

Arthur Ingram

Private

2779

London Regiment (Prince of Wales Own, Civil Service Rifles)

1st/15th Battalion



Arthur Ingram's link to Kington is slim, but there was one and his friends thought it was strong enough to have his name included on Kington memorial. Arthur was born in 1894 in the tiny hamlet of Lower Harpton, halfway between Walton and Presteigne. His father Charles, was also born in Lower Harpton and came from a family of Innkeepers. Charles married Elizabeth Annie Powell toward the end of 1893 and shortly after Arthur was born. In the 1901 census return we find that Charles had gone into the family trade and was landlord of the Bateman Arms in Shobdon. At this time Arthur has a little sister, Edith who was just one year old. From the research of local historians Tula and Gordon Ticehurst we learn that Arthur went to school in Shobdon and must have been a bright pupil since he won a scholarship, the Pierrepoint Scholarship, to Lucton School. The scholarship was named after the Founder of Lucton School and was only open to those gifted enough who lived in the 'nine favoured parishes' of Lucton, Croft, Yarpole, Bircher, Luston, Eyton, Kingsland, Aymestrey and Shobdon. The scholarship is still available to this day.



Lucton School, Herefordshire

Arthur cannot be found in the 1911 census but we do find that his parents are still running The Bateman Arms and that Arthur now has two further siblings, Alfred born in 1908 and Gertrude in early 1911. Again, from the Ticehurst research, we know that when Arthur left school, for a short time he came to Kington and worked as an apprentice at Francis Parker & Sons in Kington. This was to be his association with

Kington. Parkers' was a Drapers and Milliners located at 38 High Street, Kington. The fine entrance mosaic can still be seen to this day. Today the shop has been enlarged and is the home of Nisa, once Ashby's. From Parkers he moved further afield, to Cook & Son in St Pauls Church Yard, London. This company was a long established large wholesale clothing traders and drapers, established in 1819 by William Cook. It was from this employment that Arthur enlisted into the 1st/15th (County of London) Battalion (Prince of Wales Own, Civil Service Rifles) as Private 2779 Ingram. This low service number would indicate that he enlisted between September and October 1914.



Before the war the London Regiment formed twenty six Territorial Force battalions. Some were 'Pals' battalions, the name coined long before Pals Regiments became popular. Some were related to specific jobs and the 15th London Regiment was one of those, drawing men from the Civil Service, living and working in London. Its headquarters were based at Somerset House.

Just prior to the declaration of war on the 4th August, the 15th battalion were at their annual summer camp on Salisbury Plain. They were immediately recalled to Somerset House and from there went for intensive training in the St. Alban's area. To swell their numbers and bring them up to full strength they were supplemented by volunteers who flocked to enlist. Arthur was one of those men. In November 1914 the battalion were moved to billets in Watford and prepared for service overseas. The war diary for the 1/15th (County of London) Battalion (Prince of Wales Own, Civil Service Rifles) starts on the 17th March 1915. The scribe informs, that in the early hours of the 17th March 1915 the battalion entrained to Southampton where they boarded four steamers. The Balmoral, City of Chester, Jupiter and ironically The SS Munich. They first set foot on French soil, Le Havre, in the early hours of the 18th March.

On the 22nd March the battalion was inspected by their Commander in Chief, Field Marshal Sir John French, accompanied by one General Douglas Haig. They moved to Cauchy A La Tour, to the west of Bethune on the 23rd and on the 8th April were attached to the 4th (Guards) Brigade where they started war familiarisation training. On the 13th April 1915 they took over their first section of trenches, at Givenchy, having relieved the 1st Hertfordshire Regiment. That night they took their first shells but luckily there were no casualties. Throughout the rest of 1915, they saw action at The Battle of Aubers Ridge and The Battle of Festubert in the May. They were also heavily involved in The Battle of Loos in September 1915 and the subsequent Actions of the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

Arthur's story now moves into the December of 1915. On the 23rd December the battalion were relieved by the Post Office Rifles and went into Brigade Reserve at Noyelles. Their respite was short lived and the following day, about 3am on the 24th, they moved up to an area the diary calls Curley Crescent, 2½ miles to the east of Vermelles. In the morning they were heavily shelled and three men were wounded. It is believed Arthur was one of those injured. He received a slight wound to his head, above his left eye, which was to prove significant in the months ahead. The battalion were in the trenches on Christmas Day 1915 but it is not clear if Arthur was with them or having his wound attended. Fortunately the day was quiet and at 8pm they were relieved and returned to Noyelles Les Vermelles.

We now move to events during May 1916. At 3pm on the 21st May, Church Service was held. At 4.15 the battalion were moved forward, in preparation for going over the top. They arrived at Villers au bois at 6.15pm and moved into the line at Cabaret Road Trenches. Here they steadied themselves and at 8.20pm, went over the top. Fighting was hard and relentless until midnight on the 22nd May. The battalion was then relieved by the 24th London Regiment and retired to Camblain L'Abbe. The next day they moved further back to Calonne Ricquart. From here, home leave was granted for some and a report in the Hereford Times indicates that Arthur was one of those allowed home. He stayed with his family in Shobdon. Many were not so lucky and stayed at Calonne Ricquart, but were given the opportunity for rest and recuperation. The diary records that men returned between the 3rd and 5th June, quite probably Arthur was one of them. The following week was very wet and the regiment were involved in training and inspections. On the 11th they had Church Service where they marched past the Lord Mayor of London. On the 13th they were back in the trenches. The battalion went into Brigade Reserve on the 18th June at Noulette Wood and on the 25th they moved into Divisional Reserve at Bouvigny Boyeffles. Here they were training until the 30th, when they were again moved back into the line. Arthur did not go back into the line, by this time he was dead.

You will recall Arthur received a head wound on Christmas Eve, 1915. At some point after he returned from leave in Shobdon, an abscess formed on his wound. He was moved out of the line and transported to one of the huge military hospital at Etaples. On the 26th of June his parents received a telegram informing them that Arthur was dangerously ill. On the **27th June 1916**, infection got the better of him and he 'died of his injuries'. He was just 22 years of age. Arthur Ingram was buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, grave reference II.B.52a.

During the war, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern and southern battlefields. It was also accessible for ships to deliver new men and evacuate the injured back to Britain. Etaples Military Cemetery now contains 10,771 Commonwealth burials from the First World War. Back home in Shobdon a memorial service was held on Sunday 9th July in the local church. The Hereford Times reports that 'A pulpit reference was made by the Rev. F. E. Tuke and special music was played and hymns sung'. For

his valour, pain and suffering Arthur was awarded the Victory and British War medals and the 1915 Star.



It seems strange that a native of Kington should find himself fighting in a London Regiment, but clearly men enlisted wherever they were at the time. Arthur's parents, Charles and Elizabeth had lost one of their beloved sons. Britain had lost an intelligent and capable man, but he is well remembered. Not only does his name appear on Kington Memorial but also the memorial at Shobdon. As mentioned earlier, The London Regiment were based at Somerset House and directly outside the barracks a large regimental memorial was erected, dedicated to those of the Civil Service Rifles who did not return. Arthur Ingram is remembered there also.

