

The Moseley Society History Group

‘Midlands Today’ came to film us!

**On Thursday 29th June 2017, Linda and Graham Richards from
Simi Valley, California, came to present us with this WW1
photograph of**

Second Lieutenant William Henry Furse



We had been given photos that were found in the attic of a Salisbury Road house. A volunteer had researched the Furse brothers and their experiences in WWI.



Graham found his photo in an antique shop in Stratford-on-Avon 15 years ago on a visit home to England after emigrating to America 50 years before. In it was a newspaper cutting of William's marriage in 1915. Knowing who he was, the couple were able to find articles about him on the web.

Linda and Graham wanted to return the photo to Moseley and brought

it over with them on a visit to England.

We had a great time!



Graham and Linda present the photograph



Discussing the contents of the frame



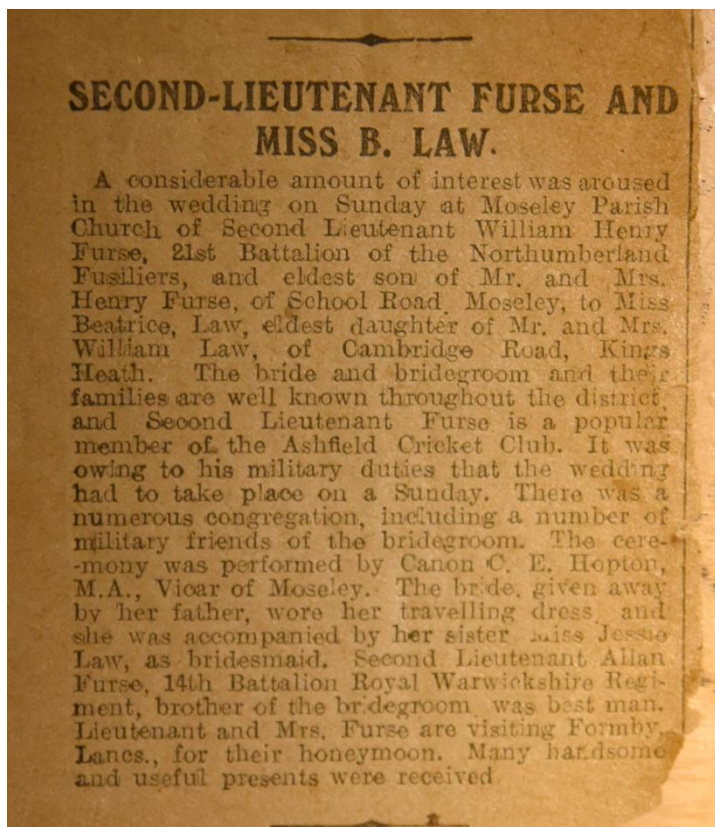
Setting up for filming



More pictures of the filming



Looking at photographs in our collection



Found in the back of the frame

FORMBY. Oct. 1915, where Bile & Bee spent



their honeymoon

The house in Formby, Lancashire where Second Lieutenant William Henry Furse and his wife spent their honeymoon

This is the article about the visit that appeared in the *Birmingham Post* on Thursday 13th July 2017

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NEWS

BIRMINGHAM POST THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2017

WWI soldier's photo is finally coming home



► Graham and Linda Richards (front) with the photo (right) and (back from left) Ray Tier, Jim Home, Frank Gresham and Edwina Rees, of the Moseley Society Local History Group. Top right, William with his brother Alan

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Staff Reporter
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A TREASURED picture of a Moseley World War One soldier is finally coming home exactly 101 years after his death – thanks to two American tourists.

The picture is of William Furse, who was killed in July 1916 as he stood up to light his pipe during the Battle of the Somme.

The 6ft 5in soldier – the tallest in the British Army at that time – was hit by a stray bullet and died later in a field hospital.

The photograph was in an ornate frame and was bought in a Stratford-upon-Avon antique shop by American tourist Graham Richards and his

late wife 15 years ago while they were here on holiday.

Graham, who is originally from Britain but emigrated 50 years ago, put the picture on display in their home in Simi Valley, near Los Angeles.

The couple thought little of it until Graham's late wife opened the frame and two items fell out – an ageing newspaper clipping and a postcard.

These told them that the portrait was of Lieutenant William Henry Furse, from Moseley, who was married in September 1915 but who was tragically killed months later in July 1916.

Last autumn, Graham and his second wife, Linda, decided to find out more about William Furse and try to return the picture and clippings to his family in the UK.

They contacted the Moseley Society Local History Group and received a reply from volunteer, Edwina Rees.

Ms Rees told the Grahams that, far from being forgotten, William's story was well known to them, as the new owners of his childhood home in Moseley had come across pictures of the Furse family.

The society had managed to piece together details of William's eventful life from a book about his regiment, dubbed the Birmingham Pals.

They discovered that he had founded the Silhill Football Club and, standing at 6ft 5in, held the distinction of being the tallest man in the British Army.

The society also discovered the tragic circumstances of his death.

He was shipped to France in Janu-

ary 1916 and his first and only foray into combat came in July when he and his men took part in the Battle of the Somme.

During the battle, William stopped to light his pipe and because he was so tall, got hit by a stray bullet and died later.

He was buried in France, not far from where he fell. His brother Alan, who also served in France, found his grave and created a makeshift memorial out of an oak branch and stones.

Ms Rees said she was "thrilled" when the Grahams told her they would be coming to Moseley to bring the photo back to William's home.

"Moseley is the best final resting place for this brave officer's legacy of

service to his country," she said. "We're so pleased Graham and Linda took the time to do research and contact us."

"Sadly, both William and his two brothers died childless so we haven't been able to trace any of their relatives, but are still hopeful of doing that."

She said the picture and frame would now join the rest of the Furse family archives, but next year would be included in an exhibition marking the centenary of the end of the World War One.

Graham and Linda, who travelled to the UK on the Queen Mary, said they were delighted to hand the photo over to the society.

"It would be selfish for this to go to waste," Graham said.