

Cheyne and Laing Connections... and more

Having been contacted by Bill Cheyne who mentioned his grandmother was friendly with Reuben Laing (my great grandmother's brother) and his wife into the WW2 era I did some more research into wider connections (more than we might have imagined!).

I knew about Reuben Laing and his butchers' shops – one very close to where my father lived in Great Northern Road, Aberdeen – and his sister (known within our family as Grandie) who was married into the Muirden side of my family. As Grandie's brother, Reuben Laing is my great, grand uncle.

Bill sent me photos of Reuben's house at 14 Pirie's Lane where his father and grandfather used to go to an air raid shelter – pictures below:-



Old photograph – house was built in 1904.



On an estate agent's website around 2020.

The name "Cheyne" rang a bell and looking at my Mum's old address book a number of angles surfaced. I had a recollection of the name Nan Cheyne and, sure enough, there is an entry for "Miss Nan Cheyne, 14 Don St., Woodside – Aberdeen".

I believe my uncle George Penny (who worked for Post Office Telephones in 9 Bridge Street – now a Travel Lodge) was a close friend of Nan who, I recall, was a telephone exchange supervisor. I had been told that they decided not to get together as George looked after my grandmother in Rosemount Viaduct and Nan looked after an elderly mother or father.

George died nearly 50 years ago – I have several books of his and other items that came from 17 Rosemount Viaduct (not least a gramophone his father bought after returning from WW1). I am amused by my Mum's address book entry for my uncle – "George Penny, Aberdeen 0224 22443 (Caledonian Golf Club) 8.30 p.m. to 11 p.m.". I think he might have been the club secretary, certainly played golf and probably liked a drink.

Going back to the Cheyne angle, these are the 1911 Census entries for 14 Don Street:

James – 31 – marine engineer – birthplace Fyvie; therefore born 1880.

Margaret – 30 – birthplace Old Machar.

James S – 9 – birthplace Woodside.

Jeannie P – 7 – birthplace Woodside.

Richard S – 4 – birthplace Woodside.

Margaret C S – 2 – birthplace Woodside.

George – 1 – birthplace Woodside.

Alongside is extracted from:- "Aberdeen in the Great War" by Derek Tait.

James Cheyne, an engineman, RNR (Trawler Section), was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in September 1915 for services rendered during an attack at the Dardanelles. His home was at 14 Don Street, Woodside.



I wonder if he could have been Nan's father?