



Clifford Hirst

1891 – 1916

Clifford was born in Dewsbury on 19th April 1891. His father was Walter Hirst, a Cloth Drawer and later a Publican born in 1860 and died in 1894. His mother was Mary (née Tyas) born in Hanging Heaton in 1865 and died in 1939. They were married at All Saints Church, Dewsbury on 29th October 1889. Walter became the Landlord of the Crown Hotel, Leeds Road, Dewsbury and after his death, Mary became the licensee. They had one more son; Arthur, born in 1890.

On the 1891 Census they lived at 48, Leeds Road, Dewsbury, in 1901 and 1911 at the Crown Hotel.

Clifford was a single man and a keen cricketer, being a member of the Dewsbury and Savile and Hanging Heaton clubs. He worked as a solicitor's clerk in the employ of Messrs Ridgeway and Ridgeway of Dewsbury, and latterly Mr. T. Richardson of Heckmondwike.

He enlisted as Private 15/1088 in "A" Company 15th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) better known as the 1st Leeds Pals. He was sent out with them to Egypt in December 1915. The battalion moved on to the Western Front in March 1916. He was wounded on the First Day of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916 and was repatriated to England for treatment at the Hyde Park Hospital, Plymouth. He wrote to his mother about his fears that he would not recover:

".....We were in the big attack on the 1st of July, and our battalion suffered very badly. For the first time I was unlucky, and a shell lit by my feet, smashing the left one to bits and breaking the right foot. I was two days and a half before I could be brought to the trenches from the place I was in, and in all that time I had nothing to eat or drink. All this time my feet were in a terrible condition. Eventually we arrived at this hospital in Plymouth, and the only things I could swallow up to then had been liquids: besides this they had to amputate my left foot as far as the ankle, and put in splinters my right foot.....I fear I shall be lucky to come through.... You can tell by my writing that I am nearly paid and can hardly write what I want, if, however I do go under, remember that I thought of you to the last."

The Chaplain also wrote to say Clifford was seriously ill, and mentioned particularly his "sweetheart"; Clifford was engaged to Mabel Wilson. Upon notification of his condition his mother and brother travelled to Plymouth but sadly they arrived too late. He died on 8th July 1916 and was buried with full military honours in Dewsbury Cemetery. Clifford was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Clifford 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 on the outside wall of Dewsbury Baptist Church and on the Memorial Plaque from the now demolished St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road now displayed in Dewsbury Minster and on the Memorial Plaque to former pupils at Eastborough School

In Memory of

Private

C Hirst

15/1088, "A" Coy. 15th Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 08 July 1916

Age 25

Son of Mrs. Mary Hirst, of The Crown Inn, Leeds Rd., Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Dewsbury Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

