

5 Percy A S Foster. Drowned 8 August 1917



“THY WAY NOT MINE, O LORD.”

IN EVER LOVING MEMORY OF
PERCIVAL ALBERT SPIVEY FOSTER,
YOUNGER SON OF A. C. AND F. M. FOSTER,
WHO WAS DROWNED WHILST BATHING IN
PIEL CHANNEL ON AUGUST 8TH 1917
(BANK HOLIDAY), IN HIS 17TH YEAR.

ALSO THE ABOVE
ALBERT CHARLES FOSTER,
DIED SEP. 28TH 1943, AGED 79 YEARS.

ALSO HIS WIFE
FRANCES MARY FOSTER,
DIED FEB. 28TH 1953, AGED 89 YEARS.

Barrow News 11 August 1917:

BARROW TRADESMAN'S SON DROWNED

SAD CASE AT PIEL

“IT IS DEEP HERE”

Percy Albert Spivey Foster, 10, Infield Park, 16 years and ten months, son of Mr. Foster, grocer, Duke-street, Barrow, was drowned at Rampside on Monday afternoon. About 4.30, in company with Lilian Moore, Annie Moore, and James Moore, he took a boat from Rampside for the purpose of a picnic. After sitting for about fifteen minutes on the island he stripped and went into the water unaccompanied, leaving the two girls and the other boy sitting on the grass. After swimming a short distance out he called out, “It is deep here. I cannot touch the bottom.” He then disappeared and was not seen again.

THE INQUEST

At Barrow Police Court, on Wednesday morning, an inquiry was held into the death of Percy Albert Spivey Foster, aged 16 years and ten months, whose dead body was recovered from the Piel Channel on Monday afternoon.

Mr. A.C. Foster, 7, Infield Park¹, father of the deceased, gave evidence of identification, (*sic*) and James Moore, 19, Tower-street, Roa Island, said he landed deceased and his (witness's) two sisters from Roa Island to Piel, but did not see the deceased in the water as he had gone back with the boat to Roa Island for a married sister. He got back to Piel about 4.55, and heard of the affair. With the assistance of John Crane, Trinity House pilot, he recovered the body in about five or six feet of water.

A sister of Moore said they stayed for a few minutes on the shore, then deceased left her and her sister to go and put on his bathing costume. He swam round the point and called out, “It's deep here, kid.” A few seconds later he said, “I cannot touch the bottom.” She called upon him to come back, but without making any struggle, he seemed to lie down in the water and disappear. He seemed as if his heart failed, or he had lost all his strength.

Mr. Foster, in answer to coroner F. W. Poole, said deceased was not a strong boy. He seemed to have outgrown his strength. He had a suspicion that his heart was not strong.

Summing up, the Coroner said it was a very sad case. The jury could only return a verdict of “Accidentally drowned.” They all deeply sympathised with the parents. Deceased was a fine, tall, young lad, and in these days the country could ill afford to lose such.

A verdict in accordance with the Coroner's recommendation was passed.

¹ One of the addresses given is wrong. The burial record confirms 7 Infield Park.



The main lectern in Rampside Church was presented to the church in Percy's memory.



From Ancestry:

1901 Census

Living at 106/108/110 Duke Street were Albert C. Foster (37), Grocer/Shopkeeper, born Pontefract, Yorkshire; wife Frances M. Foster (37), born Lancaster; daughter Frances E. L. Foster (10); son Vernon C. Foster (7); and Percival A. S. Foster (6 months). All the children were born in Barrow. There was also Rose Biddulph (21), a domestic servant.

1911 Census

The family were now living at 241 Abbey Road. They had lost (and disavowed) daughter Frances, since the Census return says that they had had 2 children, with 2 living. Both Vernon (17), apprentice chemist, and Percival (10) are still at home. A niece, Frances E. Edmondson (19) is also living with them. I cannot find a marriage or death record for Frances on Cumbria BMD, so perhaps she had moved away.