

**Grange U3A Family and Social History
Group Project on the Grange WW1 War Memorial**



***A short biography in commemoration of
John James Watson 1867- 1915***

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John James Watson was born at Sunnybrow, near Durham on the 25th June 1867. His parents were Ralph Watson and Jane Beall married in 1872 at York. He was the eldest of three sons.

In the 1881 Census John was an apprentice boilermaker in Darlington. His father was a joiner and the two brothers, William and Philip were at school.

In c1886 his father Ralph left England to emigrate to Hobart, Tasmania. Two years later on the 17th May 1888 his mother and two brothers also emigrated on the SS Ionic arriving on the 28th June. They had been sponsored by Ralph to join him in their new home. There are pictures of them in Tasmania. Quite why John James did not go with them is unknown.

On the 27th August 1891 John enlisted for twelve years in the Royal Navy as an Engine Room Artificer. This job was concerned with running and maintaining the engine room machinery including the boilers. With his experience as a boilermaker this was post was a shoe-in. He served on twenty-eight ships including the "Asia" (his first posting), the "Revenge" and "Prince of Wales". It was while he served on the Prince of Wales that he was promoted to Chief ERA, a rank he held until he was invalided out in June 1915.

His initial enlistment record describes him as being 5 feet 7 inches tall with dark hair and eye. His complexion was noted as being "Hazel" and he had a cut on his right hand. By his second 12 year enlistment his height had grown by 1 inch and his eyes were hazel!

At the time of his death on the 3rd October 1915, John and his wife Ada and daughter Doris were living at the Grange over Sands Convalescent Home. John was the Superintendent. It would seem that John had been invalided out when a heart condition involving mitral valve murmur and angina became apparent. It was only four months between this diagnosis and his death. There is no record of John being awarded any medals for his service. John did not leave a Will but his wife Ada did in 1940.

John died of natural causes with no mention of any war injuries.

The inscription on John's grave reads as follows:

*John James Watson
Late CERA R.N.
The beloved husband of
Ada Jane Watson
Died Oct 3rd 1915 aged 51 years
Also the dearly beloved wife of the above
Ada Jane Watson
Died Nov 28th 1940 and was interred at Portsmouth
“Till the day breaks”*



***The grave of John James Watson 1867-1915
In Grange Cemetery***

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