



Ernest Reynolds (Reg. No. 1699) was born in Twickenham in 1890 and was given the name Walter Ernest Reynolds. He was the youngest child of George John and Emily (nee Scott) Reynolds who married in a civil ceremony in Brentford 1885. Ernest had an older brother, Frederick (b1885), and a sister Lydia Emily (b 1887). The 1891 Census records that very soon after Emily gave birth to Ernest, she and her young children were now living as 'lodgers' at Park Cottage, Crown Road, Twickenham. Records for George John Reynolds are illusive but there is a possibility that George died in 1887 which might explain Emily's position. However, ten years later Emily (now Hutchins) is living at 11 Queens Terrace Isleworth with her three children aged 16, 13 and 11 and her husband/partner Henry Edward Hutchins. The children have retained their 'Reynolds' surname. By 1911, the three children had left home and Mr & Mrs Hutchins have moved along the road to No.17 Queens Terrace.

Ernest Reynolds can also be found in the 1911 Census working as a 'domestic groom' on a beautiful, sprawling 15th century estate called Hampton Court Stables in Leominster, Herefordshire. His brother Frederick is working as an 'Underground Colliery Labourer' - a miner- in Rhondda Glamorganshire, and Lydia is working as a general domestic servant for the Moore family at 12 Hartington Rd Twickenham.

Surprisingly Ernest enlisted in 1st Battalion, Welsh Regiment. However, knowing that his brother was in Rhondda there is a possibility that Ernest took the position in Herefordshire to be nearer to him. A few years later Ernest enlisted at Pontypridd in the Rhondda Valley.

There are no service records for Ernest. We do not know when he joined the army. He may have already been with his regiment in India in 1914, before returning to England when the war broke out. Ernest would certainly have been with this battalion when they landed in Havre on 18th January 1915. He would have exactly one month to live and would die in the most appalling conditions.

Ernest's Battalion was first marched, then bussed to Vlamertinghe (west of Ypres) and then onto Zillebeke and Blauwpoort, where he entered the carnage at the 'front line'. The trenches and surrounding areas were just a sea of mud, such that, "a man and a mule were both sucked in and drowned. Major Hoggan went about barefooted, having lost his boots in the mud". The Commanding Officer asked permission to withdraw to other trenches but there was no response for two days. This was where the Ernest died on 17th February 1915.

Ernest Reynolds's name is on the Menin Gate Panel 37. He was awarded the British and Victory Medals and the 14-15 Star. He is also remembered on the All Souls' Memorial listed as Walter Ernest.

