



John Blain McColl

1885-1918

John was born in Liverpool in 1885. His father was Robert Blain McColl, a Drysaltern Warehouseman born in Glencairn, Dumfries, Scotland in 1856 and died in 1927. His mother was Henrietta (nee Doull) born in Liverpool in 1862 and died in 1949. They were married on 7th April 1882 at St. John the Baptist Church, Toxteth Park, Liverpool.

Their other children who were all born in Liverpool were; Janette (Janet) Blain, born in 1883, Alexander, born in 1887, Elizabeth Gunn, born in 1889, Mary Hastings, born in 1891, Robert Blain, born in 1893, Robina, born in 1895, David, born in 1897 and killed in action 21st March 1918, William Blain, born in 1902 and Colin Campbell, born in 1904.

On the 1891 Census the family were living at 46, Creswick Street, Everton, Liverpool, in 1901 at 108, Landseer Road, Everton and in 1911 at 23, York Terrace, Everton. John is recorded at this address as he is still working as a Fruit Trader in Liverpool.

John was married to Catherine/Kate Rimmer (born in Dublin in 1885 and died in Liverpool in 1960) on 9th February 1905 at St. Benedict's Church, Walton, Liverpool. They had two children who were both born in Liverpool; John Blain, born in 1907 and Evelyn, born in 1909. On the 1911 Census, Catherine and her children are living at West View, Chickenley Lane, Dewsbury. They later moved to Laurel Mount, Syke Lane, Earlsheaton where John was employed by Messrs Cooper and Howroyd, Wholesale Fruiterers, Dewsbury. In 1939 Catherine was living at 14, Kingsway, Huyton, Liverpool.

He enlisted in Dewsbury serving as Private 89656 in the 18th Battalion Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) and was killed in action in the Aisne Region of France on 20th September 1918 and was buried in the field; in August 1919 his remains were reburied in Unicorn Cemetery, Vendhuile, Aisne, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Vendhuile is a village about 19 kilometres north of St. Quentin and 24 kilometres south-east of Peronne. Unicorn Cemetery is about 3 kilometres south-west of Vendhuile on the west side of the road to the villages of Lempire and Ronssoy. The cemetery now contains 1,008 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 409 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to ten casualties known or believed to be buried among them. There are also special memorials to eight casualties buried in Lempire British Cemetery whose graves could not be found on concentration.

John is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and as John B McColl 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.

In Memory of
Private

J B McColl

89656, 18th Bn., Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) who died on 20 September 1918

Remembered with Honour
Unicorn Cemetery, Vendhuile



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.