



Robert Frederick Donovan Milner

27 Wheeldon Avenue

Robert would have been 17 when war broke out in 1914. He lived with his parents and two younger siblings, Reginald and Kathleen, on Wheeldon Avenue. His family must have been one of the first to move into the area as Robert Milner (senior) is listed in the 1902-3 Register of Electors – one of only three households on “Wheeldon’s Avenue”.

Unfortunately we know nothing of Robert’s military service – only that he is listed as absent on naval or military duty in the electoral roll of 1918. There are a number of men called Robert Milner in the military archives but the incomplete records mean that we are unable to pinpoint where he served or with what regiment. We know that he was back at home with his parents by the autumn of 1919 and appears to have lived at 27 Wheeldon Avenue until his marriage.

In 1923 he qualified as a graduate of the Institute for Electrical Engineering who list him as “Donovan Robert F Milner”.

He married Gladys Mary Hobson on 4 April 1923 in St Anne’s Church. Gladys, the youngest of seven children, was a local girl who had lived all her life at 87 Watson Street. At the start of their married life they moved to 14 Wheeldon Avenue.

Robert went on to have a long career in electrical engineering, registering twelve patents for improvements relating to electrical cables and junction boxes between 1932 and 1950.

On one of these patents in 1932 his address is listed as Scarsdale Avenue in Littleover, Derby. He went on to work for the Liverpool Cable Company and he is listed in the British Telecom directories for Liverpool between 1936 and 1942. He may have also lived for a time in Leeds (about 1958).

Through the phone directories we can trace him back to Derbyshire – he is listed as living on Burley Lane, Quarndon between 1958 and 1974.

We know that Robert and his wife had at least one child born in 1924 – also named Gladys. Robert died in Derby in 1975 aged 78. His sister Kathleen was still living at 27 Wheeldon Avenue in 1966.

Robert Milner named his homes in Littleover, Liverpool and Quarndon “Renlym” or “Renlim” which, of course, is Milner backwards!