

6 Joseph Gardner d 21 November 1915 and his father, d. 6 March 1921



John R. Gardner remarried Julia M Hancox (née Picard or Pickard – this was her second marriage) in 1920 (Cumbria BMD). Her first marriage in 1908 was to Job Hancox. Both marriages were at St Mary's, Dalton.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
JOHN RAWLINSON, BELOVED HUSBAND OF
JULIA MOORE GARDNER, DIED THROUGH
ACCIDENT MARCH 6TH 1921, AGED 53 YEARS
AGNES MARIA, BELOVED WIFE OF
JOHN R. GARDNER,
DIED NOVEMBER 2ND, 1918,
AGED 51 YEARS
ALSO JOSEPH THEIR SON,
WHO LOST HIS LIFE TO SAVE OTHERS IN THE
ULVERSTON CANAL, NOVEMBER 21ST 1915,
AGED 17 YEARS,
ALSO EDITH & JOHN HENRY, THEIR CHILDREN,
DIED IN INFANCY

ICE TRAGEDY AT ULVERSTON

THE INQUEST

SOLDIER'S ACTION COMMENDED BY CORONER

SYMPATHY WITH THE PARENTS

After a lapse of many years, the Ulverston Canal was on Sunday afternoon once more the scene of a distressing ice fatality, the unfortunate victim being Joseph Gardner, age 17 years, only child of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. (*sic*) Gardner, of the Black Bull Hotel, Dalton-gate, and formerly of the Sun Inn, Dalton.

It appears that Jas. Athersmith (13), of Quebec-street, Ulverston, was sliding on some thin and treacherous ice near the canal feeder, when he was immersed. His brother Joseph (15) went to his assistance, when he also got into the water. Hearing their cries for help, Private John Akister¹, of Union-place, a member of the 3/4 King's Own (T.F.), who was skating at the time in the top basin, rushed to the spot, and saw the deceased, Gardner, in the middle of the canal, and the two boys struggling in the water near the feeder. The boys being nearest the side, Akister got some old fence railing and threw it towards them. The youths managed to get hold of the railings, and the soldier then made his way through the ice, and when up to his neck in the water succeeded in reaching the railings, and by these means pulled the boys into a place of safety, the younger one being rescued in a very exhausted condition. Akister, on looking back after effecting the rescue, could not see anything of the deceased. His cap, however, was floating on the water. Efforts to find him were unavailing until his body was recovered with grappling irons, and conveyed home. No one seems to have seen how Gardner got into the water, but there is a strong presumption that hearing the cries of the boys he also went to their assistance, and getting into difficulties through the ice breaking, was drowned. Deceased, who was an apprentice caulker at the Barrow Shipyard, was born at Askam.

The inquest was held on Monday forenoon, before Coroner F. W. Poole and a jury, of whom Mr. J. F. Jenkins was the foreman.

Jno. Wm. Gardner, licensee of the Black Bull Hotel, Daltongate, Ulverston, testified that the deceased Joseph Gardner was his son. He was 17 years of age, and was an apprentice caulker at the Barrow Shipyard.

Joseph Athersmith, aged 15 years, residing in Quebec-street, stated that on Sunday afternoon he, along with his brother aged 13, went down the Canal Bank on the Board School side, in the direction of the feeder. There were a good many people skating in the top basin, but he did not notice anyone near the feeder. There was a slide near the side at that point, and his brother went on to it. He next heard him shout for help, and saw him in the water. Witness went towards him to try and pull him out, but the ice gave way, and they were both out of their depth. Their shouts attracted a soldier named Akister, and another man. Akister came to their assistance with a wooden rail, and got them out. Witness did not see the deceased Gardner. If he had been in the water before his (witness') brother shouted for help he must have seen him.

¹ Private (Pioneer 360848) John Akister died on 27/05/1918, aged 27. By then he was in 8th Divisional Signal Coy. Royal Engineers. He was the son of George Akister, of 7, Union Place, Ulverston, Lancs. He is commemorated on the Soisson Memorial. CWGC

Private Akister gave evidence that he was skating at the top end of the canal, in the basin, when he heard a shout for help. He turned round, and went down on the right hand side, nearest the town, when he saw one man (the deceased) in the middle and two boys struggling further up nearer the feeder. He got a fence rail, and threw to the two nearest the side. He then asked someone to get hold of his hand while he went in, but the ice kept breaking away, and he went in up to his arm-pits. He got hold of the rail, and put his weight on it to break the ice between him and the boys. He got hold of the bigger boy and pulled him out, and then pulled his brother out by the neck. When he (witness looked round he saw no sign of the deceased. He did not see the deceased go down to help the boys. The three were in the water when he appeared on the scene.

The Coroner, in summing up, said this was one of the sad drowning fatalities that nearly always occurred at this time of the year, when there was ice. In this case they had unfortunately no one who saw how the deceased got into the water, and the younger brother of the witness Athersmith was not fit to appear. He thought there was very little doubt from the evidence that the deceased Gardner had gone down the canal with the intention of assisting the boys, and had unfortunately got on to a place not strong enough to bear, and so was drowned. He might say he (the Coroner) was going over the Hoad about 2.30 on Saturday afternoon, when he saw a tall man skating down the canal towards the open water, and he feared there was going to be an accident, for he was simply courting disaster. But that had nothing to do with this case. He thought the evidence pointed to the fact that the deceased was going to the assistance of the boys when he was drowned. In his opinion great credit was due to Private Akister for the way in which he dealt with the matter. If he had gone in as he was without taking the precaution of getting the rail he would probably have got into the same predicament, and four lives might have been lost instead of the one. He considered the action of the boy Athersmith in at once going to the assistance of his brother, and of Akister, who had undoubtedly saved their lives, were worthy of praise.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned", the foreman expressing sympathy with the parents, who, however, had the consolation of feeling that their son was trying to do his duty when he drowned.

His father seems to have a change of career, or perhaps followed both, when he met with an accident in 1921. The *Barrow News Saturday 12th March 1921* reported:

FALL OF 36 FEET
DALTON ORE MINER'S DEATH
INQUEST AT BARROW

The Furness Coroner (Mr. F. W. Poole) conducted an inquest at Barrow on Tuesday, touching the death of John Rawlinson Gardiner (*sic*), aged about 53, of Egerton-terrace, Dalton, who died in the North Lonsdale Hospital, on Sunday, some time after having met with an accident at the Anticross Mine, Dalton, belonging to the Barrow Hematite Steel Company.

The proceedings were attended by Mr. W. Leek, H. M. Inspector of Mines; Mr. T.A. Morgan (representing the Barrow Hematite Steel Company); and Coun. W. Lewney, Dalton, secretary of the Furness and District Miners' and Quarrymen's Association.

John Dixon, ore miner, of 74, Cobden-street, Dalton, stated that the deceased was also an ore miner, and on February 9th (*NB He died 4 weeks later on 6th March*) they were both working on a rise 36ft. above no. 2. They were "squaring out", and were working on a platform consisting of five planks. They started work at 2 p.m. About 6.45 p.m. witness noticed a piece of ore, weighing about 4 cwt., about 6ft. above the platform. It appeared to be loose, and witness tried to get it down in small pieces.

The Coroner: Did you give any warning to the deceased? – Witness: He was on a safe footing.

Proceeding, witness stated that he was trying to get the ore down in pieces, when it came down in one lump. It dropped on one of the planks, causing the latter to give way. When witness looked round he saw the ladder and the deceased falling past him. The deceased fell 36ft., to the bottom of the rise.

In answer to Mr. Leek, witness stated that the working was subject to the usual official inspection by Mr. Jowett about 3.30 p.m.

Me. E. Jowett, mining captain at Anticross, stated that when he inspected the working during the afternoon just prior to the accident, all was safe.

The Coroner returned a verdict of Accidental Death, adding that so far as he could see the work was being carried out in a proper manner.

The sympathy of the company with the relatives of the deceased was voiced by Mr. Morgan.