

Chapter 10: Joe

Grandad's diaries mention a character called Joe a great deal. I confess I found it hard to work out exactly how he related to grandad although I had concluded that they were not brothers although I had wondered if that was the case¹.

The diaries refer fairly frequently to Joe's experiences of military Tribunals. In May 1917, *"Joe went to Mansfield for exam grade III"*. I believe this referred to a medical examination and the result of it. In July 1917, grandad noted, *"Joe got Cond Ex at the Tribunal"*. I assumed this meant he received a time-limited conditional exemption. On 3 December 1917, he once again appeared before the Tribunal. Also, in December, he had another medical examination and *"passed in grade III"*. On New Year's Eve 1917, grandad noted that *"Joe got 3 months final at the Tribunal"*. On 4 February 1918, *"dad appealed for Joe at Nottm"* but to no avail. On the 8th, *"Joe had his calling up papers"*. Grandad's father did not give up. On the 11th, he once again went to Nottingham about Joe's calling up papers but without success.

So, it appears Joe was destined for military service. However, on 10 April 1918, he was unwell and went to see the doctor. The next day he was better and returned to work. But, he became worse. On 14 April, grandad noted that Joe was *"very bad"* and on the 15th *"a specialist came to see Joe"*. On the 19th, he was *"very bad again"*. On 20 April, *"Joe had Nurse Severn come to look after him at 9.30pm"*. However, on 21 April 1918, at 4.55am, Joe died. I am not sure why. Grandad did not record a cause of death or any symptoms. In 1918, there was a [major flu pandemic](#) and it is possible that this was the cause. Grandad did note in November 1918 that the Star only had one performance because of the flu epidemic.²

Whatever the cause, this was clearly a terrible blow to grandad and his family. Joe's funeral took place at 3pm on 23 April 1918. Over the next few weeks, grandad and various members of the family visited the cemetery on a Sunday. *"Joe's stone was put up"* on 23 July 1918. Grandad also inherited Joe's gold watch and Albert chain and started wearing the watch. He noted that he gave Eva £3 for the watch in May 1918. When grandad died, mum inherited this gold watch and Albert chain. She had the chain converted to a necklace which she wore constantly. When she died, the watch and chain came to me. The watch was housed in a watch case that grandad bought for one shilling in



One was grandad's name and address (96 Welbeck Street) while another noted that G Siddons repaired it on 20 July 1959. I have not found a matching diary entry for this
Right - mum wearing the Albert chain

Left – Joe's watch displayed on a stand bought for my 60th birthday in 2020. The watch is currently not working. I have tried to get it repaired without success. They did find some pieces of paper at the back of the case.



¹ See [Chapter 1](#).

² The flu epidemic was also noted by Edith Searson in her book(let) *"I Remember"* (p35). She noted that she knew several young people who died from it.

June 1920. The watch is inscribed "*from dad to Joe 1914*".

I felt sad on reading about Joe's death but also frustrated because I did not really know who he was or what his connection to the Parkin family was. I knew his date of death, the date of his funeral and the fact that he had been buried and had had a gravestone. However, I did not know his full name. I decided to see if I could find any record of a death on that date that might fit with what I knew. Fortunately, I found that Kirkby in Ashfield cemetery registers were available online. I found what I was looking for in the register of the [old Kingsway cemetery](#).

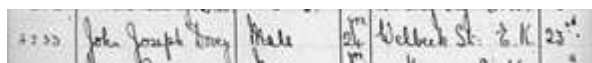
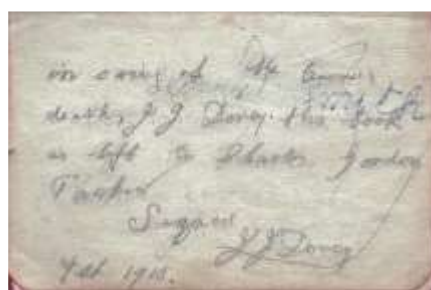


Image Source: [Ashfield Cemetery Records](#)

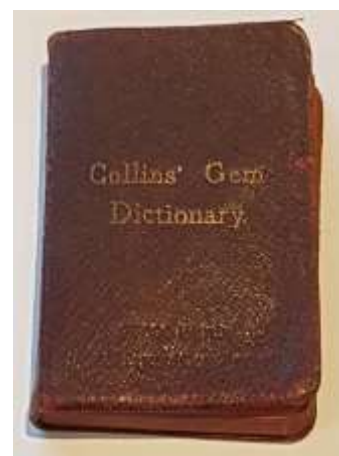
Extract from old Kingsway cemetery register

What this showed was that John Joseph Dovey, aged 24, had been buried there on 23 April 1918. This was the right date and the age fitted also. Although "*Joe*" was not his first name, it did fit with his middle name of "*Joseph*". What perhaps confirmed that this was Joe was that place of death was recorded as Welbeck Street.

I found further confirmation of this later when going through a Collins' Gem Dictionary that was among mum's papers. It appears to have been Joe's as it is annotated somewhat dramatically "*in case of the owner's death, JJ Dovey this book is left to Charles Gordon Parkin. Signed JJ Dovey Feb 1918*". So, this confirms that "*Joe*" and John Joseph Dovey were the same person. It is also rather poignant as the date precedes the illness from which Joe died but coincided with the date that he was called up to the armed forces. Clearly, he thought there was a possibility of him being killed in the conflict, enough for him to mark this book so dramatically.



Joe's dictionary with annotation



However, although I now knew Joe's full name I did not know how he was connected to the Parkin family. Grandad mentioned a Wilf Dovey in his 1917 diary. However, this did not really add much.³ I did wonder if the connection was somehow through Eva, grandad's sister. In March 1914, "*Joe bought Eva a new locket*" and later diaries recorded Eva and Joe going places together, e.g. Kilburn, Mansfield, Nottingham and Pinxton. In November 1915, grandad noted "*Eva and Joe bought me a tie*".

At the beginning of 1918, grandad begins to refer to "*Baby*" and does so throughout 1918. Not once does he refer to the baby's name. It seems that Eva might have been the baby's mother because, in March 1918, it was Eva who took the baby to be christened. I then began to wonder if Joe was the father. In January 1918, Joe and Eva went together to buy a "*carriage*" and a cot for the baby. However, if this was the case and Eva and Joe were unmarried, it seems unlikely that the Parkin family would, at that time, have reacted the way they did. In 1918, grandad's father appealed to the Tribunal on Joe's behalf. In addition, grandad's mother bought the baby a swing, grandad's father bought the baby a pushchair and grandad himself bought the baby a teddy bear.

³ I later discovered from the 1901 and 1911 censuses that this was Joe's younger brother, Wilfred. In December 1917, grandad wrote something like Wilf and Ev came for tea. This may relate to Evelyn Johnson who married a Wilfred Dovey in 1920. It seems that she died in 1926 and he remarried, Priscilla Dove, in 1927.

So, could Joe and Eva have been married? There was no record of this on the family tree that mum had prepared. This showed that Eva was married to an Arthur Evans and grandad's later diaries showed that this wedding took place in 1920. I searched [online marriage records](#) and found that indeed an Eva E Parkin and a John J Dovey had been married in Basford District in the last quarter of 1916. So, they were married and "*Baby*" was presumably their child. Presumably, the reason that grandad's diaries did not record this is that his 1916 diary is missing.

However, I still did not know who this child became or why grandad appeared reluctant to refer to the child by name. From the family tree I had, that mum prepared, I knew that Arthur Evans and Eva had two children, Olive and Roy. But I did not know their dates of birth. Could one of them be "*baby*"? I again searched online records and found that an Ethel O Dovey had been born in the quarter ending March 1918 in Basford District. Could this be "*baby*"? It would seem to fit geographically and, if the O stood for Olive, this would be a child with the names of Eva's sister and sister-in-law. I knew from our family tree that Olive had married Alf Holland. The clincher came when I found a marriage record for the last quarter of 1939. This shows that Ethel O Evans married someone called Holland. But, there is also a parallel record in the name of Ethel O Dovey.

So, it turns out that Joe and Eva were married in late 1916 and they had a child together in early 1918. Joe died in April 1918. This child was Olive and she used her step-father's name of Evans.

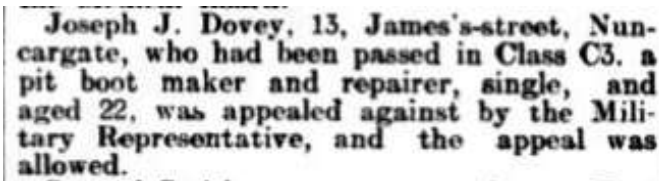
In August 2023, I was able to visit Kirkby and went to see if I could find Joe's grave in Old Kingsway Cemetery. I was able to do so. The headstone is still there although it has been laid flat on the ground, presumably for safety reasons.



Gravestone of John Joseph Dovey in August 2023. It reads "In ever loving memory of John Joseph the beloved husband of Eva E Dovey who departed this life April 21st 1918 aqed 24 years. Sweet rest in heaven"

Also, I found some references to Joe's experiences of military Tribunals in a newspaper archive. Grandad's first mention of Joe appearing before a Tribunal is in May 1917. However, in the Mansfield Reporter and Sutton Times of 17 November 1916, there was a [report](#) of a meeting of the Kirkby Tribunal that had taken place earlier that week. It included the case of a Joseph J Dovey who was described as a 22 year-old, single, pit boot maker and repairer. He was living at [13 James's Street, Nuncargate](#). His medical grading was C3. It was noted that he had been "*passed*" by the Tribunal. I assume this means he was given an exemption of some form. Not least, because this was appealed against by the Military Representative. The appeal was allowed but I am unsure precisely what this

means. The description of Joe as single at the time of this hearing fits with him and Eva having married in Q4 of 1916.

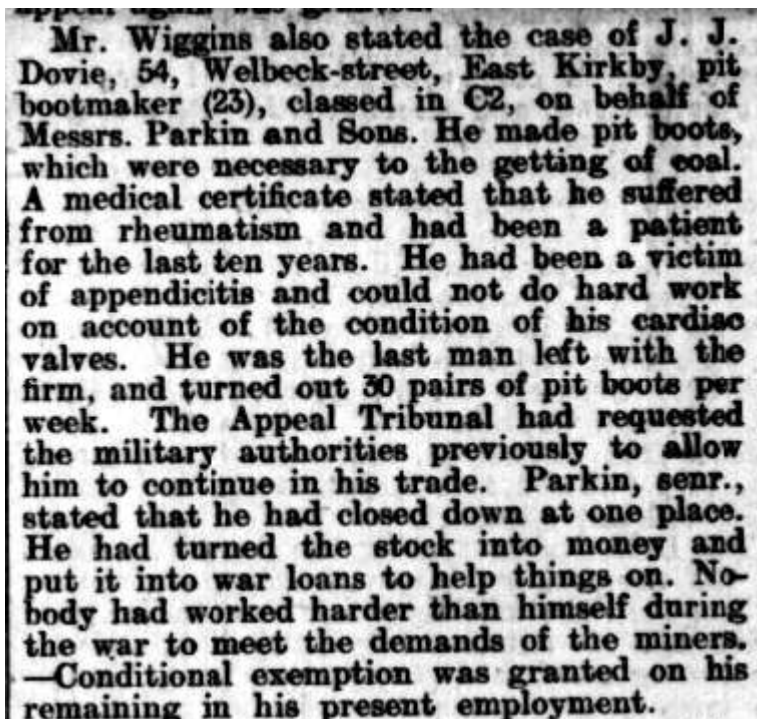


Joseph J. Dovey, 13, James's-street, Nuncargate, who had been passed in Class C3. a pit boot maker and repairer, single, and aged 22, was appealed against by the Military Representative, and the appeal was allowed.

Cutting from The Mansfield Reporter and Sutton Times of Friday 17 November 1916 featuring the case of Joseph J Dovey at the Kirkby Tribunal obtained from [FindMyPast](#) through paid subscription

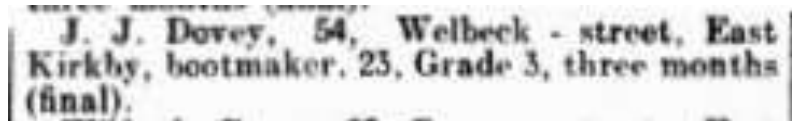
Based on grandad's diary, it seems Joe had another medical in May 1917 and he then appeared before the Tribunal again in July. The Mansfield Reporter and Sutton-in-Ashfield Times of Friday 27 July 1917 had a report of this hearing, which was the same one at which Cyril Parkin also appeared, see [Chapter 9](#). In this case, Joe's name is spelled as J J Dovie but I am sure it does relate to him. He was represented by the family lawyer Robert Henry Wiggins, as was Cyril. At this point, he was living at 54 Welbeck Street and was classed in the medical category C2. He was described as a 23 year-old pit bootmaker employed by Messrs Parkin and Sons. His work was considered in the national interest because miners were needed to get coal and they required boots. He was described as the last man remaining with the firm, presumably excluding Henry Parkin and his sons. He was said to make 30 pairs of pit boots per week. His medical certificate stated that he had suffered from rheumatism, had had appendicitis and could not do hard work on account of the condition of his cardiac valves. Previously, the Appeal Tribunal had requested the military authorities to allow him to continue in his trade. Henry Parkin noted that he had closed down at one place and that he had invested money from the stock into war loans. He claimed "*nobody had worked harder than himself during the war to meet the demands of the miners*". The Tribunal granted him conditional exemption provided he remained in his current employment. This tallies with what grandad recorded in his diary.

Cutting from The Mansfield Reporter and Sutton Times of Friday 27 July 1917 featuring the case of Joseph J Dovey at the Kirkby Tribunal obtained from [FindMyPast](#) through paid subscription



Mr. Wiggins also stated the case of J. J. Dovie, 54, Welbeck-street, East Kirkby, pit bootmaker (23), classed in C2, on behalf of Messrs. Parkin and Sons. He made pit boots, which were necessary to the getting of coal. A medical certificate stated that he suffered from rheumatism and had been a patient for the last ten years. He had been a victim of appendicitis and could not do hard work on account of the condition of his cardiac valves. He was the last man left with the firm, and turned out 30 pairs of pit boots per week. The Appeal Tribunal had requested the military authorities previously to allow him to continue in his trade. Parkin, senr., stated that he had closed down at one place. He had turned the stock into money and put it into war loans to help things on. Nobody had worked harder than himself during the war to meet the demands of the miners. —Conditional exemption was granted on his remaining in his present employment.

I am not sure why but I have not been able to find any record of a Kirkby Tribunal meeting on 3 December 1917. It seems that, following this, Joe had another medical examination at which he was passed grade III. The Mansfield Reporter and Sutton Times of Friday 4 January 1918 did contain a [report](#) of a Tribunal meeting which had taken place on New Year's Eve 1917. Joe's case was considered and he was given a final exemption of three months. This tallies with grandad's diary and culminated in a series of unsuccessful appeals and Joe being called up.



J. J. Dovey, 54, Welbeck - street, East
Kirkby, bootmaker, 23, Grade 3, three months
(final):

Cutting from The Mansfield Reporter and Sutton Times of Friday 4 January 1918 featuring the case of Joseph J Dovey at the Kirkby Tribunal obtained from [FindMyPast](#) through paid subscription