

**ROBERT R. BROWN – Private G7578, 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex, 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 1916, Age 36**

Robert Robinson Brown was born in 1880 near Richmond, the son of a Draper’s Clerk. His Father was also called Robert and his Mother Hannah Telford Snowdon was from Brompton-on-Swale. He was probably born at St Nicholas Cottages in Richmond where the 1880 Census shows him, aged 1.

Ten years later, the 1891 Census shows Robert, aged 11 living with his Father, brother Ernest, and two sisters, Amy and Hilda at 8 Victoria Place. His Father was now a Widow, his Mother having died in January 1891.

ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES		NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	MARRIAGE as to DITION	BIRTHDAY of		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employed	Employed	WOMEN	WHERE BORN
	Inhabited	Uninhabited				Male	Female					
Victoria Place	1		Jane Copeland	Wife	5 <sup>o</sup>	81		<del>Shop Assistant</del>		X		Yorkshire North Britain
8 do		1	Robert Brown	Head	Wid	38		<del>Draper Clerk</del>		X		Northumberland Exningham
			Ernest do	Son		19		Scholar				Yorkshire Richmond
			Robert R do	do		11		do				do do
			Amy do	Daughter		5		do				do do
			Hilda do	do		7		do				do Birmingham in Scot
			Elizabeth Charlton	Servant	S	24		<del>General Domestic Servant</del>		X		Wiltshire Wootton Bassett

It’s not clear where Robert (or his Father) were in 1901, but it seems his siblings Ernest and Amy were both in service, in London (Hampstead) so clearly they were not afraid to travel for work. If listed as plain old Robert Brown, without his middle name, it makes him hard to track down as it’s a common name. However, there is a Robert Brown listed as a servant at nearby Scorton (named Robinson Brown).



Figure 1 - Thornes House Wakefield in 1923

This may well be our “RR Brown” because in 1911<sup>(1)</sup> Robert was a footman in service to a barrister, Mr Charles Gaskell, in one of the largest 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian houses in Wakefield – Thornes House. Mr & Mrs Gaskell and their 29 year old daughter, Mary, employed 14 servants no less!



Figure 2 - Brook House, Sussex

It’s not clear what took him there (perhaps work?), but Robert enlisted in Brighton in the Royal Sussex Regiment as Private G/7578 with the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion<sup>(2)</sup>. Interestingly Highbrook War Memorial (a small Sussex village) also commemorates Robert Brown and the Roll of Honour Web site notes that he was born in Richmond and was killed in action at Hoge on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1916, aged 36. It also notes that he was an employee of Mr Stephenson Clarke of Brook House, Highbrook<sup>(5)</sup>, so it seems Robert was still in service when he enlisted.

The 9th Battalion was formed at Chichester, in September 1914 and was part of Kitchener's New Army. All original recruits were given a 'G' prefix to their regimental number denoting "General Service".

After formation the battalion went into camp on the South Downs around Brighton where it often took part in recruitment marches on the seafront. Here it became part of the 73rd Brigade of 24th Division. In December 1914 the battalion moved to Portslade, and in April 1915 to Shoreham. In June 1915 a further move was made to Woking, in Surrey before arriving in France, at Boulogne on 31<sup>st</sup> Aug 1915 (6).

Within a few weeks of arrival, the battalion was thrown into the Battle of Loos, fighting near a location called "the Dump" and suffering heavy losses. Its next significant battle was in the Ypres salient at Hoge in February 1916, where the 9<sup>th</sup> manned trenches in the Bellewaarde area.

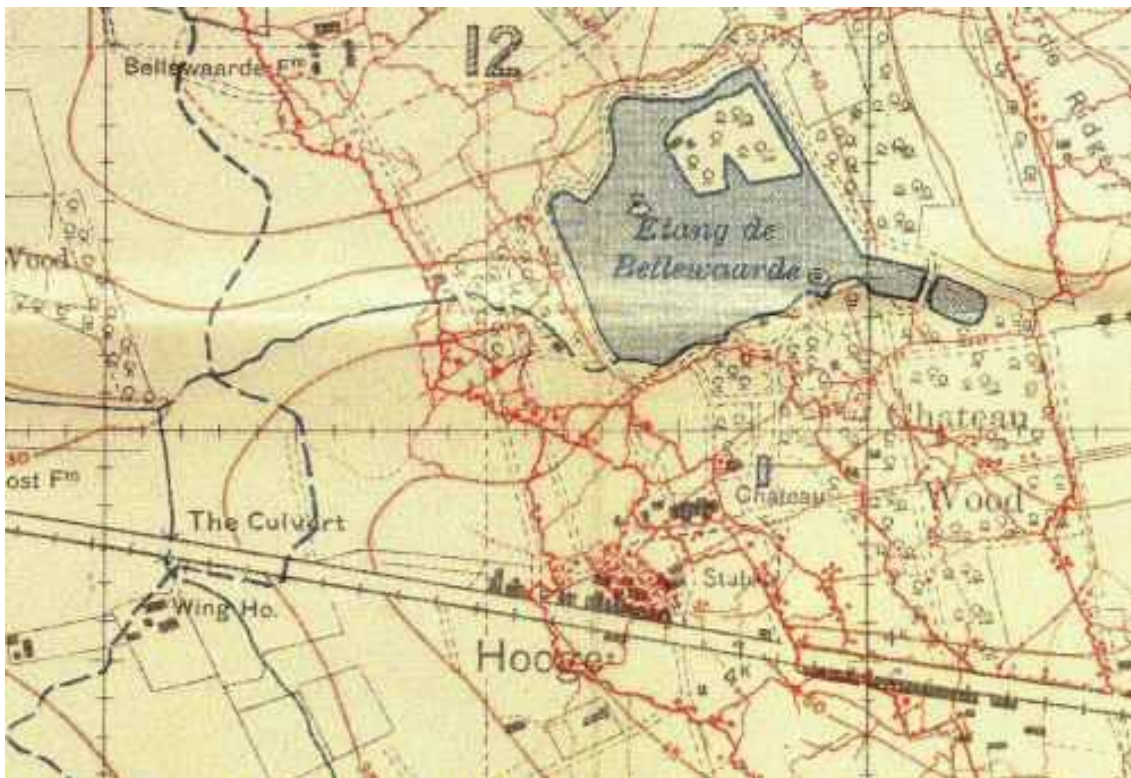


Figure 3 - Hoge Trench Map 1916 showing Bellewaarde sector top left



Figure 4 - Menin Road South Cemetery

Robert was killed in action on 12 Feb 1916, aged 36. He is buried at the [MENIN ROAD SOUTH MILITARY CEMETERY](#), Grave Reference I.G.3<sup>(3)</sup>.

Sources:

- (1) 1911 Census
- (2) UK Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914 – 1919
- (3) Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
[http://www.cwgc.org/search/casualty\\_details.aspx?casualty=95864](http://www.cwgc.org/search/casualty_details.aspx?casualty=95864)
- (4) Thornes House <http://thorneshouse.org.uk/index.html>
- (5) Roll of Honour <http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Sussex/Highbrook.html>
- (6) <http://battlefields1418.50megs.com/9sussex.htm>

NOTE: Although there are 3 other RR Brown's listed as casualties in the Great War, none of the others have any obvious connections to the North Yorkshire area and therefore I think they are much less likely candidates for "our RR Brown". The others are listed below.

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Service Number</u>	<u>Date Of Death</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Regiment/Service</u>	<u>Cemetery/Memorial Name</u>
<a href="#">BROWN, R R</a>	Second Lieutenant		18/06/1918	24	Royal Air Force	EAST BOLDRE (ST. PAUL) CHURCHYARD
<a href="#">BROWN, R R</a>	Private	50252	05/08/1917	21	Royal Fusiliers	BUSHEY (ST. JAMES) CHURCHYARD
<a href="#">BROWN, ROBERT RITCHIE</a>	Private	46893	10/04/1917	21	Northumberland Fusiliers	BEAURAINS ROAD CEMETERY, BEAURAINS