

Pte. Herbert PRIESTLEY (1893 – 1915)
(King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



Herbert Priestley was born in 1893 at Hanging Heaton, Batley. His parents were Harry Priestley and Martha Broadhead who had married at Batley Parish Church on the 8th May, 1886. Harry was born in Thongsbridge, Huddersfield and Martha was from Gawthorpe.

The couple had two daughters before Herbert was born, Annie Elizabeth (1886) and Mary Emma (1890). Mary Emma died in 1891 aged 1 year.

The 1891 Census shows the family living at Bromley Street, Hanging Heaton. Harry was a joiner, an occupation he held all his life. Martha died in 1895 and by the 1901 Census Harry was living at Commonside, Hanging Heaton with Annie Elizabeth and Herbert. Annie Elizabeth married Fred Lodge in 1910 and the couple had two children Marjorie (1912) and Herbert Priestley Lodge (1917).

The 1911 Census records Harry living in 4 rooms at 1 Broom Street, Soothill with his second family including Harry Priestley Sharp (1906), James Priestley Sharp (1908) and Alfred Priestley Sharp (1910). Their mother Sarah and her sister, Lily Sharp, also lived at Broom Street.

On the 15th February 1909, aged 16 years, Herbert enlisted in the Army and served in Malta, Gibraltar and China. He also served in Singapore and India and returned from there for a few days in January 1915 before going to the Front. He wrote home regularly but was wounded in early 1915 and spent time at a base hospital in France. He returned to the Front and was killed in action on the 8th May, 1915.

His father Harry received notification of his death from the Infantry Record Office at York. He also received a signed letter of sympathy from Lord Kitchener. As a regular in the Army, and having given 7 years' service, Herbert would have been free the following October had it not been for the war. Before joining the army in 1909 Herbert had been associated with Hick Lane Wesleyan Chapel.

Herbert Priestley 9976, 1st Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, is Remembered with Honour at Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. His name also appears on the Roll of Honour at St. Paul's, Hanging Heaton.

Researcher

Susan White, Batley History Group, March 2015