William Ashton



Rank: - Private

Number: - 30002

Regiment: - Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment) (formerly 24579 York and Lancaster Regiment) 22nd Labour Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 12th September 1916 aged 36 years

Cemetery: - Corbie Communal Extension, Somme, France Plot 2 Row D Grave 20

Batley News, 23 Sep 1916

Family Details

William was born in Batley Carr in c. 1880 the son of Thomas and Sarah Ann Ashton (nee Ounsworth). They had married in 1860.

His father was a cabinet maker, who was born in York and his mother, who was at one time a shirt maker, came from Hull.

The coupled had settled in Dewsbury for the birth of Fredrick 1861 and Anna Maria in 1862 before moving to Leeds before the birth of Ellen 1865, Sarah Anne 1868, Friend 1872, but returned to live in the area at King Street, Batley Carr before Humphrey was born in 1875, Thomas 1878, William 1880 and John 1883. They were living in King Street in 1881.

In 1891 the family was living at 57, King Street and William was still at school. A decade later the family was living at 51, King Street and William was working on his own account as a greengrocer and his brother, Thomas later joined him in the business.

His father, Thomas, died in October 1906 and Sarah Ann in October 1914 when they lived at 80, King Street, Batley Carr.

William married Annie Rusby at St. Michael's Church, Thornhill on 25th December 1915.

William worked for Mr. C.H. Kitson, contractor of Batley Carr before he enlisted.

Service Details

William enlisted 11 weeks after he was married and his wife never saw him again.

The 22nd Labour Battalion was formed in April 1916 at Millington, moving to France in May 1916. They were attached to Fifth Army as Army Troops.

The Headquarter locations were: - 22 May 1916: Regnières-Ecluse: - 12 June 1916: Daours and 2 July 1916: Toutencourt which is 14 miles north east of Amiens.

His wife received the following letter from an officer: -

"I am very sorry to inform you that your husband Private W. Ashton died of wounds on the 12th inst. Earlier in the day he had been badly wounded by a piece of shell and was taken to hospital. His remains have been interred in a local military cemetery very close to the hospital. It may be some consolation to you to know that at the time your husband was hit he was engaged in some very important work and he laid down his life for King and Country. I express to you the sympathy of all the officers, non-commissioned officers and the men of his Battalion in the blow which has befallen you."

William was awarded the British War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at King Street Mission Hall, Corbie Communal Cemetery and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group