

## Herbert Kitson (1877 – 1937)

Herbert Kitson was the only boy in a family of four children. His father ran a joinery business in Farnhill, which did a lot of business in the local area. Herbert himself became a joiner's apprentice when he was 14 years old, probably working for his father.

Herbert married in 1899 and was very much involved in village life. He was on the committee of Kildwick and Farnhill Institute, secretary of the Farnhill Water Company, an active member of Farnhill Oddfellows, and was a trustee and choir member of the Methodist chapel.



Photograph courtesy of Helen Moran

Nothing really is known about his WW1 war service.

Herbert and his wife had a son and a daughter. He died in 1937, aged 59.

### Pre-war life

Herbert Kitson was born on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1877. He was the first child of Albert Green Kitson and Rachel (nee Law), both members of local families; they lived with Rachel's parents, in Kildwick.

Albert ran a Joinery business in Farnhill and, like many of the Kitson family, was a member of Farnhill Methodist Chapel. Herbert was baptised in the chapel on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1877.

**Note:** This will have been the chapel that preceded the building which closed in 2015. It was located further down Farnhill Main Street and has since been demolished.

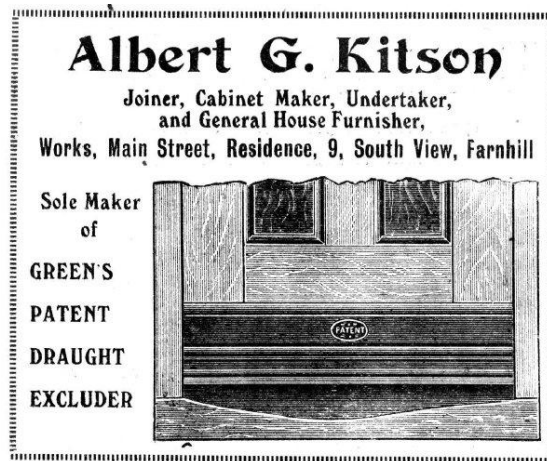


Scan of the baptismal register of Farnhill Primitive Methodist Chapel  
From the archive of the Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group

Three daughters, sisters to Herbert, were born over the next few years:

- Anne; b. 1882
- Jane; b. 1884 (d. 3/12/1888)
- Edith; b. 31/7/1890

By the time the 1891 census was taken Herbert was 14. He had finished school, and was recorded as being a "Joiner's Apprentice" – most likely in his father's business.



Albert Kitson's advertisement from Crosshills Almanac, 1918  
 Image courtesy of David Gulliver

Herbert's mother, Rachel, died in 1895 and 18 months later his father remarried to Elizabeth Pearson of Steeton. Presumably this must have been the time at which the family moved out of Rachel's parents' home; possibly first to Cross Street and then, by 1901 – but after Herbert married in 1899 – to 9 South View (the "Residence" address used by Albert Kitson on all his subsequent advertisements for his joinery business).

In 1897 Herbert was present at the opening of the new Farnhill Methodist Chapel, and was included in a group photograph taken on the steps.



Opening of Farnhill Methodist Chapel, 1897 (Herbert is at the back to the left of the door)  
 Photograph courtesy of Helen Moran

The chapel's financial accounts suggest that the Kitsons may have been involved in the construction of the building – carrying out the joinery work. It is certainly the case that they were contracted to carry out maintenance work on the building for a number of years after its completion; including the installation of a set of lobby doors in 1923, at a cost of £34-6s-4d

In 1899 Herbert married Sarah Peart in what must have been one of the new chapel's first wedding ceremonies.

1899. Marriage solemnized at <u>Primitive Methodist Chapel</u> in the <u>District</u> of <u>Skipton</u> in the County of <u>York</u> .								
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.
48	Twenty-second July 1899	Herbert Kitson Sarah Peart	22 23 years	Bachelor Spinster	Joiner Sawneyman Drawer in a Mill	Cross Street Farnhill Starkey Lane Farnhill	Albert Green Kitson John Peart	Joiner Limestone Quarryman
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.								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<u>Herbert Kitson</u> <u>Sarah Peart</u>	in the Presence of us,		<u>Robert Mosley</u> <u>Anne Kitson</u>	<u>William Curry, Minister</u> <u>M. L. Fleming, Registrar</u>		

Kitson – Peart marriage certificate  
(c) Crown Copyright

Sarah was born and lived her early life in Eston, near Middlesbrough. However, her mother and father were from Farnhill and Cononley respectively and by the time she was married, Sarah and her father were living in Starkey Lane (her mother had died in 1881).

The couple set up their home in Bright Street, Farnhill, which was where they were living when the census was taken in 1901.

Civil Parish of <u>Farnhill</u>	Ecclesiastical Parish of <u>Hildwick</u>	County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District of <u>Skipton</u>	Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District of <u>Skipton</u>	Rural District of <u>Skipton</u>	Parliamentary Borough or Division of <u>Skipton</u>	Town of <u>Skipton</u>									
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Uninhabited Inhabited Inhabited Inhabited	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN							
6 Bright St 1	1	Herbert Kitson Sarah Peart	Head Wife	24 25	Joiner Cabinetmaker Worker			Do Do Do Eston							

Extract from the 1901 census return for Farnhill  
Used under licence from the National Archive

They were at the same address in 1911, by which time they had two children: Clifford (b. 30/4/1902) and Evelyn (b. 26/4/1904). In 1914 the family moved to Mary Street.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.									
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.									
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, than the preparation of Statistical Tables.									
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.		BIRTHPLACE of every person.
1 Herbert Kitson	Head	34	Married	11	2	2	0	Joiner House 210 for Contractor	North 4 Yorkshire Hildwick
2 Sarah Kitson	Wife	35	Married						Yorkshire Eston
3 Clifford Kitson	Son	8						School	Yorkshire Farnhill
4 Evelyn Kitson	Daughter	6						School	Yorkshire Farnhill

Extract from the 1911 census return for 6 Bright Street, Farnhill  
Used under licence from the National Archive



**Note:** The “Particulars of Marriage” section records that the couple had been married for 11 years and had two children. Both of these children were living at the time of the census and no children born to the couple had died.

In 1910 Herbert was elected to the committee of the recently opened Kildwick and Farnhill Institute. A newspaper report also records that he was the secretary of Farnhill Water Company.

**Note:** The Water Company seems to have been something of a Kitson family business. In the same 1910 news report, Albert Kitson is listed as the company president. By 1931, Herbert’s role as secretary seems to have been taken over by another “H. Kitson” – his cousin Harry (as reported in the Craven Almanac for that year).

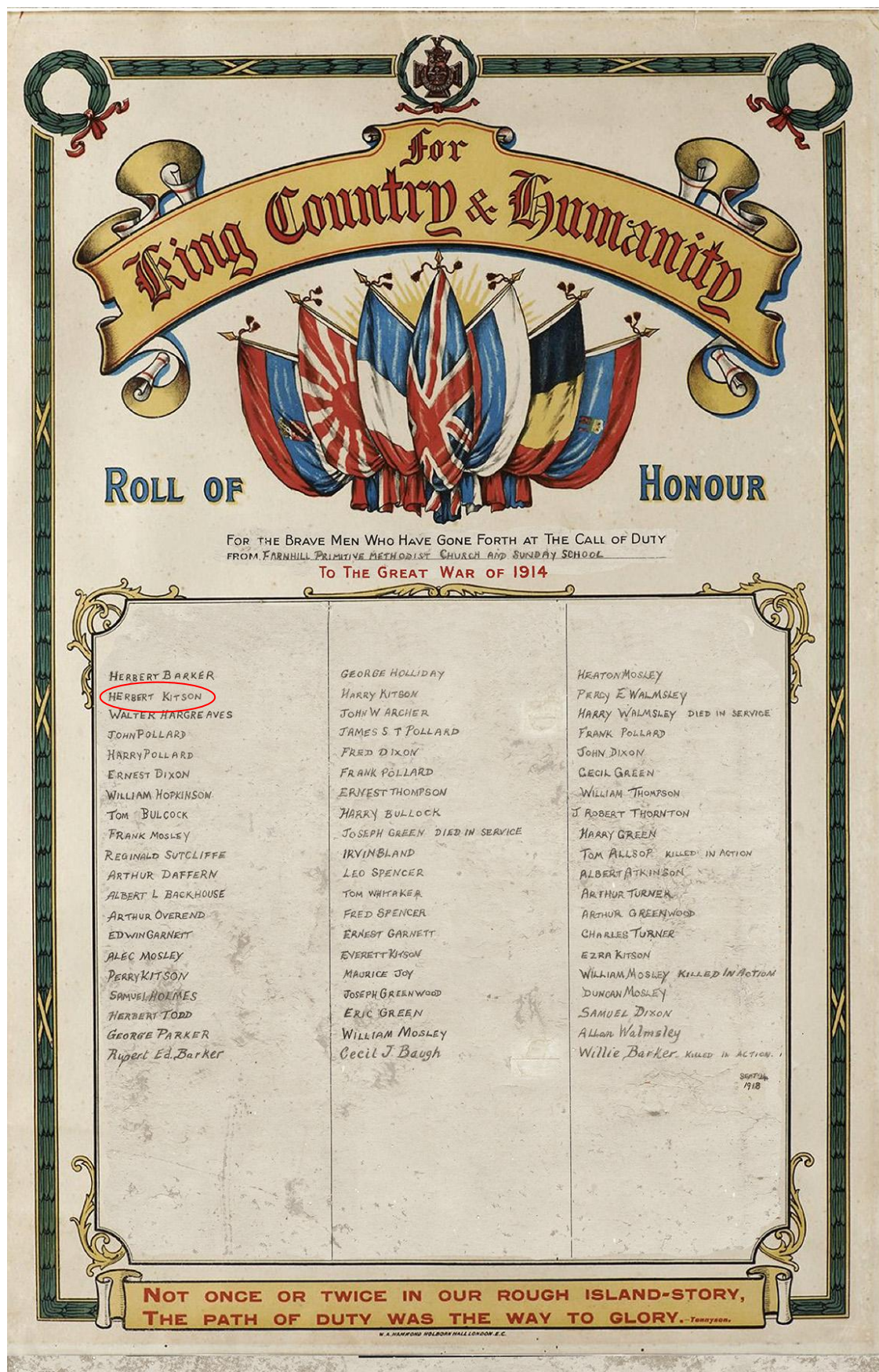
## Herbert Kitson during WW1

There is no doubt that Herbert Kitson volunteered to serve in WW1 – otherwise his name would not have been included in the Farnhill Parish Council Roll of Honour. However, it has not been possible to say definitively, one way or the other, whether he actually saw active service. The evidence against is as follows:

- There were no newspaper reports of him being wounded.
- There was no mention of any WW1 military service in his extensive obituary.
- Although there was at least one news report published during the war in which he was mentioned – when his sister Edith got married and he gave her away – it included no reference to his military service. There was no comment about him being home on leave, for example.

There are two pieces of information that suggest that Herbert did see active service.

- The 1918 electoral roll for Farnhill. This records him living at 4 Mary Street and eligible to vote because of his military or naval service.
- Herbert’s name was included on Farnhill Methodist Chapel’s Roll of Honour, unveiled on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1916.



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

## Post-war life

Albert Green Kitson died just two days before the Armistice, on November 9<sup>th</sup> 1918, leaving Herbert to carry on the joinery business. Earlier in the year Herbert had taken over his father's place as a Trustee of Farnhill Methodist Chapel and, from 1923, was listed as a member of the choir.

The 1921 census records Herbert living in Mary Street, with his wife and two children. He was employed as a "Joiner and Cabinet Maker", working from Main Street, Farnhill; he also employed his son, Clifford, as an apprentice.

In 1926 Kitson's Joinery, won the contract for the joinery work for new Co-op building in Farnhill Main Street.



From Keighley News, 20/3/1926  
With kind permission of Keighley News

In addition to his connection with the chapel, in the post-war period Herbert appears to have been an active member of the Farnhill Oddfellows and in 1928 and 1929 served on the organisation's committee of Trustees. He was also a member of Crosshills Bowling Club.

Herbert and Sarah's children married in rapid succession: Evelyn to James Brown on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1929, in Farnhill Methodist Chapel; and Clifford, somewhere in the Skipton area, in the first half of 1930. Between these two happy events, however, Sarah died (11/11/1929). She was buried in Kildwick new graveyard.



Herbert Kitson died on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1937 and was interred in Kildwick new graveyard, alongside his wife. He was 59 years old.



Grave of Sarah and Herbert Kitson – in Kildwick extension graveyard



## FARNHILL

### DEATH OF MR. HERBERT KITSON.

The death occurred at his residence in Mary Street, Farnhill, on Sunday, of Mr. Herbert Kitson.

In his 60th year, Mr. Kitson was a native of the village in which he had resided almost all his life. Highly respected and very popular, he had taken an active part in the life of the village. A member of the Village Institute since it was opened 25 years ago, he had served on the committee, and for a lengthy period was a trustee of the Farnhill Methodist Church. He was also a trustee of the Loyal Staincliffe Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, and a director of the Farnhill Water Company. At one period he was secretary and treasurer of that company. During the last few years he had been intimately connected with the Crosshills Bowling Club. In business, he was a joiner and cabinetmaker, and took over his father's business in the village on the death of his father 18 years ago. His wife died seven years ago, and he leaves one son and one daughter.

The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon, following a service at the Farnhill Methodist Church, conducted by the Rev. W. Johnson.

The family mourners were Mr. and Mrs. C. Kitson, Mr. and Mrs. J. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. G. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. C. Shuttleworth, Mr. and Mrs. A. Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. S. Airey, Mr. and Mrs. F. Feather, Mrs. J. W. Archer and Mr. G. Holliday.

The Loyal Staincliffe Lodge, I.O.O., was represented by Bros. Richard Hill, Benj. R. Barrett, T. Nowell, W. Feather, T. Spencer, P. Kitson and A. Butterfield; the Farnhill Methodist Church by Mr. C. R. Snowden, Mr. T. Sugden, Mr. C. Hill and Mr. R. Mosley; the Farnhill Water Company by Mr. Harry Kitson (secretary), Mr. T. W. Whitaker and Mr. Seth Tillotson; the Kildwick and Farnhill Institute by Mr. E. Green and Mr. T. Addy; the Crosshills Bowling Club by Mr. R. James, Mr. R. Taylor, Mr. J. W. Parkinson and Mr. A. Riddiough. The two latter, together with Mr. R. Slack, Mr. W. H. Mason, Mr. E. Sharpe and Mr. L. G. Sharpe, were the bearers.

Personal friends included Mr. W. Green (Cononley), Mr. C. Barrett (Crosshills), Mr. J. Brown, Mr. G. Bottomley, Mr. T. Thompson, Mr. W. Mosley, Mr. B. Parker, Mr. F. Bottomley (Sutton), Mrs. Cartledge, Mrs. Hartley, Mrs. H. Roe, Mrs. F. Sugden, Mrs. W. Ward, Mrs. W. H. Mason, Mr. H. Croft, Mr. W. Crossley, Mr. A. E. Darby, Mr. S. Walmsley, Mr. J. Stott, Mrs. C. Walmsley.

There was a large number of floral tributes.



## Postscript

Herbert's son continued to run the joinery business in Farnhill after his father's death and during WW2 the joinery shop was used to manufacture aircraft components – principally wooden wing and fuselage sections for Mosquito fighters. These were taken from Farnhill and assembled at Speke aerodrome (now John Lennon Airport, Liverpool).

Clifford "Kite" Kitson, as he was known, was something of a local character and there are a number of anecdotes associated with him. Here is a selection from some people who remember him.

*A few of the village lads were in the field behind Kildwick Hall, poaching rabbits with their ferrets. The ferrets were in the rabbit hole when suddenly they saw J.J. Brigg coming their way. My Dad and his mate managed to get their ferrets out of the hole and ran off, leaving Clifford Kitson to face the music. On reaching him Mr. Brigg said "Morning young Clifford, what might you be doing here ?". To which Clifford replied "Just waiting for a friend." At exactly this moment Clifford's ferret popped up out of the hole, with a rabbit. "Oh," said Mr. Brigg, "I see your friend has just arrived".*

Original source unknown – told to the Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group by Helen Waller

*I've had contact with an old friend from Farnhill, she lived at 1 Bright Street and she remembers Clifford Kitson well. She said his nickname was Kite and he made a front door for their house. Her dad asked him where the keyhole was and he told him "You don't need a keyhole, just kick it open".*

From Mandy Wass

*[The garage] didn't have any doors on, it was just an open-fronted building. It needed doors on, so that he could lock it up He wanted a joiner; and the joiner was Clifford Kitson. Clifford came down and I watched him putting wood-screws in: wood-screw; big hammer; Bang, bang. Knocked them all in – with a hammer. I said "What are you doing; what's the slot for ?" and he said "That's just to take them out with".*

Alan Hargreaves talking about Edwin Shuttleworth, Clifford Kitson, and the early days of Arnold Benson Coaches

## Herbert Kitson – a life in summary

**Born:** 24/1/1877, Kildwick

**Baptised:** 3/6/1877, Farnhill Methodist Chapel

**Died:** 3/1/1937

**Aged:** 59

**Home address:** Lyncliffe, Mary Street, Farnhill

### Parents

**Father:** Albert Green Kitson; b. 1853, Skipton (Registration district); d. 9/11/1918, Farnhill

**Mother:** Rachel (nee Law); b. 1853, Skipton (Registration district);  
d. 23/2/1895; buried 26/2/1895, Kildwick

**Married:** 1876, Skipton (Registration district)

Father remarried – Elizabeth Pearson, 1896, Skipton (Registration district)

### Siblings

Anne; b. 1882, Kildwick, bapt. 21/05/1882, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
m. George Holliday, 7/2/1911, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
d. 11/3/1933; buried 15/3/1933, Kildwick

Jane; b. 1884; bapt. 5/10/1884, Farnhill Methodist Chapel; d. 3/12/1888, Farnhill

Edith; b. 31/7/1890, Kildwick; bapt. 20/9/1890, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
m. George Parker, 1917, Skipton (Registration district);  
d. 1953, Staincliffe (Registration district)

### WW1 service

No service details known.

### Relationship to other volunteers

Albert Kitson – paternal cousin

Harry Kitson – paternal cousin

George Holliday – brother-in-law (1911)

### Marriage

**Wife:** Sarah Peart, b. 1876, Eston Middlesbrough;  
d. November 1929, Farnhill; buried 11/11/1929, Kildwick

**Date:** 22/7/1899, Farnhill Methodist Chapel



## Children

Clifford; b. 30/4/1902, Farnhill; bapt. 1/6/1902, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
m. Susan Blanche Harvey, 1930, Skipton (Registration district)  
d. 1985, Keighley (Registration district)

Evelyn, b. 26/4/1904, Farnhill; bapt. 31/5/1904, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
m. James Brown, 22/6/1929, Farnhill Methodist Chapel

