



Edwin Henry SKEWIS

Boy Telegraphist. Royal Navy H.M.S
"Mignonette"

At KES:

Edwin and his brother Ernest came to KES in 1911. They lived in Tunbridge Wells, having moved there after their father had died in 1909. Both boys worked in the kitchen, where Edwin was described "just fair". When he left in October 1914 he went straight into the Navy.

Date of Death: 17th March 1917

Place: At sea off the south west coast of Ireland.

Remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial

Edwin was only 17 years old when he was lost at sea. A family story recounts as follows:-

In March 1917 the Mignonette was acting as part of the naval anti-submarine force based at Cork Harbour. The ship had been responsible for the part rescue of the crew of the steamer SS Malmanger on March 12, 1917. A minefield was discovered off Galley Head, Ireland on Friday March 16 and on March 17th the ships Mignonette and her sister ship Alyssum were sent to sweep the minefield. During this work the bow of the Mignonette was blown off when it struck a mine. An attempt was made to tow her stern first but the vessel sank and her scattered remains are today found on the ocean bottom at a depth of 35m. During the resulting explosion on impact with the mine fourteen men of the Mignonette were recorded as killed, among whom was Edwin Henry Skewis. Most of the men who died on the ship worked as stokers and as men in the engine room. Two men working in the telegraph room, Edwin Henry Skewis as 'boy telegraphist' and William Herbert Ashcroft, age 19, a 'telegraphist' were among the listed fatalities and both of them are listed in the naval records as "killed as a direct result of enemy action - body not recovered for burial".

Obituary - KES Magazine

...entered the Royal Navy straight from School and during his training specialised in wireless telegraphy. After serving for some time on H.M.S Commonwealth he was posted to H.M.S. Mignonette, a mine sweeper doing service in the south of Ireland. This ship sank after striking a mine, and Skewis went down with the rest of his brave shipmates on March 17th. His death comes as a shock to many, for he was with us quite recently and proved himself to be a fine steady going fellow. He was ever to the fore in his school career, fond of fun and mischief and thoroughly loyal to his chums, of whom he had a host. We join the family in mourning his loss at so early an age.