



Harold Idle

1884-1918

Harold was born in Earlsheaton on 3rd October 1884 and baptised at Holy Innocents Church Thornhill Lees on 16th November 1884. His father was Matthew Idle, a Woollen Cloth Fuller born in Dewsbury in 1855 and died in 1944. His mother was Edith (nee Littlewood) born in 1857 in Honley near Huddersfield and died in 1889. They were married at Holy Innocents Church on 25th December 1883.

They had another son, Leonard, born in 1886.

Matthew was remarried in 1890 to Mary Auty (born in 1864 and died in 1902) they had three daughters; Alice, born in 1891, Norah, born in 1893 and Ada, born in 1896.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 2, Scarborough Street, Thornhill and in 1901 and 1911 at 68, Headland Lane, Earlsheaton.

Harold worked as a Joiner and was married in Bradford in 1916 to a widow, Elizabeth Ann Bartle nee Dransfield (born in 1875 and died in 1937); she married her first husband Herbert Atkinson Bartle (born in 1875 and died in 1912) in Bradford in 1899 and they had two daughters; Mabel, born in 1902 and Annie, born in 1907 and died in 1908. They had emigrated to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada in 1911. Elizabeth returned in June 1913 with Mabel.

Harold and Elizabeth lived at 50, Southfield Avenue, Little Horton, Bradford; they had no children. She later moved to live in Heston, Middlesex to be near her daughter Mabel (now Mrs. Cecil Leonard Huckle).

He enlisted on 21st March 1916 serving as Sapper 108764 in the 97th Field Company Royal Engineers. He went to France in November 1916, was on home leave Christmas 1917. He was killed in action near Heudicourt, France on 21st March 1918, the First Day of the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*). An extract from the War Diary reads "*21 March. Intense enemy bombardment opened on our lines at 3.30 am. No. 2 Section with 50 attached Infantry stood to in trench at 7.30am in front of Heudicourt in heavy barrage, wearing box respirators owing to heavy gas cloud from gas shells. During this bombardment 9 Sappers and 3 attached Infantrymen were killed and 3 Sappers and 1 Infantry Serjeant wounded by shell fire*". In 1920 his remains were found and reburied in Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery, Nord, France. Harold was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery was begun in November 1917, taken over by the Germans in 1918, and used again by Commonwealth forces in September and October 1918, but the original burials (now in Plot III) are only 55 in number. It was enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from other cemeteries and from the battlefield of Cambrai. The cemetery now contains 1,295 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 381 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 34 casualties known or believed to be buried among them.

Harold 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 Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church Earlsheaton and on the Little Horton War Memorial, Bradford, located next to St. Oswald's Church.

In Memory of

Sapper

H Idle

108764, 97th Field Coy., Royal Engineers who died on 21 March 1918 Age 33

Husband of E. A. Idle, of 50, Southfield Avenue, Little Horton, Bradford, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of "Frajohn" a member of the Great War Forum.