

## **Alexander Swan (1885 - 1962)**

Alexander Swan was my great-grandfather. He was married to Eleina Watts (1881-1966), the daughter of James Watts. ( 'Eleina' is the name on her birth certificate, but apparently she was always known as 'Helena' ) .

Together they ran Swan's newsagents, on the corner of Queen Mary Ave, for many years from around 1914 until the late 1940s. (Exact dates to be confirmed).

On the 1901 census Helena was aged 20, and working as a drapers assistant. Subsequent to this, and before her marriage, she worked as a teacher at the Winton British School, in rooms under Winton Congregational Church, on the corner of Luther Road and Wimborne Road.

Alexander apparently emigrated to Canada before the first war, but cannot have stayed long, as Winifred was born in October 1915 and she was the youngest of his 3 children!

Alexander enlisted in the RGA (Royal Garrison Artillery) on 24.5.16, at the age of 31 years and 10 months.

He was sent to Weymouth on 3.6.16, and then to Malta on 28.7.16 where he joined 102 company of the RGA as a gunner or signaller.

He was torpedoed twice in the Mediterranean and discharged on 9.9.18 as no longer fit for service.

His records apparently show injuries on 6.7.17, 8.12.17 and 7.3.18

In WW2 he drove a milk collecting lorry, and broke his arm when he skidded on ice.

My Great Aunt Margaret remembered that, when she was a child, he had glued a sixpence to the newsagents doorstep, as it amused him to see people try to pick it up.

Eventually Helena made him chisel it off as she became fed up with customers coming in to tell her about it !

Alexander's younger sister Lily ( age 7 at 1901 census) also ran a newsagent in Wimborne Road, a bit further north at number 905, from at least 1926 (possibly earlier) until the mid 1950s.

The premises remained as a newsagents until 2011 ( latterly as 'Moordown News').

Lily lived in Maclaren Road when she retired, and possibly married a sea captain.

Carol Joy  
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