

## Fact Sheet: Harry Fox

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner Name:</i> Harry Fox
<i>Person ID:</i> DR1002
<i>Your name:</i> Bryan Roberts
<i>U3A Group:</i> Sutton U3A
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
<p><b>Harry Fox</b> was born in 1855 at Poyntingham, Somerset. He was baptised a St Andrews's C of E Church in nearby Corton Denham on 21 Jan, 1855 in the presence of his parents John and Jemima and both of them signed the register. He died in Corton Denham on 20 Dec 1943, aged 89.</p>
2: Who were your pensioner's parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
<p><b>John Fox</b> who lived from 1824 to 1875. He is recorded as a Shepherd at the time of the baptism of his son, Harry, in 1855. John's grand-father was Charles, recorded as a labourer at John's baptism.</p> <p>Harry's mother was <b>Jemima Andrews</b>, also baptised in Corton Denham C of E church but on 3 Mar 1831. Her parents are listed as William and Mary Ann Andrews. No occupations are shown for the parents at the baptism. In later years Jemima was employed as a glove maker. She eventually died when 83 y.o. in 1915.</p> <p>Prior to the marriage Jemima lived with her parents:</p> <p><b>1841 Census</b> – the Andrews lived in Wheatsheaf Hill. Jemima's father (William) was shown as a Shoemaker. She had a younger (by 3 years) brother, Simon, aged 6 y.o. The household also contained 3 other older relatives, all named Andrews, ranging from 65 to 20 y.o.</p> <p><b>1851 Census</b> – the family still lived in Corton Denham, though no specific address is recorded. Father, William, was still listed as a Shoemaker. Jemima at 19 y.o. was a glove maker. Simon is no longer listed, but see below. Conversely Elizabeth (William's 77 y.o. mother) and Mary, a 37 y.o. niece are living with them. They are recorded as Paupers. I could not find any record of the <b>1861 census</b>.</p> <p>Jemima's brother, <b>Simon</b>, appears again when he marries Anna Maria Chidzey in Oct, 1862 and he went on to live at Church Hill, Corton Denham with his wife and 5 children till he died, aged 57 in 1892. He was employed as an Agricultural Labourer.</p>
3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation, later life)

**Harry** was the first child born to his parents (John and Jemima). He was followed by:

- **Jane** (born in 1859 – no records found of her after 1871 Census)
- **Edwin** (born in 1861). He may have gone on to marry Annie Thomas, at St Andrews C of E Church in Montpelier, Bristol on 15 Jan, 1898, when he is recorded as a Warehouseman, but I cannot be sure this is a correct identification
- **Alfred** (born in 1865). He lived at home with Jemima till he married Alice Bishop in nearby Sandford Orcas on 17 Feb, 1901, but by 1911 that couple had moved to Berkshire where he continued to be employed as a Gardener. He died there in 1943 when 79 y.o.
- **James** (born 30 Jan 1868 and died in Devon in 1940).

**1861 Census** – the Fox family lived in in Corton Denham – at Pearson’s, which seem to have been a farmstead with 2 other residences in the complex. Father John was employed as an Agricultural Labourer and mother, Jemima, as a glove maker. Harry was recorded as a Scholar. By then he had one sister (Jane) and one brother (Edwin born in 1861)

**1871 Census** – the family lived in Corton Street, still in Corton Denham. Jemima was still a glove maker, but John was listed as a Shepherd. By then the 16 y. o. Harry was employed as an Agricultural Labourer. His siblings Jane, Edwin, Alfred and James also lived there.

#### Part Two: Marriage and children/ boarders

1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse’s name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation). **Note:** *You can also use this space to record any details about people your pensioner boarded with.*

On 30 Apr, 1875 Harry married Mary Pardy at Sherborne Parish Church. She is recorded as having been born nearby in Rimpton, Somerset on 12 Nov, 1848 and her parents were Henry and Mary Anne Pardy.

Before her marriage she was living (1871 Census) with her parents and their four other offspring (Thomas aged 12, Winifred aged 9, Henry aged 5, and the newly born Philip).

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

Harry and Mary Fox had no children.

I cannot find any record of the **1881 Census** covering Harry Fox.

**1891 Census** – Harry and Mary Fox are shown as living in North Road, Sherborne. He is recorded as being a Rural Postman. His wife is not shown as being in employment.

**1901 Census** – Harry is recorded as a retired Postman (aged 46) and Head of Family. Mary was 53 y.o. and not shown as employed. Jemima Fox, aged 69 (and presumably Harry's mother), was living alone two door away. Both households lived in Waltons, Corton Denham. Between them lived a family called Andrews, but I cannot establish whether they were related to Jemima's family. However their daughter was named **Eva B Andrews**, aged 20 – see below.

**1911 Census** – Harry and Mary lived in the household of his mother, Jemima (aged 79). They were 56 and 63 respectively.

Mary Fox may well have died in 1930 in the Yeovil Registration District but I cannot be sure this is the right identification.

I can find no residency records for Harry Fox after this date except for the 1939 Register. The electoral rolls do not cover him, presumably because he lost his eligibility to vote once he was convicted of a crime and sentenced to 7 years in prison in 1914 – see **Part 4**

1939 Register – Harry Fox, at 85 y.o. is listed as 98 on the Corton Denham Schedule. He is living in the same household as Blanche Andrews, a Dressmaker aged 59. I assume this is the same person mentioned above in the 1901 Census, but I have no proof of this – nor am I sure if she was related to Harry's mother, whose previous surname was also Andrews. In the 1911 Census she is recorded as a Housekeeper for her widowed father, George, in North Town, Corton Denham.

### -Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

In the 1871 Census Harry Fox is shown as a 16 y.o. Agricultural Labourer.

There is no 1881 Census record of either his residency or his employment, though he started work for the Post Office in 1876

Harry Fox is recorded as a Rural Postman at the 1891 Census.

By the 1901 Census he is shown as a Retired Postman. He was not shown as having any subsequent employment

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1861 – Father John Fox was shown as an Agricultural Labourer, and his mother (Jemima) as a Glover. Harry was recorded as a Scholar.

1871 – John Fox was listed as a Shepherd, and Harry as a 16 y. o. Agricultural Labourer. His mother, Jemima, was again shown as a Glover.

1881 – no record of Harry's residence or employment, though he had married and moved elsewhere by then. His Post Office service started in 1876. His father had died, his mother was Head of the Family and her son, Alfred, is listed as a Shepherd.

1891 – Harry is shown as a Rural Postman, with no employment listed for Mary, his wife.

1901 – Harry is recorded as a Rural Postman, again with no employment shown for his wife.

1911 – Harry is again shown as Retired Postman with his wife as having no employment.

In the 1939 Register, Harry Fox's companion, Blanche Andrews, is shown as a Dressmaker.

#### Part Four: Anything Else/Later Life

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner. For example: what do we know about their life after retirement?

Corton Denham, the community in which Harry Fox lived for most of his life, was a loose knit village of 250 in about 1900. It had a Post Office counter from 1897 or earlier but I do not know whether it was also a Receiving Office for mail. Harry Fox is recorded as a Rural Postman in 1891, by which time he lived in Sherborne. It is not clear what his Post Office job was from 1876 to 1891, so I don't know from which location he would have worked or how he would have reached it in those pre-metalled road and pre-bicycle days. There was a turnpike road from Sherborne to Castle Cary running nearby so perhaps a mail coach dropped off a delivery to him. Though the village is just in Somerset it formed part of the Sherborne, Dorset, Head Post Office district. It lies 4 miles north of its head office town – a historic town of 9000 people.

Harry Fox is recorded in 1914, when he was 59 y.o. and already 13 years into his lengthy period as a Post Office pensioner, as having distinctive "marks" – one hand had been amputated and one arm was described as "thin and withered". It makes one wonder

whether these health events happened before, during or perhaps even because of his Post Office duties. Indeed it is difficult to conceive that he could perform his delivery work with such handicaps. However there can be little doubt about the identification – right year and place of birth (a very small community). The comments were recorded when he was convicted and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for three cases occurring in Corton Denham involving “carnal knowledge and indecent assault”. The register is entitled as covering “Habitual Criminals and Police Gazettes” which suggest this was not his first prosecution, but I have no proof of this. His conviction also explains the lack of information about him after his release – he would have lost his eligibility to vote.

### Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

**Baptism** - Dorset History Centre Class: *RG 9*; Piece: *1648*; Folio: *24*; Page: *13*; GSU roll: *542845e*; Dorchester, England

**1871 Census** - The National Archives; Kew, London, England; *1871 England Census*; Class: *RG10*; Piece: *2424*; Folio: *27*; Page: *16*; GSU roll : *835177*

**1891 Census** - The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891*; Class: *RG12*; Piece: *1658*; Folio: *39*; Page: *25*; GSU roll : *6096768*

**1911 Census** - The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1911*, Class: *RG14*; Piece : *14428*; Schedule No: *48*

**1939** - The National Archives; Kew, London, England; *1939 Register*; Reference: *RG 101/7099 E, line 6, schedule 98 (WQEN Enumeration District)*

**Marriage** - Dorset History Centre; Dorchester, England; Reference: *PE/SH: RE 3/9 -11 1101/7099E1911*

**Criminal Record** - National Archives, Kew, *MEPO6 Metropolitan Police, Criminal Record Office Habitual Criminals Registers and Miscellaneous Papers*; Ref: *MEPO 6/31*