



Robert Max Skelsey

1886-1918

Robert (known to his family as Max) was born in Berlin, Germany on 21st February 1886 and baptised at Hick Lane Chapel, Batley on 10th November 1886. His father was Walter Skelsey, a Woollen Manufacturer and sometime Cement Factory Manager born in Toronto, Canada around 1855 and died in 1927. His mother was Amy (nee Hall) born in Batley in 1855 and died in 1932. They were married in Dewsbury in 1878.

Their other children were; John Clifford, born in Batley in 1880, Frederick Walter, born in Batley in 1882, Hilda, born in Berlin in 1883 and Harold, born in Batley in 1891 and served in World War 1.

On the 1891 Census the family were living at “Langholme” Bilton, Harrogate, in 1901 at Hull Road, Cottingham, Yorkshire and in 1911 at Shaftesbury House, Batley, and later at “High Croft” Dewsbury and then 22A, Duchy Road, Harrogate.

Max was educated at Batley Grammar School and Hymer’s College Hull. He worked as a salesman in his father’s business at Cox Brothers and Skelsey, Woollen Manufacturers. He was married at Cottingham in 1913 to Mary Rutherford Pearson (born in Edinburgh in 1877 and died in 1949) who in 1911 was a Nurse at Seacroft Hospital in Leeds. They had a son, Walter, born in 1914 and later served as a Major in his father’s regiment in World War 2.

He joined the 4th Battalion Duke of Wellington’s Regiment from the Leeds University Officer Cadet Corps as a 2nd Lieutenant on 11th June 1915 and was sent to the Western Front on 22nd September 1916; he was injured in November 1916 when a pick-axe he was using went through his foot. He returned home to recuperate and did not return to the front until May 1917 when he was seconded to the 186th Trench Mortar Battery of his Regiment as a 1st Lieutenant. He was killed in action near Fampoux, France on 29th March 1918 during the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*). His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial to the Missing. Max was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Arras Memorial commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7th August 1918, the eve of the Advance to Victory, and have no known grave. The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April-May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918.

Robert Max is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and as *M Skelsey* on the War Memorial on the outside wall of the Dewsbury Centenary Wesleyan Church at the top of Daisy Hill and on the Memorial to former pupils of Hymer’s College, Hull and on the Memorial to former pupils of Batley Grammar School.

In Memory of

Lieutenant

Robert Max Skelsey

4th Bn. att'd. 186th T.M. Bty., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 29 March 1918 Age 32

Son of Walter and Amy Skelsey, of 22A, Duchy Rd., Harrogate; husband of Mary Rutherford Skelsey, of 5, Duchy Rd., Harrogate, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Arras Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

