

## John William Dawson (1881– 1955)

John William Dawson came from a large family, who had moved from the Shipley area to live in High Farnhill, just before he was born.

A keen gardener, John William married a girl from Sutton-in-Craven and served as a gunner with the Royal Field Artillery. On the cessation of hostilities he returned home and became a house painter.

He and his wife had no children, and he died in 1955.



Photograph courtesy of Richard Law

### Pre-war life

John William Dawson was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1881 in Farnhill, and baptised at Kildwick Church on 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1882 along with seven of his siblings. He was the ninth of what would eventually be 13 children born to William and Elizabeth (nee Beck) of Windhill, Bradford.

All of his older siblings had been born in Windhill, before the family moved to Rose Cottage, Main Street, High Farnhill sometime after 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1881, the date of that year's census.



Eleven of the Dawson sibilings at Rose Cottage, Main Street, High Farnhill  
Back row (l to r): Sam Beck, Martin, Ben, John William; Middle row (l to r): Bertha, Sarah Alice, Ida, Annie;  
Front row (l to r): Edith, Lina Mary, Elizabeth Ellen  
Photograph and details courtesy of Richard Law and John Topham

This undated photograph may have been taken on the occasion of the marriage of Bertha Dawson to James Watson in 1905.

John William's father was a stone mason and his brothers Ben, Sam Beck and Martin would all become masons in their turn.

Many men in Windhill and nearby Wrose were employed in sandstone quarries. Gaisby Quarry, the source of the stone for many of the Victorian buildings in Bradford, was a short walk from the Dawson's home. John William's future trade, however, would be as a house painter and paper hanger.

Civil Parish of <i>Farnhill</i>		Municipal Borough of <i>Farnhill</i>			Municipal Ward of <i>Farnhill</i>		Urban Sanitary District of <i>Farnhill</i>			Town or Village or Hamlet of <i>Farnhill</i>		Rural Sanitary District of <i>Repton</i>		Parliamentary Borough or Division of <i>Repton</i>		Eccles of <i>Farnhill</i>		
Col. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			12	13	14	15		
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES		Number of persons occupying if less than five	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Males	Females	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION			Employed	Employed	Number of Births	WHERE BORN	
		In-	Un- in- hab- ited (U.) or Build- ing (B.)															
	<i>60 Lane Farnhill</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>J. Wm G. Dawson</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>36</i>			<i>Lawyer</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>York Farnhill</i>	
<i>1/2</i>	<i>DO</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>William Dawson</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>28</i>			<i>Stone Mason</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>By Windhill</i>	
					<i>Blenbeth</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>23</i>									<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Bertha</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>13</i>			<i>House Painter</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Annie</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>11</i>			<i>Decorative Paperhanger</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Ben</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>16</i>			<i>Stone Mason</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Samuel</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>15</i>			<i>Wool Spinners</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Martin</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>13</i>			<i>Drifter</i>			<i>X</i>			<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>John W.</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>9</i>			<i>School</i>						<i>By Farnhill</i>	
					<i>Edith</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>6</i>			<i>DO</i>						<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Elizabeth E.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>4</i>									<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>
					<i>Lena M.</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>2</i>									<i>By Wrose</i>	<i>By</i>

Extract from the 1891 census return for Farnhill  
Used under licence from the National Archive

The Dawson family participated in Farnhill village life as the scraps of remaining evidence show. John William's father was one of the two 'chief artificers' of Farnhill Pinnacle, restored for the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. At the accompanying celebrations and sports, John William's brothers Sam and Ben put on a good showing – winning both the open 100 yards race and the open three-legged race.

Martin played in the famous Kildwick Prize Band until he joined the army, sometime before Christmas 1915.

John William appears to have been a keen gardener and won prizes at two village flower shows – for two sprays of lily-of-the-valley in 1914, and a silver medal for double pinks in 1915.

John William was the eighth of the Dawson children to marry. At age 29 he married Annie Hargreaves of 1 North Place, Sutton-in-Craven on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1911. A weaver, she was the 27 year old daughter of Tempest Hargreaves who was a warp dresser. By this time both of John William's parents were deceased and the marriage was witnessed by Lina Mary Dawson, the youngest surviving Dawson sibling and Smith Hargreaves, the youngest of Annie's siblings.

1911 Marriage solemnized at <u>the Parish Church</u> in the <u>Parish</u> of <u>Kildwick</u> in the County of <u>Yorks</u>								
Occasion	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
47	First August 1911	John William Dawson	29 Years	Bachelor	Home Painter	Highes Farnhill	William Dawson	Deceased
		Annie Hargreaves	27 Years	Spinster	—	Sutton in Cumer	Temper Hargreaves	Warp-dresser

Married in the Parish Church according to the rites and Ceremonies of the Church by John W. Phades or after Mass by me,  
 The Marriage was solemnized between us John William Dawson in the presence of us Smith Hargreaves John W. Phades  
Annie Hargreaves Lizzie Mary Dawson Kear

Dawson – Hargreaves marriage certificate  
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The couple lived at Rose Cottage, with John William's unmarried sisters Annie, Elizabeth Ellen and Lina Mary.

## WW1 service

Although John William Dawson must have volunteered to serve in WW1 before February 1916 – otherwise his name would not have been included in the Farnhill Parish Council Roll of Honour – his active service does not appear to have started until May 1917. W.B. Whitham, a friend of the Dawson family who was living in Farnhill at the time, recorded in his diary:

*21st May 1917 – J Willie Dawson, Ernest Gibson go in the Army.*

John William served with the Royal Field Artillery as a Gunner (service number 233179). Beyond this however very little is known, as his WW1 service records do not appear to have survived. (Over 70% of these records were destroyed in a fire during the WW2 London blitz.)

The photograph (next page) shows John William mounted on a RFA cob, a sturdy breed of draught horse used for pulling light, mobile field guns.

He is wearing a bandolier – a pocketed belt to hold ammunition. The RFA bandoliers had five pockets at the front and four at the back. Each pocket carried 10 rounds of .303 bullets for the Enfield rifle. Artillery soldiers wore a bandolier slung over the shoulder as a normal waist belt version would be inconvenient when on horseback.



Gunner John William Dawson  
Photograph courtesy of Richard Law

In August 1918 John William was gassed and brought back from the continent for hospital treatment. The following is an extract from a report in the Craven Herald (23/8/1918).

#### FARNHILL.

Mrs. J. W. Dawson, of High Farnhill, has received notice that her husband, Private J. W. Dawson, is badly gassed and is in hospital in Whalley, Lancashire. Mrs. Dawson went to see him and found him improving. He was able to see from one eye and there is every possibility that he will regain the use of the other.

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Whether this injury marked the end of John William's military career is not known. However he was discharged from the army on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1919 and awarded a pension of 16s (80p) per week for what was judged to be a 40% disability, with his wife receiving a further 4s (20p) per week from 1921. Payments continued until at least 1924.

Form No. S.B. 36 <sup>21 R.F.A. / 12/89.</sup> <sup>Et 26. 4. 21.</sup>

Surname: **J. DAWSON** Christian Name: **John William** Regional No. **4/M D/** No. **4130**

Unit and Regiment or Corps: **R.F.A.** Regtl. No. **233/79.** Rank: **Dr.**

Date of Discharge: **29. 4. 19.** Year of Birth: **19.** Marital Status: **S.** = Single, **W.** = Widower, **M.** = Married

Address: **73 High Farnhill, Reigate, Surrey**

Disabilities: — State whether attributable to or aggravated by Service or non-attributable: —

1. **3.** 2. **4.** 3. **1.** 4. **2.**

Particulars of Awards for previous Service (if any):

AWARDS OF PENSION, GRATUITY OR WEEKLY ALLOWANCE.

Date of Award or other Action	Degree of Disablement	Nature of Award			Weekly Rate			No. of Children under 16	Period of Award		REMARKS: Note—This column is to be used for explanatory remarks where necessary, e.g., that an award is made or revised under Article 9, or as the result of an appeal to the Tribunal, or for increase of Pension.
		Art. under which granted (and Warrant if necessary)	Whether Pension, Gratuity or Weekly Allowance	Whether Permanent, Conditional or Final	Man	Wife	Child		From	To	
12.3.21	40%	1(i)	P	C	16/-				27/4/21	25/4/22	
4.4.21	40%	1(i)	P	C	16/-	4/-			27/4/21	25/4/22	
6.3.22	40%	1(i)	P	C	16/-	4/-			26/4/22	24/4/23	
6.3.23	40%	1(i)	P	C	16/-	4/-			25/3/23	22/2/24	

Extracts from JW Dawson's WW1 pension ledger (SB 36)  
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## Post-war life

Returning to Farnhill after the war, John William lived at High Farnhill in Rose Cottage, where he had grown up. The 1921 census records him living there with his wife.



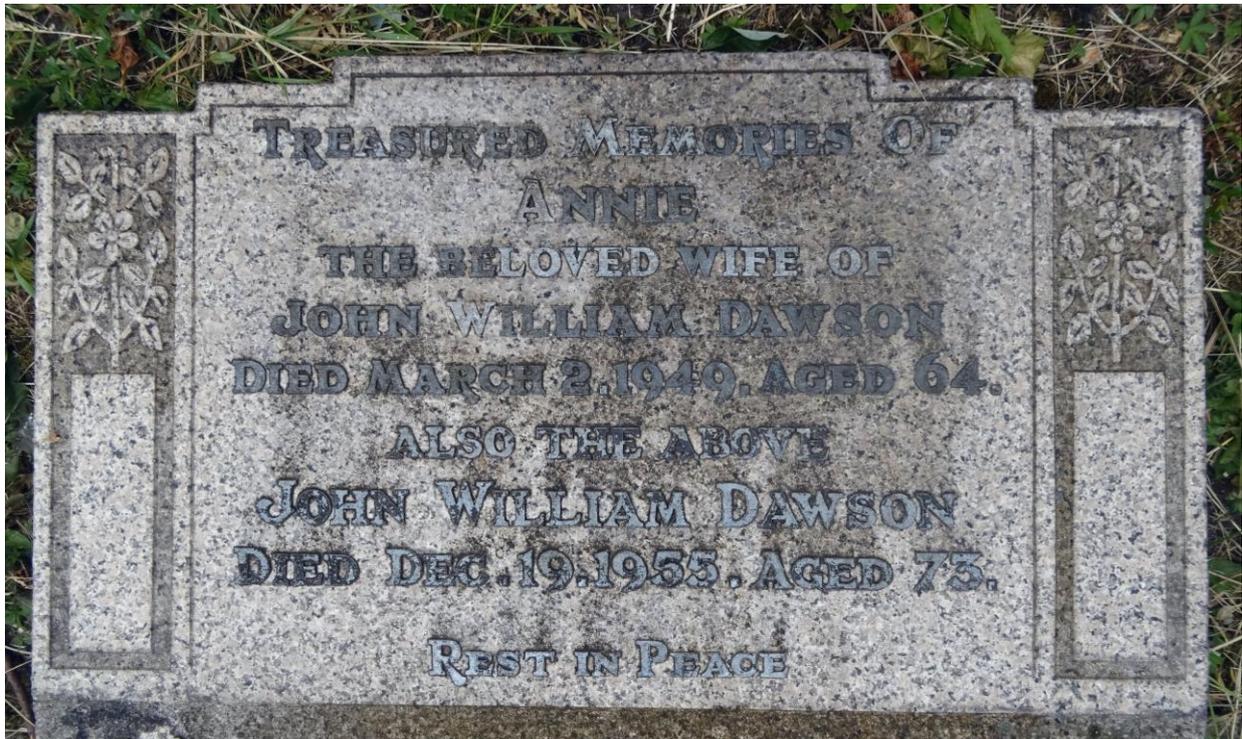
An undated photograph taken at Rose Cottage. John William, possibly with his sister Annie to his right and his wife Annie to his left. His wife died in 1949 and his sister in 1954.

Courtesy of Richard Law

John William was a house painter by trade but also painted oils and watercolours in his spare time.

In the late 1940s he sold Rose Cottage to his nephew John Martin Law and moved to 29 Gordon Street, Sutton-in-Craven. However he returned to Rose Cottage after his wife died in 1949, and this was his home when he died in St. John's Hospital, Keighley, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1955, at the age of 73.

He was buried with his wife in the graveyard of Sutton Baptist Church.



Fallen gravestone of John William and Annie Dawson

The following obituary appeared in the Craven Herald.

**Farnhill**

**MR. JOHN WM. DAWSON.**—The death occurred in hospital on Monday of Mr. John William Dawson, Rose Cottage, High Farnhill. Aged 73. Mr. Dawson had lived in Rose Cottage since the age of six. A painter and decorator by trade, he was of a retiring disposition, and enjoyed hobbies of gardening and oil painting. Several of his pictures hang in his bedroom, and he liked to paint local views. As a boy he sang in St. Andrews' Church choir, and was connected with the Sunday school. His father, William Dawson, was a mason, and was one of the men of the village responsible for the erection of Farnhill Pinnacle. Mr. Dawson was a widower, his wife having predeceased him by seven years. A service in St. Andrews Church preceded interment in Sutton Baptist churchyard. The Vicar (the Rev. S. A. Selby) officiated.

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## Postscript

Although John William and Annie had no children, many of John's siblings did and there are a number of living descendants known to be living in the local area.

## John William Dawson – a life in summary

**Born:** 23/12/1881, Farnhill  
**Baptised:** 25/3/1882, St. Andrew's Kildwick  
**Died:** 19/12/1955, St. John's Hospital, Keighley      **Aged:** 73  
**Home address:** Rose Cottage, Main Street, Farnhill

### Parents

**Father:** William; b. 1848, Windhill (Shipley); d. 20/7/1901, Farnhill  
**Mother:** Elizabeth (nee Beck); b. 1848, Wrose Hill (Shipley);  
d. 27/6/1905, Farnhill; buried 29/6/1905, Kildwick  
**Married:** 24/12/1867, Calverley

### Siblings

Bertha; b. 5/4/1868, Wrose Hill; m. James Watson, 25/4/1905, Kildwick; d. August 1922 Farnhill  
Sam Beck; b. 1869, Wrose Hill; m. Frances Watson, 5/4/1890, Kildwick; d. 4/12/1925, Crosshills  
Ida; b. 1871, Wrose Hill; m. Seth Walmsley, 20/4/1889, Kildwick; d. 13/5/1942, Farnhill  
Anne; b. 1873, Wrose Hill; d. 25/10/1954 (buried Kildwick)  
Ben; b. 1875, Wrose Hill; m. Lavinia Ellison, 14/11/1905, Kildwick;  
d. November 1943, Eastburn; buried 2/12/1943, Kildwick St. Andrew's  
Sarah Alice.; b. 10/1/1876, Wrose Hill; m. Albert Haggas, 1902, Burnley (Registration district);  
d. 1962, Burnley (Registration district)  
Martin; b. 1878, Wrose Hill; m. Lucy Jarvis, 5/7/1902, Kildwick;  
d. 1921, N. Brierley (Registration district)  
Martha Hannah; b. 1880; d. 23/8/1887 (buried Kildwick)  
Edith; b. 4/8/1884, Farnhill; m. Frank Binns, 16/7/1906, Skipton (Registration district);  
d. 3/10/1924, Paddiham  
Elizabeth Ellen; b. 1/8/1886, Farnhill; m. Walter Law, 2/4/1921, Kildwick  
Lina Mary; b. 17/4/1888, Farnhill; m. Herbert Alfred Thompson, 7/11/1918, Leeds;  
d. April 1959, Keighley  
Harry Mossman; b. 1893; d. 1/4/1894 (buried Kildwick)

### WW1 service

**Service period:** May 1917 (?) to 29/4/1919  
**Regt.:** Royal Field Artillery (Gunner, service number 233179)  
**Medals:** British War Medal, Victory Medal  
**Home address:** Rose Cottage, 73 Main Street, Farnhill

### Relationship to other volunteers

Walter Dawson – John William was his uncle (Sam Beck Dawson was Walter's father)  
Harry Walmsley – John William was his uncle (Ida Dawson was Harry's mother)

## Marriage

**Wife:** Annie (nee Hargreaves); b. 1884, Sutton-in-Craven;  
d. 2/3/1949 (buried at Sutton Baptist Church)

**Date:** 1/8/1911, St. Andrew's Kildwick

## Children

None known.

