

Jonas Green – The Oldest Man To Be Killed

Jonas Green was the oldest man from Benson recorded on the War Memorial, being 45 years old when he died.

Jonas was born in Benson in 1872, the son of Jonas & Emma Green. In 1881 the family lived in Birmingham Yard, but had moved to Warborough by 1891. However after his marriage in 1895 Jonas returned to Benson and lived in Brook St. The marriage to Gertrude Sandall was followed by the birth of their children – Eleanor (b.1898), Herbert (b.1904), Charles (b.1908) and Hilda (b.1911). Jonas worked variously as a labourer, a carter and a hay binder.

When WW1 began in August 1914, Jonas did not rush off immediately and volunteer; however he did voluntarily enlist in the Royal Engineers (at Westminster strangely) on 20th August 1915 at the age of 43. He served with the RE (as Cpl, no 116446) in the 2nd Army Tramways Company based at Coxyde in Belgium. As such, he was not actually in the Front Line, but was engaged in the vital work of helping to distribute the huge amount of ammunition and supplies the Army desperately needed around the railway system which had been developed.

His work would have taken him near the Front however, and it is likely that when he was wounded it was by an enemy shell fired from miles away. At the time of his death on 29th Sept 1917, the 3rd Battle of Ypres (often called the Battle of Passchendaele) was raging and ensuring the supply of ammunition was vital work. Sadly Jonas died from his wounds and was buried in Gwalia Cemetery near Ypres.

His widow Gertrude left Benson at some stage after this, never re-marrying, and died in Witney in 1939. His eldest daughter Eleanor married Alexander MacDonald in Oxford in 1918, whilst son Charles married Ethel Tutty locally in 1926. The other son, Herbert, lived in Cholsey, near Benson, before his death in 1979, whilst the youngest child – Hilda – was recorded as living in London (Clapham) in 1948.