

William Alfred G Wilkins

Born in North Bradley 1892

Killed in Action France 21st October 1916

William (known as Willie) enlisted under the Derby Scheme in November 1915 at Trowbridge Town Hall and was called up in April 1916, with the first married intake. After 3 months initial training he joined the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment in France. On 21st October 1916 the Wiltshires were North of Mougufft Farm near Thiepval, supporting a successful attack during the Battle of Ancre Heights. It is likely Willie was killed by shell fire and he is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, because he has no known grave. He is also remembered on the North Bradley War Memorials and also the Trowbridge Memorial in the Park.

William was the first member of North Bradley Baptist Church to be killed in the war. A memorial service was held for Willie at the Baptist Church and one of his sisters who could not attend wrote the following:

"We did not realise what a dreadful thing war was until it had ruthlessly robbed us of a loved one."

See William Alfred G Wilkin's Life Story at:
<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/4752460>

Father: William George Wilkins

Born in Trowbridge. At 16 years old he was a Woollen Cloth Worker in Trowbridge, and 10 years later in 1891, a Stationary Engine Driver, which he was still doing in 1901. He died at 39 in 1904, when his youngest child was only 2 years old, the eldest 15.

Mother: Elizabeth May

Born in the village of Bisley in Gloucestershire. In 1881 she was a domestic servant near where she was born. Only a few years later, she was married – did William (Senior) travel for work to the woollen mills in Gloucestershire? Widowed young, she died in 1914 at 48 years old.

Married in 1886, in 1891 they were living next to the New Inn (later the Mash Tun) in Woodmarsh with their first two daughters. About 1893 they moved to Studley Fields and by 1901 had 9 children, the eldest 12 years old. The widowed Elizabeth was back in Woodmarsh in 1911, close to the Rising Sun this time. She had 4 children still at school and 4 others (now adults) working but living at home, with a 14 year old daughter helping keep house. The 10 of them were living in 5 rooms. Elizabeth was then working hand sewing gloves.

William Alfred G Wilkins

Known as Willie. Butchery Assistant at Bowyer, Philpott & Payne in Trowbridge.

Wife: Lucy Florence Billett

Born in Trowbridge in 1894, Florence was a Nursemaid in 1911. Re-married in 1924.

Married 5th April 1915 at North Bradley Baptist Church, they lived in Mortimer Street, Trowbridge. There were no children.

William had 2 brothers and 7 sisters, so there must be a number of living relatives.