

# John Dunn Beeston

Driver T/421936. 665th H.T. Company (Blackheath) Army Service Corps.

According to the 1881 Census, John Beeston was born in Harpley in 1880. His parents were John and Susanna Beeston. At that time John (Jnr) had a sister, Elizabeth Ann, who was 4 years old. John (Snr) was listed on the Census as a Grocer, Draper and General Dealer and the family address was Nethergate Street, Harpley.

By 1891, the family had moved to Bircham Magna. Unfortunately the Census does not give any exact address information but John (Snr) was still engaged in being a Grocer and Draper and John (Jnr) was a Scholar aged 11. Kelly's Directory and Almanac for Great Bircham in 1900 listed John Beeston (Snr) as 'grocer, draper, patent medicine vendor and agent for Imperial Fire & Life and Norwich Ocean Accident & Guarantee Society & London Accidental Insurance Cos.

In 1901, the Census return shows John (Jnr) living at 'Shop, On the Green', Great Bircham with his mother and sister. John's father was not listed on the census at this address and his mother Susanna was shown as the head of the household and her occupation was given as Grocer and Draper. John and his sister were both unmarried at this point. In the same census year, John Beeston (Snr) was recorded as living in Mileham, Norfolk with his elderly father at the Post Office, Mileham Street, Mileham and was still engaged in being a Grocer and Draper.

The Birth, Marriage, Death and Parish Records (1837-2005) reveal that John (Jnr) married Ida Elizabeth Patrick from Flitcham in the first quarter of 1906. The 1911 Census shows John (Jnr) living in Great Bircham with his wife Ida and their four year old son, William James. John had followed in his father's footsteps as his occupation was given as Grocer and Draper. John (Snr) and his wife Susanna are also living in Great Bircham in 1911 but because they are listed on a different census return to John (Jnr), they could not have been at the same address.

Information received from the National Army Museum did not give exact details of John Beeston's enlistment in the Army Service Corps. It did however clarify that he died at Blackheath Camp, on July 2nd, 1918. There was however no explanation of the cause of death. His Soldiers' Effects Register shows £2.14s.7d was paid to his widow Ida in 1919. This is a fairly small sum which suggests he served for only a short time before his death and did not serve abroad. If he had served abroad he would have been eligible for both the British and Victory Medals. There is however no medal index card on record. The 665th Blackheath was a horse transport company which was formed in Woolwich in 1916 as a Reserve Depot engaged in training and sending out reinforcements but not leaving the UK.

John Beeston is buried in St Mary's Churchyard, Great Bircham.

