



Thornton Parker

1890 - 1916

Thornton was born in Thornhill Lees on 26th September 1890. His mother was Louisa Ann Parker, born in Thornhill Lees in 1871.

On the 1901 Census he is living with his grandmother Mrs. Ann Thornton at 4, Back New Street, Dawgreen, Dewsbury.

He was great friends with John Herman Howe from Batley Carr. The two worked for at time together at the Kilner Brothers glass bottle works at Thornhill Lees, where Thornton had the nickname '*Sports.*' Thornton enlisted with the Navy on 29th August 1912, at around the same time as his friend. The occupation he gave at the time of his enlistment was porter.

The two undertook training together on HMS *Victory*, before serving on the ships *Renown*, *Revenge* and *Albemarle*. They both joined HMS *Queen Mary* in 1913 as 1st Class Stokers. Thornton took part in the first naval battle of the war, the Battle of Heligoland Bight on 28th August 1914 which resulted in a British victory.

When on leave, Thornton returned to Dewsbury. He stayed with a cousin, Mrs. J. Gildea at Lister Hill, Watergate. He also frequently stayed at the King Street, Batley Carr home of Mrs. Austin, mother of his friend John Howe. She described how on their last leave home at the end of February 1916 they brought four other sailors to dinner, much to her consternation. She was '*in a flutter*' worrying she might not have enough for them to eat. On this last visit home, Thornton also called in at his old Boothroyd Lane School.

He was killed in action on 31st May 1916 in the Battle of Jutland when the *Queen Mary* was hit by the German battlecruiser *Derfflinger*, causing a massive explosion in her magazines. Over 1,200 other men died on board the vessel, including John Herman Howe who is commemorated on the Batley War Memorial. Two other men commemorated on the Dewsbury War Memorial also lost their lives on board the *Queen Mary* were James Kelly and Walter Edward Roberts, the latter also a stoker and chum. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Hampshire. Thornton was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

In the absence of any immediate family, his cousin Mabel Hill, 9, Kings Avenue, Model Village, Maltby, Rotherham, received his death notification.

Standing on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade in Portsmouth, Hampshire, is the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. It commemorates 9,706 naval personnel of the First World War who were lost or buried at sea.

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

In Memory of
Stoker 1st Class

Thornton Parker

SS/112640, H.M.S. "Queen Mary.", Royal Navy who died on 31 May 1916

Remembered with Honour
Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

