

## Biography of James Grieveson

James Grieveson was born on 25 September 1858 at South Hylton, Bishopwearmouth in the county of Durham. James was baptized on 24 October 1858.

He was the son of George Grieveson, a shipwright, and his wife Catherine (nee Clasper, the daughter of a potter). They had been married on 15 April 1849 at St Michael and All Angels, Bishopwearmouth.

James was their fourth child. George and Catherine's first child, also named James, had been born in 1851 but not survived. George junior was born in 1853 and John in 1855.

Their next child, Robert was born in March 1861 in Chatham. The late 1850s and early 1860s was a period of transition for shipbuilding at Chatham Dockyard with steam and steel beginning to replace sail and wood. We see many shipwrights migrating south for work, to say nothing of better overall conditions, especially in continuity of employment.

By 1871, the family has grown: Sarah was born in 1864 and, finally, William was born in 1868. The elder brothers, George junior and John, are shown as shipwright apprentices and it is likely that George senior, George junior and John are working at Chatham Dockyard. James is just 12 years old and still at school but will soon begin working.

In 1881, James Grieveson is aged 22 and a carpenter, still living at home with his parents at 35 Burritt Street in Rochester. But this will soon change as, in 1882, he marries Edith Laura Jupp. Edith was born in Gillingham and baptised 15 July 1860, daughter of John Jupp, a grocer, and his wife, Rosetta (nee Diprose).

James was admitted on 16 March 1889 to the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (Rochester and Chatham Branch).

In 1891, James and Edith are in their own home at 13 Rochester Avenue, Rochester with three children: Albert (aged 7), Leonard (aged 3) and Edith Laura junior, (aged 2). Now aged 32, James describes himself as a carpenter and joiner, as the distinction between the two trades declines.

By 1901, the growing family has moved from No. 13 to No. 47 Rochester Avenue. James and Edith's seven children include: Albert, now 17 and a brass and iron turner; Leonard, 13 and an errand boy; Edith, 11 and at school; John, 9; Rosetta – named after her maternal grandmother – aged 3; and six-month old George – probably named for James' father. Boarding with them is 14-year-old Alfred Johnson from Sheerness. Nine people in all.

1911 sees our first solid evidence that James works at the Dockyard. Now aged 52, still a carpenter and joiner, he gives his employer as "Government Dockyard". His wife, going by the name Laura (rather than Edith) is an office caretaker, possibly explaining their address of 384 High Street, Rochester (below). It is about a mile walk from the Dockyard main gate. Their children. Albert and John – a carpenter apprentice with a building firm, with Rosetta and George still at school. However. Edith Laura junior has died in 1902 at the age of 13.

Ten years later, the 1921 Census shows them at the same address. The 62-year-old James is working on his own account as a carpenter and joiner, after retiring from the Dockyard. His wife

(Edith again) is on “home duties”. Rosetta is now a Post Office assistant and George, taking after his grandfather, is a shipwright at the Dockyard.



384 High Street Rochester in May 2019 – the lefthand half of the building.

The next major event in James’ life is the death of his wife, Edith Laura, in February 1932 at the age of 71. Her ‘occupation’ is given as the wife of James, a Dockyard pensioner. She was buried in Strood Cemetery, Cuxton Road, Strood, Kent.

The 1939 Register has James, now a widower, living at 25 Glencoe Road, Chatham, with widow Elizabeth Lambkin, five years his junior. He lived there until his death on 23 October 1944. He was buried at Strood Cemetery in the same grave as his wife.