

## WILLIAM GEORGE SMITH

7784 Sgt Royal Berks Regt    KIA: 15/3/1915

William George Smith was born in **Benson** in 1885, the elder son of Willam Brackley Smith & his first wife Martha. William B was a house painter when George (as the family called him) was born, living in Mill Lane and later in Littleworth in **Benson**.

George had an elder sister Florence and a younger brother Harold. Sadly, Harold died young in 1894, aged just 5 years old.

After leaving school, George worked as a carpenter at first, but things changed at home when Martha died in 1904 when George was 19 and his father re-married quickly – to Emma Sophia Strainge.

By 1911 William George Smith had joined the army as a regular soldier in the Royal Berks Regt, whilst his father had opened a grocer's shop in **High St Benson**. When war broke out in 1914, George was a sergeant in the 2nd Battalion of the R Berks and went to France with them on 6th November 1914.

On 13th March 1915, the battalion was ordered to relieve the Rifle Brigade in the front line at Neuve Chappelle as the British attack there faltered. On the 15th there was heavy shelling, mostly from the German artillery although many casualties were also caused by British shells dropping “short”. Sgt Smith was sadly one of the casualties

His obituary appeared in the North Berks Herald of 3rd April 1915.