



## George Sykes 1889-1918

George was born in Earlsheaton in 1889. His father was Ned Sykes, a woollen cloth fuller born in Chickenley in 1864 and died in 1920. His mother was Maria Edith (nee Buckley) born in Earlsheaton in 1868 and died in 1949. They were married in 1886.

Their other children were; Nancy, born in 1886, Edmund, born in 1891 and served in World War 1, Lionel, born in 1893 and died in 1894, Leonard, born in 1895 and served in World War 1, Edith, born in 1897, Florence, born in 1900, Amy, born in 1902, Herbert, born in 1904, Norah, born in 1908 and died in 1908 and Maurice, born in 1909.

On the 1891 and 1901 Census Records the family lived at Sands Road, Earlsheaton and in 1911 at Cliffe House, Earlsheaton.

George was educated at Earlsheaton Church of England School and attended Highfield Congregational Church and Sunday school and was a member of Highfield Institute. He was employed as a Percher for Messrs Wormalds and Walker Limited, Britannia Mills, Dewsbury and was married in 1914 to Ethel Birnie (born in 1891 and died in 1970). They lived at 14, Trinity Place, Ashworth Road, Dewsbury, the house of his wife's mother and had three children; David Birnie, born in 1914, Dora, born in 1916 and Marjorie, born in October 1918, less than four months after George's death.

He enlisted in September 1916 at Dewsbury serving as Private 39696 in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front in January 1917. He was home on leave in January 1918 but suffered a gunshot wound to the back on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1918 at Epehy in France during the Second Day of the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*), resulting in the loss of use in his legs which meant he could not get away and had to be left behind on the battlefield. He was carried away by a party of Germans, being moved to three or four different places until finally being taken to '*a proper hospital with a nice comfortable bed*'. This information was in a letter he wrote to his wife, which she received on 26<sup>th</sup> May after an interval of ten weeks during which there had been no news. He said he was being well cared for as a Prisoner of War, but due to his injuries he had to lie on his back all the time; he expected to recover in time as his condition was '*nothing serious*'. Records held by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva show that he was held in Poland in a POW camp at Skalmierschütz, 106 kms south-east of Poznań (Posen) which at that time was part of the Prussian Empire. It was a very large camp for Russians and Romanians to which British and American prisoners were sent in early 1918. Sadly, his spinal cord had been badly injured and he died on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1918. He was buried in Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery, Poland. George was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The city of Poznań is located in the west of Poland approx 320kms east of Berlin. There are now 174 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the Cemetery.

George is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton and on the Memorial Plaque from the now demolished Earlsheaton Highfield Congregational Church relocated to Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury.

In Memory of

Private

## George Sykes

39696, 9th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 26 June 1918 Age 28

Son of Ned and Maria Edith Sykes; husband of Ethel Sykes, of 14, Trinity Place, Ashworth Rd., Dewsbury.  
Born at Earlsheaton.

Remembered with Honour

Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

