

Private Leonard Sucksmith (7th May 1898 – 23rd November 1920)

and family in particular his older brothers

Private Aaron Sucksmith (17th March 1889 – 4th September 1916),

Private Walter Sucksmith (17th June 1890 – 8th December 1916)

and Private James Sucksmith (3rd Nov 1894 – 1949)

Leonard Sucksmith died on 23rd November 1920 and was buried on 27th November 1920 in St Matthew's Churchyard, Lightcliffe, WRY in plot G27, next to, what would become his parents' family plot G26, with a CWGC Portland headstone which records that that he was a private in the South Wales Borderers.



But he was not the only member of this family to be involved in the armed forces. At least four brothers served in the First World War. Three of them are commemorated on the memorial boards in St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe. This family is related to Private James Smallwood who also fell in the Great War.

This then is their Sucksmith family story.

The parents of these four WW1 soldiers were William and Elizabeth Sucksmith. The two twenty year olds William Sucksmith and Elizabeth Ann Pratt had married on 15th October 1885 at the parish church in Halifax. They were both from Lightcliffe. William and his father James Sucksmith both farmed whereas Elizabeth's father James Pratt was a "Lead Miner".

By the 1891 census William and Elizabeth (aka Lizzie) had had four children. John was born 24th November 1886, Janet followed on 24th March 1888 then Aaron on 17th March 1889 and finally Walter on 7th June 1890. The family were living at Lydget Bridge, Lightcliffe on census night, 5th April 1901, when father William's occupation was a "Cart Driver". Later that year these children were 'batch' baptised at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe on 16th November 1891 when their father's occupation was "Quarryman".

Another four children, including Leonard, had arrived before the 1901 census (when the family are incorrectly transcribed as Lucksmith); Hannah on 16th October 1892, then Jim on 3rd November 1894, Leonard on 7th May 1898 and finally Alice in September 1899. Again the family seem to have gone in for 'batch' baptisms as Hannah and Jim were baptised on 20th February 1901 and then later that year Leonard and Alice were both baptised on 6th October 1901 all at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe. The family's address on 31st March 1901 was Hill Top, Lightcliffe when their father was an "Engine Driver - Quarry worker" which ties in with the baptism records where father William was a "Quarryman". By the 1901 census the two eldest children were also working; 14 year old John was an "Oiler Machinery Worsted Mill" and 13 year old Janet was a "Spinner Worsted Mill".

The 1911 census return confirms that William and Elizabeth Ann Sucksmith had ten children altogether and that all of them were still alive on the 2nd April 1911. Margaret was born on the 14th November 1902 and baptised on 11th February 1903 at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe when her father was a "Stone Labourer" of Lightcliffe. The baby of the family, Irvine, was born five years later in 1907 but no baptism record has been found. On the night of the census all twelve members of the family were recorded as being at home, which was a five roomed house in St Giles Road, Lightcliffe. All but the three youngest, Alice, Maggie and Irvine, and their mother were at work. Father William was then a "Stone Polisher", 24 year old John was a "Carpet Weaver", 23 year old Janet was a "Carpet Sewer", 22 year old Aaron was a "Brick Labourer", 20 year old Walter was a "Dyer's Labourer", 18 year old Hannah was a "Carpet Setter", 16 year old Jim was another "Dyer's Labourer" and 12 year old Leonard was a "Doffer - Worsted Spinning".

Sadly Hannah Sucksmith died on 14th March 1912 aged just 19 years. She was buried on 16th March 1912 in her Sucksmith grandparents' grave, **plot C11**, at St Matthew's Churchyard. The grave containing Grandfather James Sucksmith and both his wives was then full.



Hannah was remembered in the inscription at the bottom.



Her oldest sister Janet married Joseph Edward Asquith on 20th July 1913 at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe and their daughter is probably the baby Marian Asquith, mother Sucksmith, born Q1 1914 Halifax. On 12th December 1914 eldest son John Sucksmith aged 28 married Phoebe Butterworth aged 29. He was a "Carpet Weaver" living at St Giles Road, Lightcliffe and his father William was a "Delver". Phoebe's father had also been a "Delver" but he had died before the wedding. Phoebe's address was Park Place, Lightcliffe. John's sister Alice Sucksmith was one of the witnesses to the marriage.

Private Aaron Sucksmith (17th March 1889 - 4th September 1916)



In 1916 Aaron Sucksmith must have been employed by the British Millerain Co. Halifax as the Halifax Courier for Saturday, March 18th 1916 has this under the headings:--

AN OBJECT TO FIGHTING

Results of other cases

Aaron Sucksmith, Hill Top, Lightcliffe employed by British Millerain Co Halifax (where employer's appeal respecting him was dismissed the previous day) refused.

Then on Saturday, 23rd September 1916 the Halifax Courier reported his death.

PTE AARON SUCKSMITH

Official notice was received by Mr. and Mrs. W.Sucksmith, of St. Giles-road, Lightcliffe, yesterday of the death of their son, Pte. Aaron Sucksmith, who was a private in the Durham Ligh[t] Infantry. Only 27 years of age, he joined up at the Halifax Barracks in April last, and went to North Shields for training, He had only

been out about nine or ten weeks, and the last time he wrote was on the 1st inst. and this but a field post card. He was a member of the Hipperholme Liberal Club for some years, and took a great interest in sport of every description. His loss will be deeply felt by many of his friends in Lightcliffe. His brother Walter went out to France last week.

From the Brighthouse Echo Saturday 29th September 1916

War Casualties

 WELL KNOWN BILLIARD PLAYER
 KILLED.
 PRIVATE AARON SUCKSMITH, OF
 LIGHTCLIFFE

On Friday last Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Sucksmith, of St Giles Road, Lightcliffe received an official intimation from the Infantry Record Office, York, that their son, Pte. Aaron Sucksmith, of the Durham Light Infantry, had been killed in action, in France, on Sept. 4th. The letter, which is dated Sept. 21st, reads as follows:--

It is our painful duty to inform you that a report has this day been received from the War Office notifying the death of Private Aaron Sucksmith, of the Durham Light Infantry, which occurred at a place in France on the 4th Sept., and we express to you the sympathy and regret of the Army Council at your loss.

The cause of death was "killed in action."

Private Sucksmith, who was 27 years of age, joined the colours at the Halifax Barracks in April of this year and was sent to North Shields for training. He has been out in France about nine weeks. The last time he wrote home was Sept. 1st, when he sent a field post-card, saying he was all right and well. He was a very popular member of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe Liberal Club and was a good billiard player, having figured with both the first and second teams in the league games. His brother Walter went out to France only about a fortnight ago. Pte. A. Sucksmith took a great interest in sport of every description. When a lad he attended Lightcliffe Church Sunday School, where he attended regularly up to a few years ago. In addition to the brother mentioned, he has also another, James, who is serving in Salonica, having been there since last October.

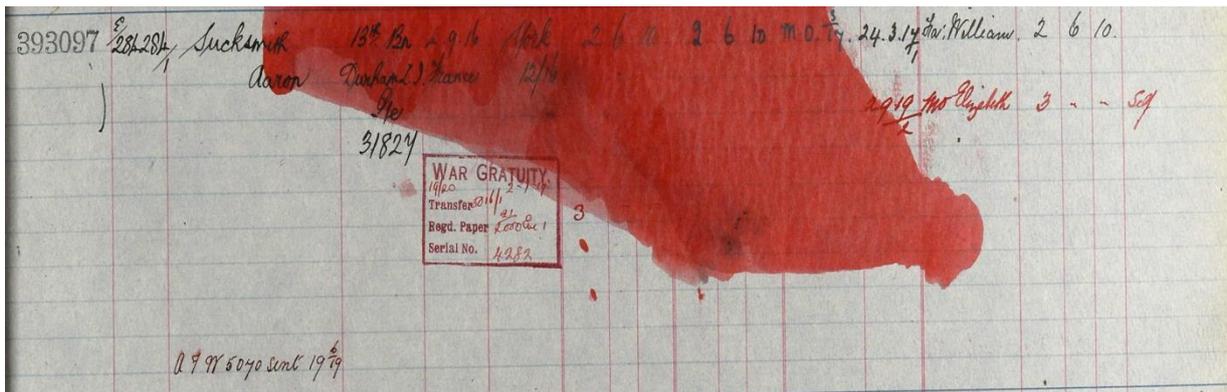
Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
SUCKSMITH	Durham LI	Pte	31827
Aaron			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	01/103 R15	2602	
BRITISH	Ldn	na	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K. 1330.

Above Aaron Sucksmith's British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Card, 1914 – 1920, and then his name appears on the UK, WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls.

51827	Pte. ✓	SUCKSMITH Aaron	13th. Durh. L.I.	Deceased.
			51827 Pte.	
			Att. 27th. North'D.	
			51827 Fus.	
51827	Pte. ✓	SUCKS Harry	13th. Durh. L.I.	Deceased.

The ink stained UK, Army Register of Soldier's Effects for Private Aaron Sucksmith names his father William and his mother Elizabeth.



Aaron Sucksmith is remembered on the **Ploegsteert Memorial Hainault Belgium** panel 8 and 9 as well as back home in St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe.



Private Walter Sucksmith (7th June 1890 – 8th December 1916)



Then just three months later on Friday 22nd December from the Brighthouse Echo:--

SECOND BROTHER KILLED. PTE. WALTER SUCKSMITH, OF LIGHTCLIFFE

It is with extreme regret that we have to announce the death of Pte Walter Sucksmith of the West Riding Regt., third son of Mr. and Mrs. William Sucksmith, St Giles Road, Lightcliffe. The sad news was conveyed in an official communication which was received from the Infantry Record Office, York, last Saturday and which was dated Dec 14th. Only the previous day a letter was received from him saying that he was quite well. The official note read as follows:-

It is our painful duty to inform you that your son, Pte. Walter Sucksmith, 23925, of the West Riding Regiment, has died. The death occurred at the 33rd Field Ambulance, France, on the 8th December, 1916. The cause of death was gunshot wounds received in action.

Pte Sucksmith was 26 years of age. He joined up last February, trained at Clipstone and went out to France in August. Before joining he was employed by Messrs. Thornton, Hannam and Marshall, Brookfoot dyeworks. He was of a very bright disposition and was well known throughout the district as one of the finest executants at billiards. As a cueist he

had few equals for miles around. He was a member of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe Liberal Club and also the Brighthouse Dyers' Club and many are the occasions on which the members of these clubs have had pleasure of witnessing his prowess with the cue. When a lad he was a scholar at the Lightcliffe Church School. It was only on Sept. 4th of this year that his older brother, Pte Aaron Sucksmith, was killed in France. Much sympathy will be extended to the family at their double loss. A younger brother, James, has been serving in Salonica for fourteen months.

The following letter of sympathy has been forwarded to Mr. and Mrs. Sucksmith, by Mr J.H.Oates (secretary) on behalf of the members of the Hipperholme and Lightcliffe Club:--

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sucksmith, --
On behalf of the members connected with the Liberal Club I am desired to convey to you their deep sympathy in your recent great trouble. Both your sons were well liked by all, and words poorly express the feelings of every member. There is no satisfaction in saying to you they died for their country, though all men are heroes who do their duty at whatever cost, and they have paid with their lives. Personally, I would say how my heart aches for you. In spite of whatever happens the world

Private Walter Sucksmith was buried in the **Mesnil communal cemetery extension**



and remembered there as well as back home in St. Matthew's Church Lightcliffe.

Only his mother Elizabeth is named on Private Walter Sucksmith's record of UK, Army Register of Soldier's Effects .

392837	280684	Sucksmith Walter	8th Bn W. Riding Die	8.12.16 France 11/7	York 12/16	2 13 .	- 3 7 - 3 7 2 6 2	York 4/17 4 4 14 York 4/17 5.4.17 40 6/17 24.6.17	R.P. Wick Sole Dep. Elizabeth	3 4 3 7 2 6 2	10 11 12 Elizabeth	3	(A)
			28925	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> WAR GRATUITY. 14.12.16 15.5.17 Transfer 50/4 Regd. Paper 21/4/20 6 Serial No. 13116 66 </div>		3							

Q 9 77 8070 sent 17/79

Continued in part 2