Henry Smithson





Rank: - S/Sgt

Number: - 401499

Regiment: - Royal Army Medical Corps Territorial Force 1st West Riding Field Ambulance

Died: - 7th November 1918 Rochester Road (London) Military Hospital aged 37

Cemetery: - Garforth Cemetery D. 101



Batley Reporter, 7 Nov 1919 (classifieds)

Researched by members of Batley History Group

Family Details

Henry was born in Dewsbury in 1881 the son of George and Hannah Maria Smithson (nee Dyson).

John Edward was born in 1883 followed by George in 1885, Ned 1889 and Sarah in 1891. The family in 1891 was living at 28, Quarry Road, Staincliffe when George was working as a cloth miller.

Before 1901 the family with the addition of Martha (1896) was living at 78, Upper Road, Batley Carr and George had become a cloth fuller and Henry and George were also working in woollen mills.

His father died in 1903 and the 1911 census shows there were another four children who had died in infancy and his mother was a certified midwife living at Machell's Buildings, Upper Road, and Batley Carr.

Henry married Alice Ada Blakeley at St. Matthew's, West Town, and Dewsbury on 21st December 1901. They had five children, Albert (1903), Mabel (1905-05), Eva (1907-08) and Norman 1909 plus one other and by 1911 Henry was working as a district manager for an insurance company. Henry was one of Dewsbury's best known and longest serving ambulance workers.

In around 1913 he moved with his family to Garforth where he obtained a position in the office of the Garforth Colliery and also worked as an ambulance instructor at the colliery. Alice Ada died in 1917 and is buried at Garforth Cemetery.

Service Details

He enlisted in August 1914 and after a brief spell at home he sailed for Salonika but contracted fever and went into hospital. He returned to England but was paralysed and remained in bed for 2 years and 6 months. His mother and sister, Mrs Sarah Blezzard, went to London to be with him. His body was brought to Batley Carr before being taken to Garforth to be buried with his wife. He left three children orphaned.

Henry is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr and Dewsbury War Memorial. There is a note dated 8th June 1922 that the authorities should dispose of any medals.