ever been to England before but all that he saw from his train window impressed him, particularly passing through London. Finally, the train arrived at Seaford in balmy July weather and he thought the place lovely. He wrote home that the town had three picture houses and a pier and asked for a postal order and additional money to enjoy an outing to Brighton.

At Brighton, Paul saw wounded British, Indian and Gurkha troops. He remarked how strange it was to see bearded six-foot Sikhs and small Gurkhas walking side-by-side, the latter having mainly hand wounds from their habit of grabbing German bayonets so that they were then free to use their 'dreadful knives' (a reference to the traditional curved kukri knife of the Gurkha soldier). There was talk in the correspondence about a family visit to Sussex but Paul could not be sure how long the Division would remain in England. Lord Kitchener, the British War Minister, inspected the Division during these weeks and 'declared himself well satisfied' with all he saw of the Ulstermen.

During the period 1–3 October 1915, the Division sailed from Folkestone to Boulogne but Paul could only tell his family that he was 'somewhere in France' and recorded his disappointment at not having seen them before embarkation. On arrival in France he found himself at a tented transit camp complete with YMCA and music hall entertainment. The next day, the Battalion made a 10-hour train journey through mile after mile of beautiful vine country to a

village called Flesselles, north of Amiens. From the station the Battalion marched the ten miles to its billets at Poulainville. Paul describes how the men stumbled into a barn in darkness, placing their groundsheets on the floor and slept fully clothed under a single blanket – quickly asleep despite the sound of distant artillery. He took some comfort from the fact that the Germans used to be in this village but were now some miles to the north. Paul asked his family to send out cakes (but not soda bread); a fountain pen and a pair of fleece-lined gloves. He had received 'a long letter and six photographs from Dorothy'. (It is not known who this lady was but she is often mentioned in his early letters home.)

The family in Belfast seemed to have had a camera and so presumably at one time there were many photographs from this period. It is also apparent that Paul himself was a pipe-smoker. One wonders whether his mother approved? It would seem that from the moment he arrived at Boulogne until Paul was killed almost exactly nine months later, he never slept in a proper building again although occasionally the men slept in billets, presumably huts with bunks but mainly, they slept rough either in the open, in tents, or farm buildings. On 21st October, the men marched to Beauvals just north of Flesselles and carried out large-scale formation field exercises. On Sunday, 24 October 1915, Paul received a parcel from home and wrote a letter to his sister, Elsie.

On 25 October, the 14th Battalion, the Royal Irish Rifles received orders to line the streets of Beauvals as King George V, the President of the French Republic and Field Marshall Sir John French, the British Army Commander-in-Chief, drove through the village. Later that day, the Battalion received instruction in carrying out trench routines and a few days later marched to Fonquevillers via Couin and Souastre and there, for the first time, moved into front line trenches with the 5th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. The purpose of this attachment was to receive front line training. After four days, the men were withdrawn via Couin where they had the opportunity for bathing – the first time their clothes had been off in eight days. They rested the night, and then marched back to their old billets at Beauvals. From here they received orders to move further to the east away from the front line to Pernois and Franqueville where they trained with more experienced troops.

By 29 November, the Battalion was at Ailly-Le-Haut Clocher and on 11 December, Paul's B Company was billeted at Ergnies some ten miles west of Abbeville on the Channel coast. Paul would remain here until 5 January 1916 and spend a memorable Christmas which sadly would be his last. He wrote two letters home on 7 November but nothing further until 26 December.

Paul's November letters confirm the entries of the Battalion Diary that the troops were under an experienced regular brigade for training but in answer to Elsie's questions about how he lived in France, Paul told his sister that the men stayed under canvas, in farm buildings or dug-outs but never in huts although this was to change. On 17 November Paul wrote to his father and reported that snow covered the ground but the men were wearing large fur coats and were warm. He confirmed that he was writing a long letter to his former employer, Mr Birch. He told his father that just after leaving the front line trenches their old position was blown-in by German artillery fire. He seems, during this period, to have received weekly parcels from home containing special items of food, sweets, chocolate and personal things like socks or razor blades. At this point in the war Paul was inundated with letters from various people and had difficulty finding the time to reply. For the first time he becomes nostalgic about home and looks forward to the day when the whole family, including his brother Norman, would be together again but he concedes that this will not be for a 'wee while yet'. For the first time too, he looks forward to his eventual discharge from the Army. It was from Ergnies that Paul sent his parents the lovely embroidered Christmas cards whose colours and condition are as vivid today as when he sent them, almost 100 years ago.

Paul's Christmas letter dated 26 December is a remarkable account of how a group of like-minded men can create a 'home from home' and make the best of a situation. The letter describes how the boys in Paul's billet pooled their Christmas parcels of seasonal food from home and with the festive rations the Army supplied produced an amazing feast. For example, each soldier had a duck to eat. Their officers came round to wish the men a Merry Christmas and this was followed by entertainments in which Paul sang twice. This suggests that he must have had a very acceptable singing voice. There was also a best billet competition and Paul's B Company came a close second to A Company. The Battalion Diary confirms this was a close call. On 27 December there was a sergeants versus officers football match which the latter won by one goal to nil and on 1 January 1916, the band played to welcome in the New Year. All of these events are movingly explained in his letter and much is confirmed in the Battalion War Diary.

Paul wrote to his mother on 2nd January and in this letter, expresses his belief that the whole Battalion will be coming home for six days' leave, yet there is nothing to explain his certainty. It is possible that he was telling his mother what she actually wanted to hear but he conditioned the letter by saying 'something could change this'. In the letter nevertheless he also describes a scene for her where she looks up from her window and sees him at the garden gate and then

walking down the path – something we know he was destined never to do. The intriguing thing is that many mothers during the war imagined just this same scene but in Paul's case the happy homecoming sprang from his imagination. In this letter too, Paul returns to his mother an order form from a Belfast store for special provisions. He indicates a strong preference for traditional sponge puddings and chocolate.

On 11 January 1916, the Battalion moved to Berneuil, a day's marching closer to the front line and remained here in training and administration until 7 February.

On 1 February, Paul wrote to his sister Elsie and thanked her for a pair of trousers and some tins of food. He also assures her that he is writing as often as he can and that he is now corresponding with between 25 and 30 people, often several letters to each. Then he remarks about the cold and how it is sometimes difficult to hold a pen, and in the mornings his drinking water bottle was filled with ice. Finally, Paul tells Elsie that he has, once more, a long letter from 'Dot.'

The training for war had intensified at Berneuil and the Battalion Diary records time spent live-firing weapons. This is the first range practice recorded in the Diary, although one hopes there had been many other occasions. Clearly the Battalion was preparing for a prolonged period in the front line. On 7th February the men marched to Varennes via Puchevillers and into billets. From here, working parties were sent out to help the Royal Engineers construct a light railway at Acheux, work that would last until 28 February.

On 14 February, Paul wrote a short letter to his father but apologised for the sparseness of news and letters. As we now know this was a fairly prolonged period of what the Army called 'fatigues', in this case, constructing a light railway. Only now can we glimpse the routine of this from the Battalion Diary. He complains about the miserably wet weather and repetitive nature of the fatigues. The frustration is clear in this particular letter.

The situation was to change and on 28 February: the Battalion marched via Mally to Auchonvillers and took over flooded, front line trenches from the 10th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. The trenches were almost entirely flooded from melting snow and required constant pumping-out. To the annoyance of their own officers, the men did not receive dry gum boots and had to stand thigh-deep in freezing water for five days. During this period the enemy exploded a mine and the Battalion had patrols out but saw nothing. The Battalion Diary also records that Lieutenant Colonel F.O. Bowen took over command of the 14th Battalion. When the men left the trenches, there were several cases of 'trench foot' due to the wet conditions. The Battalion then concentrated at Forceville

A Merry Christmas & all the rest of it. There was a prize of £2 for the best billet in the Staff & A. boy got it. We had the best billet in "B" boy. At night we had a concert at which I sang twice O.S.D. & I think they are going to put it in the "Ulster Saturday Night". Geo. Hackney & John Ewing also sang. Alec was there also & enjoyed himself very much.

Now Elsie I do not think you need worry about your letters or parcels as I am almost certain I get everything that is sent to me, but you can still mark your parcels to make sure of it.

There is nothing else I need just now, but if I need anything I will write.

That was a fine case with the knife spoon & fork.

I think this is all the news just now but I will write soon again.

With love & kisses to all.

Your loving brother,  
Paul.

'... we had a concert at which I sang twice ... I think they are going to put it in the "Ulster Saturday Night". Geo Hackney and John Ewing also sang ...'

Extract from a letter to his sister Elsie Pollock, dated 26 December 1915

and Varennes to bathe and get cleaned up. During this period an enemy aircraft dropped a bomb close to the officers' mess but with no casualties. On 7 March the Battalion marched to Mesnil via Engelbelmer and Martinsart to take over billets from the 11th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

On 9 March, Paul posted a letter to his mother and spared her no detail on his recent discomfort. He confirmed the appalling nature of the trenches at Auchonvillers; that the village was a wreck and how his company had been in the second line. His letter tells how the enemy shelled the village day and night and that the men lived in the cellars 'like the stone age.' One man had burst ear drums from a shell explosion and 72 of them frost bite. Some stood up to their thighs in mud for 23 hours. The Germans had apparently blown up the boot store. In another letter, Paul tells his father that he could not begin to explain what it was like as it could not be imagined without the experience of being there. During the period Paul got up to eight hours' sleep in five days and four nights. When relieved by another unit, he tells of how the men staggered out of the line. Interestingly, he also writes to his mother that in a recent letter exchange with his father their view was that no matter how bad the situation, both felt that Paul would come safely through with much to talk about. He thanks his mother for the wonderful birthday cake with a flag design. Thanks also went to the rest of the family for their presents. Finally Paul warns his mother to tell his father not to repeat anything from his letters in the church magazine or sermons. It is clear that Paul was taking a chance with his descriptions and did not want to invite trouble from the Army censor.

From 11 until 15 March, the Battalion was in the line at Hamel and during the period, the Germans shelled the village killing Sergeant Penman.

Paul was able to write his next letter to his father from the trenches at Hamel. This letter was in a more confident tone than the last. He took pleasure in describing how the British artillery destroyed German trenches, 'blowing everything up into the air – equipment and sandbags were quite visible'. The encouraging effect on Paul and his comrades is obvious in the letter. He describes 'how our guns gave the Huns no peace at all.' In this letter he is full of pride for his Battalion – only 2 men wounded since they came to France. At this point he uses the Battalion title, the YCVs (Young Citizen Volunteers). He reflects on the high standards and discipline. This change of mood probably had something to do with the weather which had become dry and warm, in fact too warm. Paul's preference was for winter as clothing could be adjusted but in the summer heat there was no escape.

He told his father that he had been having an 'exciting time.' To illustrate this point he describes how he was pinned down with another man by shell fire with

fragments falling between them. The two men wondered about the possibility of getting an arm or leg injury; a passport to home for a short while. He adds, ‘worst luck – they all missed’. Another reason why this letter is more upbeat was due to regular and longer periods of sleep in the line. Paul tells his father of a curious incident concerning an officer, Captain Harper, in a communication trench to Hamel village. Paul thought he saw a German visible in ‘no man’s land’. Also present was a Captain Slacke who was also to die on 1 July. A third officer, apparently a crack shot, used Paul’s rifle to fire at the object but it turned out to be part of a peacetime road bank.

At this point whilst writing his letter, Paul’s dug-out is rocked as a shell lands and destroys an adjacent dug-out. Paul emerged into the connecting trench to find a blood trail and then casualties. He ran to a nearby cellar for additional cover but feared it would collapse so, exposed to enemy fire, he ran through buzzing shell fragments into the second line trenches. He discloses that a sergeant was killed (we now know it to have been Sergeant Penman) and several men wounded. This particular letter, written as it is from the trenches rather than a billet village, had to be finished the next day because of interruptions caused by enemy action. The Battalion had now withdrawn to the rear and in completing the letter, Paul reflected that all of the recent casualties had happened in the last few hours of being in the line. Once more he asks his father not to repeat the letter’s contents.

From 15 to 19 March the Battalion were back at Mesnil but provided forward working parties for the Royal Engineers. Here, they lost one man to shell fire. From 20 to 25 March, the Battalion were once more in trenches at Hamel. One man was killed by machine gun fire on takeover and Paul writes his next letter from there. From 26 March until 2 April, the Battalion are once more back at Mesnil cleaning up and doing fatigues for the RE. The Diary records that enemy air activity resulted in the officers’ mess latrine being bombed but without casualties. Wryly it notes, ‘even here we can’t get away from them.’

Paul’s letter to his father dated 20 March mainly concerned postal delays. The Diary confirms that he was in a village just behind the trenches. He also reported that the weather was warm and the trenches dry. The letter, like many others, makes reference to other boys from his father’s congregation who were serving with him. This strongly suggests that the 14th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles was a ‘Pals’ Battalion’ largely made up of groups of friends, known to one another and from the same community. One name that recurs in the letter is George Hackney. He would live through 1 July and transferred to the Labour Corps, possibly as a result of injuries. He survived the war and his service was remembered on the memorial at St Enoch’s Church.

On 30 March, whilst still at Mesnil, Paul writes to his father about his previous period in the trenches just a few days before and which he found 'quite exciting.' He had been chosen to go out on night patrols into 'no-man's land'. The task was to check the barbed wire in front of the British trenches and then examine the German wiring. He called this 'good sport' and it must have broken the tedium of being in trenches. Paul explains the 'funny sensation' of lying in the dark, as he felt it, surrounded by Germans.

Paul's father had asked him how he spent Sundays and was told that when at the front Sunday was like any other day. He explained that each day he read part of his Bible and prayed. He prayed that the war would be over soon and they (meaning his family) would be united once more. He added, 'it would be the time of our lives.' Finally in the letter, Paul asks for soda bread, cakes, puddings and butter to be sent out to France.

From 2 to 8 of April, Paul's B Company was in the Battalion's front line trenches at Hamel. During this period, A and D Companies were shelled and suffered six men killed and six wounded. The Battalion Diary records the names of those men who distinguished themselves and the fact that all involved, 'behaved splendidly'. During this period in the trenches, the Diary speaks of the Germans sending 'oil cans' over. This is mentioned several times. In the next of Paul's letters he makes an oblique reference to the enemy using mustard gas against them.

On 11 April, Paul wrote to his sister Elsie. Apparently Marion, his mother, had learned from another mother in Belfast that Paul was now a lance corporal. He explained to his sister that it did not lessen the dangerous work he had to do and it had not occurred to him to report his promotion home. He told her that during the last time in the trenches, the men had been heavily shelled and thought it might be a prelude to the Germans 'coming over' but their own pre-emptive rifle and machine-gun fire was so heavy and accurate, that nothing was attempted. In this letter, Paul provides some detail about the Germans using mustard gas against the Battalion. He describes it as, '... hot stuff ... understand? ... Mustard.' Mindful of the censor, he said no more. Nevertheless, despite the increase in intensity of attacks by the Germans, Paul found this exciting and at last had something to write about.

On 20 April, the Battalion were moved back from the trenches to billets at Martinsart Wood where the men had baths available despite the wet weather.

On 23 April Paul wrote to Elsie and described France as a 'rotten hole'. Clearly things had changed. Paul told her that he was out of the trenches but this pattern had been going on for three months without a break and clearly he was

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right. of course ~~she~~ Mother  
 very sincerely ~~feels~~ <sup>is</sup> in her  
 letter that she can hear me  
 laughing at her expecting  
 an answer to such a question  
 of course I can not blame her  
 as I am sure she would  
 simply love some person to  
 answer it, well, so would  
I but this is the best way  
 I can answer it, but I  
 can give you one piece of  
 information - that is, that  
 an English Division was  
 here before us & were  
 inspected by Kitchener & sent  
 to Aldershot & are never away  
 yet & that was months ago  
 & all the English people say  
 that they would ~~rather~~ <sup>rather</sup> a

5.

100 times have the Ulster  
 Division than the English  
 one which was here before  
 us. & as per usual the  
 Y.C.V. has made ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> name  
 in fact the General that  
 was here before he said that  
 if the other Bns. in the Div.  
 were like the Y.C.V. it would  
 do well.

You have no idea  
 how I am longing to see  
 you all it is a funny  
 feeling to be away from  
 home so long at a time  
~~but~~ but it will not be  
 long now.

I am sending by  
 some post a P.C. of Brighton  
 to give you a view of it.

‘... an English division was here before us & were inspected by Lord Kitchener  
 & sent to Aldershot & are never away yet & that was months ago &  
 All the English people say that they would rather a 100 times have the Ulster Division  
 than the English one which was here before us ...’

Extract from a letter to his father Rev. John Pollock, undated

fed up. He told her that the rumour was that they would not be going back for some time but when he wrote these words, he was not to know that next day, his Company would be returning to the trenches after just a few days away. He also told her that he had had some 'close shaves.' He makes reference to Dot once more, explaining that he had plenty of news from her.

Paul's letter of the 23rd April to his mother contained little about the operational situation but it is clear that several family or church friends were commissioned officers in the Battalion, among them Lieutenant Lacke who was by now the Patrols Officer but was also to die on 1 July. Paul thought it would be some time before he would have the opportunity to return home. It was as well that the contents of this letter were quite bland: it was opened by the censor before delivery at home.

On 24 April, B Company was detached to Thiepval Wood and by 28 April all companies were deployed there in trenches. By now the weather had improved and the wood was described as, 'looking at its best', but heavy thunder storms developed and flooded the trenches at times. During this period the Germans at Thiepval village mortared the Battalion in the wood but the Diary reports all men being in excellent spirits. Lieutenant Colonel Bowen reported the high number of British artillery shells and mortars bombs that failed to explode on impact. (This is something that troubled the Army all along the chain of command and it was becoming a political issue in London.) The exchanges of fire were heavy and D company lost 11 men killed and 22 wounded. Many were lost when trenches were blown in. Men worked feverishly to dig out casualties. The Diary records: 'the awful sight it was to see the procession of dead and wounded being brought out the next morning. Men had died at their posts that could have saved themselves by retiring but did not because they had to stay in position to deny the Germans the ground, had they come across.' The C.O. acknowledged in the Diary with deep regret the loss of life and by name recorded the gallantry and devotion to duty of one officer and 13 men.

It was with relief that the Battalion withdrew on 6 May and moved to Martinsart Wood. No sleep had been had for 48 hours. On 8 May the Battalion went into billets at Lealvillers. The billeting arrangements were poor and the Diary records immense frustration and the need for a centrally organised system with minimum standards for living areas on handover from one unit to another. The men had to do a lot of work to make them habitable. By 11 May the men were getting back to their old form and were practising attacks on the German trenches similar to those at Thiepval Wood. On 11 May, the Battalion was inspected by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief

in France. According to Paul, he expressed himself ‘well-pleased’ with what he saw. The Battalion were to remain at Lealvillers until 13 June carrying out intensive training, church services and some competitions. They then moved to Aveluy Wood to prepare support trenches for reserve battalions for what the Diary calls, ‘the great day.’ Clearly the forthcoming Somme offensive was known to the senior officers of the Battalion but must also have been obvious to the men who had spent weeks making preparations and dumping ordnance and material of all kinds in forward positions.

On 12 May, Paul wrote on YMCA notepaper to his mother. He had received a couple of parcels and a letter that his brother Norman had sent him eight months previously when Paul was still at Seaford Camp, Sussex. It had enclosed a pound note for a night out in London! Paul reflected on what could have delayed the letter. He confirmed that he was out of the firing line and that the Battalion was to have a proper rest. He said, ‘they had all had a hot time of it with many killed and wounded but the number was not “militarily significant” although he could not say how many.’ He describes how, during a bombardment, the Germans got out of their trenches to recover their own dead and wounded and how the Battalion had held their fire but later that day when they tried to do the same, the Germans had opened fire. He described the ‘Huns’ as a bad lot and appropriately named.

Paul wrote that he had often wanted to explain what it was like being in the trenches but had never been able to and so he enclosed an article cut from a magazine that described graphically what conditions were like and how soldiers adapted to survive. The description did not include bombardments which were an added dimension to Paul’s own experience. At this point in the letter Paul uses the phrase, ‘which take us within sight of the limits of physical and mental endurance and that our most riotous flights of luxury rarely run to basic comfort’, which, if original to him, is quite a profound thing to write to his mother. Indeed within the scope left to him by the censor, Paul does not shield his parents from any detail and they were left under no illusions about the dangers in which their son was placed. Finally, the letter ends by saying that this experience was past and that currently the men were working hard but out of danger and resting. He told his mother that the other boys (some named and presumably church members she would have known) were looking fit and well. The night before he wrote the letter, the men had had a good time watching a concert party by ‘The Ulster Division Follies’.

It was just two days later that he wrote to his mother again following a church service taken by Captain Mitchell. The letter acknowledges a parcel received from her with a great many items of food and drink all of which were quite

special and which must have meant a lot to him. These included: lemonade, ginger cake, café au lait, salmon, raspberry jam and oatcakes. He acknowledged that Captain Mitchell had spoken to her recently on his own home leave. Paul reminds her of several other boys by name; she would have known them as children. It makes the point that the losses of 1 July were grievous for both the family and Church community.

Whilst still at Lealvillers on 21 May, Paul wrote to his father. The letter speaks of the hot weather and that the men are 'roasting away to nothing'. A friend called Alec had gone home on leave and would visit his father and tell him all the news. Paul had given Alec things to say to his father. Finally there is another reference to George [Hackney]. In this letter too, Paul shows concern for his mother's recent, 'chill', presumably a cold. The letter ends as they usually do with, 'love and kisses to all, your loving son, Paul'.

On 30 May, Paul wrote to his father and began the letter by telling him that he had decided to 'take a commission' and hopefully be appointed as a junior officer. The letter implies that the Rev. Pollock had urged this on his son at an earlier stage but Paul either did not wish to or could not go down this route. In this decision Paul seems to have been influenced by a family friend called Alec who was also applying for a commission and who had recently seen Paul's parents during home leave. Paul explains to his father the procedure and asks him to approach the commanding officer of another regiment to see if there was a willingness to sponsor him. Paul was greatly influenced by a large number of his church friends, many of whom had made similar applications. Paul also thought that being the son of a minister, it was the right thing to do. He drew on the experience of Alec and tells his father to try and get a battalion stationed near Belfast. It is quite clear that he had enough of active service for the moment and was trying to get home. The timing of his interest in receiving a commission, in the light of his earlier comments, suggests this. At this point, he had been on active service continuously for eight months. The 'P.S.S.' on this letter hopes that with a possible rearward move for the Battalion and an application for a commission that he 'will be home soon for a good while'. Alas, this was not to be.

The last letter from Paul before he died, dated 11 June, is just before the Battalion moved to Aveluy Wood. It was a day of kit inspections and church parades. On this day he wrote to his mother. Paul thanked her 'very, very much' for yet another parcel and then reflected on all the visitors she had had from the Battalion. Paul then conveys the shock that all the men felt when news of the death of Lord Kitchener reached them. They could not believe it but he adds 'we will still win anyway'. He ends his last letter by complaining that the leave period

had been reduced from seven to three days and that the men were angry. Paul was not to have the leave that he expected and there is only one more communication from him dated 27 June, just three days before he died. It was a pre-printed card completed at Headuville on which Paul had deleted all the other standard messages except, 'A letter follows shortly.' By now he was on the move with no time to write.

In the last 19 days of his life Paul did not write any further letters to his parents that we know of and the Battalion War Diary of the 14th Battalion, the Royal Irish Rifles (Young Citizen Volunteers) is the only account of his final days. On 13 June, the Battalion marched to Aveluy Wood via Martinsart. On arrival it did not have anywhere near a full complement of tents and many issued were full of holes. The weather was very wet at the time but gradually improved. There was much pressure to get on with the tasks and the Somme offensive was known to be imminent. There were about 10,000 troops in the Wood and machine-gun fire and artillery occasionally found their mark as the men dug and worked. One young officer was killed while writing a letter beside his shelter. The improving weather made the Wood relatively pleasant and work carried on apace. On 19 June the Commanding Officer received the outline dispositions of the four battalions in the brigade. Paul's Battalion was to be the left support battalion behind the 9th Battalion the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. On 23 June Paul's Battalion left Aveluy Wood to go back to Headuville but were recalled during the march to carry more ammunition forward at Aveluy Wood. When they finally left to return to Headuville the men were wet to the skin and had had nothing to eat. They arrived 'wet and dead beat' after their march. The 24 June was a day of rest, drying and getting sorted out but was also the first day of the bombardment that would last six days. On 26 June the British used gas with some success against the Germans. On 27 June the Battalion marched into billets at Martinsart while the bombardment intensified. From here the Battalion were told to march to Forceville and for the first time, Lieutenant Colonel Bowen learned that the attack would begin on Saturday, 1 July. The men were described as being in the best of spirits. At 9:45 pm on 30 June the Battalion left Forceville to march directly to Thiepval Wood for an attack the following morning.

'The Battalion marched off into the night by platoons at 100 yard intervals', first to Engle Belmer, then Martinsart 'under a clear starry sky'. They passed over the recently constructed light railway and on to Aveluy Wood. All the time 'the night was made hideous by the crash of guns and the whistling of shells overhead.' The march was led by A Company and when the main railway line was reached the platoons followed it north towards Thiepval Wood. The

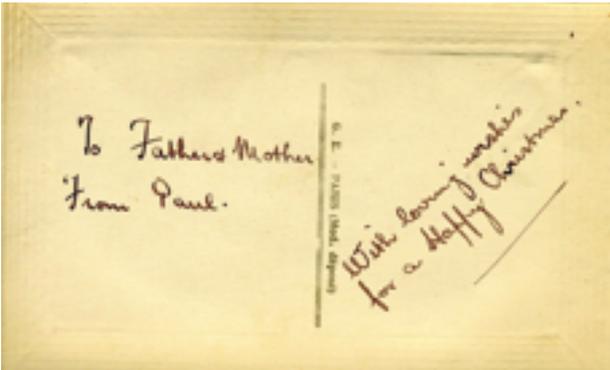
Battalion then crossed the marshes of the River Ancre using what was known as the southern causeway. A German machine-gun tried to hit the Battalion at this point but the fire went too high. The men by now were making their way up a long communication trench called 'Paisley Avenue'. It approached the south-east corner of Thiepval Wood and then ran along the southern edge until it crossed another main communication trench called 'Elgin Avenue'. This was the main route right up the centre of the Wood to the northern edge facing the Germans. The time was now about 1:00 am and until 3:30 am, the Diary records that 'a lull seemed to settle over all the earth as if it wore a mutual tightening up for the great struggle shortly to commence ... A water hen called to its mate midst the reedy swamp and a courageous nightingale made bold to treat us with a song'.

As 6:00 am approached, German artillery played on the northern edge of the wood and British artillery continued to hammer at the German defences. At 7:20 am Paul's Battalion got up from its assembly trenches and went forward to lie behind the forward trenches of the 10th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. At 7:30 am the four battalions of the 109th Brigade rose and advanced on a 500-metre front, in fact the northern edge of the wood. It is at this point that we lose sight of Paul's last journey. The Commanding Officer from his dugout and under shell fire writes the diary personally for 1 July.

'The Brigade moved off as if on parade – nothing finer in the way of an advance has ever been seen, but alas, no sooner were they clear of our own wire when the slow "tat tat" of the Hun machine guns from Thiepval Village and Beaumont-Hamel caught the advance.' At 7:45 am, the Commanding Officer wrote, 'under a deadly cross fire but nothing could stop this advance and so on they went.' The first German prisoners started to appear in Elgin Avenue and reports started to reach Colonel Bowen from his four companies. By 8:10 am the companies were consolidating in front of the second line of the German front line trenches. This line was overlooked by the Schwaben Redoubt – a German strong point which was an objective for the Brigade. Time went by and urgent requests for reinforcements started to come back from the companies; the Germans seemed to be organising a counter-attack to retake their lost ground. By 8:00 pm it was clear that the Brigade could not hold its gains despite capturing the Schwaben strong point and men were coming back to the northern edge of Thiepval Wood where a defensive line was struck in the original forward trenches.

That night, only two officers and 120 men of the Battalion who had gone over the parapet re-crossed the causeway to the comparative safety of Headuville. The Battalion casualties had been 42 per cent in a battle that had lasted about 12 hours and had, for a time, advanced about 2 kilometres.

Paul Pollock could have died at any point on 1 July 1916 and anywhere between the northern edge of Thiepval Wood and the far end of the Schwaben Redoubt. He has no known grave but if he has one at all, it is likely to be at the Connaught Cemetery on the northern edge of Thiepval Wood. At this spot were laid the bodies of many unidentified soldiers. We shall never know the agony of Paul's final hours and minutes, and Ulster reeled from its loss. However, in the years that followed, it remembered with immense pride the heroic sacrifice of the 36th Ulster Division. Paul's name is remembered on his father's grave with its elevated view across Belfast Lough and the open sea across which Paul never returned.



Embroidered Christmas Card, 1915





Mrs Elizabeth Bridges (left) and her sister Joan Tyres

## POSTSCRIPT

### THE POLLOCK FAMILY

BY ELIZABETH BRIDGES

Rev. John and Marion Pollock were my grandparents. My mother, Elsie, born on 29 April 1889, was the middle one of three. She and her elder brother Norman were born in Edinburgh where my grandfather was a Minister in the United Presbyterian church. The family moved to Glasgow three years later where Paul, the much loved youngest son, was born on 29 February, Leap Year Day, 1896. There was no leap year in 1900 so he was eight before he celebrated his actual birthday. He was in France for his fourth birthday. My mother sent him a cake with four candles. Four months later he was reported missing.

Mother went to school at Hillhead High School in Glasgow. She loved music and sang in a choir until she was eighty. She played the piano mainly for hymn singing until she was eighty-five. In 1906 mother spent a year in Switzerland at a finishing school. She learned to ski there but, as far as I know, never had the chance to ski again.

The family moved to Belfast in 1901. Norman returned to Edinburgh to train as a doctor. He joined the navy as a surgeon and through the First World War served on board a ship in the North Sea. He remained a naval surgeon until he retired.

In 1912 my mother started training to become a nurse at the London Hospital. My father, Percy Cheal, was a medical student at the same hospital. They met in early 1914 when my mother, newly qualified, nursed him after he had an appendix operation that developed complications. When the war started later in that year mother continued to nurse at the London Hospital caring for the ever-growing stream of wounded soldiers. She told me once she learned to close the back of her nose to block out the terrible smell of gangrene. The men would exchange false arms or legs, causing confusion and laughter, much needed in that desperate place and time. When Paul went to France my mother must have scrutinised every face of the intake of wounded in case her beloved brother was among them.

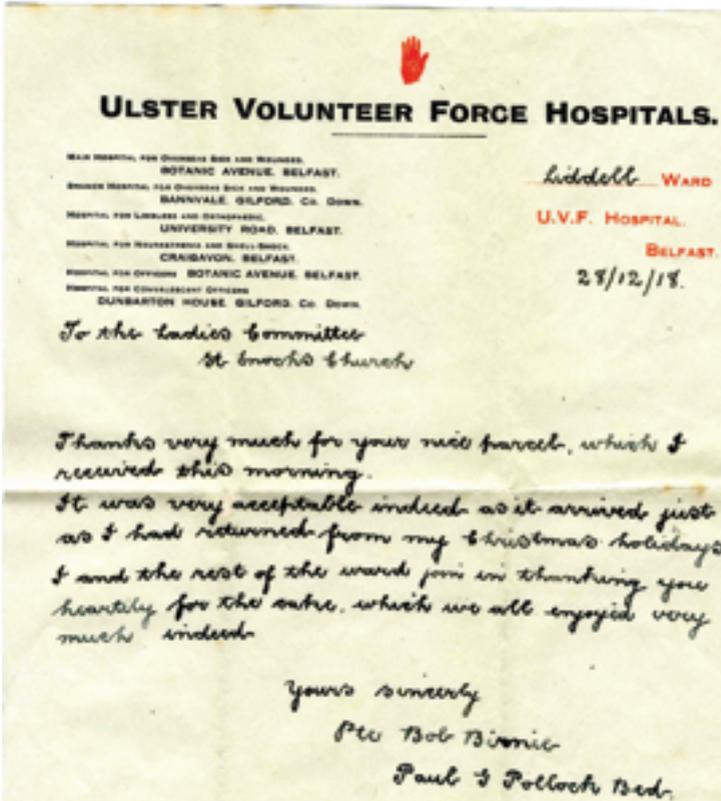
In 1915 Paul was sent to Seaford in Sussex for his preliminary training. My father having qualified as a doctor and surgeon was by that time operating at Greylingwell Military Hospital in Chichester which is near Seaford. As my parents were courting by this time it was a good chance for Paul to meet my father. Paul mentioned this in one of his letters.

When Paul was reported missing after 1 July 1916 mother went home to Belfast to be with her parents to give each other comfort. My grandparents never accepted that Paul was killed. They never gave up hope that he would return. Mother spent the rest of the war nursing at the Volunteer Force Military Hospital in Belfast. I have a letter written at the end of the war by a patient at that hospital. He was writing from the 'Paul Pollock Bed' and addressed the letter to 'The Ladies' Committee, St Enoch's Church'. I wonder if my mother, in conjunction with her parents, was instrumental in sponsoring that bed.

While my father was at Chichester he met Dr James Maxwell who was to greatly influence him to work towards doing medical missionary work in Formosa. Dr Maxwell's father had started the first mission hospital in southern Formosa in 1865. My parents must have discussed and agreed to this future plan. They were engaged before mother returned to Belfast. As with so many thousands of others, separation and heartbreak was part of their life. Not only was there the tragedy of Paul's death but my father, having joined the RAMC, was torpedoed in the Mediterranean on his way to serve in Egypt. He went on to serve as a surgeon in the General Hospital in Cairo, later being transferred to Salonika, where he contracted malaria. This was to recur at various times for the rest of his life.

In December 1918 father returned to England and hurried to Belfast to make arrangements for his wedding. They were married on 26 February 1919 in St Enoch's Church. None of my father's family were able to attend. The post-war deadly flu epidemic was raging and father's sister, Elma, had developed it, though she did recover. He was dressed in full military uniform including a sword that clanked on the tiled church floor. It was incongruous that he had to wear a sword as he was a Quaker and refused to fight. Because he was a doctor and declared that he would minister to the wounded, whether friend and foe, he was not put in prison, as so many good men were.

My parents' honeymoon was spent in the farmhouse of a friend on the Chatsworth estate in Derbyshire. Father then took a post at the hospital in Colchester in Essex. He and my mother would have spent time planning their trip to Formosa. I have a photo of my mother in Belfast. On the back it states that this was when she went to say goodbye to her parents. In December mother and father sailed from Liverpool on a packed, uncomfortable ship bound for



1918 letter from a Private Bob Birnie, convalescing in the 'Paul G Pollock Bed' of the U.V.F. hospital in Belfast where Elsie Pollock was a nurse

Canada. They crossed Canada by the Trans-Canadian Railway, then by ship to Japan and finally to northern Formosa. A long train journey took them to Tainan in the south of the island.

During the next ten years they learned the difficult language, worked incredibly hard, not only in the hospital but travelling with the Bible to various places including visiting aboriginal people. Also during that time mother gave birth to my sister, Joan, my three brothers, John, Jim and Frank and me, the youngest. Mother not only carried on her own nursing but trained Formosan nurses. They did return once to England with Joan and John as small children. I have photos of them with my Pollock grandparents at my father's family home in Sussex. There probably was not time to visit Belfast.

When I was only a few months old mother travelled to England with the five of us. Although most of the journey was by ship, she did take a train across France because Frank was very ill with dysentery. My father was unable to go with the family as he would not be freed from the hospital to join us for another three years. Mother took us to Belfast to stay with our grandparents for those three years. Joan, John and Jim went to a local school. I have very few memories of that time. I can only remember sitting on a sofa with my grandfather who lay on another sofa. He had lost his sight by that time. He used to tell me stories. The sofa I sat on was of horse hair and prickled my legs. I imagine my grandparents enjoyed having the chance to get to know us over that time. I have happy photos of outings to the seaside for us all. That is the only time we went to Belfast. When grandpa Pollock died in 1935 grandma came to Eastleigh and bought a house near us. Then when war broke out and there were bombing raids she moved in with us and lived with us until she died in 1947.

With my father returned from Formosa, we moved to Eastleigh, a town just outside Southampton. Father set up a general practice and we grew up there through the war. Although Southampton was heavily bombed, Eastleigh escaped fairly lightly. Father was on the fire watch rota, when he had to walk the streets of Eastleigh with a torch, a whistle and a stirrup pump to put out fires from incendiary bombs. He set up a first-aid post and taught people to treat patients for shock and if they were hurt in the bombing.

Mother organised knitting parties for making scarves and balaclava helmets for the troops, particularly for sailors. She worked for the British and Foreign Bible Society as their secretary for twenty-five years. She joined the Women's Voluntary Service, helping when people had been bombed out of their homes. Mother took turns at the local railway station, serving tea and cakes to soldiers who were passing through and changing trains there.

After my father died in 1957 mother moved to Sunbury to live with my sister Joan. She had a separate flat and led a very active life, continuing to work for the WVS and the Bible Society. In 1965 she was invited to return to Formosa (now called Taiwan) for the one hundred years' celebration of the start of the hospital. Sadly she felt it was too far for her to travel. She did however enjoy travelling in England visiting her family and many friends and in 1967 she flew to Belfast for the ninety-fifth anniversary of the opening of St Enoch's church. That must have been an emotional time for her. She went on her only holiday abroad to Majorca with a nursing friend. When she celebrated her ninetieth birthday in 1979 the whole family, including her eleven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren attended. It was clear to see how she enjoyed the occasion. Seven months later she died.

We decided that it would be sad not to continue to meet as a family, so every year since then we have met on the second Sunday of June for a family day. There is often a new baby or a new boyfriend or special news to share. Although our three brothers have died leaving just Joan and me, we have now 'passed the baton' on to the next generation who are keeping the tradition going.

My sister Joan joined the ATS and served in Plymouth during the heavy bombing there, working on an anti-aircraft station where she manned the searchlights. She met her future husband there. They had three children and now have eleven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

My eldest brother John joined the Navy and served in many parts of the world and was torpedoed in almost the same place in the Mediterranean as my father was in the First World War. After the war he continued to travel, with a map making company. He spent two years in the Antarctic exploring and has a point named after him. He married and had two daughters and now has five grandchildren.

My middle brother Jim could not join the forces as he was an electrical engineer and his work was considered too important for the war effort. He stayed in that job all his working life. He married and they had one daughter and now have one grandson.

My youngest brother Frank was not old enough to join up in the war but he served two years in the army after the war. He worked all his working life for a Medical Publishing company. He was a lay preacher for the Baptist Church and travelled over the country preaching. He married but he and his wife had no children.

I left school at the end of the war and joined the Women's Land Army. At first I was not old enough so I worked on the farm where mother and father had their honeymoon. In the WLA I worked in Sussex and Hampshire. I married a farm worker and we had five children. I now have fifteen grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Last year my two daughters and I went with Peter (Fisher) to Thiepval to see Paul's name on the memorial. Peter took us, through his research, on the last journey Paul made through France. At the small cemetery near where he and his friends would have left Thiepval Wood on that fatal day we found a tombstone to a soldier 'known unto God' from Paul's regiment and killed on the same day as he went missing, so we laid our wreath there. Paul might have known him. We plan to return in 2016.

Elizabeth Bridges

## APPENDIX 1

# ST ENOCH'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: ORIGINS TO 1900

Between 1850 and 1900 Belfast's Presbyterian population quadrupled, while the number of congregations rose from 15 to 47. One of the new congregations established in this period was St Enoch's. Its origins, however, are far from straightforward and to understand something of them we need to go the middle years of the 1800s. In 1849 the congregation led by the Rev. Joshua Collins that gathered in the meeting house in Berry Street moved to a church in College Square North and was henceforth known as College Square. The vacated meeting house in Berry Street, which had been originally built for a congregation of Seceders as long ago as 1782, was eventually taken over by a new Presbyterian congregation that had developed out of meetings held in St Ann's Buildings in Donegall Street. These meetings had been organised by some of the members of Townsend Street Presbyterian Church, among them a licentiate named Hugh Hanna. On 29 March 1852 Hanna was ordained minister of the Berry Street congregation.

### **Rev. Hugh Hanna**

Hugh Hanna was born near Dromara, County Down, in 1821. His father Peter was the tenant of a small farm, while his mother Ellen (née Finiston) was the daughter of a soldier in the Black Watch who had served in the Napoleonic Wars. His family belonged to First Dromara Presbyterian Church. When his parents moved to Belfast Hugh was raised by his grandparents and grew up listening to his grandfather John Hanna's tales of Covenanting times and other stories. Eventually he joined his parents in Belfast and attended Rev. Dr Henry Cooke's church in May Street. While in Belfast he studied at Bullick's Academy and Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and in 1847 entered the theological college of the Presbyterian Church. By this time he was a member of Townsend Street Presbyterian Church where he also taught in a school associated with the congregation. He was licensed to preach by the Belfast Presbytery in May 1851.

Under Hanna the congregation in Berry Street grew from 75 families to 750 families. In 1858 the meeting house was rebuilt at a cost of £2,400, but even this was not sufficient to accommodate the expanding membership. By 1869 it had become apparent that a new meeting house at a different location was required.

In the summer of that year a site at Carlisle Circus was secured from the Belfast Charitable Society at an annual rent of £80. The Belfast-based architect, Anthony Thomas Jackson, who had designed a new town hall for Belfast only a short time before, was commissioned to prepare plans, while James Henry, who was responsible for many of Belfast's most important edifices of this period, was appointed builder. On 27 October 1870, in the presence of a large gathering, the foundation stone of the new church was laid by the Marquess of Downshire. Placed in a cavity in the stone were documents relating to the congregation's history, sermons and copies of the *Belfast Newsletter*.

### **St Enoch's Church**

The cost of the new church was estimated to be £7,000, with another £3,000 on the manse and school. Paul Larmour, in his *Buildings of Belfast* (1987) provided the following description: 'A jagged and craggy Gothic Revivalist pile in white Scrabo sandstone, now much blackened. ... The triple arched antrance and jutting gargoyles give an Early French look ...'. By the time that Larmour was writing the original spire rising to a height of 120 feet had been dismantled. He commented on the 'magnificent theatre-like interior with two tiers of galleries around three sides and four great rooflights up above', an arrangement that was 'unique in an Irish church'.

The building of the new church took over a year, but by the spring of 1872 its completion was in sight. A name for the new church still had to be agreed, however. The minutes of the Committee meeting on 13 May 1872 record:

The name to be given to the new church was then considered. A diversity of opinion existed. The names St Enoch, St David and Mount Hermon were put forward and when the majority were in favour of St Enoch which name was to be submitted for the approval of the congregation.

The choice of St Enoch – which was derived from St Enoch's Church in Glasgow – was approved by the congregation at a meeting on the following evening. The opening service in the new church was held on 9 June following with the preacher Rev. J. Oswald Dykes of London. The building was packed to the rafters with an estimated attendance of between 3,000 and 4,000; hundreds more had to be turned away. In the report of its opening in the *Belfast Newsletter* of 10 June, the church was described as 'the largest in connection with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, having comfortable seating accommodation for

over 2,500'. In the 1890s a third gallery was built to accommodate the Scottish soldiers from Victoria Barracks who attended services. On Sunday evening, 6 September 1874, on the occasion of D. L. Moody and I. D. Sankey's visit, the attendance in St Enoch's was 'one of the largest ever witnessed in a place of worship in Belfast'.

### **'Roaring Hugh'**

Known as 'Roaring Hugh', Rev. Hugh Hanna was 'forcible and impressive' preacher who often courted controversy. He was a staunch defender of Protestantism, hostile to the Catholic Church, and strongly opposed to the introduction of Home Rule for Ireland. His opponents accused him of having fomented civil disorder on a number of occasions. On the other hand, as his entry in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* states, 'Such activity has overshadowed his impressive contribution to education. Within St Enoch's he established an enormous network of Sunday schools and evening classes, including a training institute for teachers.' In a report of 1888 it was noted that the Sabbath schools had 3,200 on the rolls and the day schools over 2,000 pupils. The day schools under Hanna's care were St Enoch's, Linfield, Riversdale, Finiston, Hillman and North Thomas Street, 'in all of which a good work is carried on'. In the *History of Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (1982), Hanna was described as 'sui generis, with respect to his abilities as a preacher, lecturer and educationist.' In his history of St Enoch's, J. M. Barkley noted that Hanna 'was generous to the poor of all creeds and classes', and that while he may have exhibited political anti-Catholicism, 'no Roman Catholic ever came to him seeking help and was turned away without receiving assistance.' In 1885 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by the Irish Presbyterian Theological Faculty, while in 1888 he was awarded a Doctorate of Laws by Galesville University, Wisconsin.

Hanna died suddenly at his home, 1 Clifton Terrace, on 3 February 1892 and two days later was buried in Balmoral Cemetery. At a congregational meeting on 22 February following it was agreed that a tablet would be erected in St Enoch's and a monument at Balmoral in his memory. The tablet was designed by the architectural firm of Young & Mackenzie and created by the English sculptor Harry Hems (whose other works include the statue of William III atop Clifton Street Orange Hall). The memorial at Balmoral is in the form of a tall square pillar, the inscription of which records that it was 'erected by St Enoch's Congregation and Sabbath schools'. Hanna was survived by his wife Frances, known as Fanny (née Rankin), whom he had married in 1852 and who had

borne him two sons and four daughters. In 1894 a bronze statue of Hanna was erected in the centre of Carlisle Circus. This was blown off its plinth by a bomb in 1970 and removed into storage where it remains. The tablet to Hanna that was once in St Enoch's is now in the Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church on the Ravenhill Road, Belfast.

### **Rev. Charles Davey**

Less than a month before Hanna's death, Rev. Charles Davey, a man of very different character, had been installed as his colleague and successor on 7 January 1892. A farmer's son from near Carrickfergus, as a youth Davey began to attend some of the cottage meetings established in the wake of Moody and Sankey's visit to Ireland in 1874. These had a profound influence on him and led him into Christian service. In 1878 he joined the Irish Evangelisation Society which took him to all parts of the north of Ireland. After completing theological studies in Belfast, New York and London, he was licensed by the North London Presbytery in 1886 and in the following year he was ordained minister of First Ballymena. Eschewing party politics, his primary aim as a minister was preaching the Gospel. Unlike 'Roaring Hugh', at times nervous tension reduced his voice to a whisper.

During his eight years in St Enoch's he showed a deep commitment to pastoral visitation. With the number of families in connection with the congregation increasing from 700 when he arrived to 1,200 six years later this was exhausting work and inevitably affected his health. In 1897 he went to South Africa for three months to recuperate from overwork. In 1900 he accepted a call from Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church, preaching in St Enoch's for the last time on 19 August of that year. In April 1901 his new congregation moved into a new meeting house on the Malone Road and was henceforth known as Fisherwick. Davey remained minister of the congregation until his death in March 1919. His son, Rev. J. Ernest Davey, was Principal of Assembly's College.

### **Sources**

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*A History of Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (1982)

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Paul Larmour, *Belfast: An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (1987)

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## APPENDIX 2

# THE SCOTCH-IRISH PRESBYTERIAN REUNION, ST ENOCH'S, 4 JULY 1884

On 4 July 1884 the delegates attending the Pan-Presbyterian Council in Belfast held a 'Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Reunion' in St Enoch's Church, the date, of course, having added significance for the Americans in attendance. The meeting opened with devotions led by Rev. Dr Hall of New York. The chair was occupied by Thomas Sinclair who said that it was a privilege to be asked to preside over a gathering of those of Scotch-Irish birth or ancestry from all over the globe. He drew attention to the fact that the Presbyterian Church in the United States had been founded by an Ulsterman (Francis Makemie) and highlighted the achievements of other Ulstermen around the world. Sinclair was followed by the Rev. Hugh Hanna who expressed his belief that this was probably the most remarkable gathering ever in the history of the Reformation Churches and highlighted the pride that they had in their Scottish inheritance. Hanna concluded his rousing speech to loud applause and turned and shook hands with two of the American delegates seated on the platform.

The next speaker was Rev. Dr Martin of Kentucky who noted that five of the twenty-one Presidents of the United States were of Scotch-Irish background – Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Johnson and Arthur. In his speech Martin read from a letter that had been written by Chester A. Arthur's private secretary on 17 May 1884 that acknowledged the President's Ulster lineage: 'He is of Scotch-Irish descent, his father having been a native of the County of Antrim'. Further talks followed. Rev. Dr McCracken, Chancellor of the Western University, Pennsylvania, and Professor of Theology elect of the University of New York, delivered an address on 'The Scotch and Irish in the United States'. Martin then returned to the podium to talk on 'The life and character of President Andrew Jackson'.

He was followed by Rev. Dr James McCosh, a native of Ayrshire who had been Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Queen's College, Belfast, before being appointed President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1868. McCosh spoke on the distinctions between the Covenanters and the Puritans and highlighted the importance of education to the Scots and

Scotch-Irish, noting the many young men from Ulster who had been educated at Glasgow University. The proceedings continued with a number of additional addresses. During the reunion a cablegram was sent to President Arthur extending to him the good wishes of those gathered. In reply Arthur wrote, 'Coming from kindred ancestry the kind greetings of the Scotch-Irish assembled at Belfast today are specially pleasing, and are very cordially reciprocated.'



Scotch-Irish Society medal. The Society was founded in 1889 as an outcome of the 'Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Reunion' event held at St Enoch's Church in Belfast in 1884

## APPENDIX 3

# CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR

Christian Endeavour is an international and interdenominational youth organisation. The inaugural Christian Endeavour society was formed in Williston Congregational Church in Portland, Maine, in 1881. The first society in Ireland was established in 1889 by Margaret Magill, a shy and modest young woman who was nonetheless a committed and innovative Sunday School teacher in Agnes Street Presbyterian Church in Belfast. The movement spread rapidly in the years that followed and by 1896 there were 100 societies across the island.

A strong supporter of Christian Endeavour in Ireland in its early years was Rev. James D. Lamont, minister of Knock Methodist Church and the first president of the Irish Christian Endeavour Union in 1897. The year before he had attended the Scottish Convention of Christian Endeavour in Edinburgh where he heard ‘Scotland for Christ’ being sung. This hymn had been written by Rev. John Pollock. Lamont approached Pollock and asked him if he would compose an equivalent song for Ireland. Pollock initially dismissed the idea, but Lamont was not to be deterred and in 1898 he convinced the Irish Council to invite Pollock to write a hymn for the following year’s Convention. Pollock accepted this request and ‘Ireland for Christ’ was published in the March 1899 edition of *Irish Endeavour*. Pollock was unhappy with his efforts, however, and produced a revised version soon afterwards and it was this rendition that was used throughout Christian Endeavour in Ireland. Years later Pollock revealed that he had written another verse that had never been published. This was felt to have been somewhat too militaristic in tone.

Rev. John Pollock became even more involved in Christian Endeavour following his move to Belfast. In 1904 he was elected a trustee of the World Christian Endeavour Union. In 1906 the British Council met in Belfast. At a public meeting in St Enoch’s Church Margaret Magill presented a medallion to the British president, none other than the Pollock. At this time he was also president of both the Irish Union and the European Union – he would serve as President of the European Union for nineteen years.

Pollock was active in many spheres of activity for Christian Endeavour. In 1917 he produced a textbook for the British Union that was used as the basis for examinations on the principles and methods of Christian Endeavour; those who passed were awarded an ‘Expert’ diploma. Pollock himself was in charge

of this scheme for a number of years and he presented the John Pollock Shield which was awarded each year to the Union with the most passes. A man of remarkable versatility, his artistic skills were also put to use in designing Christian Endeavour programmes and badges. Pollock even designed a chain of office for the president of the Irish Christian Endeavour Union. Towards the end of his life he was the joint editor of the Christian Endeavour Hymnal and five hymns of his own composition appeared in this work.

**Further reading:**

D. A. Levistone Cooney, *A History of the Christian Endeavour Movement in Ireland* (1977).



From the Rev. John Pollock archive. Courtesy of Christian Endeavour, Belfast

## APPENDIX 4

# GEORGE HACKNEY BELFAST SOLDIER PHOTOGRAPHER

With thanks to Dr Vivienne Pollock for assistance.

George Hackney was born in Belfast in 1888 and grew up in the Antrim Road Garea. His family belonged to St Enoch's Presbyterian Church and knew the Pollocks well. He and Paul Pollock served together in the 14th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. The Ulster Museum has a remarkable collection of Hackney's wartime photographs and holds three of Hackney's four diaries from the war years – unfortunately, the diary for the period 18 February to 15 July 1916 is missing. The Pollocks appear on a number of occasions in his diaries for 1915 as the following extracts show.

### **Saturday, 7 August**

Went for a walk down to the shore after doing a little shopping, in the course of which I met Miss Pollock and a few minutes later Rev. J. who had just arrived off the train. I was delighted to see his face once again and so far from home but only had a few words with him as he had just reached Seaforde.

### **Friday, 13 August**

After tea I went into town and had a walk round the shore with L. Corporal Clark Templeton; met Paul Pollock on esplanade who had an invitation from his mother for me to come for tea on Saturday which I was very pleased to accept.

### **Sabbath, 22 August**

Got cleared up after dinner and dressed for church. Mr Pollock preached and took for his text 'The Lord Jehovah is my strength and song': I enjoyed him immensely and was glad to hear his familiar voice again.

### **Saturday, 30 October**

After dinner we had a little excitement when Paul Pollock and I were coming from the third to the second line trench: we saw an aeroplane hovering over the Enemy lines shortly after saw a few shells bursting in the air where they were trying to get at him.

**Wednesday, 21 December**

Owing to Paul Pollock getting a large consignment of stuff from home we decided to have a bust up of a dinner so the nine of us managed to all get round a table of 30 inches diameter and have an eight-course dinner, a dinner which we all thoroughly enjoyed. The courses were as follows:-

Turkey

Boar's Head

Plum Pudding

Pineapple

Raisins and almonds

Figs and dates

Chocolates

Tea and cake

It was certainly a surprise dinner to have under the circumstances in which we were placed.



Portrait of George Hackney wearing uniform and medals of Sergeant in 10th Batt Boys' Brigade  
BELUM.Y26402.142. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum



A rest by the wayside, Randalstown, County Antrim, July 1915.

BELUM.Y26402.8. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum

A Fatigue Party, Bramshott camp, England.

BELUM.Y15536. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum





View of billet with group of soldiers lining up alongside their beds, kit laid out for inspection, July 1915.

BELUM.Y26402.18. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum

Paul Pollock and N. Donaldson probably involved in a fleabite-spotting operation, Authuille, France 1916.

BELUM.Y15551. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum



## APPENDIX 5

# OUR BOYS AT SEAFORD A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMP

Address by Rev. John Pollock.

Printed in the *Belfast Newsletter* on 6 September 1915.

## FAITH IN THE FLAG

A large and interested congregation attended in St Enoch's Church, Carlisle Circus, last evening to hear 'A Message from the Camp' delivered by Rev. John Pollock, who had just returned from Seaford, where he had been spending some holidays. He took as his subject: "Behold a man came out of the camp," II Samuel, i., 2, and in the course of his remarks said "We cannot but regard this as a religious war. We have given our sons for the defence of the same old cause of 'civil and religious liberty' for which our fathers fought and were ready to die. This was the overmastering thought in my mind as I saw our boys marching at Seaford, and went about conversing with them in that armed camp. I have come into pretty intimate contact with them, and know much of what is in their minds – so much, indeed, that I can venture to convey something like a message from them to those at home. Certainly I shall take good care that that message shall contain nothing which they would not cordially endorse. And so I have no hesitation in saying, to begin with, that our boys are increasingly conscious of the high and holy significance of the great world-struggle to which they have devoted themselves. Few of them gave themselves thoughtlessly at the first; but, on the other hand, comparatively few of them enlisted with anything like the heroic determination which impels them now. The nearer they come to getting into grips with the enemy, the more earnestness of spirit do they manifest. Behind all their youthful jollity there is the spirit of their godly and heroic ancestry, men and women who counted not their lives too high a price to pay for

### Liberty of Conscience

Nothing has impressed me more than the absence of the jingo spirit. War songs are not popular among them. You seldom hear ‘Rule Britannia’ or ‘The Red, White and Blue.’ Their favourite ditties are about ‘the sweetest girl I know,’ and

“Neath the dark cloud shining  
 There’s a silver lining,  
 Will turn the dark cloud inside out  
 When the boys come home!”

The men of the Ulster Division were not ashamed to march along the esplanade singing in full chorus, “Onward, Christian soldiers,” or “When the Roll is Called up Yonder I’ll be there!” Never have I preached to a more joyously earnest sea of faces than at a parade service under the open sky – not even at a great Christian Endeavour convention. In the best and busiest of seasons the Seaford churches were never so crowded as during the sojourn of the Ulster Division. On one occasion that I know of, scores were turned away. I cannot say that all our men are “good soldiers of Jesus Christ” – would to God that they were! But there are many praying lads among them, and the spirit that dominated the whole is the spirit of serious optimism that is not easily distinguished from Christian faith. Another unhesitating assertion I have to make is this, that our boys by no means regret the voluntary act of enlistment which placed them where they are, and which may any day set them in the firing-line. Many of them, it is true, are heartily home-sick – as sick of longing for you as you are for them.

“Absence makes the heart grow fonder;” and father and mother are dearer now than ever they were, or than ever they would have been, perhaps, but for this suspenseful separation. But the men of the new army have no regrets. “Well, yes, I’d rather be at home at my work,” said one young fellow to me; “all the same,” he added quickly, “if I were free to-day I’d enlist again to-morrow!” And, be it remembered, our boys have not been playing at soldiers. “They have had fully a year of the hardest work most of them ever had in their lives. And they do not forget – though they try hard – what terrible days may lie in front of them. The very fact that they are, as a rule drawn from a higher stratum than the normal soldier carries with it a fuller and more intelligent realisation of the possibilities of

the unknown future. Nothing delights a sympathetic visitor more than to see the happy-go-lucky contentment of our citizen soldiers, Go into one of the huts at meal-time, and you will see young men sitting at a bare deal table, absolutely devoid of any of the elegancies to many if not most of them have been accustomed – fellows who never at down to dinner without a serviette. The food is clean and wholesome, but beyond that the less said the better. Contented? Of course they are. It's all in the day's work. And, after all, isn't it rare fun scrambling for the jam? They never felt better in their lives. The only ailments they suffer from are hunger before the meal, and loss of appetite after. Another message I can give you, not from them, but about them, is this, that the men of the Ulster Division are doing you high credit wherever they go. There were something like 20,000 men at Seaford, and a street row was unheard of. They made

### **A Splendid Reputation**

for themselves among the townspeople. Some days before I left I was informed by an army instructor of long experience that the discipline of his battalion broke all records, and that for four weeks on end he had not complained of a single individual to the commanding officer. Of course the phenomenal good conduct even of our new army is partly traceable to the excellent discipline to which they are subjected. That is making high grade men of them, physically and morally. There are no idle hands among them for the devil to find mischief for. You will, many of you, have the joy of welcoming home better men by far than you sent out – men who have acquired a more serious view of life, and who will do their duty more faithfully in peace because of the war experience through which they have passed. One more message I bring to you from Seaford, not like the message this man brought from the enemy of Saul, “with his clothes rent and earth upon his head.” My message from camp is this, lift up your hearts. God is with us. Our cause is the cause of honour, and righteousness and peace; and it must prevail.

And that message I can bring you from the fleet, as well as from the army. I know a surgeon who bear this testimony, that while in the naval hospital he found some pessimism, on board ship, where he now is, and where there is fairly full knowledge of what our navy has done, and is doing, there is nothing but the most buoyant optimism. That is the only spirit I could find among our soldier lads at Seaford. They are as cheerful as the men who come home from the front, and this is saying much. I tell you there is more pessimism in our pews, and even in our prayer meetings, than there is on the parade ground, or even in the trenches. It would do our croakers good to spend a week at Seaford, to come into touch with

the faith of these young fellows – their faith in the flag, and in the God of their fathers. To-day or to-morrow they finish their long march from Seaford to Aldershot, glad to be thus brought nearer their task, nearer to battle, nearer to the victory which they confidently anticipate. No need to drive them into the firing line. No need for compulsion. They have freely given themselves, and they are

### **Sick of Waiting.**

Their only fear is that the inevitable triumph may be snatched without their help, long delayed as they are by lack of equipment. If ever they are permitted to ‘do their bit’ they will not be found wanting. For they are flushed with the sure hope of a glorious consummation, an honourable and lasting peace. This, the, is the message which I bring you from our boys at Seaford. Aye, and this is the message I bring you from their God and ours: “Be strong and of good courage; dread not, no be dismayed.” “Lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.” “Have faith in God.” This earth is not yet removed, the mountains haven not yet been cast into the midst of the sea. Be still, therefore, and know that “Jehovah He is the God, Jehovah He is the God!” Our praise is nothing but great swelling words if our faith is not equal to the Psalms we sing. Our prayers are little better than an impious mockery if they have not behind them that faith without which it is impossible to please God. Brethren, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak. I know you will respond, and respond most gladly to the message I bring you from the camp. God is with us: To doubt that is treason to our righteous cause. Liberty shall not be destroyed. The tyrant shall not be permitted to work his will upon us. Our children shall not be robbed of the golden heritage which we received from our fathers. The kingdom of God is in no danger; it must triumph. We may suffer from a passing suspense; but God knoweth the end from the beginning. The demon of militarism shall yet be crushed, beaten down never again to raise its loathsome head. Already the dawn of a better day is touching the hill-tops, a day on which the sun shall no more go down; neither shall the moon withdraw itself. “For the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” “Even so come, Lord Jesus!”

At the conclusion of the service the congregation joined heartily in singing the National Anthem.

APPENDIX 6

REV. JOHN POLLOCK'S LETTER  
TO GEORGE HACKNEY

30 August 1916

My dear George,

Since leaving home three weeks ago I have had no heart to write to anyone, so that you are not an exception. We feel that there is now nothing but the very faintest likelihood of our dear boy turning up, and the suspense has given place to a sense of bitter bereavement. At the same time we do not forget that we gave Paul for the noblest of causes, and he most enthusiastically gave himself. The present war is, on our part, "for the defence of the Gospel", the protection, advancement and consolidation of the Kingdom of God. That being so, I had rather have my son's body in an unmarked grave, having done his duty, than sitting beside me here, having shirked it. I never honoured you and your comrades at the front so much as I do now. And God will richly reward you. There is no heresy in that conviction!

Accept of our united thanks for your great kindness. Your letter was just like you. Though it was not answered promptly, it was acted upon without delay. Mr Smith and Elsie called each of them on part of your list. The addresses were all visited, but no definite information was gained. From information received through my notice in the press, we have reason to believe that Paul was so seriously wounded by shrapnel that he must have died before he could be attended to, and not more than fifty yards from our lines, but away from the Y.C.V. position. His body has not been found, the entire ground having been ploughed up by explosives. Of course we still cling to the hope that his may be one of the wonderful cases of reappearance after long suspense.

Mother was bearing up wonderfully when I saw her last, which was very shortly before leaving home. May you be spared to see her, and she to see you!

With united affectionate regards,  
Ever yours,

John Pollock

St. Enoch's Church.

Rev. JOHN POLLOCK,  
Minister.  
(Presbyterian Chaplain  
to the Forces.)

7, GLANDORE PARK,  
BELFAST,

30. 8. 16.

My dear George,

Since leaving home three weeks ago I have had no heart to write to anyone, so that you are not an exception. We feel that there is now nothing but the very faintest likelihood of our dear boy turning up, and the suspense has given place to a sense of bitter bereavement. At the same time we do not forget that we gave Paul for the noblest of causes, and he most enthusiastically gave himself. The present war is, on our part, "for the defence of the gospel", the protection, advancement, and consolidation of the Kingdom of God. That being so, I had rather have my son's body in an unmarked grave, having done his duty, than sitting beside me here, having shirked it. I never honoured you and your comrades at the front so much as I do now. And God will richly reward you. There is no luxury in that conviction!

Letter from Rev. John Pollock to George Hackney (PRONI, D3503/4/7)

Accept of our united thanks for your great kindness. Your letter was just like you. Though it was not answered promptly, it was acted upon without delay. Mr Smith and Elie called each of them on part of your list. The addresses were all visited, but no definite information was gained. From information received through my notice in the press, we have reason to believe that Paul was so seriously wounded by shrapnel that he must have died before he could be attended to, and not more than fifty yards from our lines, but away from the H.C.V. position. His body has not been found, the entire ground having been ploughed up by explosives. Of course we still cling to the hope that his may be one of the wonderful cases of reappearance after long absence.

Mother was bearing up wonderfully when I saw her last, which was very shortly before leaving home. May you be spared to see her, and she to see you!

With united affectionate regards,  
 Ever yours,

David Pollock

## Tidings Wanted.

Revd John Pollock (St Enoch's Church),  
7 Glandore Park, Antrim Road, will be glad to  
receive any information regarding his son  
Lance-corporal Paul G Pollock, scout,  
Royal Irish Rifles (YCV), B Company,  
who had engaged in the advance of the Ulster Division  
on 1st July last, and has been 'missing' since that date.

## APPENDIX 7

# PRESBYTERIAN MEMORIALS AND THE GREAT WAR

In 1917 it was estimated that around 20,000 members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland had enlisted in the Armed Services. At the Church's annual General Assembly in June that year it was proposed that a Roll of Honour be created listing all those who served in the army and navy along with their units and distinctions gained and to be placed in the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society who would look after the co-ordination and publication of the Roll at the close of the war. In 1919 it was reported that the ever-changing nature of the lists especially details those wounded etc had eased with the cessation of the war and congregations were reissued with new forms to help with uniformity in submissions. The Roll was finally completed and went to print in 1921. While many Rolls of Honour were already in existence and had been maintained in numerous individual churches, factories, schools, universities etc the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Roll of Honour was unique in the scope and detail listing men from all corners of Ireland and further afield and included many of their home addresses – an important factor for future generations remembering their family members. When eventually published the Roll of Honour contained the names of an estimated 24,000 men.

In the years after the war the thoughts of communities, organisations and others turned to ways of making a more permanent and lasting memorial to those who had paid the supreme sacrifice and those who served. Across the country cenotaphs and monuments were erected and the churches did likewise - the majority being erected in the mid to late 20s. However, the form of the memorial erected in the Presbyterian Churches varied enormously. Some, especially those in the larger congregations, where several hundred men were listed, took the form of handwritten scrolls while others took the form of brass or wooden plaques. Still others were made of marble – an especially elaborate memorial was erected in Abbey congregation in Dublin – or moulded plaster. Many other memorials took a more practical approach with congregations dedicating new organs, erecting pulpits and installing stained glass windows.

An important factor with the erection of these memorials is that while they did not contain as much information as the published Roll of Honour many do contain differences: the lapse of time allowed for the names of many men who

were not included in the printed Roll and correspondingly a few names that were included in the Roll were not recorded; the spelling of names was corrected; changes in rank or battalion/unit was recorded and in many cases the names of women from the congregation were added who had served as nurses or with the VAD.

Over the intervening years since many churches have now closed. Some of the memorials have been relocated and erected in nearby congregations and a few have transferred to the care of others such as the Somme Heritage centre, but still others have been lost.

It is a sad fact that in some cases the name on the memorial is all that remains to remember some of these men and of their participation in one of the most significant events in our history. One such case is that of Paul Pollock, who went missing in that great battle on the Somme on the 1st July 1916. All that marked his contribution were his name in the Roll of Honour and the marble plaque erected in St Enoch's the Church by his grieving family. His name was not recorded in the volumes comprising *Ireland's Memorial Record* nor in the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission nor on the memorial to the missing at Thiepval.

After a fire at the Church, Paul's plaque was removed with the rest of the debris but was recovered – a story in itself – and is now in safekeeping. Had the memorial been lost so too could his memory. Thankfully Paul's story, like his plaque, has been recovered – his name has now been added to the Thiepval Memorial and included in the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – but how many are now just a name and how many will never be known ...

Edward Connolly



The recovered memorial plaque for Paul Pollock. Photograph courtesy Mary Lennon

## APPENDIX 8

# INST AND THE GREAT WAR; INSCRIBING PAUL POLLOCK'S NAME IN BELFAST AND AT THIEPVAL

My involvement with Paul Pollock's story dates back to my time at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution ("Inst") in the 1970s. I had seen the names on school's World War memorials, over 200 of them, every day without giving them much thought. On a visit to Belfast at Easter in 2008, my wife and I wandered into the school and I noticed the familiar memorials. I've always had an interest in the Great War and I decided to see what I could find out about the boys that fell between 1914 and 1918.

The first port of call was the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) website – every Commonwealth serviceperson who died in the Great War should be commemorated here, either with the location of their grave, or, where there is no grave, the location of where their name is recorded on one of the Memorials to the Fallen around the world. I was able to find all but two names commemorated there – one shouldn't have been there in the first place (he didn't actually die until 1974 but that is another story!) and the other was Paul Pollock. Then he was no more than a name to me - a name I couldn't identify.

As part of my research on the names, I was lucky enough to be able to consult the Inst archives and, in particular, the "School News" magazine published quarterly throughout the war years. This was a goldmine of information, and each edition included photographs of the Instonians who had recently died in the war. The photograph of Paul on the front of this book came from School News, and also the detail that he had died on the 1st July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, as a Lance Corporal in the 14th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles. So many of the boys listed on the Inst memorial had died that day.

I also consulted the Medal Rolls held at the National Archives at Kew, giving information of every soldier who served, and was able to find Paul's – it stated that he was "missing, presumed dead".

At the same time as I was researching the memorial, I was also involved in the "In From The Cold" project, part of a group of volunteers who were systematically going through the official lists of all British service personnel who died in the war, to check they were commemorated by the CWGC. The lists did mention Lance Corporal Paul Pollock, with confirmation of his date of death. At



this point it was clear that, due to some sort of clerical error, Paul had been left off the list of names submitted to CWGC after the war. Though unusual, this was not a unique situation – the project has helped identify over 2,000 names that should have CWGC commemoration.

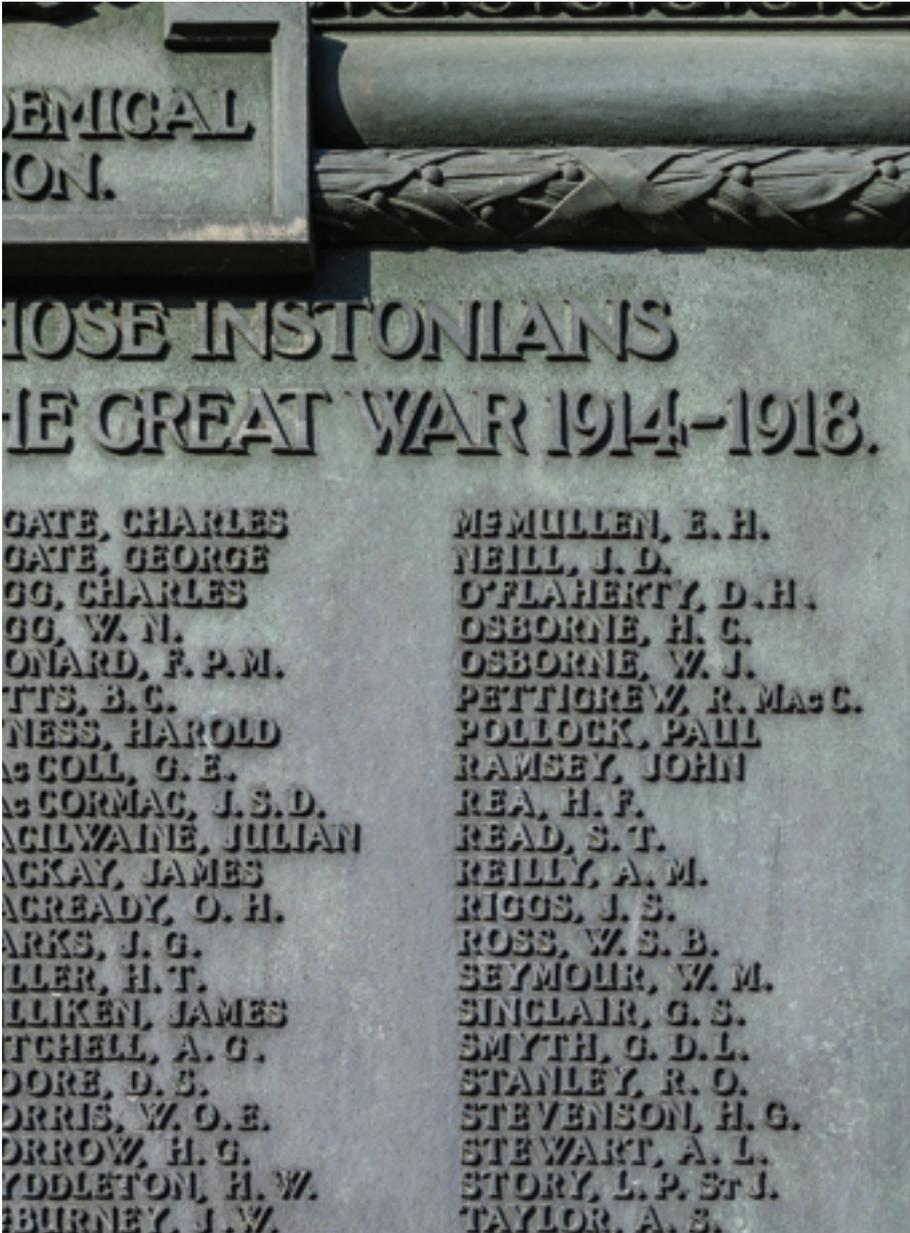
With the advice and encouragement of the In From the Cold team, I was able to obtain a copy of Paul's death certificate, which I submitted to the CWGC, as evidence that his name should be inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing on the Somme battlefield.

Within three weeks or so, I was delighted to hear that Paul had been accepted for CWGC commemoration. After almost 100 years, Paul's name has finally been added to the Thiepval Memorial, together with the names of all those who fell on the Somme, who have no known grave.

-

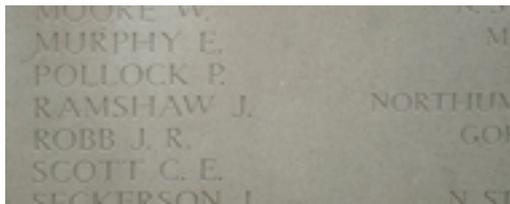
As I collected information on the old boys who had fallen, I decided to create a website. After quite a few years research, gathering information from all sorts of sources, including the school itself, the National Archives at Kew, and contributions from the members of the internet-based Great War Forum, I was able to create [www.instgreatwar.com](http://www.instgreatwar.com), where I have tried to tell their stories.

Alan Curragh  
[www.instgreatwar.com](http://www.instgreatwar.com)



Photograph snippet showing Paul Pollock's name on the RBAI Memorial

ADDENDA CORPORAL	
LEE W.	MIDDLESEX REGIMENT
LUNNEY R.	ROYAL INNISKILLING FUS.
MARSHALL A.	KING'S OWN YORKSHIRE L. I.
MILLS C.	S. STAFFORDSHIRE REGT.
PUGH J.	THE KING'S LIVERPOOL REGT.
RATCLIFFE W.	N. STAFFORDSHIRE REGT.
ROUELL T. W.	NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS
SMITH G. H.	DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY
SWALLOW L. F.	LINCOLNSHIRE REGIMENT
WELLS F.	3RD BN. LONDON REGT. S. FUS.
LANCE CORPORAL	
ALLSOPP G.	KING'S SHROPSHIRE L. I.
BATES G.	NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS
BISP A.	SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY
BOURNE J.	KING'S SHROPSHIRE L. I.
BUCKHAM W.	THE CAMERONIANS (SC. RIF)
CULBERT R. G.	ROYAL IRISH RIFLES
HARRIS H. M.	ROYAL FUSILIERS
HILTON J. H.	THE KING'S LIVERPOOL REGT.
HOWELL E.	THE KING'S LIVERPOOL REGT.
HUNT W. G.	BAILEY'S SHARPSHOOTERS
JOHNSON M. L.	7TH BN. LONDON REGIMENT
LAING A.	BAILEY'S SHARPSHOOTERS
LAMB T.	EAST LANCASHIRE REGIMENT
MANN E. W.	ROYAL SCOTS
MOORE W.	N. STAFFORDSHIRE REGT.
MURPHY E.	MIDDLESEX REGIMENT
POLLOCK P.	ROYAL IRISH RIFLES
RAMSHAW J.	NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS
ROBB J. R.	GORDON HIGHLANDERS
SCOTT C. E.	THE QUEEN'S
SECKERSON J.	N. STAFFORDSHIRE REGT.
WYMAN R. H.	LINCOLNSHIRE REGIMENT



Top image: The Panel Lists (Addenda) commemorate individuals officially declared as having been lost but for whom there is no known grave, or their grave cannot be individually marked, or the grave site is inaccessible. (Commonwealth War Graves Commission, www.cwgc.org)

Bottom image: Photograph snippet showing Paul Pollock's name on an actual panel of the Thiepval Memorial.



Paul Pollock and N. Donaldson probably involved in a fleabite-spotting operation, Authuille, France 1916. Photographed by George Hackney  
BELUM.Y15551. Photograph © National Museums Northern Ireland. Collection Ulster Museum

My own dear boy,  
I'm proud to call you mine!  
Long shall the bravery of Ulster shine  
Upon the page of British martial fame,  
And hearts beat high at mention of her name  
Well done our gallant boys, you've 'done your bit'  
And done it gloriously...

Extract from Rev. John Pollock's poem to his son Paul.

Glasgow-born, Paul Pollock (1896–1916) was one of the thousands of young men killed in the Great War. His body was never found and until recent years his name was not recorded on the Thiepval Memorial. The letters he wrote home, from July 1915 until June 1916, have been treasured by the family ever since.

Revealed in this book for the first time, the letters paint an intimate picture of Paul's experiences as a young man in the Royal Irish Rifles, of his friend the war photographer George Hackney, and of the admiration and anguish of his father, Rev. John Pollock of St Enoch's Presbyterian Church in Belfast.



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