



Woodford Remembers



Pte. Harry Wood

4th Quarter 1878 – 1 July 1916

Family

William Wood was born in Great Billing in 1836. His father, James was an agricultural labourer and his older siblings were Sarah, Walter and Cornelius. On 3 November 1859, William (a widower) married Woodford girl Sarah Ann Hawes (spinster) in Woodford St Mary's Church. Their firstborn was Elizabeth (bapt 25 12 1860) followed by Ellen (bapt 3 November 1861), Rebekah (bapt 29 November 1863) and Charles who was baptised on 28 January 1866. There followed James (born~1870) Emily (born~1872) Walter (born ~1875), Harry whose birth was registered in the last quarter of 1878 and Hedley born in early 1881.

(Interestingly, there is no baptism record for the children born after Charles). William, Harry's father was a shoemaker in 1881 but by 1891 he had taken up the other local trade of ironstone labourer.

In the 1901 Census Harry is still living with his parents, and gives his trade as a blast furnace labourer. Sarah, Harry's mother died in September 1904 in Woodford at the age of 65, and in 1911 Harry's father was living as a lodger in the High Street not far "above" the Blacksmiths and lists himself as a widower, retired boot maker. William died in 1927 and the funeral took place at St Mary's Church on 5th February. At the time, he was the village's oldest inhabitant. The Northampton Mercury reported his death (aged 92) and went on to say that he "was a great walker. Up to a short time ago, he often walked to Great Billing, his native village, and back home again the same day."

Army Service

Harry joined the Northants Militia on 15 June 1900 and states he is employed by Mr Kidner. Mr Kidner was a senior manager at the Islip Furnaces. He was discharged in June 1906 but a year later on 1 July 1907 he joined the Northants 3rd regiment and is described as being 5' 3" with brown hair and brown eyes, weighing in at 125 pounds. He is listed as being a deserter on 29 June 1908, when his father is confirmed as William Wood of Woodford.

Harry disappears from official records, not appearing in the 1911 census (or certainly not being easily found!) but is discovered again when in Goole in 1915, as Private Harry Wood 15186 when he enlisted with the 10th Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

He disembarked in northern France on 11 September 1915 and was killed in action on 1 July 1916 at Scots Redoubt at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme.

Burial / grave

No known grave

Dependants

There is strong suggestion that Harry had two children Harry Wood Freer b 1902 and Evelyn Wood Freer b 1906. Although there is no record of a marriage to their mother Annie Freer (sister of William Freer, see Woodford Remembers). The sole beneficiary of his effects on death according to army records was his father, William.

Commemoration

Thiepval Memorial panel 11C / 12A

Woodford War Memorial

Woodford St Mary's Church Memorial



(c) P T Bird 2015

If you can help with more information please contact clerk@woodfordpc.co.uk