



## Wilby Illingworth

### 1876-1918

Wilby was born in Ossett, Yorkshire in 1876. His father was James Illingworth, born in Ossett in 1847 and died in 1901. His mother was Elizabeth Conyer (nee Wilby) born in Hunslet, Leeds in 1847 and died in 1876. They were married in 1869.

They had another son, William Henry born in 1870.

On the 1881 Census James and his two sons are living with the family of his father Edmund Illingworth at South Terrace, Ossett. James was remarried in 1883 to Eliza Smith (born in 1846 and died in 1935) a widow with four children and they lived in Wortley, Leeds; they had a son, Scott, born in 1883 and died in 1896.

Wilby and his elder brother remained with their grandfather's family until Edmund died in 1901. Wilby then found accommodation in the home of Sarah Teale at Town End, Ossett along with two other boarders; he was working as a rag grinder, but by 1911 he was working as a male attendant at the Dewsbury Union Workhouse, Healds Road, Dewsbury.

The inscription on his Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone reads; "*After 17 years service. Brother Wm. Henry*". These words, requested by his brother suggest that he had served with the armed forces for 17 years. Although both the 1901 and 1911 censuses show him working in civilian jobs, he must have been a Territorial since 1901 and who in 1914 was still on the reserve. He enlisted at Pontefract serving as Driver 18030 in the 119<sup>th</sup> Battery, 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. His early embarkation for France on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 1914 further indicates that he was a reservist. He was later posted to the Italian Front for two months, but returned to the Western Front for the rest of his service.

He was severely wounded and gassed during the later stages of the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*) and died in hospital on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1918 at Aire-sur-la-Lys. He was buried in Aire Communal Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. Wilby was awarded the 1914 Star with Clasp, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 1918, the Ossett Observer reported his death and published a letter which the hospital matron had written to his fiancée, Miss Edith Winpenny, Dale Street, Ossett to say that he had been brought in "*severely wounded and gassed*" and had died peacefully.

Aire is a town about 14 Kms south-south-east of St. Omer. From March 1915 to February 1918, Aire was a busy but peaceful centre used by Commonwealth forces as corps headquarters. The Highland Casualty Clearing Station was based there as was the 39<sup>th</sup> Stationary Hospital (from May 1917) and other medical units. Plot I contains burials from this period. The burials in plots II, III and IV relate to the fighting of 1918, when the 54<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station came to Aire and the town was, for a while, within 13 Kms of the German lines. The cemetery now contains 894 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.

Wilby 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 Ossett War Memorial.

In Memory of

Driver

## Wilby Illingworth

18030, 119th Bty. 27th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 14 May 1918 Age 42

Son of James and Elizabeth Illingworth, of Ossett, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Aire Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

