George Edward Lodge





Rank: - Private

Number: - 42151

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) 15th Battalion

Died at Cullercoats: - 20th January 1919 aged 32 years

Cemetery: - Whitley Bay, (Hartley South), Northumberland C.C. 1007

Family Details.

George Edward was born in Batley on 9th February 1885 the son of Wesley and Elizabeth Lodge (nee Booth) and was baptised at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel on the 22nd March 1895 when they lived at Field Hill, Batley.

When the 1881 census was taken the family was living in Field Hill with Wesley's family where both he and his father were shown as managers in shoddy manufacturing.

His siblings were John Arthur (1873), Charles Henry 1875; Robert Booth was born in 1877 followed by Philip Wesley 1879, Benjamin Ewart 1881, Ann Amelia 1887 who died aged 9 months in July 1888, Annie Elizabeth 1890 and Albert in December 1891 who only lived for 12 hours.

In 1891 the family was living at Spring Grove, Upper Batley and had two domestic servants.

Wesley, an extract manufacturer, died on the 15th May 1895 at Ingle Bank, Batley leaving £3,435.7s.4d.

In 1901 Elizabeth was living at Ingle Bank which was next door to Blenheim House with her younger children, a servant and her father John Booth who was a retired grocer. Philip was working as a plumber and glazier and George Edward would still have been at Batley Grammar School.

Elizabeth was still at Batley when the 1911 census was taken living in a seven roomed home, Moorland House at Field Hill with her son Charles Henry and Annie Elizabeth.

On the 30th October 1915 it was reported in the Batley News "Charlie" Lodge the son of the late Wesley paid a visit to his friends and relatives in the district. Private Lodge was in the veterinary corps attached to the Royal Horse Artillery and in that capacity was doing congenial work well.

The report continued: -

""Charlie" is turned forty but he is as young in spirit as ever and his cheery voice is always breathing encouragement to the boys in his battery. He looked much fagged for want of sleep when we saw him last Saturday night but after a quiet

weekend with his mother and sister at Holmfirth he turned up at Batley on Tuesday in the best of health and spirits. Delighted he was to meet his old friends and in acknowledging a hearty welcome he said" We have got the shells---- plenty of shells—and the guns. All we want is a few more Batley boys to come give us a lift. Yes- and we must have them."

Before 1910 George Edward had gone to live at Newcastle upon Tyne where in 1911 he was living with his wife, Elizabeth Moore (nee Irwin) who he had married in Newcastle on the 18th December 1910, at 147, Warwick Street, Heaton giving his occupation as a woollen and cotton rags manager for a wholesale merchant.

His son John Edward Wesley was born on 24th April 1913 followed by George Edward on 8th July 1916.



Photo with his Wife and Children.

Service Details.

His service records have not survived but his medal rolls index cards state he enlisted in the West Yorkshire Regiment on 8th January 1917 at Newcastle and was discharged on 6th December 1918 reason given 392(XV1). He was awarded a Silver War Badge no. B55398.

His brother Charlie, who was in the veterinary corps attached to the Royal Horse Artillery, paid a visit to Batley to see his friends and relatives during the last week of October 1915. It was reported in the Batley News that "Charlie" was turned forty but was as young in spirit as ever and his cheery voice is always breathing encouragement to the boys in his battery .The reporter states that when he say him the previous Saturday he looked very fagged for want of sleep but after a quiet weekend at Holmfirth with his mother and sister he returned to Batley the following Tuesday in the best of health and spirits. He was delighted to meet his old friends and said*: -*

"We have got the shells-plenty of shells—and plenty of guns. All we want is a few more Batley boys to give us a lift. Yes, we must have them."

The 15th Battalion (Leeds Pals) was serving in France from March 1916 where it came under the orders of 93rd Brigade, 31st Division.

In 1917 they took part in operations on the Ancre, Third Battle of Scarpe and the capture of Oppy Wood. On the 7th December they amalgamated with the 17th Battalion becoming 15th/17th Battalion.

In 1918 the first battle they fought was the Battle of St. Quentin which took place between 21st March and 5th April.

On the 22nd March the battalion arrived at 4 am at camp west of Villers and were immediately ordered to move forward to occupy forward positions, two companies went to the east of Brei and two companies to the west of Brei. By 3.30 pm the bridge at Brei was completely demolished.

At 8 am on the 25th they received news that the bridge at Eteragny had been crossed and the enemy had to be counter attacked. They attacked at 9.30 am and they came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire west of Eterpigny. The

position was held all day against severe odds until they were ordered to start to withdraw at 8.30 pm.

On the 26th at 10 am they were ordered to withdraw immediately to Rosieres and this coincided with the arrival of the enemy. Withdrawal began immediately, each company covering its own withdrawal. By 3.30 pm they were in positions near the railway and held the positions with the 2nd Field Company of Royal Engineers on the left and 2nd Middlesex on the left. There was no action that night.

At 2pm on the 27th the machine gun officer arrived at Battalion H.Q. and reported that all the troops on the left were retiring and in fact there were troops retiring through the village. "B" Company who were in reserve

George Edward was captured by the Germans and taken prisoner.

In the 14th June 1918 issue of the Batley Reporter there is a report that read:-

"Private George Edward Lodge youngest son of the late Wesley Lodge of Batley whose wife and family reside at Whitley Bay and has been posted "missing" since March 27th is a prisoner of war. A letter to that effect dated April 2nd has been received from the soldier himself."

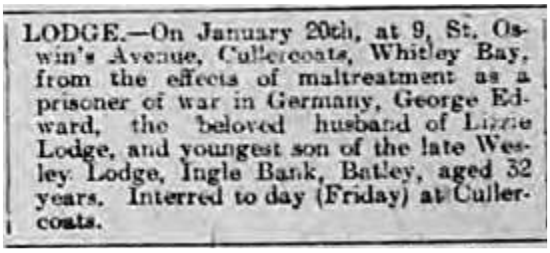
In captivity he was allowed to send letters home and his wife received about eight, although he never received any from her although she sent them. All he asked for in the letters were food and boots.

He was released after the end of the war on 6th December 1918 and arrived home in time for Christmas 1918 but he weighed only five stone and seven pounds, his wife tried to feed him food but his body could not take it and he died four and a half weeks later on 20th January 1919 due to the malnutrition he had received as a prisoner of war. Officially he died of debility, heart disease and bronchitis brought on by maltreatment he had received when he was a prisoner war.

It was reported in the Batley Grammar School Magazine

"George Lodge was reported "prisoner of war" in our last number. He was repatriated, but never recovered from the abominable ill-treatment he suffered

and died at Cullercoats in January. He was one of a family of our dodgiest footballers."



LODGE.—On January 20th, at 9, St. Oswin's Avenue, Cullercoats, Whitley Bay, from the effects of maltreatment as a prisoner of war in Germany, George Edward, the beloved husband of Lizzie Lodge, and youngest son of the late Wesley Lodge, Ingle Bank, Batley, aged 32 years. Interred to day (Friday) at Cullercoats.

Details of his will states "Died 20th January 1919 of 9, St.Oswin's Avenue, Cullercoats, Northumberland left £195 "

His wife and children emigrated to Aspendale, Victoria, Australia in about 1925 where their descendants still live.

George Edward was awarded the British War Medal, Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel, Batley Grammar School and Batley War Memorial.

Thanks to his granddaughter Leslie Davis for allowing reproduction of photographs and additional information and to Philip Wheeler et al for using research from Batley Lads.

