



## Herbert Charles Beavis

Over the last few months I have told the stories on the Local History page in the South Wight Chronicle of two of my great-uncles, Hector Beavis (first published 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021) and Bernard Beavis (first published 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022). Both of these articles have been to do with the sea, with Hector losing his life at the age of just seventeen whilst serving on a hospital ship, sunk by a German U-boat in the Bristol Channel, in the First World War, and Bernard, a Merchant Navy Captain, awarded an M.B.E. for bravery during the Second World War, known for bringing his cargo ship close to the Ventnor coast to signal loudly to the locals and his family that he was on his way home from another of his frequent trips across the globe. This new article also has maritime connections (albeit, tenuous) completing a hat-trick of brothers with a common thread.

This time however, it is not another of my great uncles but their younger brother, my grandfather, **Herbert Charles Beavis** (always known as 'Pat'). He was born in 1886, one of thirteen children (eight girls and five boys) to Frank Beavis and his wife Edith (nee Slaughter). *(In the picture on the right, Frank is in the middle, Herbert is on the right and the one on the left is my father, Reg).*

When Herbert retired in 1951, the following report (below) was published in the Isle of Wight Mercury:-

### "Council Employee's Retirement:-

To mark his retirement from the employ of the District Council after 45 year's service, Mr H. C. Beavis of 1 Bruce Cottages, Upper Ventnor, a member of the parks and gardens staff, was presented with a fireside chair on Friday week. Mr. Beavis, who was always known as 'Pat' commenced working for the council in 1906 and was for 29 years associated with the Southampton Steampacket Co. in the berthing of the paddle steamers which called at the pier. During the war he was foreman of the council's tomato growing scheme at St. Lawrence and has since contributed his skill in maintaining the beauty of the town's parks and gardens. The presentation was made by the chairman of the district council (Mr. H. T. Saunders) who was accompanied by the vice-chairman (Mr. H. C. Beaumont). He thanked Mr. Beavis for his long and loyal service and wished him happiness in his well earned rest. Accompanying the chair was a list of subscribers who included members of the council, senior officials and Mr. Beavis' colleagues. Tribute to his service was also paid by the parks superintendant (Mr. A. F. Beavis F.R.H.S), who organised the presentation and announced that the chairman had offered to pay the cost of an inscribed plate to be affixed to the chair."



The family lived in Morey's Cottage, Steephill, on the Steephill Castle estate where Frank was a gardener employed by the owner, John Hambrough.

Herbert was also a gardener and in 1906, at the age of twenty, he began his employment with Ventnor Urban District Council, retiring after forty-five years unbroken service to the town, at the age of 65 – the normal retirement age for men in those days.

Among his many jobs with the council, he was responsible for the safe berthing of the steamers that visited Ventnor pier from all parts of the Island and parts of the south coast of the mainland, usually on a daily basis, especially in the summer months. Sometimes there were two vessels tied up at the pier at the same time!

In 1943, during the second World War, Walter Zuber bought fifty-four acres of the Puckaster Estate in St. Lawrence and created the *The Undercliff Produce Company* to grow tomatoes, potatoes and lettuces to help the war effort. With his extensive horticultural knowledge, Herbert was put in charge of this small part of the national 'Dig for Victory' campaign. During the first season alone, more than 50 tons of tomatoes were shipped to the mainland.

Herbert married Rosie Ellen Lewis, from Whitwell in 1911 and they moved in to No.1 Lowtherville Road, Upper Ventnor where they lived until Herbert's death in 1957 at the age of seventy-one.