



Howard Oates

1892-1918

Howard was born in Thornhill Lees on 27th September 1892 and baptised in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees on 9th October 1892. His father was John Richard Oates, a Gas Founder in a glass bottle works born in Thornhill Lees in 1871 and died in 1951. His mother was Louisa (nee Fenton) born in Thornhill Lees in 1872 and died in 1945. They were married in Holy Innocents Church on 9th July 1892.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at Lees Hall Road and in 1911 at 3, Morton Street, Thornhill Lees.

Howard was an only child who in 1911 worked as a bottle gatherer at Kilner Brothers Glass Bottle Works in Thornhill Lees but later worked as a Millhand at Syke Ing Mill, Scar End, Earlsheaton. He was a talented cricketer who played for Moorlands Wesleyans and later Mirfield Cricket Club Second Eleven and attended Dewsbury Baptist Church and the Out-and-Out Mission. He was married in 1915 to Maria Sykes (born in 1893 and died in 1978), they lived at 47, Fairfield Terrace, Dewsbury and had a daughter, Doreen, born 7th January 1916. Maria and her daughter later moved to live at 15, West Caroline Street, Blackpool.

He enlisted in Dewsbury on 26th March 1916 in the 2nd/4th Battalion Cameron Highlanders with the Service Number 4679 but was transferred to the 7th Battalion of the Machine Gun Corps on 25th July 1916 serving as Private 44715. He was sent to the Western Front in the following month and had several spells in hospital, suffering from trench feet, gastro-enteritis and an unspecified wound. In February 1918 he became a member of 220 Company which was part of the 7th Division which was transferred in the spring of 1918 from the Western Front to Italy to support the Italian forces which were under severe pressure from the Austrian army. He was severely wounded in both legs on 13th July 1918 resulting in his left foot having to be amputated and sustaining a serious wound in his right thigh; despite intensive treatment he died in hospital on 25th July 1918 and was buried in Cavalletto British Cemetery, Italy. Howard was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Cemetery is 12 kilometres south of Asiago in the province of Vicenza, Veneto region, 9.5 kilometres North West of Lusiana and 45 kilometres from Vicenza in the commune of Calve. Mount Cavalletto was the site of an advanced operating station where urgent cases from the front were treated, as the journey from the mountains to the main hospitals on the plain was long and difficult. Cavalletto British Cemetery, one of five Commonwealth cemeteries on the Asiago Plateau contains 100 First World War burials.

Howard 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 Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees and on the Thornhill Lees Wesleyan Methodist Church Memorial Plaque relocated to Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury and on the War Memorial on the outside wall of Dewsbury Baptist Church and on the War Memorial from the now demolished St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road now relocated to Dewsbury Minster and on the Memorial Plaque from Moorlands Wesleyan Methodist Church, now stored in the Resource Centre at Batley Central Methodist Church.

In Memory of

Private

Howard Oates

44715, 7th Bn., Machine Gun Corps who died on 25 July 1918 Age 26

Son of John Richard and Louisa Oates, of No. 3, Morton Street, Thornhill Lees, nr. Dewsbury; husband of Mrs. Howard Oates, of 15, West Caroline Street, Blackpool.

Remembered with Honour

Cavalletto British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of the British War Graves Website of Michael McCann.