

**Private John Colesell**  
**Regimental Number: 53497**  
**2/7 Battalion, Manchester Regiment**

**born: 1898 - died: 28 November 1918**

Private John Colesell was born late in 1898, the son of Henry and Polly Colesell.<sup>1</sup> His father, Henry, (also sometimes called Harry) was born in about 1869 in Hounslow<sup>2</sup> and his mother, Polly (whose birth name was Mary Ann McLaren) was born in London in 1862.<sup>3</sup> Henry and Mary Ann were married at Holy Trinity Church in Hounslow on 4 August 1895. Henry was a labourer and living at 4 Brickhill Cottage, Holloway Street, Hounslow and Mary Ann was a factory woman, living at the same address.<sup>4</sup> They subsequently had three children – John and his two sisters, Ethel (born in 1896)<sup>5</sup> and Elizabeth (born in 1900).<sup>6</sup> In 1911, the family was living at 14 Dursley Cottages, Albion Road, Hounslow and Henry was a labourer.<sup>7</sup>



J Colesell in Gosselies Communal cemetery  
(Source: Author)

John admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 26 November 1918.<sup>8</sup> He had served with the 2/7 Battalion, Manchester Regiment, which was formed in 1914 and landed in France in February 1917.<sup>9</sup> In April 1918, it was reduced to a training cadre and then was disbanded in France on 31 July 1918.

When John was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS, he was a returning prisoner of war.<sup>10</sup> He survived only two days at the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS, dying on 28 November of enteritis with haemorrhage. He was buried two days later in the Gosselies Communal Cemetery (Grave 248), with the Canadian chaplain W. O'Neill Fisher presiding. He was a member of the Church of England.

The 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS was then the foremost Casualty Clearing Station on the advance to Germany and close to the outpost line.<sup>11</sup> The day he was admitted, the station was "Continuing receiving patients – large numbers of R.P.O.W.s [returning prisoners of war] arriving

in shocking condition, starved, emaciated, very scantily clad, very lousy and dirty with wounds and sores showing gross lack of care or treatment. Very busy." There are ten First World War servicemen buried in the Gosselies cemetery, all of whom died after the Armistice.<sup>12</sup>

No next-of-kin was identified for John in the chaplain's journal. However, the monies owing to him by the army after his death were sent to his mother, Polly, his sole legatee.<sup>13</sup>



Graves of nine WW1 soldiers in Gosselies Communal cemetery (Source: Author)

John was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 7 April 2015), entry for John Colsell, Registration district: Brentford, Sub-registration district: Isleworth, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 1184, Folio: 84, Page Number: 42, Household schedule number: 270.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 7 April 2015), entry for Mary Ann Emily McLaren, Registration district: Marylebone, Inferred County: London, Volume: 1a, Page: 484. Her name is also sometimes given as Polly – a common nickname for Mary.

<sup>4</sup> "London, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1921," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 7 April 2015), entry for Harry Colesell, Parish: Holy Trinity, Hounslow, Borough: Hounslow, Register Type: Parish Register

<sup>5</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 7 April 2015), entry for Ethel Colesell, Registration district: Brentford, Inferred County: Middlesex, Volume: 3a, Page: 68

<sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 7 April 2015), entry for Elizabeth Colesell, Registration district: Brentford, Inferred County: Middlesex, Volume: 3a, Page: 59

<sup>7</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 5 January 2015), entry for John Colesell, Registration district: Brentford, Registration District Number: 128, Sub-registration district: Isleworth, ED, institution, or vessel: 12, Household schedule number: 88, Piece: 6817

<sup>8</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 729

<sup>9</sup> "The Manchester Regiment 1881 - 1958" (<http://www.themanchesters.org/>; accessed 31 March 2015)

<sup>10</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 729

<sup>11</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G))

<sup>12</sup> "Gosselies Communal Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>; accessed 30 March 2015)

<sup>13</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 31 March 2015), entry for John Colesell

<sup>14</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 31 March 2015), entry for John Colesell