

# Percy Rawlins of Earl Street



Percy Rawlins on the Student Union's Committee at Leeds University [Private collection 1905]

Percy James Rawlins was born in Hanford in 1884. His father Alfred was a farmer and lived at The Red House, 123 High [Mayne] Street. He obtained a BSc in Pure Maths, Physics and Chemistry at Victoria University Manchester in 1904 and a Bachelor of Education in Magnetism and Electricity at Leeds University in 1906.

He went on to teach at St James Boys' School, Longton from 1906 until 1912. He married Victoria Millicent Place, a teacher, in Halifax on 29 December 1908. They had two sons and two daughters. One daughter, Freda, was lost at sea while working for the Women's Transport Service on 25 October 1945.

In 1911 they were living at 9 Earls Street, Hem Heath. During the war, at the suggestion of his brother Sidney, Percy became an aero engine tester and dispatcher at the Royal Aircraft Factory in Farnborough.

He returned to the area and taught science at Harpfields School in Stoke until he retired in 1942.

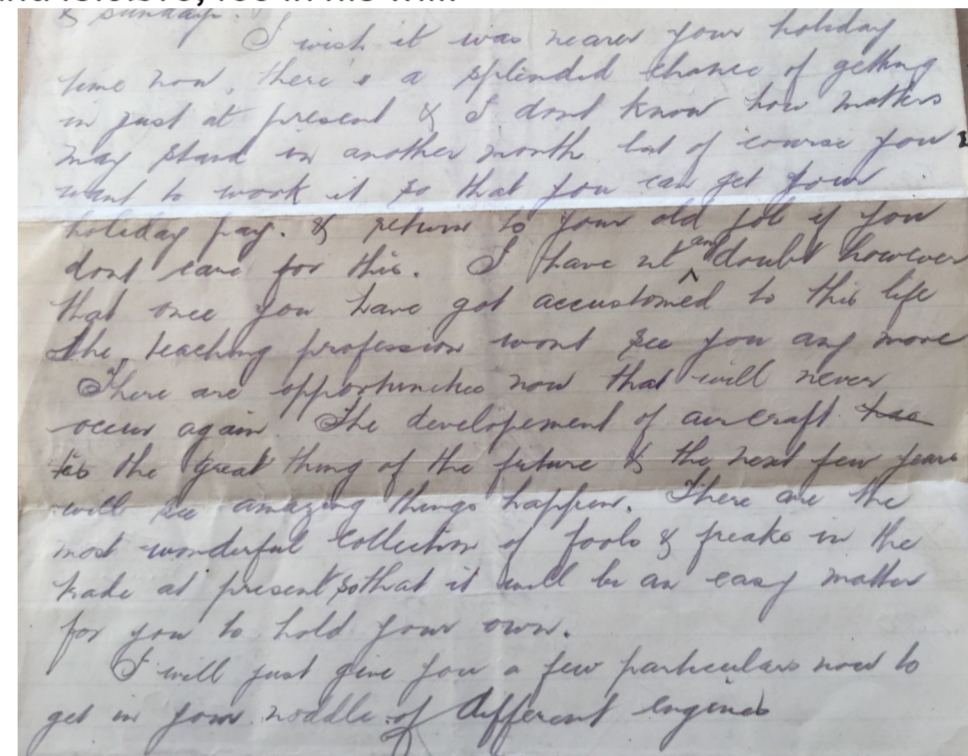
When his father died, Percy moved into the Red House in Hanford. He was always a keen gardener and maintained an allotment and greenhouse across the road from his house. He acted as Secretary for the Hanford Allotments' Society for many years.

Alfred Rawlins, Percy's father, had bought a number of properties in the 1919 auction of Trentham Estates and leased them to tenants. Weekly collections of rents for 12 properties remained an ongoing commitment for Percy.

Percy died on 28 October 1964 at the age of 80 and left £16,463 in his will.

Part of a letter from Sydney to Percy in 1915 urging him to move to Farnborough.

*"...There are opportunities now that will never occur again. The development of aircraft is the great thing of the future. And the next few years will see amazing things happen. There are the most wonderful collection of fools and freaks in the trade at the moment and it will be an easy matter for you to fit in..."*



Percy Rawlins and his son Eric at the Hanford allotments. [ Private collection]



R.E.5—British two seat reconnaissance and artillery observation biplane built by Royal Aircraft Factory for the Royal Flying Corps [photo Wikimedia creative commons]

A page from Percy's engine testing book 1915.

At that time the engines under test at Farnborough were mainly Renault and Wolseley Hispano-Suiza.

