

# The Pestell Family

## Of Irstead

**1891 Census** living at Marsh House, Irstead

Horace Pestell	Head	aet 33	Marshman
Louisa Pestell	Wife		
Louisa Pestell	Daughter		Scholar
<b>John H Pestell</b>	<b>Son</b>	<b>aet 11</b>	<b>Scholar</b>
Ethel Pestell	Daughter	aet 7	

**1901 Census** living in “The Street”, Irstead

Louisa Pestell	Head	aet 42	Cowkeeper
<b>John H Pestell</b>	<b>Son</b>	<b>aet 21</b>	<b>Agricultural Labourer</b>
Ethel Pestell	Daughter	aet 18	

**1911 Census** living in “The Street”, Irstead

Louisa Pestell	Widow	aet 53	Dairy Work
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(living at a separate address to John H Pestell—see below)

<b>John H Pestell</b>	<b>Head</b>	<b>aet 31</b>	<b>Farm Labourer</b>
Beatrice Pestell	Wife	aet 29	
Mabel Pestell	Daughter	aet 6	
Gladys Pestell	Daughter	aet 4	
Sydney Pestell	Son	aet 5 months	

John and Beatrice (nee Hudson) were married in about 1905. Prior to this Beatrice had been a teacher at Neatishead Primary School—and may have been a pupil/teacher. However at that time when a female teacher marries, they had to give up teaching.

Louisa Pestell died in 1920 and was buried at Irstead Church on 10.11.20.

# John Horace Pestell

John Pestell enlisted on 5.6.1916 in the Royal Garrison Artillery for the duration of the war. The form on display **Army Form B2512** gives his occupation as a Milkman.

**Army Form Descriptive Report on Enlistment** gives his height as 5' 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" and gives details of his family. This same form gives **Military History** which states that he suffered an injury to his right arm on 28.5.1918.

**Army Statement of Service** shows that he was:  
5.6.16 to 9.6.17 at home (presumably training in the UK)  
10.6.17 to 9.6.18 in France  
10.6.18 to 6.3.19 at home, and discharged  
This form also refers to his injury which was a GSW (gunshot wound) to his right arm which was amputated.

**Army Form B.104-53** also refers to his injury on 28.5.18 and that he was transferred to Adm 83 General Hospital, Boulogne on 29.5.18 where his right arm was amputated.

**Ministry of Pensions Form** states that the degree of disablement was 70% and that he was awarded a pension of 27s 6d (£1.37½p) for 13 weeks from 7.3.19 and then 19s 3d (96½p) for life, with an additional allowance of 15s 10d (78p) from 24.3.19 for 3 children and then 11s 1d (55½p) from 11.6.19.

The **Medal Card** shows that he was awarded the **Victory Medal and British War Medal**. The Acknowledgement of receipt of medals was sent from the Royal Garrison Artillery Record Office on 10.12.21 and signed by John Horace on 30.12.21.

# John Horace Pestell cont'd



**Photo above: Beatrice, with Gladys, Mabel and Sydney, probably taken about 1917/18.**

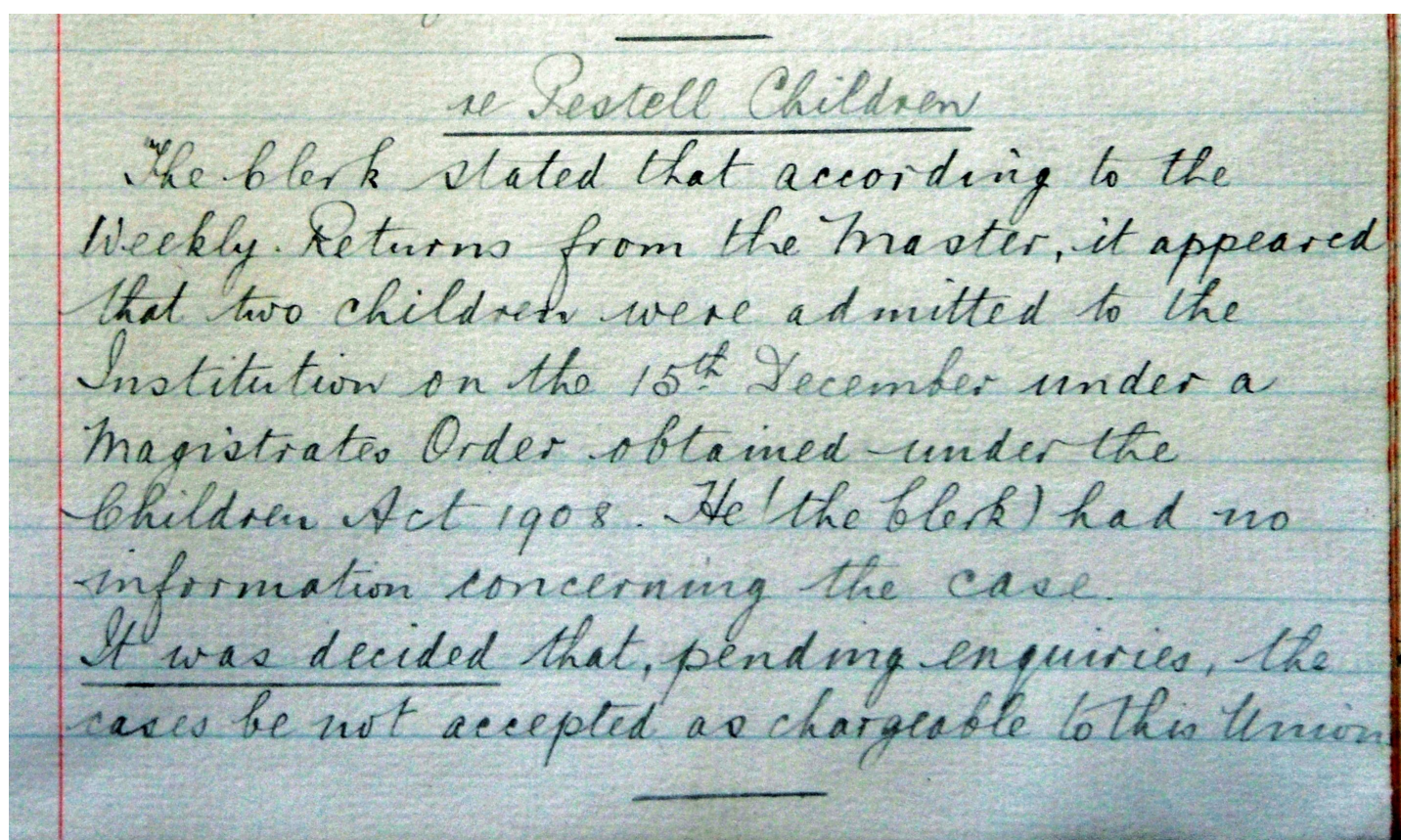
On returning from the war, because of the injuries he suffered as a result of his service and in addition to his pension, **John Horace was given a tricycle and a knife/fork, as of course he only had one hand (see photos).**

# John Horace Pestell cont'd

John and Beatrice had another daughter, Elsie, born 12.9.19. A few years after Beatrice fell ill. It appears that perhaps John could not look after all the children as well and two of the children were admitted to the Workhouse around December 1922.

The three extracts that follow are taken from the Smallburgh Poor Law Union (SPLU) Minute Book 1921—1923.

Source: NRO C/GP 18/43, page 406, 423 and 437.



It then appears that Beatrice was admitted to the Poor Law Infirmary at Aylsham (which then became St Michael's Hospital) on 3 January 1923 and John was asked to "contribute 30s towards the maintenance costs of his wife and children".



# John Horace Pestell cont'd

## re Pestell Children

The clerk reported that he had received a copy of the Magistrate's Order in this case, and he was satisfied that the children were properly chargeable to the guardians under the provisions of the Children Act 1908.

Resolved that the chargeability of these children be accepted.

The Relieving Officer reported that the mother of these children had been removed to the Poor Law Infirmary.

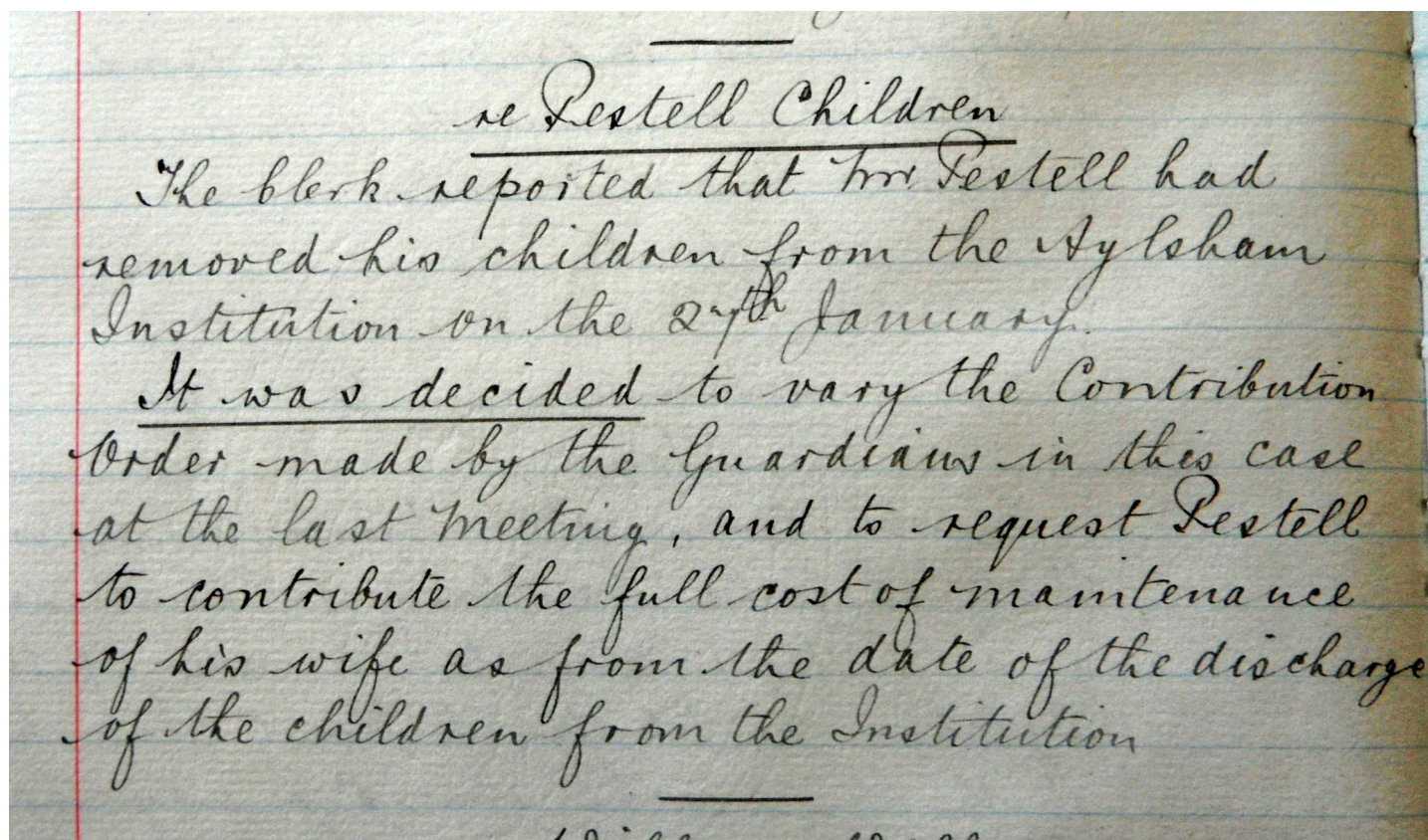
Resolved that Mr John Pestell of Istead be requested to contribute the sum of 30/- per week towards the cost of maintenance of his wife and children at Aylsham, and that Pestell also be asked to pay the cost of removing his wife to Aylsham viz:  
39/6.

It was thought that the children had gone to the workhouse in Smallburgh (the buildings are still there in Workhouse Common Road and are now houses). However, it looks as though the workhouse had closed by 1922 and although the Smallburgh Poor Law Union still existed and was responsible for costs, the actual workhouse that was used was in Aylsham.

It would seem the children had only been in the workhouse for 44 days, from 15 December 1922 to 27 January 1923.



# John Horace Pestell cont'd



Sadly Beatrice died on 12 March 1923 aged 40. She had been in hospital for just under ten weeks and had overlapped the children's stay by two weeks. The cause of death was "Rodent Ulcer of the Face" (possibly face cancer).

Beatrice was buried "by friends" at Neatishead but there does not appear to be a gravestone there. This was not surprising as a stone would have been very expensive and the cost of maintaining Beatrice in the hospital would almost certainly have taken its toll.

With thanks to Stephen Pestell, son of Sydney Pestell, for giving us this information,, the "Memories" of Sydney Pestell, found handwritten, tucked away in his house by his wife Betty after he died and also to Ann Smith, John's granddaughter, for allowing us to copy and display photographs of the Pestell Family.

**Sidney (Sydney) John Pestell**  
**(also known as Cuddy)**  
**20.10.1910 – 27.9.1994**

**Memories of life in Irstead just after WW1**

“I was born at Irstead 1910. I had three sisters, two older and one younger, I lost my mother [Beatrice] through illness when I was 12. My father [John Horace] was in the First World War in which he lost his right arm.

*I remember seeing the water right up to the back door although I was only two in the flood of 1912.*

My grandfather lived next door and kept three or four cows we used to take down to the marshes before we went to school in the summer – and hurry home from school to get them home again for milking – for which we were given a large piece of cake.

***We went to Neatishead School which was two miles away. There were about 30 children going from where we lived – the families were big in those days, 7 or 8 in a family.***

If we helped my grandmother in the winter to grind the turnips for the cows we were allowed in the dark evenings to go and play tiddly winks in her house, which always seemed to have brighter lights than ours with just paraffin lamps – no electricity then.

*Sundays we went to Sunday School to the Baptist Chapel at Neatishead. We used to take our dinners so we had a nice long day.*

