

Brattleby's War Memorial & Churchyard

There a Link to the War memorial website attached to the bottom of this page.

WE ARE COLLECTING STORIES ON THOSE LISTED:

William Henry Simons

There are few places left in today's "hustle bustle" world that can offer us a few precious moments of solitude. A place to stand and stare as we attempt to put our daily problems into perspective. Yet, surprisingly most villages have one, the local churchyard. Even if it happens to be unfamiliar, reading a few headstones may provide us with that much needed dose of reality. Just how did Elsie Smith come to terms with the loss of the three children under 10, followed several years later by the loss of her husband in the great war, leaving her to raise the three remaining children alone? It makes the letter little Johnnie brought home from school yesterday, reporting an outbreak of head lice seem quite trivial. In another era it could have been a letter similar to the one received by Mr. & Mrs. Simons in the autumn of 1918, with news from their son William, the first line of which reads "We regret to inform you".

William Simons, the son of Charles and Harriet Simons was brought up with his four brothers and three sisters in a "two up and two down cottage" in the village of Brattleby. The bedroom ceilings were so low, they were unable to stand upright.

Like many other young men of the time he joined up for the fight for king and country, seduced by the prospect of a few months adventure in a foreign land, no doubt believing –as many did– "it'll all be over by Christmas". Unfortunately this statement proved to be widely optimistic, with the dreadful carnage raging on for a further three years, ending on the 11th of November 1918. William wrote the following letter to his sister on 14th August 1918.

Dear Sister, Just a line hoping to find you both quite well as it leaves me at present. You will think I have forgotten you but it is such a job to get paper where we are now. You will know I am not with the battalion and my proper address is B Company 1st Lincolns attached to 175 Tunnelling Company B E F France.

I have got not yet got the parcel you sent I may do yet as it would go to the battalion and it might have got lost but I have got your other letters alright we are having a good time here and having some beautiful weather. I think the news is better and I don't think it will be long before it is over. I wish I was back at the old job again now it would be a change. I like this job better than the other and I can get on with it well I must now conclude hoping to hear from you again soon. With best love to you both

your loving brother William.

Tragically William was killed in October, and whether he received his parcel or not we shall never know.

His parents outlived him by almost 40 years oddly both dying on the 27th November 1947 within 30 minutes of each other in different hospitals. This story came to light during the restoration of the Brattleby War Memorial. Now after many years the once illegible names can now be seen again. One can't help but think of those immortal words by John Maxwell Evans "When you go home tell them of us and say, for their tomorrow we gave our today".

Acknowledgement My thanks to Mrs. R. Allen of Helmswell for the loan of the photographs, and her kind donation to the Brattleby War Memorial Fund.

Author: Mike Spencer

Selena Mary Burr

We are currently trying to find more information on this lady. The story so far is that she might have been a nurse on one of the navy vessels. If you can help us with references please do.