Ben Thornton Parker





Rank: -Private

Number: - 15/1210

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

Killed in Action: - 1st July 1916 aged 18 years

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France Pier and Face 2 A 2 C and 2 D.

Batley News, 8 Jul 1916, 29 Jul 1916 (photo)

Family Details

Ben was born in Healey, Batley on 28th February 1898 the son of John William and Margaret Parker (nee Thornton, m, 1895, registered Dewsbury). He was baptised at Staincliffe Wesleyan Chapel on 17th April 1898, the same day as his cousin Lizzie Thornton who was born 5th February 1898.

In 1901 the family, including his sister Constance Harriet born 1896, was living at Belle Vue Street, Healey with a live-in domestic servant Florence Exley. John William gave his occupation as a draper.

Within the next decade the family had moved to live in a six roomed home at 168, Halifax Road, Batley and John William described himself as a Drapery Manager. Both children were still at school. Elsie was born in 1908 but sadly died in the same year.

Ben attended Heckmondwike Grammar School and was later apprenticed to Messrs. Smithson and Gledhill, dyers and finishers, Ravensthorpe.

Service Details

Ben enlisted in late 1914 into the "Leeds Pals". The 15th (Service) Battalion (1st Leeds) was formed in Leeds in September 1914 by the Lord Mayor and City. From June 1915 it came under orders of 93rd Brigade, 31st Division and in December 1915 moved to Egypt. The stay there was not long and they went to France in March 1916. They landed at Marseilles and moved north for service on the Western Front.

Their first major battle was at Albert which started on 1st July 1916 and was part of the Somme Offensive.

Ben went missing on the first day of this battle as did Hugh Woods son of Dr. J.H. Woods J.P. of Wellington Street, Batley who occupied the same hut. Hugh had attended Wheelwright Grammar School.

A comrade who was injured but was able to be taken to a hospital in Cheshire said he was killed by a shell.

Ben was awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ben is remembered with Honour at Christ Church, Staincliffe, Staincliffe Wesleyan Church and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group