

Chapter 10: Joe

So, in February 1918, Joe received his call up papers. It appears he was destined for military service but on 10 April, he was unwell and went to see the doctor. However, the next day he was better and returned to work. But, he became worse. On 14 April, granddad 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 bad Nurse Severn came to look after him at 9.30pm*”. However, on 21 April 1918, at 4.55am, Joe died. I am not sure why. Granddad 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. Granddad did note in November 1918 that the Star only had one performance because of the flu epidemic.¹

Whatever the cause, this was clearly a terrible blow to granddad and his family. Joe’s funeral took place at 3pm on 23 April 1918. Over the next few weeks, granddad and various members of the family visited the cemetery on a Sunday. “*Joe’s stone was put up*” on 23 July 1918. Granddad 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 granddad 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. At this time, the probate value of the watch was £120 and the Albert 9ct gold chain £500. The watch was housed in a watch case that granddad bought for 1/- in June 1920. The watch is inscribed “*from dad to Joe 1914*”.

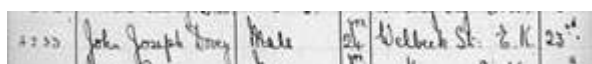
Mum wearing the Albert chain necklace (below) and the watch displayed on a stand bought for my 60th birthday in 2020 (right)



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.

¹ 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.

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](#).

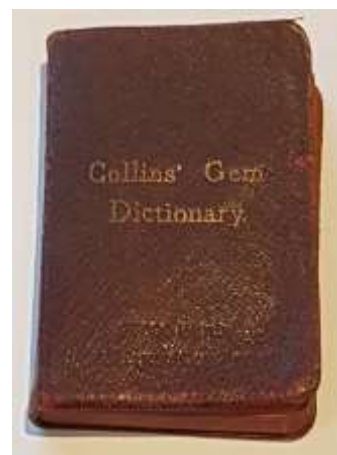
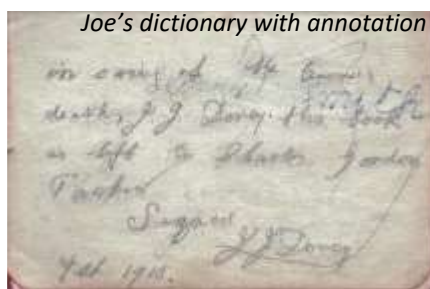


Extract from old Kingsway cemetery register

Image Source: [Ashfield Cemetery Records](#)

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, J J 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.

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.² 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.

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.

² 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.

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.