



Fred Whitwham 1885 – 1915

Fred was born in Dewsbury on 20th July 1885. His father was Walter Whitwham, a Shuttle Maker born in Kirkstall, Leeds in 1854 and died in 1902. His mother was Margaret Jane (nee Yarker) born in Harrogate in 1854 and died in 1925. They were married on 23rd September 1876 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury.

Their other children were; Mary Elizabeth, born in 1877, Joseph Thomas, born in 1879 and died in 1881, Lily, born in 1881 and died in 1882, Ada, born in 1887 and Alice, born in 1889.

On the 1881 Census the family lived at High Street, Batley, in 1891 at 4, Chapel Street, Batley, in 1901 Walter is living as a boarder at 3, Upper Mount Street, Batley; Margaret and the rest of the family are at 83, Lidgate Lane, Dewsbury. The 1911 census shows Fred stationed in China, his widowed mother is living alone at 1a, Upper Road, Batley Carr, Dewsbury.

Fred was a single man who worked at Messrs Joshua Ellis and Company, woollen manufacturers in Batley Carr.

He attested into the army in around 1909. According to a newspaper report, he was in Singapore at the outbreak of war, but came to France with his regiment in January 1915 serving as Private 9908 in the 1st Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was hit in the head by shrapnel and died of his wounds on 11th June 1915 in the Duchess of Westminster's Hospital, Le Touquet, France. He is buried in Le Touquet-Paris Plage Communal Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. Fred was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Fred's death was reported in the local newspaper, where a letter to Fred's mother appeared from Nurse Mary A. Mitchell. She wrote: *"I nursed your son all the time he was in this hospital. He was very ill indeed when he came, but he got a little better, and was quite sensible for a time. He often used to speak of you and ask how you were. We were all fond of him ... he was so patient and good, and on Sunday evenings he used to help with singing the hymns. His poor head was badly hurt, but, of course, there is not a great deal that can be done for that."*

The Duchess of Westminster's Hospital (No.1 B.R.C.S) was at Le Touquet from October, 1914, to July, 1918, and the British graves in the Communal Cemetery were made from that hospital. The Communal Cemetery contains a number of French and Italian military graves, and two British Plots in the corner. A wooden obelisk in memory of the British dead was erected in the cemetery by the Lifeboat men of the commune. There are now 142 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war here. All of whom died in the period November, 1914, to April, 1916.

Fred is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Private

Fred Whittham

9908, 1st Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 11 June 1915 Age 30

Son of Walter and Margaret Jane Whittham, of 9, Short St., Carlisle St., Batley Carr, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Le Touquet-Paris Plage Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

