John Appleyard
1896 - 1917

John was born in Liversedge in 1896. His father was Joseph Appleyard, an Engineer in a woollen mill born in Pudsey in 1867 and died in 1937. His mother was Mary Ellen (nee Hays) born in Liversedge in 1868 and died in 1955. They were married in 1895.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 12, Occupation Lane, Staincliffe, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 11, Fox's Buildings, Chapel Fold, Halifax Road, Staincliffe, Batley.

Their other children were; Henry, a twin brother to John born in Liversedge in 1896 and served in World War 1, Frances, born in Batley in 1900 and Joseph, born in Batley in 1910.

John was a single man who was educated at Staincliffe Parish Church Day School and was also a Church member and Sunday school teacher; he was a good singer in the choir, possessing a fine tenor voice and performed in the local dramatic society. He worked as a piecener for Messrs George Fox & Sons, Staincliffe.

He enlisted on 30th June 1916 serving as Private 43818 in the 19th Battalion Durham Light Infantry. He was killed in action in France on 7th August 1917 when struck by a shell and was buried in Villers-Faucon Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Villers-Faucon was captured by the 5th Cavalry Division on 27 March 1917, lost on 22 March 1918, and retaken by the III Corps on 7 September 1918. The Commonwealth graves in the communal cemetery are those of soldiers who died in February-August 1917 or (in the case of two who are buried in Row B) in September 1918. They were made by the cavalry, the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division, and other fighting troops. The communal cemetery contains 227 First World War burials, five of them unidentified. The adjoining extension was begun in April 1917 and used until March 1918. It was then used by the Germans, and Commonwealth burials were resumed in September and October 1918. Further Commonwealth graves were brought in after the Armistice from a wide area round Villers-Faucon. The extension contains 459 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 144 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to six casualties believed to be buried among them.

John 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 Christ Church, Staincliffe.

In Memory of
Private

John Appleyard

43818, 19th Bn., Durham Light Infantry who died on 07 August 1917 Age 21

Son of Joseph and Mary Ellen Appleyard, of 11, Fox Buildings, Halifax Rd., Staincliffe, Batley, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Villers-Faucon Communal Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Headstone photograph by courtesy of the "In Memory" Website of Pierre Vandervelden.