

1910

HMS Saracen

January 15th

Appointment to HMS Foresight. I received a private letter from Captain Madden (Secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty) offering me the command of the scout 'Foresight'. In an interview with Commodore Charlton a few days ago he told me he would put my name down for a scout if I liked, but I had no idea I would get one so soon. This is therefore a great and welcome surprise and I wired to the Admiralty accepting the offer. It is particularly pleasing to me, showing as it does, that my collision in the 'Saracen' has not gone against me at all.

January 19th

Appointment. My appointment to HMS Foresight was announced in today's paper. It is a step in the right direction and I am delighted.

February 1st

Left HMS Saracen

HMS Foresight



HMS Foresight about 1910

February 2nd

Joined HMS Foresight. Left Sheerness in the forenoon to take up my appointment to the 'Foresight'. Elsie came as far as Sittingbourne with me. Arrived at Portsmouth at 4:15 and went on board the 'Foresight' where I found Commander Fawcet Wray ready to turn over the ship. We had a tedious business turning over all the confidential books

and documents, after which I took over the ship and we reported together to the Commander in Chief (Sir A Fanshawe). The 'Foresight' pleases me immensely. I have very good accommodation, sleeping cabinet, bathroom, etc; very different to my cramped quarters in the 'Saracen'. Nevertheless, I was very sorry to leave that ship and Sheerness where the first three months of our married life have been so happy. In the evening, I called on Mrs. Robinson (Elsie's aunt) at Southsea. I remember her when she used to come to stay with Elsie's father at Wellington Lodge, where I was a boy at school there in 1885, and where I first saw Elsie, as a little girl of 18 months.

February 3rd to March 10th

At Portland

March 11th to 23rd

At Portsmouth

March 24th to April 15th

At Portland

April 7th to 14th

On leave at Warwick and London.

April the 11th

Result of the collision with SS Surf. I was greatly surprised and relieved to receive a telegram stating that my case "Saracen V Surf" has been settled out of court and that the Admiralty had obtained 90% damages against the owners. The case was to have come off on Wednesday 13th and so it has been settled just in time. The news removed a load from my mind for, however certain I was, one can never tell how these things will shape themselves in a law court. I have the satisfaction now of knowing that I was in no way to blame for the collision and that it cannot go against me in any way.

April 15th to June 18th

At Portsmouth

April 19th

HMS Rattler. I noticed in the harbour my old ship, the 'Rattler' [*note – 1901 –1903 in South Africa*], which has just come round from the Clyde, where for some time she is being used for experiments in gas propulsion. She has now come down for a training hulk for stokers and is to be fitted with a water tube boiler. This is I think, the last phase of her existence.

May 6th

Death of King Edward VII. On passing through the streets of Gosport on my way to the ship in the morning, I notice posters announcing the illness of HM King Edward, which looked very ominous but no one knew that he was seedy and this added to this gravity. Having obtained weekend leave, I bicycle to Northwood, Winchester in the afternoon. On arriving at Winchester I saw that bad news was in the wind and found the Telegraph had arrived which practically stated that the case of HM was hopeless. Arrived at Northwood about 7:00 PM and found everyone in the great state of mind about this shocking news. HM subsequently died between 10:00 and 11:00 this night.



Death of King Edward VII. The King was suffering with pneumonia and bronchitis and had a number of heart attacks before he died on 6th May 1910.

May 7th

News of the death of King Edward. We received the sad and shocking intelligence about King Edward in the early morning, and found it at first hard to believe that this great and good monarch had passed from us. The consternation all over country is very great, and all countries are commiserating with us on our great loss and extolling his late Majesty's virtues. The Prince of Wales was proclaimed today as King George V.

May 16th

Picnic of Titchfield. Drove Elsie to Titchfield in Mr Moorman's dog cart in the afternoon and made tea at the Gate House, returning to by Catisfield, very enjoyable.

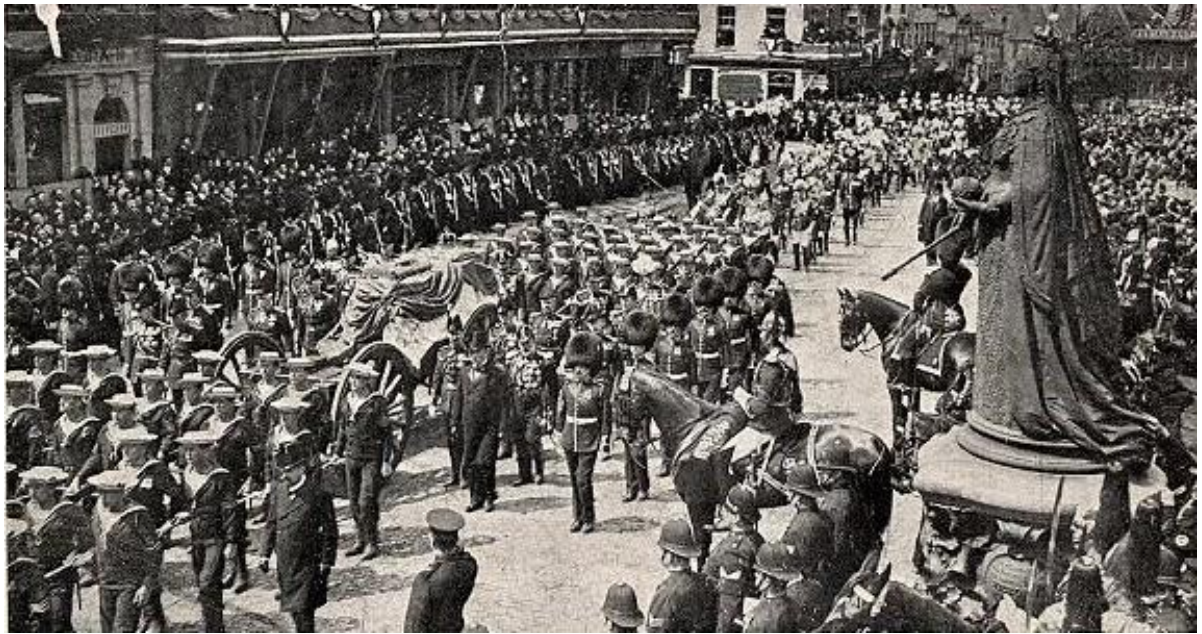
[note added by the author 21/11/26 - The Gate House is Place House and we picnicked in the beech coppice by the road. Mrs Long, who lived at the cottage, boiled the kettle

for us. We little thought then that this cottage and grounds would become our property and home.]



May 20th

Funeral of King Edward VII. The funeral of His late Majesty King Edward VII took place today, the body being conveyed with proper pomp and ceremony to Paddington, thence to Saint George's Chapel, Windsor [*note – he'd died at Buckingham Palace*], witnessed by millions of people. Only those officers and men taking part in the procession were allowed away from the Portsmouth command. The ship's companies of all ships were assembled at Divisions, officers in full dress, during the firing of the minute guns, one for every year of King Edward's age (68). During the progress of the procession in Windsor, memorial services were being held in all ships. I found some difficulty in reading it, being so emotional, and the widespread regret at the King's sudden death is phenomenal. His personality was so great that everyone feels they have lost a true friend. The number of crowned heads in London today taking part in the proceedings constitutes a record and it is with great satisfaction that one heard in the evening that no important mishaps had occurred and that there had been no outrages.



The funeral procession of King Edward VII, passing through Windsor



The Nine Sovereigns at Windsor for the funeral of King Edward VII. Standing, from left to right: King Haakon VII of Norway, Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, King Manuel II of Portugal, Kaiser Wilhelm II of the German Empire, King George I of Greece and King Albert I of Belgium. Seated, from left to right: King Alfonso XIII of Spain, King-Emperor George V of the United Kingdom and King Frederick VIII of Denmark.

May 23rd

Halley's Comet. I saw Halley's Comet tonight for the first time. It was on its journey into space and was somewhat disappointing to look at as its tail is nearly end on to the earth, which diminishes its brilliancy.



Not everyone was excited by the prospect of Halley's Comet. A French astronomer, Camille Flammarion, caused widespread panic when he suggested that the comet's tail, through which the Earth would pass, contained 'cyanogen' gas, which would poison Earth and end all life – needless to say, he was wrong!

May 28th

Death of Arthur (brother). My brother Arthur died today at 19 Garden St, London. It was terribly sudden and unexpected and I was not aware of the sad occurrence until Monday.

May 30th

Arthur. On my arrival on board received the shocking intelligence referred to above (28th), which upset me terribly. We had previously arranged to go to Porchester Castle in the afternoon, and I decided to try to cheer myself up a little so met Elsie at Fort Blockhouse Station and bicycle there. We had tea in the castle grounds and spent a most interesting afternoon.

June 1st

Arthur's funeral. Bicycled to Fareham and caught the 10:00 train to London. After lunch at the US Club to Highgate Cemetery where I met the rest of my brothers and we buried poor Arthur with the usual rights. I afterwards went with John and Oliver to his office at Great Helens to talk with them whilst they overhauled his papers, as they are

his executors. After this mournful proceeding was over, returned to Lee, arriving about 9:00 PM.



Arthur Tibbits' grave in Highgate Cemetary East

June 18th to July 8th

At Portland

June 19th

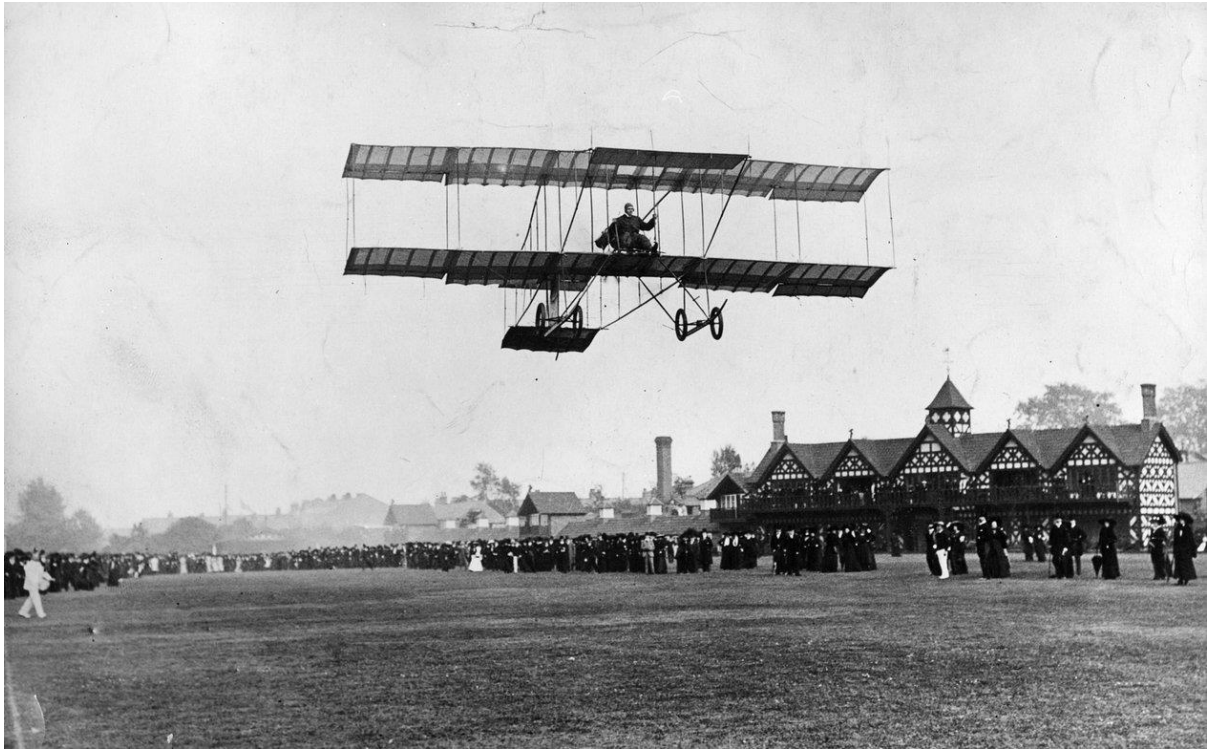
My 38th birthday

July 10th to 25th

Off the West Coast of Scotland for fleet manoeuvres

July 22nd

Flying machine. In the evening Mr Graham White made a flight in his biplane, cruising around the fleet in the most marvellous manner. It is the first time I have seen one of these 'airmen' and it is a wonderful sight indeed. He looked just like a huge fly and the buzzing of the propellers made it all the more realistic. His machine was under perfect control and his descent was perfect, to the same spot from which he had gone.



Claude Grahame-White in his Farman III biplane in 1910. The Wright Brothers had demonstrated heavier than air flight was possible only 7 years earlier in December 1903.

July 25th to 29th

At Torbay

July 29th to August 9th

At Portland

August 8th to November 29th

At Portsmouth

September 16th

Birth imminent. Elsie and I did some gardening in the evening and then for our usual more towards Eastney. She returned feeling very tired and at 11:00 PM, just after going to bed, the symptoms of childbirth began to assert themselves. *[note – there has been no mention of Elsie’s pregnancy up to this point, unless CST did not transcribe it. Perhaps it was superstitious to mention at a time when infant mortality was approximately 15% but maternal mortality was more than 35%.]*

September 17th

Birth of first son - Terrence. By 1:00 AM we had no doubt that the long-expected event would shortly take place and so I went off on my bicycle to fetch the nurse, Miss Petch,

who has been awaiting a summons for the last week or more. When she arrived there was not the least doubt. At 6:00 he went off to fetch Dr Aston Key, who came at about 6:45 and found poor dear Elsie in great suffering. He gave her chloroform at once which immediately relieved her, and at 8:20, to my delight, our little son was born into the world. The relief to me that all is over was intense and my feelings during the crisis were unimaginable. The first sound of my little offspring when I heard his cries was a most extraordinary feeling. My joy was great when Doctor Key told me that I might go and see my dear wife and the little boy, and that he was a fine little specimen, and physically sound, and that Elsie had come through this fearful ordeal splendidly. *[note – it was not until the 1960s that men were allowed in the delivery room]* She seemed so happy it was all over and very well considering the pain she had endured. After receiving congratulations onboard, sending wires etc, returned home to find the little fellow washed and dressed and looking happy and contented in his new surroundings.

October 1st

Pram. Elsie able to lie on a couch today. Baby now a fortnight old, developing into a fat, sturdy little fellow. He went out in his perambulator for the first time.

October 9th

Downstairs. Elsie downstairs to supper for the first time since 16th of September.

October 17th

Mother. The monthly nurse, Miss Petch, left us today. Elsie is able to get about again, much to my relief, and the little boy thrives well from having so good a mother.

October 23rd

Christening. Our little boy was christened at Saint Jude's Church in the afternoon. His name is Charles Terrence Bethune. His godmother is Elsie's step-mother and Godfathers Reverend R Howes (my brother-in-law) and Lieutenant Michael K H Kennedy (1st Lieutenant of the 'Saracen'). Emily held the baby at the font with Elsie's aunt Mrs Robinson. We afterwards had a small tea party for the people who attended the ceremony and cut his christening cake. Some of the officers of the ship came. They have presented him with a fine silver mug.

November 29th

Departure from Portsmouth. To my regret, the good times are now ended and I have to part with Elsie and my little son for a few days. They remain at Southsea for the present.

November 29th to December 12th

At Sea of Portsmouth

December 13th to February 23rd

At Sheerness

December 25th

Christmas Day. To the ship in the forenoon as usual, where the ship's officers asked me to join them in a bottle of 'fizz'. Elsie and I spent a quiet and happy day, the first we have had in our own home together. We read David Copperfield to each other to pass away the evening.

December 31st to January 11th

On 10 days leave