

Pte. George WHITTAKER (1895 – 1914)
(King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



George Whitaker was born at Albion Street in Ravensthorpe, on the 8th June 1895, to John Whitaker and Zillah (nee Wood) who had married in 1891. He was christened at Ravensthorpe Parish Church on the 11th July. There were 4 other children in the family - Clara (born 1892), Lily (1901), Harry (1907) and Nellie (1911).

In 1901 the family lived in Wakefield but by 1911 they had moved to 8 Back High Street, Batley Carr. John, the father, was working as a woollen spinner and George was a woollen piecener working for R Wilson and Sons, Warwick Road.

George had enlisted as a Regular at Dewsbury in October 1913. He disembarked on the 10th August 1914 and was drafted with the Expeditionary Force to the front and took part in the Battle of Mons. This was the first major action of the British Expeditionary Force in WW1. At Mons the British Army attempted to hold the line of the Mons-Conde Canal against the advancing German 1st Army. Although the British fought well and inflicted disproportionate casualties on the numerically superior Germans, they were eventually forced to retreat due both to greater strength of the Germans and the sudden retreat of the French Fifth Army which exposed the British right flank.

George was killed in action on the 28th October 1914. His parents were now living at Court 4, King Street, Batley Carr. Expressions of sympathy were received by his parents from King George and Queen Mary.

His sister Clara had married Albert James Roberts at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr in 1913. Further tragedy was to come for the family in 1915 when Albert was killed on the 10th March. Clara remarried in 1921 to Leonard Robinson.

Private George Whitaker 10952 2nd Battalion KOYLI is Remembered with Honour at Le Touret Memorial. His name appears on the Holy Trinity, Batley Carr, Roll of Honour.

Researcher

Susan White, Batley History Group, June 2014