



## **John Arthur Clifford Bell**

### **1897 - 1917**

John was born in Dewsbury on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1897 and was baptised at St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road, Dewsbury on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1897. His father was Arthur Bell, a Grocer born in Chapel Haddlesey near Selby in 1860 and died in 1932. His mother was Phoebe Ann (nee Jones) who was born in Willenhall, Staffordshire in 1867 and died in 1926. They were married on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1886 at St. Peter's Church, Stanley near Wakefield. Arthur worked in the grocery trade from leaving school and by 1891 he had a shop in Warren Street in Savile Town. Ten years later, he was the resident caterer at The Mansion in Crow Nest Park, which was the property of Dewsbury Corporation.

Their other children were; Emily born in 1887, Minnie, born in 1889, twins Elsie and Lily, born in 1891 and Alice Maud born in 1893.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 51/52 Warren Street, Savile Town, in 1901 and 1911 at The Mansion, Crow Nest Park.

John, known as Jack to his family, was a single man who was educated at Dewsbury Parish Church School and was attached to St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor where he was a chorister. He was employed by Messrs Shepley, Plumbers, Bond Street, Dewsbury.

He enlisted in one of the Army Cyclist Battalions in June 1916 and was later transferred into the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion of The King's (Liverpool Regiment) serving as Private 57625 and was sent to the Western Front in December 1916. He was killed in action on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917 during the first day of the Battle of Arras; twenty-nine men of the Wiltshire Regiment and the 18<sup>th</sup> King's (Liverpool Regiment) were killed on that day and were buried in Henin North Cemetery, Henin-sur-Cojeul, about 800 metres North of the village. In 1919 his remains and those of his comrades were reburied in Wancourt British Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Wancourt is a village about 8 kilometres south-east of Arras. It was captured on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1917 after very heavy fighting and the advance was continued on the following days. The cemetery, called at first Cojeul Valley Cemetery, or River Road Cemetery, was opened about ten days later; it was used until October 1918, but was in German hands from March 1918 until 26<sup>th</sup> August, when the Canadian Corps recaptured Wancourt. At the Armistice, the cemetery contained 410 graves, but was very greatly increased in the following years when graves were brought in from small cemeteries and isolated positions on the battlefields south-east of Arras, including Henin North Cemetery, Henin-sur-Cojeul. Wancourt British Cemetery now contains 1,936 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 829 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 76 casualties known or believed to be buried among them

John is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour in Dewsbury Library and as *Jack Bell* on the War Memorial in St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor and on the Dewsbury Parish Church School War Memorial.

In Memory of

Private

## John Arthur Clifford Bell

57625, 18th Bn., The King's (Liverpool Regiment) who died on 09 April 1917 Age 19

Son of Arthur and Pheobe Bell, of Beaconsfield House, Bridlington, Yorks. Native of Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Wancourt British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Ms. Danielle Roubroeks, Antwerp, Belgium.