

2.4 Herbert Robert Page (1879)

Herbert was born in 1879 Hales, Lodden, Norfolk (Fig 2.11).

CERTIFIED COPY of an Entry of BIRTH
(6 & 7 Wm. IV., cap. 86).

Sec. 27 of the above Act enacts that "for every general search of the Indexes shall be paid the sum of twenty shillings, and for every particular search the sum of one shilling, and for every Certified Copy the sum of two shillings and sixpence;" and Sec. 28 of the said Act enacts that "Where the application is made by post and the search is conducted by the staff of the General Register Office, the particular search fee is two shillings and sixpence."

Given at the **GENERAL REGISTER**
SOMERSET HOUSE,

Application Number **S.R.**

REGISTRATION DISTRICT **LODDON**

1879 **BIRTH in the Sub-District of** **Aldeby** **in the County of** **Norfolk**

No.	When and Where Born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
323	Seventh October 1879 Hales	Herbert Robert	Boy	Robert Page	Jane Page formerly Easter	Farm Labourer	Jane Page Mother Hales	Eighteenth November 1879	John Read Sayer Registr.

CERTIFIED to be a true Copy of an Entry in the Certified Copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the **18th** day of **March** **1931**.

B 50066

This Certificate is issued in pursuance of and subject to the following Acts:—6 & 7 Will. IV., c. 86, sec. 38; 24 & 25 Vict., c. 98, sec. 36; 3 & 4 Geo. V., c. 27, sec. 3, 5 & 6.
The Act 6 & 7 Will. IV., c. 86, sec. 38, enacts "That all Certified Copies of Entries, purporting to be sealed or stamped with the Seal of the General Register Office, shall be received as evidence of Marriage to which the same relate, without any further or other proof of such Entry; and no Certified Copy purporting to be given in the said Office shall be of any force or effect which is not sealed.
Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this Certificate, or (2) uses a falsified certificate as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to Prosecution under these Acts."

Fig 2.11. Herbert Robert Page's birth certificate.

He lived on the Yarmouth Road, Hales from 1879 to the mid 90's (1881 & 1891 census returns). Despite questioning him I was never able to get much about his early life. I feel that he was ambitious and wanted to put his past behind him. One of the few items that I have that casts any light on this part of his life is a copy of the New Testament presented to him for good conduct at Sunday school (Fig 2.12). The Primitive Methodist Chapel was on a road in Hales branching off the Yarmouth Road and thus quite close to where he lived. In the late 1890's Herbert was able to obtain a job at the Church of England Boy's (today coeducational) Public School, Cheltenham College, working as a footman (1901 census). This experience led to employment at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, as a 'College Gyp' (1911 census entry) the term used in the University at that time for a valet or servant. By family anecdote his first

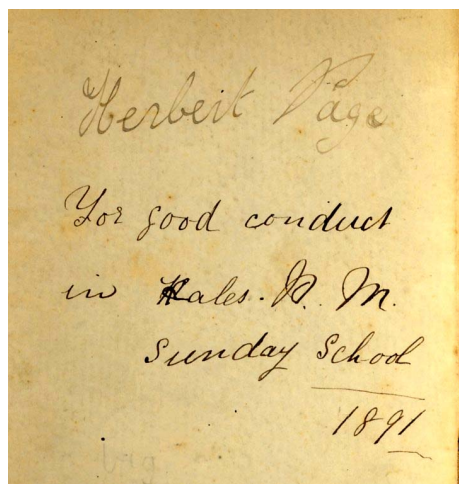


Fig 2.12. Entry on page of a copy of the New Testament in the possession of Kenneth R. Page.

job in the college was to work in the house of the Master of the college (The 'Masters Lodge', the Master at this period would have been William Chawner). Herbert married Emma Goodson at Loddon in 1906 (BMD Index) and shortly afterwards the couple set up home at 13 Mackenzie Road, Cambridge. This was a rented property belonging to one of the other Cambridge Colleges (*Gonville and Caius?*)



Fig 2.13 Front and rear views of 13 Mackenzie Road (On the frontal view it is the house just to the right of the lamp post in the centre of the picture).

Herbert and Emma's first son Kenneth Herbert was born on the 6th August 1907 (Birth certificate). Fig 2.14 is a photograph of the family taken some months after this event (*It is also the earliest photograph I have for both the Page and Goodson families*). Sadly Kenneth Herbert died in 1910. Herbert and Emma's second son, Robert William, was born on the 1st May 1912.

In order to supplement the family income Herbert often did small jobs for the College Fellows and this on occasion required moving furniture. This led to Herbert developing a hernia and this required a truss that he wore for the rest of his life.



Fig 2.14 Herbert, Emma and their first son Kenneth Herbert taken about 1907).

Herbert served as a private soldier during the 1914-18 war. His army papers show that on the 10th December 1915 he was recruited in to the 2/5 Battalion of the Yorkshire regiment. The hernia he suffered from however caused him to be medically downgraded and so he was transferred to the 44th Labour Battalion of the British Expeditionary Force and he served in France with this unit until February 1919. His service number was 25958. During his time in France he worked as an officer's mess attendant. One story he had from this period was that he was requested to get fresh trout for a mess dinner. He was somewhat nonplussed by this order until one of his comrades suggested that they drop a hand grenade into a local lake. This was done and the aim was successfully achieved although not in a very ecological manner! He was discharged with the rank of Lance Corporal from the army on the 23rd March 1919. He was subsequently awarded the WWI Medal, the Victory Medal, and a medal for service in France. He always felt guilty that he had never served on the front line unlike his friends and contemporaries, however he had been in uniform and he had always obeyed orders. Fig 2.15 shows a photograph of the family taken on an occasion when he was home on leave.



Fig 2.15. Photograph of Emma, Robert and Herbert taken during the First World War.

Following his war service life returned to normal back at Cambridge. At some stage Herbert moved out from the Master's Lodge and commenced service in the main hall of the college. The future Emperor Hirohito of Japan visited Cambridge in the early 1920's whilst still Crown Prince and Herbert had occasion to serve him, an action that brought about a tip of £5 when the pound was worth a great deal more than it is today. Herbert never forgot this and the Emperor was always held in high esteem by him, even at the height of the Second World War! Income was always very short and Emma and he supplemented their income by taking in undergraduate students as lodgers. This was an activity highly regulated by the University authorities and reports had to be made on the student's conduct whilst in the lodging. Herbert both before and after the war occasionally worked as a Proctor's 'bulldog'. The Proctor's were drawn from academic staff and collectively they acted as a university police force enforcing compliance of university regulations regarding student behaviour on the town streets and in other public areas. Each Proctor on his patrol had two college servants to assist him and these were known as his bulldogs (*This system lasted up to the Garden House riots in the 1960s*).



Fig 2.16 Robert with Herbert in the garden of 13 Mackenzie Road. (Photograph taken sometime in the mid 1920's).

Emma's and Herbert's son Robert gained entrance to the Cambridgeshire High School for Boys (Now the Hills Road Sixth Form College) in 1923 and remained there until 1930 (see chapter 6). During the period between the two World Wars Emmanuel College employees were given pension rights. Although by present day standards the pensions were very modest Herbert was very proud that he would now be able to earn a pension. Herbert was a keen member of the college servant's bowls club an interest he maintained throughout his working life and into his retirement (see Fig 2.17).



Fig 2.17 Herbert playing bowls on the Christ Pieces bowling rink. (Photograph dates from about 1950).

By the late 1930s Herbert had reached the position of Head Waiter in the College. This was a position of some responsibility in that it involved the supervision of all meals in Hall, the servicing of the Senior Combination Room, the running of the Buttery, and the day to day care of the college silver and the condition of the college wine cellars. (*When my wife and I visited the college in 1960 Herbert's successor, Mr Parr, kindly showed us the silver and the wine cellars, it was noted that the latter still had a lot of South African sherry dating from the war years – see below. To my delight some of the staff in the Buttery remembered me. I had often accompanied my grandfather to the college during the latter years of the Second World War but I had not returned much to the college after this period*). Herbert's colleague and great friend at Emmanuel was Mr Freestone, the head Porter of the College. (*As a youngster accompanying my grandfather I got to know the Porter's lodge very well and well remember the tutorials on politics Mr Freestone bestowed on me. As I remember Mr Freestone's views were somewhat to the right of Genghis Khan but he was a splendid man despite this, always very smart and adorned with a bowler hat when patrolling the college. To his contemporaries he was known as the 'Lord Mayor of Trumpington', Trumpington being the Cambridge suburb where he lived*).

The years of the Second World War brought problems, many of those who would have been students were instead called up for service in the armed forces. Issues such as food rationing and the threat of air raids all had their effects on the life of the College. Parts of the college buildings were turned over to the military and the hostel adjacent to Parker Street was used as sick quarters for the military personnel stationed in the college. One innovation that occurred at this time was the appointment of a woman, Miss Bolt, as Catering Manager for the college. This development to put it mildly was met with a mixed reception by the college servants. Their misgivings were confirmed when a consignment of powdered potatoes arrived at the kitchens, had standards slipped so much that dishes prepared from powdered potatoes should be served in Hall? Things were clearly not going well with the wine cellars either, this was demonstrated when a consignment of South African, not Iberian, sherry was received. The war was definitely taking a toll on college standards although college feasts still took place on occasions. The Page family happily accepted items not consumed at these feasts. Following a college feast, Herbert looking magisterial as he was still in full evening dress, would on arriving home produce items such as chicken legs, each neatly wrapped in a college serviette, from the pockets housed in the tails of his coat, a welcome boost to the diet at a time of strict food rationing.

The College played host to a number of academic visitors despite the war. One such was J.Frank Dobie who from 1943 to 1944 was a visiting Professor of American History. He came from the University of Texas and during his time in Cambridge he was a member of Emmanuel College. He became a friend of Herbert and I well remember him, a tall man always in a light grey suit and wearing a cream coloured hat, not quite a Stetson but almost. He was an authority of Texan folklore and on my seventh birthday he gave me a copy of his book 'Coronado's Children' with a touching inscription in it, which I have copied as Fig 2.18. Fig 2.19 is a photograph of Herbert and I taken in the grounds of Emmanuel at about this time. *(Professor Dobie held liberal views and came to blows with the Governor of Texas, with the result that he was dismissed from the University of Texas. Attitudes changed with time however and in 1964 he received one of the highest awards in the United States, the Medal of Freedom. The Dobie Paisano Fellowship in the University of Texas was set up to commemorate his memory - see "https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Frank_Dobie" as well as other web sites).*

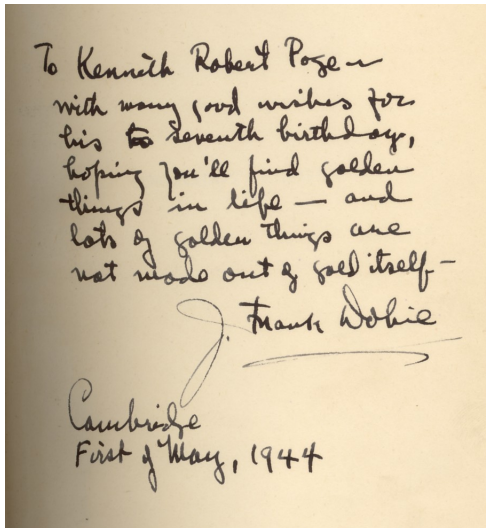


Fig.2.18 Inscription in fly leaf of a copy of 'Coronado's Children' by J.Frank Dobie given to Kenneth.



Fig 2.19. Kenneth with Herbert in the grounds of Emmanuel College. Photograph taken in 1944.

At home at the start of the war my mother, Constance Lucy, and I arrived at 13 Mackenzie Road. Apart from 1942 we were destined to stay there until early 1947. Herbert was appointed as the air raid warden for the streets surrounding 13 Mackenzie Road. A plate announcing that the house was equipped with a stirrup pump was duly posted by the front door. Herbert had to undertake regular patrols at night and hence was away when bombs fell on Fenner's Cricket Ground a short distance from the house (these killed a number of people). This event caused a certain amount of excitement at 13 Mackenzie Road, I myself being rapidly shoved under the stairs by my mother. The French windows at the rear of the house were damaged by the blast. I can still remember Herbert returning home shortly after this event and having to help Emma; in the emergency she had taken refuge under her bed but had then got stuck so that she could not get out again! Several other War experiences stand out in my memory. In May 1943 my father Robert who had been called up as a private soldier was commissioned. Emma in particular was over the moon with his promotion. Emma and Herbert had grown up in a world governed by class and although they were both ambitious, they came from the agricultural working class of East Anglia and never in their wildest dreams had anticipated a son of theirs would become a commissioned officer in the army! Another experience was in 1944 and D-day. Robert, now a temporary Major was in the second wave over the Normandy beaches and shortly after this event he was able to write home from France. I can vividly remember Herbert reading the letter out to all the family. Finally, a year after the war had ended when I was still in Cambridge I can remember the pride of Herbert and Emma when it was announced that Robert had been awarded the M.B.E (Military Branch) for his services in the war.

During the war the routine of 13 Mackenzie Road continued much as it had done before 1939, Herbert leaving the house early in order to supervise the serving of breakfast in the college and staying in college until after lunch had been served. He

would then return home and have a sleep in a chair in the living room until 4 pm (I have a photograph of him at this juncture, see Fig 2.20). At 4 pm prompt (thanks to Emma routine in the house was always prompt!) he made tea for all at home (I still possess the teapot used for this process!) and then he returned to the college in order to supervise the serving of dinner. As I remember it unless there were special events he had most weekends off. Saturday mornings were therefore spent polishing the household silver and brass (of which there was much including door knobs and stairway fittings) and then in summer it was off to bowls for the afternoon!



Fig 2.20 Grandpa's afternoon nap.



Fig 2.21. The holy of holies – the front room of 13 Mackenzie Road.

Emma always kept the house in spotless condition. Woe betided the delivery boy who put his dirty foot on to the front doorstep; this was kept in a pure white condition by regular holystoning. I have a picture of the front room of the house (see Fig 2.21); this room was only used on Sundays and on special occasions!



Fig 2.22. On the pier at Llandudno about 1932.



Fig 2.23 From L to R Constance Lucy, Herbert, Kenneth and Emma. On holiday in Bournemouth, 1946.

Herbert and Emma went on summer holidays from the 1930's onwards. I include two photographs (Figs 2.22 and 2.23) from these holidays. Note the relaxed holiday dress of the period!!

In 1945 Herbert retired. A copy of a letter from the College marking this event is shown in Fig 2.24.

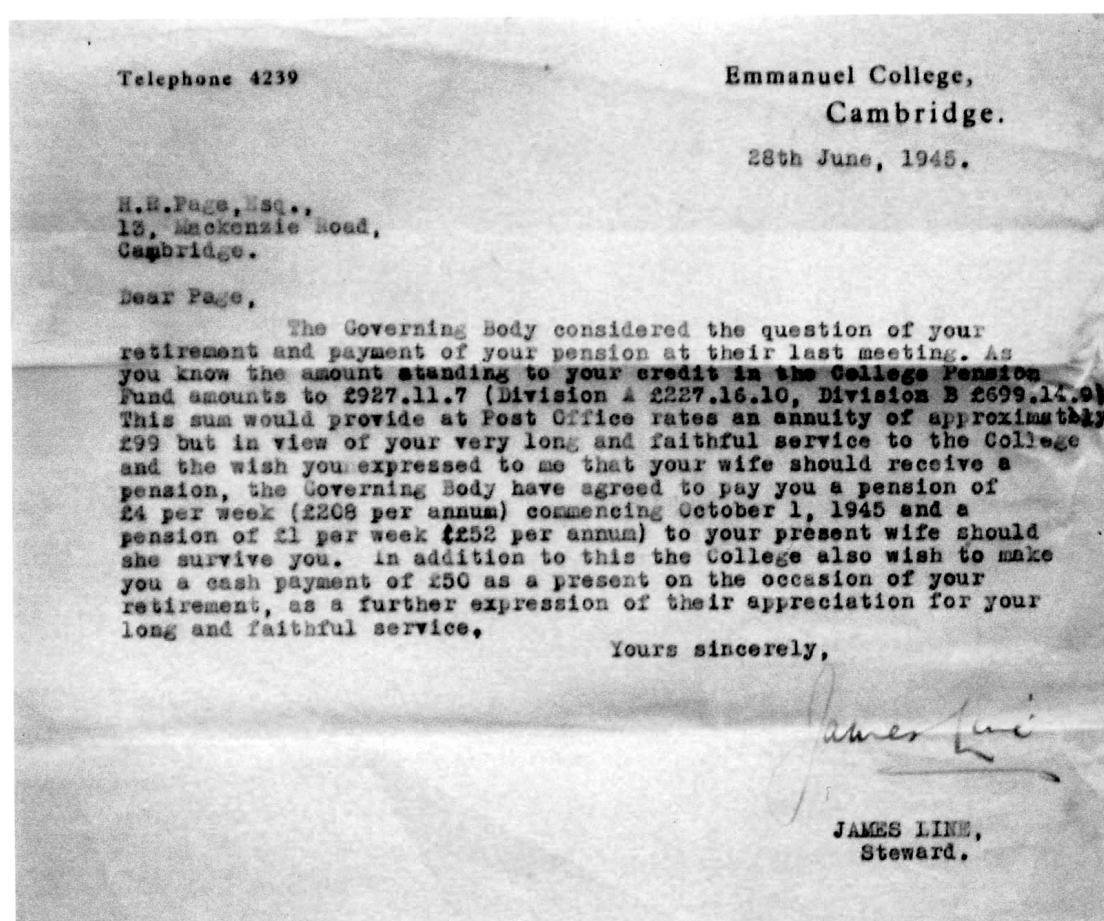


Fig 2.24 Letter from the Emmanuel College Steward to Herbert regarding the financial arrangements following his retirement.

On his departure Herbert and Emma were presented with amongst other thing a fine set of silver cruets. Retirement did not mean contact with the College was severed. On the occasion of special college feasts Herbert was often recalled to preside over the serving arrangements and from time to time was asked to act as Toastmaster. A bottle of fine port arrived at Mackenzie Road from the college each Christmas. Herbert occasionally looked into the buttery to chat with old colleagues. I remember his patience was somewhat strained when it was decided waiters serving in hall in the evenings should wear light coloured jackets rather than full evening dress! One hobby he had from college days was to review at regular intervals the careers of students that he had known. I came to appreciate this when as a cadet at Dartmouth one of my fellow cadets mentioned that his father had studied at Emmanuel. I passed this on to Herbert and virtually by return of post received a curriculum vita of the person concerned, which, on showing it to my friend, proved to be correct on all points! Time inevitably took its toll however and early in 1957 Herbert passed away. The College permitted his funeral to take place in the College Chapel and on the day a number of Fellows and students attended the funeral and lined the pathway across the Quad

when the coffin left the chapel, a gesture that was very much appreciated by the family. The Emmanuel College Magazine later in 1957 published the note shown as Figure 2.25:

Heather's predecessor, Page, who till very recently still came, and liked to come, to help us at Commemoration and other special occasions, had retired from full-time service in September 1945. His long connexion with the College formed a link with a less crowded, less hurried, academic world that already seems almost fictionally remote. To many visitors to the College, especially from overseas, his dignified figure was the personification of an older tradition of England. Emmanuel men will learn with regret that Page died early this year.

Fig 2.25 Note appearing in the Emmanuel College Magazine in 1957 informing its readers of the death of Herbert. (*I am afraid from a 2010 perspective university life in the 1950's now also belongs to 'a less crowded, less hurried academic world that already seems fictionally remote'*)!

Not a lot has been said in this chapter about Herbert's wife Emma. This in part is due to the fact that much of her life is described in Chapter 3 that deals with her family line, the Goodsons. She had a very strong personality and her sense of drive played a very important role in Herbert's career. As a couple they worked as a team and especially in their old age there was a strong bond between them. I count it as a privilege that I was able to spend an important part of my childhood in their house. Emma died only six months after Herbert. They are both buried in the Mill Road Cemetery, only a short distance from Mackenzie Road, and in the same grave as Kenneth Herbert Page, their son who had died in 1910.

From my personal angle this is not quite the end of the story. In 1962 I left the navy (*I had by this time become a Lieutenant*). I decided that I wanted to become a schoolteacher and thus wished to enter university. I contacted Mr Edward Welbourne, then Master of Emmanuel, as I appreciated that he had known Herbert very well and thus might be prepared to advise me. This was a good move and a series of letters were exchanged, one in particular being of substantial length. With hindsight I am amazed how much time a man of his position was prepared to give me, a person who had really no other connection with Emmanuel apart from being the grandson of a past college servant. Thanks to his advice I turned to the Scottish Universities (*He had encouraged me to do this as it would give me a year to get back into studies, the first year of the Scottish four year degree course at that time being more akin to GCE A levels*) and I stayed in academia thereafter until I retired as a Senior Lecturer at Aberdeen University in 2002. I thus in 1962, some five years after his death, benefited from Herbert's standing at Emmanuel.



Fig 2.26 Herbert in Emmanuel Quadrangle with the College Chapel in the rear of the frame. Picture taken in 1955.