



## **John Austin Harding**

### **1900-1918**

John was born in Westtown, Dewsbury on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1900 and baptised at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1900. His father was Joseph Harding, a Coal Miner/Hewer born in Huddersfield in 1867 and died in 1944. His mother was Jane (nee Webster) born in Staincliffe, Batley in 1868 and died in 1933. They were married on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1892 at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church.

Their other children were; William, born in 1893 and died in 1898, Herman Joseph, born in 1895 and died in 1898 and Gerald, born in 1898 and died in 1901.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at Middle Road Westtown and in 1911 at 127, High Street, Westtown.

Joseph was remarried in 1941 to a widow, Mary Ellen Ryan (born in 1872 and died in 1959) he had a lifelong connection with Dewsbury Celtic Rugby Club and was a committeeman of Dewsbury Irish National Club. He died from a fall in the street during the WW2 blackout, having survived a previous fall two or three years earlier.

John was educated at St. Paulinus School and attended the Church and was a member of the Boys Brigade. He worked as a hairdresser.

He enlisted in Dewsbury serving as Private 63598 in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1918. He was killed in action in France only two weeks later on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1918 and was buried in Bienvillers Military Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Bienvillers is a large village in the department of the Pas de Calais 18 kilometres south-west of Arras. The cemetery was begun in September 1915 until March 1917; it was reopened from March to September 1918, when the village was again near the front line. Bienvillers Military Cemetery now contains 1,605 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War.

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 Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church.

His parents paid for a stained glass window to his memory in Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church, the inscription reads: *"Pray for the soul of John A. Harding. Killed in the War 30<sup>th</sup> Augt. 1918."*

In Memory of

Private

## John Austin Harding

63598, 2nd/4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 30 August 1918 Age 18

Son of Joseph and Jane Harding, of 127, High St., West Town, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

**Bienvillers Military Cemetery**



**Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

