

ROBERT MEADEN

1884-1945

ROBERT was born at 66 Ditchling Street Brighton Sussex on 8th March 1884.

The first information we have of ROBERT is from his wedding certificate, which tells us that he was a Boilermaker and lived in Gunner Street Portsmouth. It is quite likely that he served his apprenticeship at Brighton Railway Factory (where his father worked as a brass moulder, and his Grandfather was Foreman of the Foundry.) before moving to Portsmouth Dockyard. He married ETHEL RUBY GOOD on the 10 September 1911 at ST, Marys Church Portsmouth, and they moved in with ETHEL's widowed mother SUSAN GOOD at 80 Clarence Street, Landport Portsmouth.

When SUSAN died in 1927, they continued to live there until his death from bowel cancer 29th September 1945. He was buried in Kingston cemetery 3rd Oct.

An interesting story R, W, H tells of his father, was that during one of Portsmouth's worst nights of bombing on 23rd December 1940, when the Germans carried out a special mission to destroy the Dockyard and the capital ships docked therein, they sent a single aircraft, An, HE 111, to drop a "MAX" blast bomb, the largest they possessed. It was only the second time this type of bomb had been used, because it was difficult to control the aircraft with such a heavy load. The bomb fell outside the Dockyard and the blast destroyed many streets and hundreds of houses. Thinking his parents must be dead he was finally allowed out of the Yard at 7am and cycled to their home, only to find the front door missing and his father trying to retrieve the carpet from the chimney, with the fire sat on top of that.

His parents had been in their garden air raid shelter during the bombing.

The house faced Pitt Street Baths, or what is now the main entrance to the gymnasium and the garden is now part of the supermarket.

There are two other facts about Robert that were told to me, by my father Robert William Henry and they were,

- (a) As a stocky thick set Boiler Maker, Robert was often called upon to climb inside a boiler during its manufacture and “dolly” up the rivets. The noise was so great that his ears would ring to such an extent that they were painful. He would often go home and syringe his ears.
- (b) From a very early age (I am told in his twenty’s) Robert was completely bald. He was so sensitive about it, that he would remove and replace his working cap for his better cap, in one swift movement. Indeed he wore a cap in his son’s wedding photos.