

George Buck Holliday (1885 – 1982)

George Holliday's early life is something of a mystery. Although he stated, in later life, that his father was a greengrocer, there is no concrete evidence of this being the case. His mother Ellen Kinghorn Holliday, who worked as a hotel maid in the Harrogate area, had three children – including George – whose fathers were not named on their birth or baptismal certificates. She died when George was 17, after marrying and living in Keighley – leaving George with a sister, a half-brother, and several step-siblings.

When George's connection with Farnhill began is not clear but he was involved with the Methodist Chapel and married local girl Anne Kitson there in 1911.



Photograph from the archive of Farnhill & Kildwick Local History Group

George appears to have served with the Lincolnshire Regiment and with the Labour Corps. At some point he was hospitalised, in Liverpool, with shell shock.

At the cessation of hostilities, the Hollidays continued to live in Farnhill and George resumed his occupation as a milkman. His post-war activities included being involved at the chapel and with the Ex Soldiers' and Sailors' Smallholders' Association. He also took part in many local amateur dramatic productions.

He became caretaker of Kildwick School and vergers at St Andrew's Church, and less than a year after the death of his wife he married again. He and his second wife lived for a time in York before moving back to the Kildwick and Farnhill area. She died in 1963 and George would eventually go to live with friends in Crosshills where he died, aged 96, in 1982. At that time he was said to be the oldest man living in the Glusburn and Crosshills area.

Pre-war life

George Buck Holliday was born in the Union Workhouse, in Knaresborough, on 10th October 1885. He was the son of Ellen Holliday, a domestic servant, and an unknown father, who may have had the surname Buck.

REGISTRATION DISTRICT				KNARESBROUGH						
1885 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Knaresborough				in the County of York						
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
417	10th October, 1885 Union Workhouse Knaresboro U.D.	George Buck.	Boy.		Ellen Holliday a Domestic Servant of Harrogate		Ellen Holliday Mother Union Workhouse Knaresborough	Thirty first October 1885	William Parr Registrar	

George Holliday's birth certificate
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Note: George may have been the second child born to these parents. In 1884, the birth of Emily Buck Holliday was registered in the Knaresborough area. Nothing further is known.

Ellen was the daughter of Joseph and Mary Holliday (nee Kinghorn). Exactly when and where she was born is uncertain, although census returns suggest it was somewhere in the Harrogate area in 1860. The same returns also indicate that from at least 1881 Ellen was working as a hotel maid.

By the time of the 1891 census, Ellen – who by this time was calling herself Ellen Kinghorn Holliday – was living and working at the Wellington Hotel, in Harrogate.



Wellington Hotel, Harrogate, c. 1900
Copyright The Francis Frith Collection – www.francisfrith.com

George was not living with her. He was recorded, aged 5, living as a boarder at 4 Skipton Road, Harrogate. He does not appear to have been related to any of the other members of this household.

Note: By this time Ellen had had another child. The birth and subsequent baptism of Arthur Holliday, mother Ellen Kinghorn Holliday, father not recorded, appears in the register of Christ Church, Harrogate. Nothing further is known.

1890 Nov. 2 nd Born At: 21 st No. 330	Arthur	Ellen Kinghorn	Holliday	3 Montpellier Terrace	Spensley	Witful (Walter)
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In 1891, 3 Montpellier Terrace, Harrogate, was the home of Ellen's mother and sisters.

On 18th March 1895, Ellen Kinghorn Holliday, aged 35 (Spinster), married Benjamin Proctor, aged 39 (Widower), in Keighley Parish Church. He was a blacksmith; she was a domestic servant. The marriage certificate indicates her uncertainty about her name. She signed it Ellen Holliday and then inserted the middle name Kinghorn.

In the 1901 census, the Proctor family were recorded living at 22 Edensor Road, Keighley. George was registered at the same address but was recorded as a "Visitor".

Civil Parish of Keighley	Ecclsiastical Parish of Keighley & Andrews	County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District of Keighley	Ward of Municipal Borough or Urban District of Keighley	Rural District of	Parliamentary Borough or Division of Keighley	Town or Village
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Uninhabited In In In	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
22 do	1	Benjamin Proctor	Head	39	Blacksmith	do do
		Ellen do	Wife	35	do	do Harrogate
		Joseph do	Son	19	Blacksmith's Striker	do Keighley
		Elizabeth do	Daughter	12	Washed & Dressed	do do
		James do	Son	9	do	do do
		John do	Son	16	Washed & Dressed	do do
		George Holliday	Visitor	15	do	do Harrogate

Extract from the 1901 census return for Edensor Street, Keighley

Used under licence from the National Archive

Ellen Proctor, George's mother, died in October 1902 and was buried in Utley cemetery on the 18th.

Although it is unclear exactly when George Holliday moved to Farnhill, from 1909 he subscribed to a pew in the Methodist Chapel. On 7th February 1911, he married Anne Kitson at the chapel.

1911. Marriage solemnized at <u>Primitive Methodist Chapel, Farnhill</u> in the District of <u>Skipton</u> in the County of <u>York</u>							
Column.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.
87	19 th February	George Holliday	25 years	Bachelor	Truck Sawyer	5 Main Street Farnhill	George Holliday Deceased
		Anne Kitson	28 years	Spinster	Bottom weaver	9 South View Farnhill	Albert Green Kitson
Married in the <u>Primitive Methodist Chapel</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Primitive Methodists</u> by <u>Certificate</u> by me, <u>George Holliday</u> in the Presence of us, <u>John Briggs Muschamps</u> <u>James H. Muddleton</u> <u>Anne Kitson</u> <u>Edith Kitson</u> <u>M. L. Fleming-Registor</u>							

Holliday – Kitson marriage certificate

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George gave his address as 5 Main Street, Farnhill, and his profession as Milk Hawker – he may have been employed by Charles Smith, the Farnhill milk dealer (see later). Anne was the daughter of Albert Green Kitson, who ran a joinery shop in Main Street, Farnhill; she was also the younger sister of Herbert Kitson, who would subsequently become a Farnhill WW1 Volunteer.

Note: George recorded his father as being George Holliday (deceased), a Greengrocer. There is no evidence that this was the case. No father was mentioned on his birth certificate.

The couple set up home at 3 South View, Farnhill, close to Anne's family, who lived at number 9.

George Holliday in WW1

Uniquely among the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers, it appears that George Holliday served with the Lincolnshire Regiment.

His WW1 service records have not survived (70% of the records were destroyed during WW2, in the London blitz of 1940) but it has been possible to put together a partial account of his WW1 service from newspaper reports and other sources.

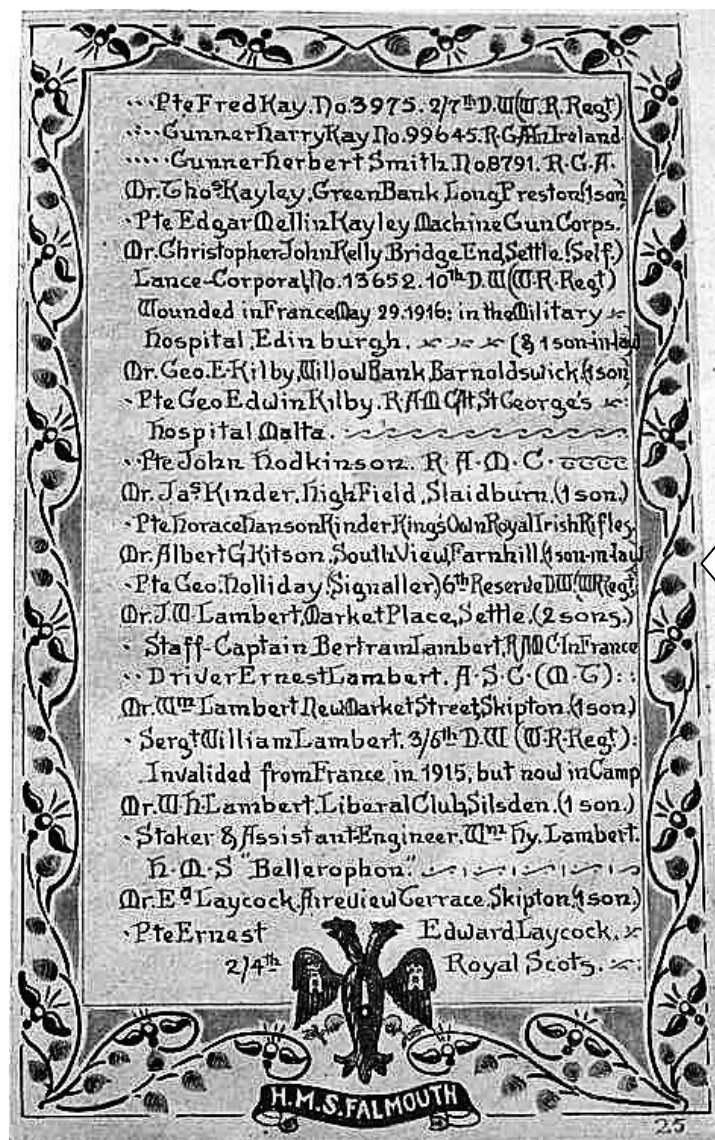
The earliest mention of him as a member of the armed forces comes from a newspaper report of November 1915, which described an event held at the Farnhill Institute to raise funds to provide "winter comforts for the lads serving with the Colours". The piece ends with a list of "The lads to be remembered", which includes G. Holliday. The assumption must be that George was already serving, either training in the UK or in the field, by this time.

George's name was recorded on Farnhill Methodist Chapel's Roll of Honour, unveiled on 9th July 1916, although the report gives his name as George Halliday.



The digitally-restored Farnhill Methodist Roll of Honour (1916)

George's name also appears on the Skipton Division Liberal and Conservative Associations (SDLCA) Roll of Honour, compiled on 4th August 1916, where he is described as the son-in-law of Albert Green Kitson, South View, Farnhill. This Roll provides the only information about which unit he served with, as he is recorded as being a member of 6th Reserve Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment.



Skipton Division Liberal and Conservative Associations WW1 Roll of Honour – page 26

From www.cpgw.org.uk

6th Reserve was a "holding unit" for men who volunteered to serve with the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment. Typically, George would have been transferred to one of the regiment's service battalions when he started his training however this appears not to have happened.

His WW1 medal card shows that he began his service as a Private with the Lincolnshire Regiment (service number 35046).

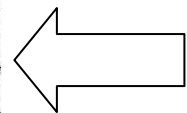
Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
HOLLIDAY.	Lincolnshire Regiment	Private	35046
George			27207
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	hc/101617	1702	
BRITISH	do	do	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K. 1380.

The only glimpse of George Holliday on active service comes in a report published in the West Yorkshire Pioneer in December 1917 (14/12/1917).

FARNHILL.

SOLDIER WOUNDED.—Mr. J. Greenwood, of Starkey Lane, Farnhill, has received news that her husband, Pte. Joe Greenwood, of the West Riding Regiment, has been wounded in the recent fighting. He was first operated on at the Australian General Hospital in France, and has since been moved to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. Pte. Greenwood has been some time in France. Before enlisting he worked for Mr. Wm. Sugden, coal merchant, Kildwick.—Pte. George Holliday, of Farnhill, who is in a hospital at Liverpool, suffering from shell shock, is progressing favourably.—Drivers Walter Hargreaves, R.F.A., and Robert H. Brown, R.F.A. are at present home on leave from France



News of George Holliday's hospitalisation
By kind permission of Craven Herald

It is possible that it was following this hospitalisation that George was transferred to the Labour Corps (Private, no. 27207). This unit was formed in January 1917, to provide the manpower required to build and maintain roads, railways, buildings, camps, etc. both in the UK and abroad. The Corps was manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated below the condition needed for front line service. Many were men who had been wounded.

George was discharged from the army on 5th October 1918. His entry on the WW1 medal roll shows that he was awarded a Victory medal and a British War Medal for his service.

LABOUR CORPS									
ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or B									
On 11/11/18 or on becoming non-effective		NAME		REGT. NO. AND RANK		Unit previously served with. Regt. No. and Rank in same on entry into theatre of war		SUB. TEMP. or ACTING. IN A THEATRE OF WAR.	
Regt. No.	Rank								
27206	Cpl.	HOLLAND, GEORGE WM		34996		Cpl.			
						Line. Regt.			
27207	Pte.	HOLLIDAY, GEORGE		35046		Pte.			
						Line. Regt.			

Detail from the medal roll of the Labour Corps, showing George Holliday's entry
Used under licence from the National Archive

The reason for his discharge is not known, however he was not awarded a Silver War Badge, which was usual for men who had been wounded.

George was awarded a WW1 pension, however in October 1920 it was judged that he had no grounds for any further payments.

Form No. S.B. 36

C.N.5.J 25222

Surname: HOLLIDAY Christian Names: George Regional No. 4/M H/ No. 5470

Unit and Regiment or Corps: Labour Regt. No. 27207 Rank Pte.

Date of Discharge: 5.10.18 Year of Birth: 1883 Marital Status: Single

Address: 14 Mary St. Farnhill Rillwink N. Leighton Date of commencement of Pension: 6.10.18

Disabilities: — State whether attributable to or aggravated by Service or non-attributable: —

1. 3. 1. 3.

2. 4. 2. 4.

Particulars of Awards for previous Service (if any):

AWARDS OF PENSION, GRATUITY OR WEEKLY ALLOWANCE.												
Date of Award or other Action	Degree of Disablement	Nature of Award			Weekly Rate				No. of Children under 16	Period of Award		REMARKS: Note—This column is to be used for explanatory remarks where necessary, e.g., that an award is made or revised under Article 9, or as the result of an appeal to the Tribunal, or for increase of Pension.
		Art. under which granted (and Warrant if necessary)	Whether Pension, Gratuity or Weekly Allowance	Whether Permanent, Conditional or Final	Man	Wife	Child	From		To		
14/10/20		No grounds for	further award									

Extracts from George Holliday's WW1 pension ledger (SB 36)
Used under licence from the National Archive

Post-war life

In the 1918 electoral roll for Farnhill, George Holliday was listed as an absent voter – presumably he was discharged too late to be registered. However, he was back in the village by the time the Autumn 1919 roll was compiled, living with his wife at 17 Mary Street. In 1920 the couple moved to 10 Hanover Street, Farnhill, but the 1921 census has them both living with Anne's mother at 9 South View; where George is recorded as working as an Iron Moulder for a company in Kildwick.

He subsequently resumed his occupation as village milkman and was photographed in this role, with Jenny, his assistant.



Photograph of George Holliday, with Jenny his assistant

From the Farnhill & Kildwick History Group archive – date of the original photograph not known

On 15th December 1920, George was a witness to the marriage of fellow Farnhill WW1 Volunteer Leo Spencer to Annie Smith, at St. Andrew's Church, Kildwick. Annie was the daughter of Charles Smith, a local milk dealer, who may have been George's employer.

On 2nd July 1921, George played the part of the Sheriff of Nottingham in a performance of "King of Sherwood", a popular 2-act comic operetta, at a garden party held at Kildwick Hall in aid of Kildwick and Farnhill Institute (reported in the Craven Herald, 8/7/1921).



Cast of King of Sherwood at Kildwick Hall – including George Holliday as the Sheriff of Nottingham
From the Farnhill & Kildwick Local History Group archive

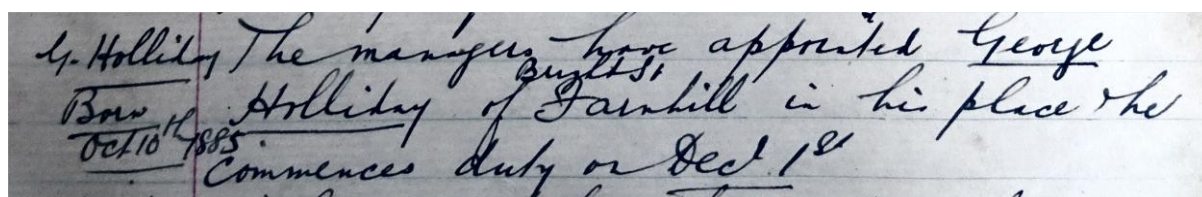
A little over a year later, in July 1922, the trustees of Farnhill Methodist Chapel asked George to investigate the possibility of the schoolroom being licensed for public performances. In September of the same year, George put forward proposals for altering the schoolroom to meet the requirements for a public performance licence. The outcome of these moves is not known, however it might be significant that from around this time the importance of the chapel as a venue for social events in the village began to wane, superseded by Kildwick and Farnhill Institute.

In October 1924, George was again "treading the boards", this time in the operetta "Dogs of Devon" staged, on four nights, at the Institute. He gained much praise for his performance in a report published by the Craven Herald (17/10/1924).

The part of Sir Francis Drake was admirably taken by Mr. Eric Green, whose singing and acting elicited much praise. As the Spanish Ambassador, Don Bernardino De Mendoza, Mr. G. Holliday excelled, portraying the Spanish grandee to perfection; while his two accomplices in crime, Sir Wilfrid Leigh (Mr. N. Green), and the Captain of the Guard (Mr. L. Mosley), assisted him in splendid fashion. Their trio, "Three bad men," was well received.

George Holiday in "Dogs of Devon"
By kind permission of Craven Herald

On December 1st 1925, George started work as caretaker at Kildwick School, where he stayed for exactly 8 years.

A handwritten note on lined paper, likely a log book entry. The text is written in cursive and reads: "Mr. Holliday, The manager, has appointed George [unclear] Holliday of Farnhill in his place & he commences duty on Dec 1st". There is a date "Oct 10th 1885" written on the left side of the note.

An extract from the log book of Kildwick School (November 1925)
By kind permission of Kildwick School

In the same month he also became vergers of St. Andrew's Church, Kildwick. This may have coincided with his leaving Farnhill Chapel, as he appears to have ceased being a member of the choir in 1925, and his wife gave up her subscription to one of the chapel's pews the following year. It is also the case that all of George's subsequent musical and dramatic performance were at Kildwick school and the Institute, rather than in Farnhill Methodist Church schoolroom.

One of George's first jobs as vergers must have been to oversee the completion of work on the new graveyard at Kildwick, across the canal from the church (Craven Herald 16/4/1926). He led the procession when the ground was consecrated, in June 1926 (Craven Herald 11/6/1926).

Note: One of the first burials to take place in the new graveyard was that of Thomas Appleby, for 26 years the headmaster of Kildwick school, who died on 24th June 1926.

In 1930, George and his wife, Anne, moved to 3 South View, Farnhill, which is where they were living when Anne died on March 11th 1933. Unsurprisingly, she was buried in the new Kildwick graveyard.

Before the end of the year, George had married again. His second marriage was to Gertrude Wood, of Farnhill, and took place in St. Andrew's Church, Kildwick.

1923		Marriage solemnized at <i>the Parish Church</i> in the Parish of <i>Kildwick</i> in the County of <i>York</i> .						
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
240.	30 th Dec: 1923.	<i>George Holliday</i>	48	<i>Widower.</i>	<i>Weaver</i>	<i>2, South View Farnhill.</i>	<i>George Holliday (decd)</i>	<i>Green - grocer.</i>
		<i>Gertrude Wood</i>	40	<i>Spinster</i>	—	<i>14, Mary St Farnhill.</i>	<i>Albert Wood (decd)</i>	<i>Assistant Encourager Superintendent</i>

Married in the *above Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Established Church* by *Licence* or after — by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *George Holliday* in the Presence of us, *Fredrick William Fell* *John Briggs Murochamp.* *M. T. Walsdon* Vicar.

Holliday – Wood marriage certificate
(c) Crown Copyright

Note: Once again, George recorded his father as being George Holliday (deceased), a greengrocer. Perhaps this is what he, himself, had been told ?

Gertrude was originally from Bradford but the family had moved to Farnhill in 1924.

The couple appear to have left the village almost immediately after the marriage and their whereabouts for a number of years are uncertain. However, they were recorded on the 1939 Register – created at the start of WW2 to enable ration cards to be issued – as living in York; with George recorded as being a grocer.

<i>Holliday George</i>	<i>M 10 Oct 85, M.</i>	<i>Grocer</i>
<i>Holliday Gertrude</i>	<i>F 21 Jan 93, M</i>	<i>Unpaid Domestic Duties</i>

Extract from the 1939 Register, for 133 Beckfield Lane, York
Used under licence from the National Archive

By 1947 they had returned to Farnhill, the electoral roll for that year recording them living at "Lyncliffe", Mary Street (probably the name given to number 11).

In 1957 they moved to Church Terrace, Kildwick, the small row of houses that back on to St. Andrew's churchyard, at the bottom of Priest Bank Road. This was where they were living when Gertrude died on 4th June 1963.

Quite unusually, she was buried in Kildwick new graveyard, in the same plot as George's first wife, Anne.

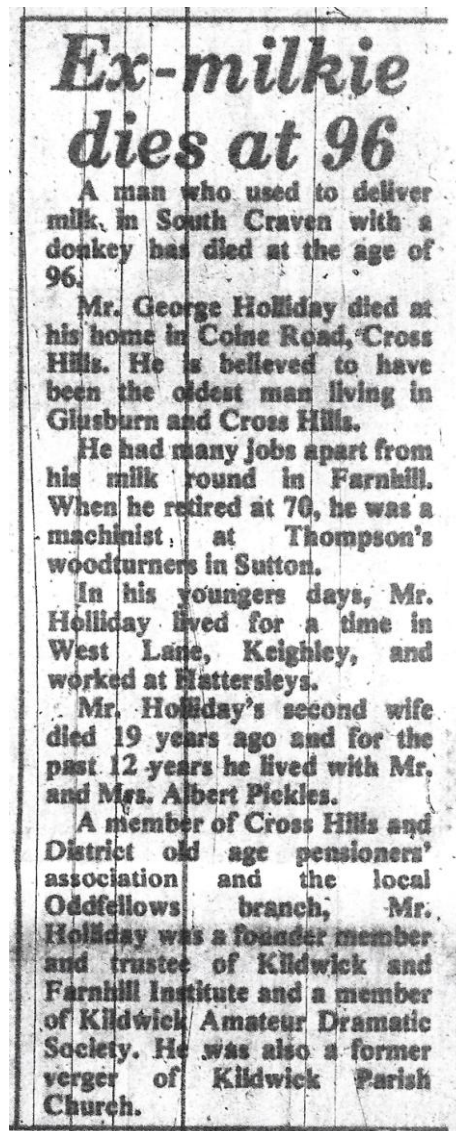


The gravestone of George Holliday's two wives – in Kildwick extension graveyard
Photograph courtesy of Keighley and District Digital Archive

George continued to live in Church Terrace until 1971 or 1972, when he moved out of the village to live with Albert and Elsie Pickles at 72 Colne Road, Crosshills.

Note: When George and Gertrude moved back to Farnhill in 1947, Elsie Richardson (as she was then) lived with them for a number of years. She married Albert Pickles, in York, in 1952 and then moved to Crosshills in 1954.

George Holliday died on 17th August 1982 at the age of 96. A few days later, the following obituary appeared in the Keighley News (27/8/1982).



George Holliday's obituary
By kind permission of Keighley News.

Postscript

George had no known children by either of his marriages and, although he had a sister, a half-brother, and a number of step-siblings, it is unlikely that any close descendants live in the local area.

George Holliday – a life in summary

Born: 10/10/1885, Union Workhouse, Knaresborough

Died: 17/08/1982 **Aged:** 96

Home address: 72 Colne Road, Crosshills

Parents

Father: Unknown.

Step-father (from 1895) was Benjamin Proctor; b. 1859, Keighley;
d. 1912, Keighley (Registration district)

Mother: Ellen Kinghorn Holliday; b. 1860, Kirk Hammerton; d. 1902; buried 18/10/1902, Utley

Married: 18/3/1895, Keighley (to Benjamin Proctor)

Siblings

Emily Buck Holliday; b. 1884, Knaresborough (Registration district);

m. John Briggs Muschamp, St. John's, Yeadon, 6/6/1908

Arthur Holliday; b. 21/10/1890, Harrogate (half-brother ?)

plus a number of step-siblings (from Benjamin Proctor's first marriage)

WW1 service

6th Reserve Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment. No further details known.

Relationship to other volunteers

Herbert Kitson – brother-in-law (1911). He was brother to George's first wife, Annie Kitson.

Marriage

Wife: (1) Anne Kitson; b. 1882, Farnhill; bapt. 21/05/1882, Farnhill Chapel; d. 11/3/1933, Farnhill
(2) Gertrude Wood; b. 1893, Bradford (Registration district); d. 4/6/1963, Farnhill

Date: (1) 7/2/1911, Farnhill Chapel – witnessed by Edith, Anne's sister
(2) 30/12/1933, St. Andrew's Kildwick

Children

None known, from either marriage.

