

Ben Hargreaves (1894 – 1926)

Ben Hargreaves was born on a farm above Kildwick and was one of five children whose father was a fishmonger. By the time he was 16 he was working full time as a worsted spinner.

Assigned to the Army Reserve he was mobilised in 1916 and, following training at camps in the United Kingdom, was shipped over to France.

It is thought he was wounded twice and also gassed and unfortunately dangers were not over for Ben Hargreaves even after demobilisation. He was involved in a road traffic accident and his frail condition – the long-term effects of the gas – and the injuries received in the accident resulted in him spending the rest of his life in Ilkley Sanatorium. He died there, never having married.



Photograph courtesy of Andrew Whittam and Jo Birtwhistle

Pre-war life

Ben Hargreaves was born on 21st November 1894 at Great Slack, a farm on New Lane, Kildwick, above the road from Kildwick to Silsden.

REGISTRATION DISTRICT				SKIPTON						
1894 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Kildwick				in the County of York						
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
200	Twenty first November 1894 Great Slack Kildwick R.S.D.	Ben	Boy	John Hargreaves	Mary Ann Hargreaves formerly Brammer	Fish-monger	John Hargreaves of Station Slack Kildwick	Twenty first November 1894	A. H. Dawkins	Registrar

Ben Hargreaves' birth certificate
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The 1901 census noted the head of the household as John Edward Hargreaves, Ben's father, who was recorded as being a fishmonger, aged 35, born in Steeton. His wife, Mary Ann, was 34 and had been born in Cambridgeshire.

There were four children at Great Slack:

- Laurie, aged 11, born in Silsden
- Fred, aged 8, born in Kildwick
- Ben, aged 6, born in Kildwick
- Elizabeth Ann, aged 2, born in Kildwick

Civil Parish of <i>Kildwick</i>	Ecclesiastical Parish of <i>Kildwick</i>	County Borough, Municipal Borough or Urban District	Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District	Rural District of <i>Shipton</i>	Parliamentary Borough or Division of <i>Shipton</i>	Town or Village								
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Uninhabited No. of houses No. of houses	Uninhabited No. of houses No. of houses	Building	Population of Household No. of Males No. of Females	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday of Males Females	Condition as to Marriage	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	16 (18 91)	
<i>Great Slack 1</i>					<i>John C. Hargreaves</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>✓</i>	<i>Woolmonger</i>	<i>Own Account</i>		<i>York's Shelton</i>		
					<i>Mary A. Hargreaves</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>✓</i>				<i>York's Shelton</i>		
					<i>Laurie Hargreaves</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>✓</i>				<i>York's Shelton</i>		
					<i>Fred Hargreaves</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>✓</i>				<i>York's Shelton</i>		
					<i>Ben Hargreaves</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>✓</i>				<i>York's Shelton</i>		
					<i>Elizabeth A. Hargreaves</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>✓</i>				<i>York's Shelton</i>		
<i>T. ut. St. 1</i>														

Extract from the 1901 census – Hargreaves family at Great Slack
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There was a fifth child, Harry, who was not living with the rest of his family at this time. He was recorded as being aged 4 and born in Kildwick, and was living with his grandmother, Annie Hargreaves, at 10 Mill Street, Sutton in Craven.

By the time of the 1911 census the family, including Harry, had moved to 17 Starkey Lane, Farnhill, where they were living in four rooms.

Laurie had left the family home. He had married in 1909 and by 1911 he, his wife Alice, nee Emmett, and their 1 year-old daughter, Phyllis, were living in Sutton with the Emmett family. There had also been an addition to the Starkey Lane family, a daughter, Mary, who was aged 3 in 1911.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.						
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.						
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, than the preparation of Statistical Tables.						
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.	BIRTHPLACE of every person.	
1 John Hargreaves	Head	45	Married 22 7 6 1	York Winger 922	Doncaster	York's Shelton
2 Mary Ann Hargreaves	Wife	43	Married 22 7 6 1			Not known OX
3 Fred Hargreaves	Son	19	Single	Weaver Worsted 844	Yorkshire	York's Kildwick
4 Ben Hargreaves	Son	16		Spinner Worsted 843	Yorkshire	York's Kildwick
5 Harry Hargreaves	Son	14		Spinner Worsted	Yorkshire	York's Kildwick
6 Elizabeth Ann Hargreaves Daughter		12		School 290	D	York's Kildwick
7 Mary Hargreaves	Daughter	3				York's Kildwick

Extract from the 1911 census return for 17 Starkey Lane, Farnhill
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Note: The "Particulars of Marriage" section records that John and Mary Ann had been married for 22 years, and had had seven children; six were still living, and one child born to the marriage (name unknown) had died.

Ben must have attended Kildwick school and, like many children of the time, probably worked part-time in one of the local mills from the age of 12. Certainly by the time of the 1911 census, taken when he was 16, he was working full-time as a worsted spinner.

WW1 service

Ben attested his willingness to serve in the Army on 10th December 1915, at Crosshills. He had just turned 21. By this time it seems he had left the mill as his occupation was recorded as a labourer.

As was usual for those who attested he was assigned to the Army Reserve, but was called up almost immediately.

On 24th January 1916, Ben was mobilised and entered service as a Private with 11th battalion the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment (service number 11/18102).

There then followed five months of training at camps in the UK.

On 9th June 1916 Ben was transferred to 3/5 battalion. His younger brother, Harry, joined the battalion on the same day and they were given similar service numbers (Harry, Private no. 242159; Ben, Private no. 242169) On the 20th both men were shipped over to France with 1/5 battalion.

The above represents the full extent of Ben Hargreaves' surviving WW1 service record.

STATEMENT of the SERVICES of No. 11/18102 Name Ben Hargreaves		Army Rank	Dates	Service not allowed to reckon for fixing the rate of Pension		Signature of Officers certifying correctness of Entries
Battn. Depot	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.			years	days	
General Service	Attested	PLC	10 Dec 15			
General Service	To Army Reserve	--	4 2/15			
W.R.R. 2	Mobilized	--	24/1/16			
11	Posted	--	26-1-16			H. Wayne
3/5	transferred	--	9 JUN 1916			
W. Rid. Regt 1/5	Posted	PLC	20 6 16			

The full "Statement of Services" from Ben Hargreaves WW1 service record – with 11, 3/5 and 1/5 battalions WRR
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The Regimental War Diary for 1/5 West Riding Regiment reports that the field strength was supplemented with 262 men on 26th June 1916; presumably this number included Ben and Harry Hargreaves.

The Somme offensive started on 1st July 1916 and 1/5 battalion were involved from the very start. It is known that Ben left the trenches on 19th August having been in the front line for seven weeks.

On 3rd September 1/5 battalion, as part of the 147th Brigade, were part of an attack on the German lines either side of the River Ancre. The Regimental War Diary reports starkly:

The whole attack failed. The 146th Brigade failed to reach its objective and although the 147th Brigade reached their objective they were unable to hold it.

It appears that part of the assault force attacked in the wrong place and left gaps in the line. In addition, communications with another part of the force were lost almost as soon as the attack started. Extracts from the diary reveal the chaos that ensued:

D 'Coy' [Company] had to withstand bombing attacks on its left, from its centre, and later on from its right. It was impossible to get bombs up to it ... The company ... evidently made a very good fight of it and only retired when they had no more bombs ...

As regards A and B Coys no accurate information could be obtained. In the case of 'B' Coy no officer returned at all and of A Coy only one came back ...

... The party [A Company] ... swung to its left and right, leaving a disastrous gap ... enabling the Germans later on to bomb to the East and West along their front line.

B Company assaulted the [German] support line but only one third of them seems to have reached it. ... So far as can be ascertained no officer reached the German support line.

No messages were received back at HQ during the whole operation. The only information which was obtained was from wounded men returning ...

The men fought splendidly and in many cases without NCOs or officers ... as proof of the hard fighting there were 350 casualties out of 450 men who assaulted the German lines.

In these circumstances, Ben Hargreaves might appear to have been lucky. The following day (4th September) he was hospitalised with a gunshot wound to the left foot. As was subsequently reported in the press (West Yorkshire Pioneer 15/9/1916 and Keighley News 16/9/1916), it was the second time he had been wounded.



With kind permission of Keighley News

Ben must have been brought back to England as on 6th October he was admitted to the Red Cross Hospital, Feltham, Middlesex.

Subsequent information on Ben's military career is fragmentary. He certainly returned to active service and it is known that at some point he was gassed. He was also transferred from the West Riding Regiment to the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC; service number 161193), although when and where these events happened is not known.

Ben was not discharged from the army until 15th November 1919, over a year after the end of the war.

He applied for a war pension as a result of the gunshot wound to his left foot and was awarded an interim payment of 8s (40p) per week for July, August and September 1920, for what was judged to be a 20% disability. In September 1920, his disability was judged to be "Nil" and it was determined that there were "No ground for further award".

Form No. S.B. 36 7/ RAM C. 12344

Surname HARGREAVES Christian Names Ben Regional No. 4/M H/ No. 3687

Unit and Regiment or Corps R.A.M.C. Regtl. No. 161193 Rank PL

Date of Discharge 15-11-19 Year of Birth 1896 Marital Status { S. = Single
W. = Widower
M. = Married }

Address 17, Mary St. Fairlie
Kilmorie, W. Kingston Date of commencement of Pension 16-11-19

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

1 G.S.W. L^e Foot 3 1. att 3 6-9-24

2 6-9-24 4 6-9-24

Particulars of Awards for previous Service (if any) 6-9-24

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	
16/9/20	20%	Art 1(1) 19	Interim	8/-	-	-	-	28/9/20	28/9/20		
16-9-20	Nil	No ground for further award									

Extracts from Ben Hargreaves' WW1 pension ledger (SB 36)
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Post-war life

After his discharge from the army Ben returned to Farnhill.

In April 1920 he received the Victory medal and British War medal due to him for his service.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
HARGREAVES	W. Res R R.A.M.C.	Pte	242169 161193
Ben.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	RAMC/101 54	4184	
BRITISH	do	do	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

K 1280

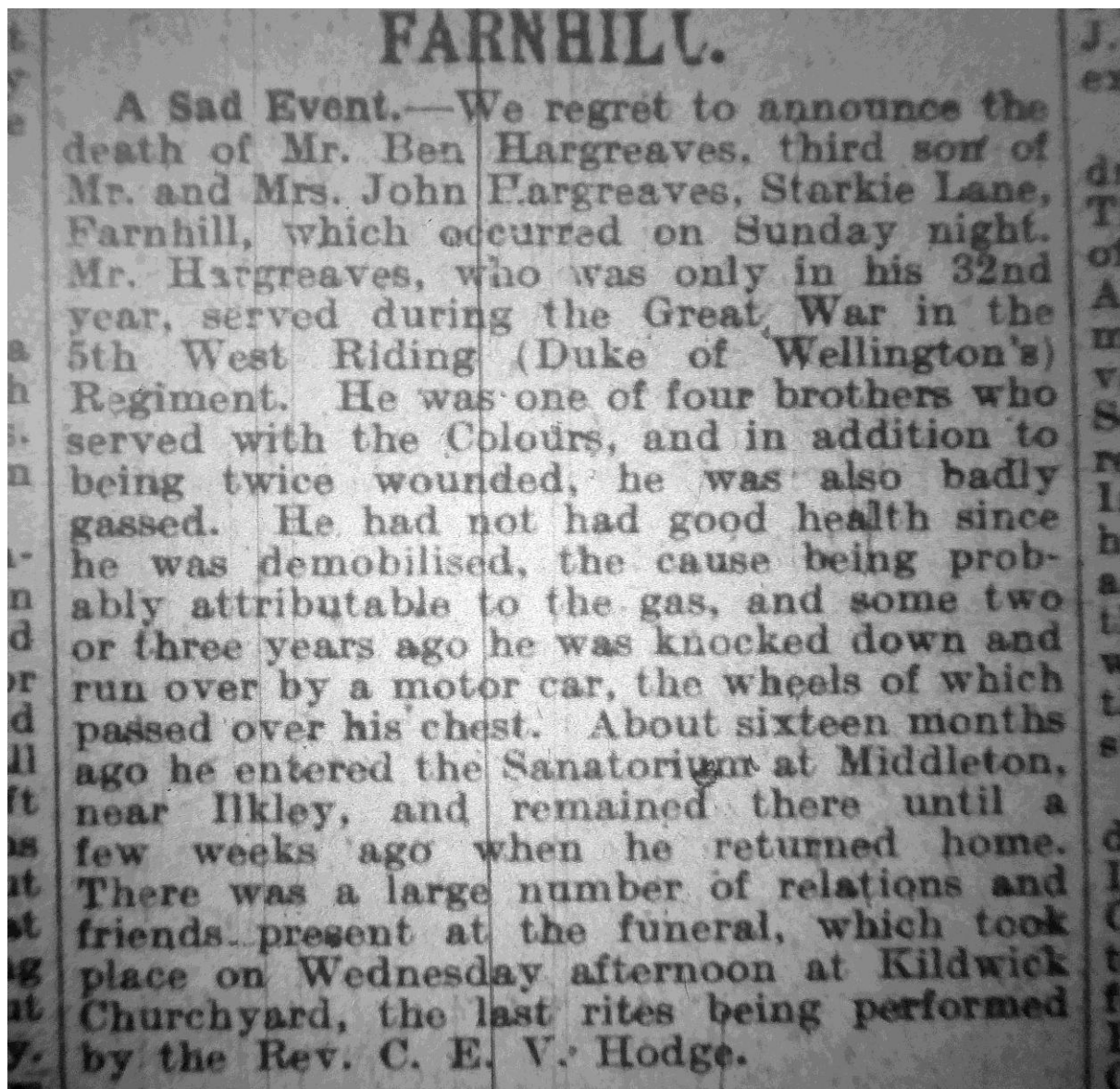
Ben Hargreaves' WW1 medal card
Used under licence from the National Archive

The 1921 census records Ben as living back at the family home, 17 Starkey Lane, with his parents and various siblings. He is recorded as working at Eastburn Quarry, as a general labourer.

In 1923 or 1924, Ben was involved in a road traffic accident in which he was hit by a car which ran over his chest. In consequence of this, and the long-term effects of the wartime gassing, he spent the rest of his life in a nursing home in Ilkley.

Ben Hargreaves died on 4th July 1926 and was buried in Kildwick churchyard a few days later. He was aged 31.

The following obituary appeared in the Craven Herald.



With kind permission of Craven Herald

Postscript

John Edward (Ben's father) died in June 1945 and Mary Ann (his mother) in March 1951.

Ben did not marry, and there are no direct descendants. Of Ben's siblings, only one brother is known to have married and had children. It is not known if there are descendants of the family still living in the area.

Ben Hargreaves – a life in summary

Born: 21/11/1894, Kildwick
Baptised: 15/4/1900, Kildwick
Died: 4/7/1926 **Aged:** 31
Home address: 17 Starkey Lane, Farnhill

Parents

Father: John Edward; b. 10/2/1866, Steeton; d. 11/6/1945, Farnhill
Mother: Mary Ann (nee Pamment); b. 1866, Isleham (Cambs.);
d. March 1951; buried 7/3/1951, Kildwick St. Andrew's
Married: 4/8/1888, St. Andrew's Kildwick

Siblings

Laurie; b. 1890, Silsden; m. Alice Emmett, 1909, Bradford (Registration district); d. 1924
Fred; b. 8/6/1892, Kildwick; m. Eva Smith (nee Horne), 23/12/1943, at Keighley Register Office;
d. 17/10/1975, Oakworth
Harry; b. 20/11/1896, Kildwick; m. Maria Wade, 6/9/1941, Silsden Parish Church;
d. 1/12/1982, Crosshills
Elizabeth Ann; b. 1899, Kildwick
Mary; b. 1908, Kildwick

plus one other who died prior to the 1911 census

WW1 service

Attested: 10/12/1915, Crosshills
Service period: Mobilised 24/1/1916; in France from 20/6/1916; discharged 15/11/1919
Regt.: 11th battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment (Private, no. 11/18102); later 3/5 battalion and 1/5 battalion (Private, no. 242169);
RAMC (Private, no. 161193)
Medals: British War Medal, Victory Medal
Home address: 17 Starkey Lane, Farnhill

Relationship to other volunteers

Fred Hargreaves – brother
Harry Hargreaves – brother

Note: There appears to be no relationship between these brothers and the other Hargreaves family of Farnhill.

