

Ossett Men at War

The Story of the Ossett Men who went to
War...and some who didn't.

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www.ossett.net

100 years ago this week

Andrew Lockwood

- Died 24th April 1915
- Age 18 and an only son.
Unmarried
- Millhand of Intake Lane
- Royal Horse & Field Artillery
- Driver
- Died at Newcastle Hospital
- Cause of death unknown
- Buried at Ossett Holy Trinity

Thomas William Spurr

- Killed 30th April 1915
- Aged 40. A.k.a Thomas Stephens
- Carpenter once of Manor Road
- Australian Infantry. Previously
West Yorkshire Regt. Under age
- Lance Corporal
- Killed at Gallipoli, Turkey
- Buried at Quinn's Post Cemetery
Anzac Gallipoli
- Mother & Stepfather buried at
St. John's Church South Parade
Ossett

Lance Corporal Thomas William Spurr



- Australian Artillery
- Formerly West Yorkshire Regiment
- He (twice) served in India, Aden, West Africa, the 2nd Boer War and finally at Gallipoli Turkey.

The Background to the research

- Why? 100 Years on 1914-2014 & for the next 100 years
- Where we began? – Ossett’s WW1 Memorials & Rolls
- What we found and the “missing” 73 men who died
- 302 Ossett men were killed or died of wounds/illness.
- Biography for each man & a 2014 Roll of Honour
- Biographies too for some survivors, Acts of Gallantry, Officers & Conscientious Objectors
- Meanwhile back in 1914-1918 Ossett
- A work in progress – what next?
- <http://www.ossett.net/ww1.html>

Ossett Memorials & Rolls of Honour



- Ossett War Memorial
- South Ossett Parish Memorial
- Holy Trinity Parish Church Roll
- Wesleyan Chapel Wesley Street
- The Green Congregational Church
- Gawthorpe & Flushdyke Cong
- Central Baptist Church
- South Ossett First Baptist
- Ossett United Methodist Church
- Ossett Grammar School
- Ossett Conservative Association
- Ossett Sunday School Sick Society
- Healey Sunday School and Mission

Who were these men?

- Estimated that 2400-2500 Ossett men served in the British Army in WW1. 302 died equivalent to 2% of Ossett's 1911 population.
- **Born and /or lived** in Ossett. 191 men born in Ossett. 111 born elsewhere including New York & Tasmania (both the latter were remembered on the Ossett War Memorial)
- **Age Structure** of Ossett men who served and died in WW1

Age under 20	21 men	7 %
Age 20-25	132 men	44%
Age 26-29	61 men	20 %
Age 30-39	66 men	22 %
Age 40-49	15 men	5 %
Age 50-55	3 men	1 %
Age unknown	4 men	1%
- **Marital Status:** 182 men were single (60%); 118 were married (40%) and 95 men had children (31%); 2 widowers. In total, 166 Ossett children lost their fathers.
- **Occupations:** 77 (25%) were colliery workers and 85 (28%) were mill workers.
- Other occupations included 11 white collar, 9 athletic goods workers, 4 horsemen, 3 tram conductors, 2 hairdressers, 1 cinematographer, a man-servant (later a batman). One miner was also an "entertainer."

Who did they serve with?

- At least 302 Ossett men lost their lives during or shortly after WW1. 2% of the Ossett population.
- 295 men served in the Army. Only 7 served with the Royal Navy.
- By Christmas 1914 at least 300 Ossett men had volunteered. Of these, 121 of them were in 4th Battalion, K.O.Y.L.I. In addition 27 were in the National Reserve on Guard Duty.
- “D” Company of the 4th Battalion, K.O.Y.L.I. might be thought of as the “*Ossett Pals*”.
- 93 (37%) of those killed served in the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry [K.O.Y.L.I.] Regiment. 42 of these men served in the 4th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I.
- Other regiments: West Yorkshire (19 men), York & Lancaster (11 men), Duke of Wellington’s (11 men), Durham Light Infantry (10 men), Royal Field and Royal Garrison Artillery (25 men), Australian Army (2 men), Canadian Army (1 man)

4th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry
Drill Hall, Fairfield Hall, Fairfield Road, Ossett



When did they serve?

- Service records for 70% have not survived so it is not possible to be precise as to when men enlisted or moved overseas
- However of the men who died during WW1:-
 - 9 (3%) were overseas by 22nd November 1914 and were awarded the 1914 Star Medal. Also known as the “*Mons Star*.”
 - 83 (27%) were overseas by 31st December 1915 and were awarded the 1914/15 Star
 - 210 (70%) did not serve overseas before 1st January 1916
- All men who served overseas in a theatre of war were also awarded the British and Victory medals
- Men who were awarded the 1914 or 1914-15 Star medals must have been volunteers and not conscripts.

When & Where were they killed?

- Number of Ossett men who died in the following years of WW1:-

1914	4 men	1 %
1915	27 men	9 %
1916	63 men	21%
1917	96 men	32%
1918	103 men	35%
1919-21	8 men & 1 unknown	3%
- Ossett men mainly fell in France & Belgium but also in Mesopotamia/Iraq (6), Egypt (2), Gallipoli (3), Greece (3), India (2), Gaza (1). 7 died whilst held as Prisoners of War.
- 12 Ossett families lost two children. One Ossett family lost a father and son.
- 28 Ossett men are remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, The Somme, France.
- 14 Ossett men at Tyne Cot Memorial near Ypres.
- 13 Ossett men at Ypres Menin Gate.
- 12 Ossett men at Arras (6 of whom died on 3rd May 1917)

1st July 1916: Opening day Battle of the Somme

- 10 Ossett men died together on 1st July 1916 on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Eight of these men served in K.O.Y.L.I.



Battle of Arras: May 1917

- 5 Ossett men died together on 3rd May 1917 in the Arras Offensive. 3 of these were in the 15th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment [Leeds Pals]



Nieuport: July 1917

- 9 Ossett men died in late July 1917 at Nieuport on the Belgian Coast, near Ostend. Seven served in K.O.Y.L.I. Many of these were gassed.



German Spring Offensive: March 1918

- 19 Ossett men died in the German Spring Offensive which began on 21st March 1918.



The first and the last....

Sam Stephenson



The first Ossett soldier to die. He died of wounds at the Battle of Mons on 24th August 1914.

Arthur Dews



The last Ossett soldier killed following a tragic accident on 11th November 1918 – Armistice Day. Arthur died of his wounds on 11th December 1918.

The youngest and the oldest....

Willie Giggall



One of the youngest (and one of the smallest) Ossett men to die in WW1. Willie was 19 years and 2 days old when he was killed by a sniper on the 18th September 1918.

James Frudd



One of oldest Ossett men to die in WW1. James was 47 when he first voluntarily enlisted in October 1915. He served in France for 3 months and was discharged on medical grounds but re-enlisted in April 1918, aged 50. James died on 14th July 1918.

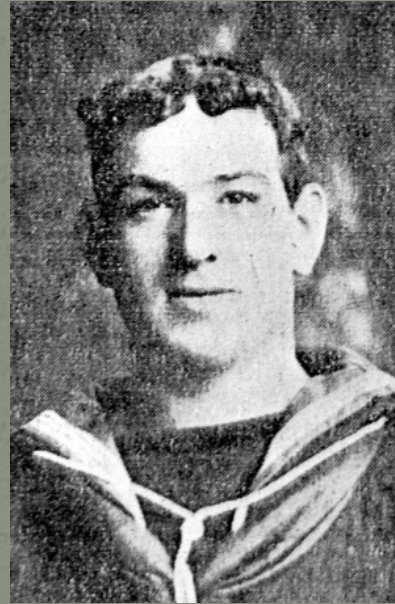
First “Ossett Pal” and first Ossett sailor to die...

Fred Smith



The first Ossett man to be killed from 1st/4th Battalion King's Own (Yorkshire Light Infantry) Regiment [KOYLI]. “D” Company of 4th KOYLI was known as the Ossett Company – an “Ossett Pals” group of largely local Ossett & Horbury men. Sergeant Fred Smith was killed on 31st May 1915.

Willie Peaker Whitaker



Stoker 1st Class HMS Goliath Royal Navy. Willie was the first Ossett sailor to be killed in action. Willie died on 13th May 1917 when his ship was torpedoed shortly after the Gallipoli landings

The first Ossett Prisoner of War...

- John ETTY



Lance Corporal John ETTY, 4233, 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Hussars was believed to be the first Ossett man to be captured by the enemy and to become a Prisoner Of War (P.O.W.)

John was captured during the British retreat from Mons on the 24th August 1914, the same day that fellow Ossett soldier Sam Stephenson was killed.

He spent the much of the rest of WW1 as a prisoner of war, and with many of the 18th Hussars, was held at Soltau PoW camp. Some PoWs from Soltau camp (possibly including John ETTY) were sent to Holland in 1917 and 1918 as part of an exchange program with German PoWs.

Families who suffered more than most

- These families each lost at least two family members:-
- Cousins Fred and Harry **Beetham**
- Brothers Charles Edgar and William **Binns**
- Brothers Ernest and Hubert (aka Herbert) **Dews**
- Brothers Frederick E. and Harry R. **Eastwood**
- Brothers George and William **Gawthorpe**
- Brothers Frank and Walter **Goldthorpe**
- Father & Son Thomas and Oswald **Grogan**
- Brothers Benjamin W. and Robert T. **Hall**
- Brothers Ernest and Leonard **Harrop**
- Brothers Ignatious and Anthony **Jackson**
- Uncle & Nephew Joshua and Stanley **Lockwood**
- Brothers George and Willie **Nettleton**
- Brothers Bernard and James **Richmond**
- Brothers George and Henry **Sanderson**
- Brothers Harvey and Norman **Wainwright** plus their cousin Wilfred **Wainwright**

Unusual Circumstances

- **Included in the Ossett who died in WW1 are:**
- Between April 1911 and October 1915, **George Rowland Coulson** emigrated to Canada from Ossett and joined Canadian Army as “*Tommy Atkins.*” He died of his wounds, (gunshot wounds head & lung) at No. 1, Australian General Hospital at Rouen, France on the 16th October 1916.
- **John Boyes Young** deserted from two regiments & joined a third. Left his Wakefield wife to “*go out for half an hour*” and died in France three months later.
- **Claude Farrar**, born in Gawthorpe, but also known as Claude Turner, joined the 12th Service Battalion (Miners) (Pioneers) of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was fatally injured on or around the 13th April 1918 in the desperate defence of the Nieppe Forest, part of the Battle of Hazebrouck.

More Unusual Circumstances....

- Joseph H. Carter, a veteran soldier convicted for begging at Saddleworth in 1907 and imprisoned at Strangeways for 2 weeks.



Born in 1878 and a career soldier, he served in the 2nd Boer War in Africa, in India and later in Ireland.

He was recalled from the Army Reserve in 1914 to his regiment, the Oxford & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry only to die from wounds during the German Spring Offensive in June 1918 aged 40 years.

More Unusual Circumstances....

- Frederick Sykes Parker was born in Newburgh, New York, U.S.A. in 1890, the son of Ossett-born bricklayer and gardener John Sykes Parker and his wife, Sarah.



The Sykes family had gone to the U.S.A. no earlier than late 1886 and had returned in late 1890.

“Gassed, Wounded Three Times, Now Killed - Another well-known local soldier, Private Fred Sykes Parker (30), K.O.Y.L.I., whose home is in Radley-street, off the Green, Ossett, has made the supreme sacrifice after strenuous service in the war.”

From the *“Ossett Observer”*, 21st September 1918

More Unusual Circumstances....

- William Alfred Butterfield born in Tasmania, Australia



William Alfred Butterfield was born in Lebrina, Tasmania in 1890, the sixth born of eight children, including five boys, all born in Tasmania to John and Mary Butterfield between 1880 and 1894 where they had a farm. All of the children were British citizens by parentage.

Came to England in 1895 and in 1901, John, then a woollen rag merchant, and his wife Mary with their children were living at Dearden Street, Ossett.

Gunner Butterfield was killed in action at the Battle of the Lys, in Belgium, aged 27, on the 18th July 1918,

More Unusual Circumstances....

- Harry Fothergill, who served in the *Legion of Frontiersmen* was one of two grandsons of Henry Westwood to be killed during WW1. Harry died on his 28th birthday on the 23rd October 1918.



Harry Fothergill joined the Legion of Frontiersmen in 1916 and went to East Africa to fight the Germans who occupied modern day Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Harry suffered from malaria fever and was eventually invalided home in 1917.

He was then transferred to the West Kent Regiment and went out to France, but the fever again returning, he was again invalided to this country. He returned to the Western Front at Easter 1918.

Private Fothergill died from machine gun fire whilst trying to clear the Belgian hamlets of Kattestraat and Kwadestraat, which were German strongholds.

More Unusual Circumstances....

- John W. Shaw, miner, was well-known, not only locally, but throughout the district as an entertainer, being a popular “*lady impersonator*.” He was born in Ossett in 1889, the eldest child of miner Thomas Shaw and his wife Annie (nee Wilby) who married in Ossett in 1888. The couple were to have eleven children, but three died before April 1911.
- Private John W. Shaw, 2nd Bn, K.O.Y.L.I. died of wounds on the 4th April 1917 during the German withdrawal “*Operation Alberich*” from the Somme area.



Ossett men Illness, Disease and Drowning

- 36 (12%) of the 302 Ossett men who died were the victims of disease or illness. 8 of these men died in 1919-1921.

Died of Pneumonia (8 cases), Spanish Flu (2), Heart Disease (2), Heatstroke (2)

Single cases of Inflammation of kidneys, Acute Bronchitis, Pyemia, Malaria, Smallpox, Enteric Fever, Tuberculosis, Seizure, Nephritis.

- 7 Ossett men were drowned: 5 Army and 2 Navy:

George Oldroyd

Arthur J Parsons

Irvin Hinchliffe

Harry Walker

George Robinson

John William Heaton

Harold Nettleton

Ossett's Conscientious Objectors

- Willie B. Clapham
- Joshua Fox Taylor
- Eli Marsden Wilson



The Final Weeks of WW1

The Ossett men who died in November 1918:

- Private George Griffiths, 2/4 Bn, K.O.Y.L.I. 1st
- Sapper Charles Edgar Binns, Royal Engineers 3rd
- Private Victor Walker, 2/4 Bn, Duke of Wellington's Regiment 4th
- Private Clifford Walker, Army Service Corps 5th
- Private Joseph F. Wilson, 2nd Bn, West Yorkshire Regiment 5th
- Driver Benjamin W. Hall, 92nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery 6th
- Private Arthur Richardson, 22nd (Labour) Bn, West Yorks Rgt. 6th
- Corporal Herbert Sutcliffe, 9th Bn, K.O.Y.L.I. 7th
- Private Oliver Speak, 1st Bn, K.O.Y.L.I. 8th
- Sapper Alfred M. Buckett, Royal Engineers 9th
- Driver Robert E. Pennington, 108th Field Coy, Royal Engineers 12th

Ossett Roll of Honour 2014

- Ossett's War Memorial does not bear the names of all of the 302 Ossett men killed in WW1
- Only 229 of these men were recorded in the Memorial's dedication in November 1928
- Biographies have been researched & written for each of the 302 men. These are available on the Ossett History website at www.ossett.net
- A searchable database of these men – a **2014 Roll of Honour** – has also been compiled from the research

For each of the 302 soldiers and sailors the Roll of Honour includes:-

- | | |
|--|--|
| • <i>Name</i> | <i>Ossett Memorial</i> |
| • <i>Year & Place of Birth</i> | <i>Marital Status</i> |
| • <i>Ossett Address</i> | <i>Occupation</i> |
| • <i>Approx date of enlistment/embarkation</i> | <i>Regiment, Battalion, Service No. & rank</i> |
| • <i>Date & cause of death & age</i> | <i>Action in which soldier/sailor was killed</i> |
| • <i>Cemetery in which remembered</i> | <i>Next of kin</i> |
| • <i>Medal Awards</i> | |

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY

Of the Ossett Men Who Lost Their Lives In The Great War 1914-1918



A database comprising the details of Ossett soldiers and sailors
who died in WW1

www.ossett.net