

MARKET RASEN

GATEWAY TO THE WOLDS

RASEN AT WAR

John George Brown

Jack, whose full name was John George Brown, was born in Waltham in 1879. He trained as a monumental mason in Grimsby then moved to Market Rasen to work for Scupham and Sons. He married Fanny Beeson in 1899. They had a son and three daughters and lived in Prospect Place.

In November 1916, two years into the war, Jack was conscripted into the army. After training, he was sent to France early in 1917 with the 2/5th Battalion of The Territorial Force of Lincolnshire Regiment. His unit saw front line action south of the Somme near Estrees and fought the retreating Germans to the Hindenburg Line.

Jack was captured in April 1917 then spent nineteen months as a prisoner of war. He experienced harsh treatment and lack of food and was moved from place to place to work for his captors. At his last camp at Oplanden on the River Rhine, he must have found comfort when he was able to work at his trade as a mason once more.

When the war ended, Jack was the first repatriated Prisoner of War from Market Rasen to arrive home safely. When the Armistice was declared, he was first sent from Germany to Holland, then on the long sea trip home from Rotterdam to Hull and eventually back to his former life as a mason working for Scupham and Son.

When Scupham's was contracted to make the Market Rasen town war memorial, Jack had the task of carving the names on it. How hard it must have been for him, to mark those names. Many of young men he would have known in Rasen and perhaps shared a drink with in a pub. Men he would never see again.

The memorial was unveiled in June 1922. The Market Rasen Mail reported the occasion:

'An exceptionally large assemblage foregathered on Sunday afternoon for the unveiling and dedication of the memorial cross which has been erected by the people of Market Rasen to perpetuate the memory of those of its sons who fell in the Great War. The cross is of Sicilian marble, 14ft in height, with two bases, the bottom base being of Yorkstone. On the front of the cross is a large bronze sword, whilst on the front of the die is an inscription and on each side are the names of the fallen, seventy-five in number.... The names and inscription are sunk into the marble with lead and

this work has been done by Mr J Brown (one of the employees of Scupham and Son who have erected the monument), who was a prisoner of war in Germany. Jack Brown died of tuberculosis in 1931 at the age of 53'.

The Canty Family

Some families saw several sons go to war. The Cantys had a military background. Father William, a former Royal Engineer, worked as a joiner in Rasen but enlisted in the Lincolnshire Regiment at the age of 54 and served four years through the war. His eldest son Bertram and second son George both served in the Army and returned home safely. Third son Horatio enlisted and was sent to France in June 1918. He was killed in action on 4th November 1918, just days before the war ended and is buried at Wargnies-le-Grand, in Northern France. The youngest of the Canty sons, Arthur, was just eighteen when he joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1916. The eldest of the Canty children, Constance, trained to be a nurse and went to serve in India where she was a sister at the Mayo Hospital in Lahore in 1917.

The Cressy Brothers

Two generations of local brothers also served in the Great War. Only three of the men survived and it is suspected that two of them lied about their ages in order to join up. Brothers Joseph and Charles Cressy enlisted in the 4th Lincolnshire Regiment, Joseph lying about his age saying he was 38 when he was 48. Both Joseph senior's sons, George and Joseph, joined up. George enlisted on 5th August 1914, the day after war was declared, and survived the war. Joseph enlisted in the 10th Lincolnshire Grimsby Chums. On 1st July 1916 his battalion went "over the top" on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. On that day the British Army suffered nearly 60,000 casualties of which nearly 20,000 were killed. Joseph was one of those who died. Five other Market Rasen men also died that day and another died a few days later of wounds sustained on that first day.



JOHN GEORGE BROWN



ARTHUR CANTY IN UNIFORM



JOHN GEORGE BROWN



RASEN AT WAR

The West Brothers

Seven of the eight West brothers served in the war. Two of them were killed. Henry Willis West was one of the first Market Rasen men to be killed in the War. He died on the 25th October 1914. The Market Rasen Mail of the 12th December reported: "Considerable sympathy is felt for the Misses Rushton of Oxford St in the great loss they have sustained by the death of their nephew Private Henry Willis West of the Coldstream Guards who was killed in action with the Expeditionary Force...They have received letters of sympathy from Lord Kitchener and the Commanding Officer of the Regiment. The deceased was a fine, steady young fellow who has died a hero's death fighting for his country against a ruthless enemy...." Henry is remembered on the Menin Gate at Ypres in Belgium.

Edward West enlisted on 11th December 1915. He trained as a gunner with the 24th Seige Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery and survived the war until 1918 when on 27th September he was killed. Edward is buried at Vaclencourt British Cemetery, Maiseemy, Aisne I.A.17.

John West joined the Royal Navy in 1911 and was a member of the crew of the battle cruiser HMS Princess Royal throughout the War. John saw much action on this ship being involved in the battles at Heligoland Bight (1914), Dogger Bank (1915) and, on 31st May and 1st June 1916, in the major battle at Jutland. In that battle the Princess Royal took nine direct hits which killed 22 and injured 81 of the crew but the ship remained operational. John was lucky to survive the battle and in July was on leave in Market Rasen where he featured in a report in the Market Rasen Mail.

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Sources

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Let Us Sleep Now...

The Market Rasen Men Who Died in the Great War & Their Memorials by Douglas G Boyle

Kelly's Directories



STOKER JOHN WEST



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TED BROWN AND HIS SON COLIN

