

CLAYTON, ARTHUR - Died 14th July 1918 aged 34 (Gravestone is incorrect, shows age as 32)

82116: Private, Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment);

19484: Private, 7th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)

405343: Private 865th Company, Labour Corps



Photograph courtesy of Ann Rossiter, his granddaughter

Arthur was born in Scotton on 27th February 1884. He was the youngest child of George and Sarah (nee Clarke) Clayton who were also born there. His parents had married at St. Peter's Church on 27th June 1864 and their other children were William, Thomas, Edward, Elizabeth, Emily, Kate, George, Ruth and Frank.

By 1891 his father was the publican at the White Swan and was there until around 1907 when he retired.

Arthur's mother died on 9th June 1912.

On 23rd October 1913, aged 29, he married 25 year old Gertie Hanson at St. John the Evangelist Church, Carlton- in-Lindrick, Nottinghamshire. Their witnesses were George Clayton and William Hanson. Her father was recorded as the deceased Richard Hanson, who had been a labourer.

The couple both lived in that village where Arthur worked as a groom and Gertie was a skilled seamstress. They set up home in South Carlton and on 13th April 1915 their son Robert Reginald ('Reg') was born.

For over 15 years, Arthur worked for Mr. Harrison Smith of Carlton Hall, Worksop, and the owner of the Don Brewery in Sheffield. The two grooms of the estate were listed as 'Mr. Clayton and Mr. Thistleton'.

Arthur went to Derby and enlisted into the Sherwood Foresters. At some point he transferred into the Royal West Kent Regiment whose 7th Battalion embarked for France on 26th July 1915. They were involved in trench warfare, including the Battle of the Somme in 1916, and like other battalions they suffered massive casualties and needed drafts from Britain.

He arrived in France around April 1917.

Arthur made his second transfer of the war into the Labour Corps. In early 1918 they were being strengthened with men from shattered battalions and people returning from injury. Their units were often used as an emergency infantry and were deployed for work within range of enemy guns. They always suffered from a lack of transport and had many inexperienced officers.

On 26th July 1918, under the heading Scotter, the Gainsborough News reported:-

'The sad news reached the village at the beginning of last week that Pte. Arthur Clayton, youngest son of Mr. Geo Clayton had died of pneumonia in France. Pte. Clayton, before joining up, was in the service of Mr Smith, of Carlton Hall, Worksop, with whom he had been a highly esteemed servant of upwards of fifteen years. Pte. Clayton had been in France about fifteen months and he leaves a widow and one child to mourn his loss.'

Two weeks after his death a memoriam appeared in the Worksop Guardian:-

*'He bade no one a last farewell
He waved his hand to none;
His soul had fled before we knew,
That he from us had gone.'*

From his loving wife and son.'

A year later another memorial ended with the words:-

'Though lost to sight. No memory ever dear'

Gertie never re-married and spent many years living in their cottage at Carlton-in-Lindrick. In her later years she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and died in 1973 aged 85 at the Gatelea nursing home on Gateford Road, Worksop. She was cremated and her ashes interred in the grounds of St. John the Evangelist Church at Carlton-in-Lindrick, the church where she had married.

On 20th October 1940 Reg married Selina Mary ('Lena') Wilson of Mansfield and for a time they lived with Gertie. He served during World War Two and rose to become a Captain in the Sherwood Foresters. In February 1945 the Governor General of Sudan made him an honorary officer in the Sudan Defence Force with the rank of Bimbashi (Major).

Later that year his daughter Ann was born. After the war Reg worked as the Company Secretary of B. Shippside Limited, a Vauxhall car dealership on Newcastle Avenue in Worksop. He moved his family to live in the town on Grasmere Road. Reg died in 1977 and his ashes were interred close to those of his mother.

If you enter the grounds of St. Peter's from Church Lane, the grave of Arthur's parents is the first one on the left.

Private Arthur Clayton died at the 35th General Hospital.

He is buried at Les Baraques Military Cemetery in Sangatte near Calais, France. PLOT – IV. C. 8.

Private Clayton is also remembered on the Carlton-in-Lindrick War Memorial.



Photograph courtesy of Peter Bradshaw