



Thomas John Heasman

Private SD 687 Royal Sussex Regiment 11th Battalion, 39th Division

Died 3rd September 1916 aged 31

Thomas John, the eighth child of the large family of Harry and Susan Heasman, was baptised in Shipley Church on 3rd May 1885. Although listed on the Shipley War memorial as John, all his birth, service and census records name him as Thomas. He was probably known as John within the family, only reverting to his baptismal name on official records.

The 1891 Census shows the family was living at Slaughter Bridge, Coolham where Harry was working as an agricultural labourer. Censuses show that the entire family were Jane (1870), Elizabeth (1872), Susan (1876 possibly did not live), Frederick (1878), Susan (1880), James Streeter (1882), **Thomas (1885)**, Ernest (1887), Frank (1889), Alice (1891) and Harriet Christmas (1893). The 1911 Census shows that two of Harry and Susan's children had died prior to 1911.

By 1901 Thomas was aged 16 and living as a boarder in Tonbridge where he was employed as an errand boy. By 1911 he had moved back to Shipley to live with his parents in a cottage at Renches Farm where he worked as a groom. By the time of Thomas' death in 1916 his parents were living at Whitehall, Shipley.

Thomas enlisted at Horsham in 1914 along with three other family members into the Royal Sussex Regiment. His service number is consecutive with other Shipley men, who had volunteered together in a "Pals" battalion, eventually becoming known as "Lowther's Lambs" *. He is mentioned on the Roll of Honour drawn up and published in the Shipley Parish magazine in November 1914.

The 11th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment was embarked for France in March 1916 and saw action during the Somme campaign. Thomas died of wounds received at Beaucourt Ridge, where his unit was engaged in fighting in the trenches north of the River Hamel. Thomas was one of three Shipley men who died in this action, the others being Edgar Heasman and William Lucas.

He was remembered by the Reverend Baker in the memorial service held at Shipley Church in November of 1916, a year in which eight Shipley men gave their lives.

He is buried at Serre Road Cemetery at Beaumont Hamel and commemorated in Shipley Church.

Thomas was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

*Note: see accompanying document "The Southdowns Battalions".

In Memory Of

Private

THOMAS HEASMAN

Service Number: SD/687

11th Bn., Royal Sussex Regiment who died on 03 September 1916 Age 32

Son of Harry and Susan Heasman, of Whitehall, Shipley, Horsham, Sussex.

Remembered with Honour

SERRE ROAD CEMETERY No.1

VII.H. 1.



COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH

WAR GRAVES COMMISSION