



Arthur Benson

1889 – 1916

Arthur was born in Dewsbury on 31st March 1889. His father was William (birth name registered as *Walter*) Benson, a Card Fettle born in Liversedge in 1847 died in 1894. His mother was Sarah Ann (née Proctor) born in Heckmondwike in 1851 and died in 1907. They were married at St. Peter's Church, Birstall on 6th July 1873.

Their other children were; Oliver, born in 1877 and died in 1901, Annie, born in 1881 and died in 1882, Etty, born in 1883, Alice, born in 1887 and Fred, born in 1893.

On the 1891 and 1901 Census Records the family lived at 3, Back Beckett Nook, Dewsbury Moor. In 1911 Arthur is working as a yarn spinner and living with younger brother Fred at the home of their sister Alice (now Mrs Norman Scargill) at 14, Kilpin Hill Lane, Dewsbury.

Arthur attended Dewsbury Moor Church School and Sunday school. He also played football for Dewsbury Anroyd F.C. and was employed by Messrs Pyrah and Mitchell, yarn spinners, Liversedge. He was granted home leave to be married on 5th June 1916 at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor to Gladys Annie Holroyd (born in 1893 and died in 1951) with Ernest Whitaker as his best man. Their home was in Mark Street, Liversedge. On 16th June 1916, the pair returned to France. Gladys was remarried in 1918 to Henry (Harry) Wood (born in 1892 and died in 1960), they had three children.

Having joined the Heckmondwike Artillery, Arthur was mobilised along with best friend Ernest Whitaker at the outbreak of war. He served as Driver 1460 in the 246th Brigade Royal Field Artillery. Whilst stationed at Doncaster he was kicked in the ribs by a horse and spent three months in hospital. Once recovered, he was placed in a Reserve Battery but negotiated a transfer to the Battery with which Ernest served and went out to the Western Front in April 1915. The pair were demobilised as time-expired in 1916 but both signed on again. He died from the effects of gas on 26th July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. He was buried in Mesnil Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. Arthur was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

It was Ernest who wrote home to tell friends of Arthur's death; at around 7am on 26th July, the German bombardment that morning included gas shells, and Arthur died from the effects of gas poisoning. Part of his letter read; "*Old 'Bense' died as he had lived, without a fear.*"

The village of Mesnil is about 6.5 kilometres north of Albert. It was close to the Allied front line until September 1916, and again from March to August 1918. The communal cemetery extension was begun in July 1916, and used again as a front-line cemetery in 1918. It was greatly enlarged after the Armistice. The extension now contains 333 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War.

Arthur is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial in St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor.

In Memory of

Driver

A Benson

1460, 246th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 26 July 1916

Remembered with Honour

Mesnil Communal Cemetery Extension



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.