

# Ernest Thompson (1888 – 1957)

Ernest Thompson was born in Skipton but on the death of his mother, when he was eight, he and his brother went to live with their uncle and aunt in Kildwick.

He attended the village school and also worked part-time as a bobbin minder, and then as a joiner’s labourer.

During the war Ernest served with the Royal Field Artillery in France and afterwards he had a variety of jobs – working in a railway locomotive engine shed, then as a wood machinist, and finally as a sawyer.

He married, at the age of 31, and lived in Eastburn. After the death of his wife he married for a second time and died in 1957, aged 68.



## Pre-war life

Ernest Thompson was born in Skipton on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1888.

He was the son of Jonathan and Ann (nee Moorby); Jonathan (b. 1857) was a cotton weaver, originally from Grassington; Ann (b. 1863), who also worked as a cotton weaver, was from Skipton.

Ernest was the couple’s second child, although his older sister, Alice Ann, had died in infancy, in 1886.

The 1891 census recorded the family living at 20 Westgate in Skipton. In addition to Ernest and his parents the family also included a young daughter, Maria (b. 1890), Walter Moorby, aged ten – Ann’s illegitimate son from before her marriage to Jonathan – and Richard Mount, a 15-year-old lodger. They were all living in two rooms.

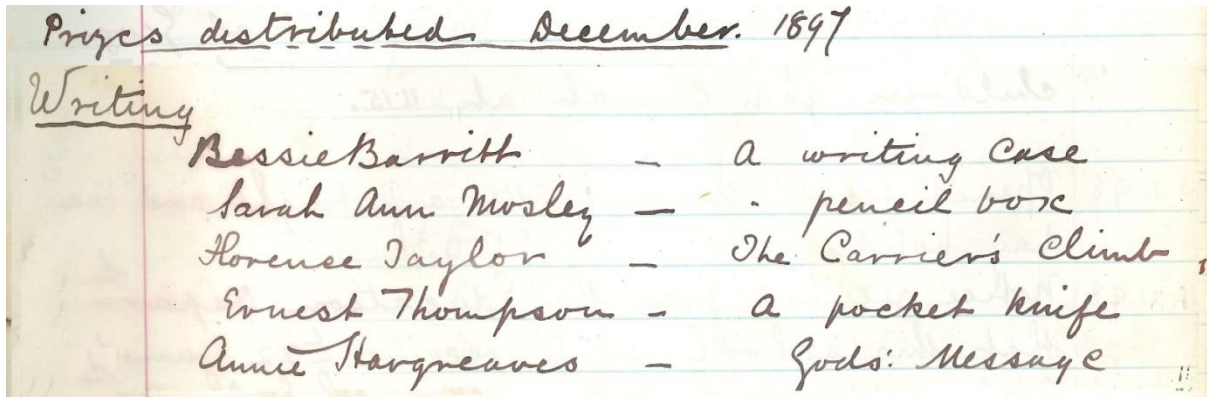
Administrative County of York - West Riding		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the												
Civil Parish		Municipal Ward		Urban Sanitary District		Town or Village or Hamlet		Rural Sanitary District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Ecclesiastical Parish		
Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES in the building (a)	Usual number of persons occupying it (b)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employed	Employed in Agriculture	Employed in Horticulture	Employed in Fishing	Employed in Manufacturing	WHERE BORN
206	20. 20. 20	1	2	Thompson Jonathan	Head	M.	35	Cotton Weaver						Grassington
				Ann	Wife	M.	27	do						Skipton
				Moorby Walter	Son	M.	10	do						do
				Thompson Ernest	Son	M.	2	do						do
				Mount Richard	Lodger	M.	15	do						do

Extract from the 1891 census return for Skipton – the Thompson family at 20 Westgate  
Used under licence from the National Archive

In 1893 Ernest’s sister, Maria, died (aged 3) and a brother, Willie, was born.

In 1896, Ann Thompson, Ernest's mother, died, at the age of 33. This death almost certainly brought about the break-up of the family, with Ernest and Willie moving to live with their uncle and aunt, Joseph and Margaret Richmond, in Church Terrace, Kildwick. (Margaret was Ann's sister.)

Ernest and Willie attended Kildwick school, where Ernest seems to have been an above-average pupil. In December 1897 (aged 9) he won a school prize for Writing and was awarded a pocket knife.



Part of the prize distribution list from the Kildwick School log book  
By kind permission of Kildwick School

By the time of the 1901 census, taken when he was 12 years old, Ernest was still at school but was already working part-time as a "bobbin minder" in one of the local mills.

At this time Ernest's father, Jonathan Thompson, was boarding with the family of Robert Moorby, his brother-in-law, at 5 Carrs Yard, Skipton. He died suddenly in 1907 after collapsing in the street. A coroner's inquest, held in Skipton Town Hall, on 26<sup>th</sup> February, recorded "Death by natural causes, probably heart failure".

By the time of the 1911 census, the Richmonds and the two Thompson boys had moved to 60 Starkey Lane, Farnhill (they would move again, to 53 Airedale Cottages – on Skipton Road – before the outbreak of the war). In this census, Ernest was recorded as being a "Joiner's Labourer".

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 10 years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every person.
1 Joseph Richmond	Head	56	Married	None	2	Coarter for Coal	598	Wether	Yorks, Pally Bridge	
2 Margaret Richmond	Wife	54	Married	29	2				Yorks, Grassington	
3 Ernest Thompson	Boarder	22	Single			Joiner Labourer	211	House Joiner	Wether	
4 William Thompson	Boarder	17	Single			Offer Yarn	915	Washed Yarn	Wether	

Extract from the 1911 census return for 60 Starkey Lane, Farnhill  
Used under licence from the National Archive

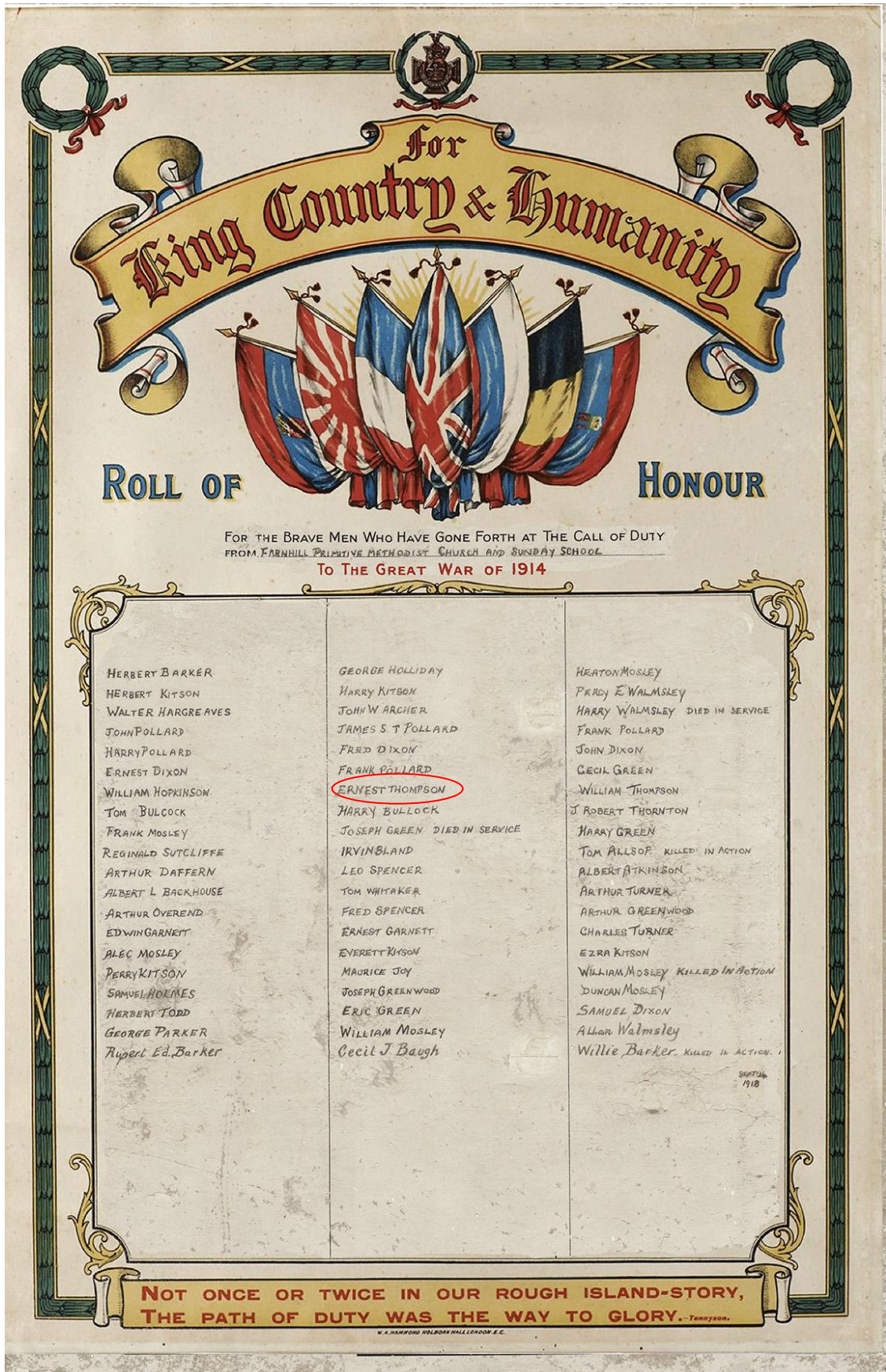
**Note:** The "Particulars of Marriage" section records that the Richmonds had been married for 29 years; they had had two children but both had died.

## WW1 service

Ernest Thompson's WW1 service records do not appear to have survived (over 70% of these records were destroyed in a fire during the WW2 London blitz). However a fragmentary account of his WW1 service can be constructed from other sources.

A news report of 19<sup>th</sup> November 1915 in the West Yorkshire Pioneer records a fund raising event, held in Farnhill Institute, to "provide winter comforts for the lads serving with the Colours". The report concludes with a list of the men, which includes "E. Thompson". This suggests that Ernest was already serving abroad by this time and was in need of "winter comforts".

Ernest's name was included on Farnhill Methodist Chapel's Roll of Honour, unveiled on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1916.



For  
**King Country & Humanity**



**ROLL OF HONOUR**

FOR THE BRAVE MEN WHO HAVE GONE FORTH AT THE CALL OF DUTY  
 FROM FARNHILL PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL  
 TO THE GREAT WAR OF 1914

HERBERT BARKER  
 HERBERT KITSON  
 WALTER HARGREAVES  
 JOHN POLLARD  
 HARRY POLLARD  
 ERNEST DIXON  
 WILLIAM HOPKINSON  
 TOM BULCOCK  
 FRANK MOSLEY  
 REGINALD SUTCLIFFE  
 ARTHUR DAFFERN  
 ALBERT L. BACKHOUSE  
 ARTHUR OVEREND  
 EDWIN GARNETT  
 ALEC MOSLEY  
 PERRY KITSON  
 SAMUEL HOLMES  
 HERBERT TODD  
 GEORGE PARKER  
 Rupert Ed. Barker

GEORGE HOLIDAY  
 HARRY KITSON  
 JOHN W. ARCHER  
 JAMES S. T. POLLARD  
 FRED DIXON  
 FRANK POLLARD  
 ERVEST THOMPSON  
 HARRY BULLOCK  
 JOSEPH GREEN DIED IN SERVICE  
 IRVIN BLAND  
 LEO SPENCER  
 TOM WHITAKER  
 FRED SPENCER  
 ERNEST GARNETT  
 EVERETT KITSON  
 MAURICE JOY  
 JOSEPH GREENWOOD  
 ERIC GREEN  
 WILLIAM MOSLEY  
 Cecil J. Baugh

HEATON MOSLEY  
 PEARCY E. WALMSLEY  
 HARRY WALMSLEY DIED IN SERVICE  
 FRANK POLLARD  
 JOHN DIXON  
 CECIL GREEN  
 WILLIAM THOMPSON  
 J. ROBERT THORNTON  
 HARRY GREEN  
 TOM ALLSOP KILLED IN ACTION  
 ALBERT ATKINSON  
 ARTHUR TURNER  
 ARTHUR GREENWOOD  
 CHARLES TURNER  
 EZRA KITSON  
 WILLIAM MOSLEY KILLED IN ACTION  
 DUNCAN MOSLEY  
 SAMUEL DIXON  
 ALBAN WALMSLEY  
 Willie Barker KILLED IN ACTION.

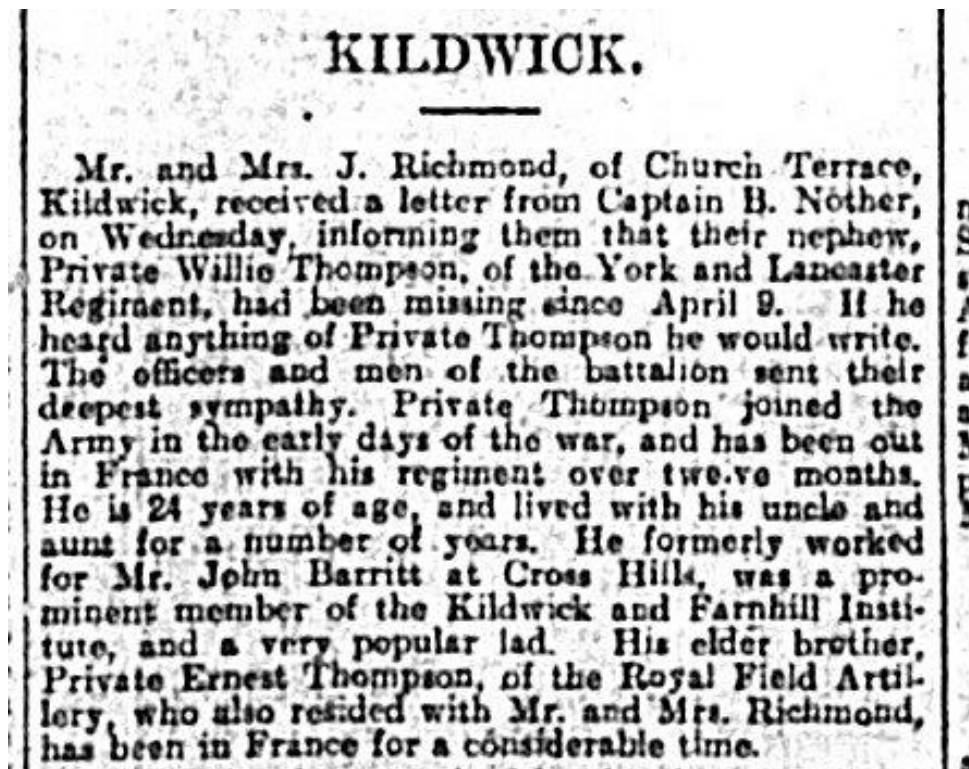
SEPTEMBER  
 1918

**NOT ONCE OR TWICE IN OUR ROUGH ISLAND-STORY,  
 THE PATH OF DUTY WAS THE WAY TO GLORY. —Tennyson.**

W. A. HANFORD HOLBORN HALL LONDON E.C.

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

The first indication of which unit Ernest served in comes from news reports of April 1917, in which he was mentioned almost as an afterthought.



Evidence of Ernest Thompson's WW1 service, from the Keighley News 28/4/1917  
By kind permission of the Keighley News

**Notes:** A contemporary report in the West Yorkshire Post gives the Richmonds' address as "Airedale, Farnhill" and also notes that Ernest is a driver with the RFA.

Willie Thompson was later reported to have been captured and made a prisoner of war.

Beyond this it has proved impossible for the project to determine, with certainty, anything further about Ernest's WW1 military career.

**Note:** At least 32 men called Ernest Thompson served with the RFA in WW1; there is no way of knowing which of these was the Farnhill WW1 Volunteer.

## Post-war life

After the war Ernest returned to live with his uncle and aunt in Farnhill.

Margaret Richmond died early in November 1919 at the age of 60 and the funeral took place at St. Andrew's, Kildwick on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Later the same month, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ernest married Edith Smith of Eastburn, at Keighley Register office. Ernest was recorded as being a "Steam Riser in a Railway Locomotive Engine Shed".

1919 Marriage solemnized at in the District of <i>The Register Office</i> <i>Keighley</i> in the County of <i>York</i> .								
Column 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.
104	<i>Twenty Second November 1919</i>	<i>Ernest Thompson</i>	<i>30 years</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Steam Riser in Railway Locomotive Shop.</i>	<i>53, Skipton Road Tarnhill Near Keighley</i>	<i>Jonathan Thompson (deceased)</i>	<i>Carter</i>
		<i>Edith Smith</i>	<i>29 years</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>Woolen yarn Twister</i>	<i>2 Main Road Eastburn Near Keighley</i>	<i>John Smith</i>	<i>Woolen Weaver</i>
Married in the <i>Register Office</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the _____ by certificate before _____ by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us: <i>Ernest Thompson</i> <i>Edith Smith</i>				In the Presence of us, <i>Clara Smith</i> <i>Walter Smith</i>		<i>J. T. Mitchell Registrar</i> <i>J. H. Clarkson Superintendent Registrar</i>		

Thompson – Smith marriage certificate  
(c) Crown Copyright

The couple lived with Joseph Richmond and Ernest's brother, William, for two years before moving to 4 Main Road, Eastburn, in 1921 – which is the address given in the 1921 census. This was next door to Edith's family, who lived at number two.

In March 1929, Ernest's uncle, Joseph Richmond died at 16 Gargrave Road, Skipton, at the age of 73. His home was still at Airedale Cottages, and the funeral took place at St. Andrew's, Kildwick, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

In 1930 Ernest and Edith made another house move, to 51 Sun Street, Eastburn. They would both live there until they died.

The register taken in September 1939, when WW2 ration cards were being issued, showed the couple living together at 51 Sun Street. Ernest was recorded as being a "Wood Machinist".

Edith Thompson died on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1943, aged 53. After this it appears that Mary, the wife of Ernest's brother, William, moved in for an extended period (she may have been widowed by this time). She was included on the electoral roll for 51 Sun Street in 1945, but this arrangement is likely to have ended by the time Ernest remarried in 1946.

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 1946 the 57 year-old widower Ernest Thompson married the 48 year-old spinster Caroline Elizabeth Race at St. Stephen's Church, Steeton. The marriage certificate recorded Ernest as being employed as a "Sawyer".

Ernest Thompson died on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1957, and was buried at St. Stephen's Church, Steeton. He was aged 68 years.

## Postscript

Caroline continued to live at 51 Sun Street until 1966. It has proved impossible to trace details of her life after this date but it is believed that she died somewhere in the local area in 1971.

Neither Ernest nor his brother William appear to have had any children and it is unlikely that there are any living descendants.

## Ernest Thompson – a life in summary

**Born:** 1/12/1888, Skipton (Registration district)

**Died:** 27/10/1957                      **Aged:** 68

**Home address:** 51 Sun Street, Eastburn

### Parents

**Father:** Jonathan; b. 1857, Grassington; d. 1907, Skipton

**Mother:** Ann or Annie (nee Moorby); b. 1863, Skipton; bapt.8/2/1863, Skipton Christ Church;  
d. 1896, Skipton (Registration district)

**Married:** 1884, Skipton (Registration district)

### Siblings

Walter Moorby (half-brother); b. 1881, Skipton

Alice Ann; b. 31/7/1885, Skipton; d. 1886 (aged 0)

Maria; b. 1890, Skipton; d. 1893, Skipton (aged 3)

William (Willie); b. 21/9/1893, Skipton; m. Mary Spencer, 31/7/1926, St. Andrew's Kildwick

### WW1 service

**Regt:** Royal Field Artillery, Driver

**Home address:** 53 Airedale (Skipton Road), Farnhill

### Relationship to other volunteers

William (Willie) Thompson – brother

### Marriage

**Wife:** (1) Edith Smith; b. 3/2/1890, Crosshills; d. 28/5/1943, Steeton

(2) Caroline Elizabeth Race; b. Dec 1897, Rillington; d. 1971, Staincliffe (Registration district)

**Date:** (1) 22/11/1919, at Keighley Register Office

(2) 27/3/1946, at St. Stephen's, Steeton

### Children

None known.

