

## BRITAIN William – A. 65

William Britain was the inventor of the hollow cast lead, painted model soldier. He is buried in All Saints churchyard under the inscription:-

“In loving memory of WILLIAM BRITAIN,  
who died XXIV Nov. MCMXXXIII aged LXXIII years  
(24) (1933) (73)

William Britain & his young wife Helen lived at “Rosedelba” in Sea View Avenue, Birchington.

The entry in the burial register states the same facts as the grave stone.

The Church magazine of December 1933 only lists his name among a group of others who were buried in November of that year. It would appear that he made no great demands on the villagers to recognise his inventive skills, so these facts went unnoticed at his death.

It is interesting to note that in Kelly’s Directory of 1930 (3 years before William died) a Mrs “BRITTON” is printed under “Rosedelba”. In 1932 we find “Wm BRITTON” in Kelly’s, however, in 1933 “Wm BRITAIN” is listed as the occupant. By 1934 we have only “Mrs Britain”. It would appear that the spelling of the surname was an error, but why only Mrs Britain was listed is unclear.

In 2009 Harry Kemp came to Birchington to try and find William’s grave. When I asked why he was interested in the man, he told me he was an avid collector of cast lead soldiers and the William Britain was the inventor of the method still used to produce them. The plan below gives the location of the grave.

