



## **Harold Vivian Hickling 1891-1919**

Vivian, as he was known, was born in Ravensthorpe on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1891 and was baptised at St. Saviour's Church, Ravensthorpe on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1891. His father was William Hickling, a Butcher and Beer Seller born in Thornhill in 1850 and died in 1898. His mother was Alice (nee Jackson) born in Mirfield in 1850 and died in 1924. They were married at St. Saviour's Church on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1874.

Their other children were; Tom Jackson, born in 1875 and died in 1876, Harry, born in 1876 and died in 1878, Beatrice Alice, born in 1878, Tom Harry, born in 1879, Maud Eliza, born in 1881 and died in 1884, Stanley Gathorne, born in 1882, Unnamed male child, born in 1885 and died in 1885, Blanche Hilda, born in 1887, Unnamed male child, born in 1888 and died in 1888 and twins Annie and Edgar, born in 1890 and both died in 1890.

They lived at their business premises at 222, Huddersfield Road, Ravensthorpe; Alice ran the business until her death when it was taken over by her son Tom Harry. Her address in 1919 was "St. Tudnos" 719, Huddersfield Road, Ravensthorpe.

Vivian was a single man who was educated at Ravensthorpe Church School and Wheelwright Grammar School; having developed a natural talent for drawing, he was apprenticed to a firm of Lithographers, Messrs Taylor Brothers of Leeds. He later moved to work in Skegness, Lincolnshire.

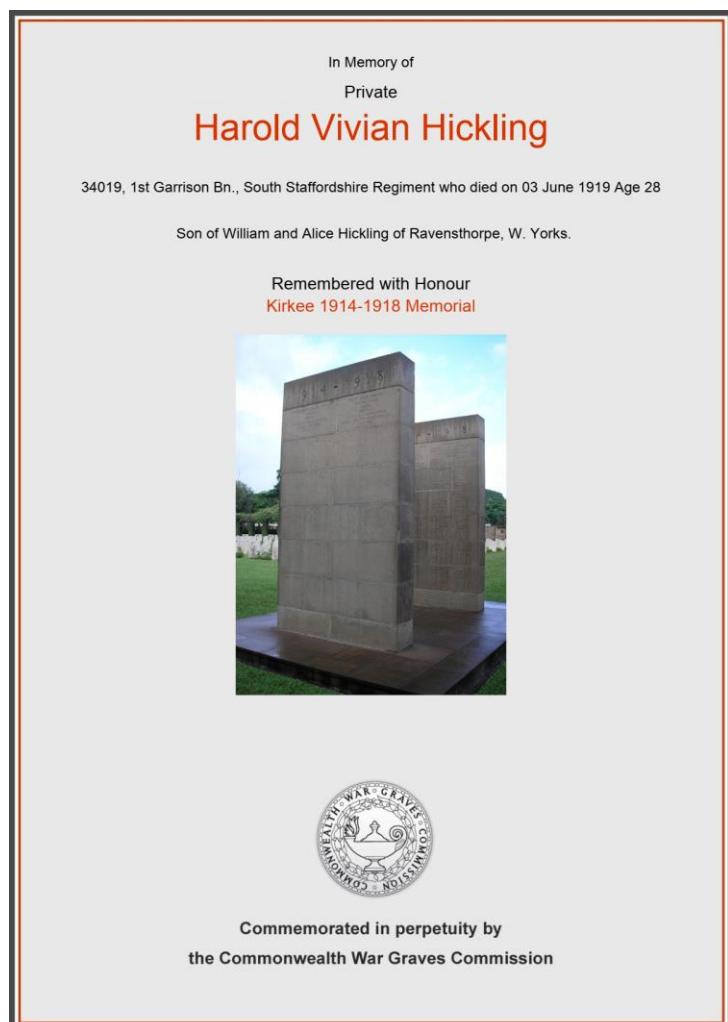
He enlisted in September 1914 serving in the Lincolnshire Regiment as Private 584 in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion (the Grimsby Chums) and was sent to the Western Front in January 1916. A month later he was badly gassed in France near Bois-Grenier and was hospitalised on the Channel Coast at Wimereux for over six months before recovery. He was subjected to a thorough medical examination which found that he was unfit for further service at the front and was transferred to "A" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Garrison Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment serving as Private 34019. He spent time at home on leave and in March 1917 departed for India, via Sierra Leone, Cape Town and Durban, arriving at Bombay sometime in May. During the two years he spent there, he contracted dysentery, typhoid fever and in December 1918, influenza from which he thankfully recovered. In May 1919 he wrote a letter to his mother saying he was "*in good spirits*" and was stationed at Colaba, a district of Bombay. He was a Drummer in the Regimental Band and also played other instruments. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1919 he was on the jetty at Pilot Bunder near Colaba when a huge wave swept him into the water, a boat was launched to try to save him but being a non-swimmer, he had drowned before it reached him. He was buried in Bombay (Sewri) Cemetery. Vivian was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Vivian 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 Ravensthorpe War Memorial in St. Saviour's Church. He was not named on the Wheelwright Grammar School Roll of Honour Memorial Plaque which was inaugurated in 1922, the reason for this omission is not known. The Memorial is now displayed in Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury after a fire severely damaged the Grammar School on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024. A newly created addenda panel now features Vivian's name.

In November 2024 Dewsbury Sacrifices made contact with members of Vivian's family and were able to view his many paintings, sketches and letters home in addition to photographs of his time in India and poignantly, a photograph of his original headstone.

In 1962 his remains were reburied with 628 other First World War casualties in Kirkee War Cemetery, some 73 miles to the south-east from Bombay (now Mumbai). Kirkee, also known as Khadki, is a Military Cantonment adjoining the large university town of Poona on the Plateau above Bombay.

The Cemetery was created to receive Second World War graves from the western and central parts of India where their permanent maintenance could not be assured. In addition, in 1962 the graves of 629 First World War servicemen were brought to the cemetery from Bombay (Sewri) Cemetery and reburied in the grassed area between the Memorial and the Cross of Sacrifice. They are commemorated by name on the Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial which stands within the cemetery and was built to commemorate over 1800 servicemen and women who died in India during the First World War, and who were buried in civil and cantonment cemeteries in India and Pakistan whose graves were considered to be unmaintainable after India gained its independence in 1947. For several years now, the CWGC has been working to reinstate the original graves of a large number of these individuals and the official commemoration of over 1000 individuals have been reverted back to their original burial location. However, their names will remain on the Memorial for the foreseeable future. There are now 708 casualties commemorated in the records of the Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial.



Headstone photograph by courtesy of the Hickling family.