

Frank Leese (1891 – 1975)

Frank Leese, one of twins, was born into a large Skipton family. His father was a locomotive engine driver.

After her husband's death, Frank's mother had a small drapery business, and was later landlady of the Crown Inn in Cononley. On her remarriage the family moved to Farnhill, and Frank worked as a weaver.

Details of his WW1 war service have not survived, but his name appeared on the Roll of Honour of former pupils of Cononley School.

After the war Frank lived in Crosshills and later, after marrying, lived in Colne, and nearby Barrowford. He was employed as a maintenance engineer for heating systems. The Leeses had no children and Frank died in 1975, having been a widower for seven years. He lived the last years of his life as a resident in a Lancashire council run home for the elderly.

No Photo Available

Pre-war life

Frank Leese was born on the 20th September 1891, in Skipton and baptised in Christ Church a few weeks later. He was one of twins (his brother was called Bertie) and they were the last of 10 children born to Thomas Jonathan Leese and his wife Mary Ellen (nee Oldcroft, Holdcroft, or Houldcroft – spellings vary). Both of his parents came from Staffordshire and had arrived with their family in Skipton, via Motherwell, sometime between the birth of their daughter Elizabeth (in 1886) and their son Thomas (on the 24th February 1888).

The 1891 census, taken a few months before Frank's birth, recorded the family living in Rowland Street, Skipton. Frank's father was recorded as being a locomotive engine driver on the railways. Throughout the 1890s Thomas Jonathan Leese was included on the Skipton electoral roll living at addresses in Rowland Street and Romillie Street. He died on the 24th December 1899.

After the death of her husband, Frank's mother, Mary Ellen, seems to have taken on the role of family breadwinner. The 1901 census recorded the family living at 11 Rowland Street, with Mary Ellen described as running her own "small drapery business".

Civil Parish		Ecclesiastical Parish		County-Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal-Borough or Urban District		Rural District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Town or Village	
Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton		Skipton	
ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Uninhabited	Number of Inhabitants	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN			
11 Rowland St	1			Mary E. Leese	Head	45	Small Drapery Business	own account	at Home	Huddersfield	West of Yorks		
				John W. Leese	Son	26	Worker of Machine	Worker		do	do		
				Agnes Leese	Son	19	Worker in Drapery	Worker		do	do		
				Alfred Leese	Son	17	Worker in Drapery	Worker		do	do		
				Lizzie Leese	Son	15	Worker in Cotton Mill	Worker		do	do		
				Robert Leese	Son	11				Yorkshire	Skipton		
				Frank Leese	Son	9				do	do		
				Bertie Leese	Son	9				do	do		

Extract from the 1901 census return for Skipton
Used under licence from the National Archive

On the 12th January 1903 Frank, his twin Bertie and their older brother Albert Edward were all enrolled in the National School, Cononley – the older siblings were of working age. At this time they were living at the Crown Inn, Cononley, where their mother was the landlady.



Crown Inn, Cononley (facing). The inn closed in 1907.
Photograph courtesy of David Gulliver

Frank's older brother, Albert Edward Leese, only remained at the school for a fortnight but Frank was a pupil there until 18th May 1905, by which time his mother had remarried.

In 1904, Mary Ellen Leese had married William Stansfield. He was at least 18 years her senior.



Farnhill and Kildwick's old aged pensioners, photographed in 1912. William Stansfield is third from left
Photograph from the Farnhill & Kildwick Local History Group archive

After the marriage, the Leese family moved into William's house, Airedale Cottage, Farnhill. The 1911 census recorded the household being made up of William and Mary Ellen; five of the children from Mary Ellen's first marriage, including Frank; and a one year old child, Mary Ellen's grandson. Frank was recorded as being a weaver in a worsted mill.

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, or for any other 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.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.
1 William Stansfield	Head	74	Married 7 Nov		Yorkshire Consett	Eng. Sub. 8
2 Mary Ellen Stansfield	Wife	56	Married 7		Staffordshire	Eng. Sub. 8
3 Alice Leese	Slp. Daughter	27	Single	Cloth Weaver Worsted	Worsted	Scotland - Glasgow
4 Elizabeth Leese	" Daughter	25	Single	Cloth Weaver	Worsted	Scotland - Glasgow
5 Albert Edward Leese	" Son	21	Single	Stationary Engineer	Worsted	Yorkshire
6 Frank Leese	" Son	19	Single	Cloth Weaver Worsted	Worsted	Yorkshire
7 Bertie Leese	" Son	19	Single	Warehouse Boy	Worsted	Yorkshire
8 John Norman Leese	Grandson	1			Worsted	Yorkshire

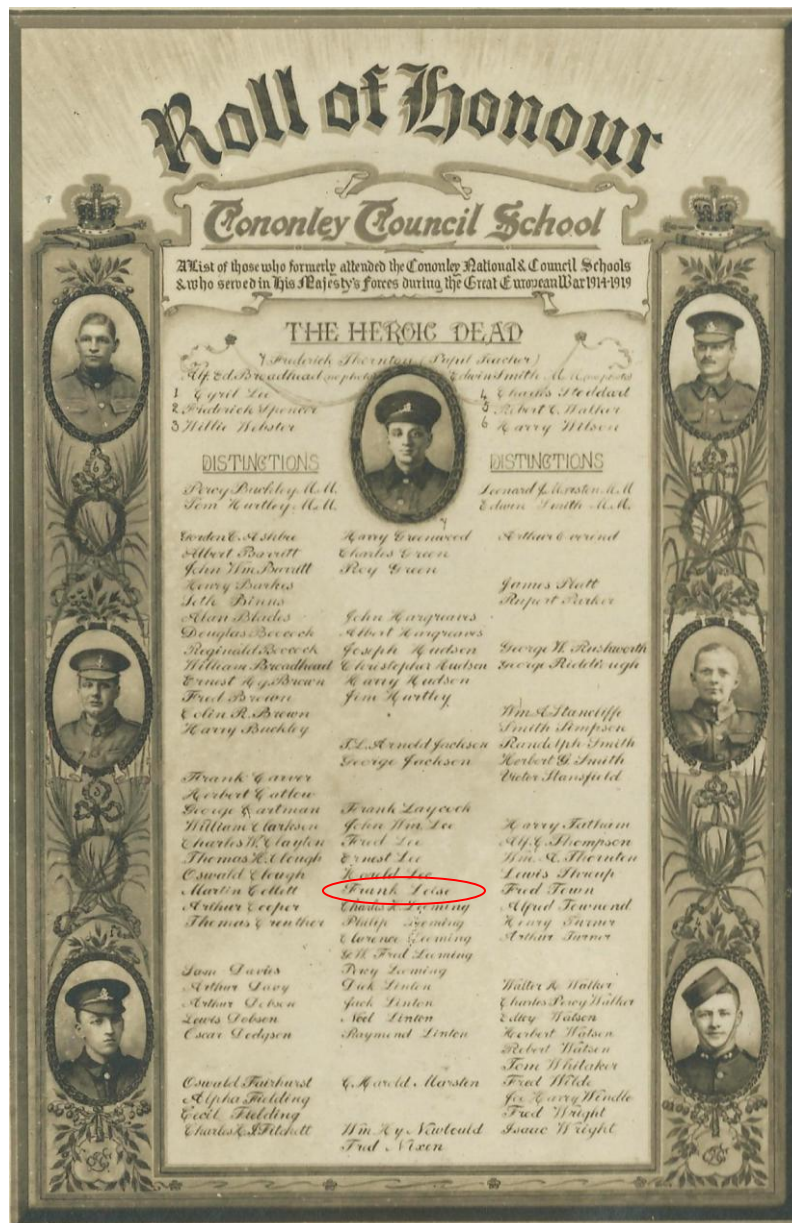
Extract from the 1911 census return for Airedale Cottage, Farnhill
Used under licence from the National Archive

Frank Leese during WW1

There is no doubt that Frank Leese served in WW1, however it has not been possible to say when, where, or how he served.

The only mention of him as a member of the armed forces comes from a newspaper report of November 1915, which described an event held at the Farnhill Institute to raise funds to provide "winter comforts for the lads serving with the Colours". The piece ends with a list of "The lads to be remembered", which includes F. Leese. The assumption must be that Frank was already serving, either training in the UK or in the field, by this time.

Frank's name was subsequently included on the Roll of Honour of former pupils, those who served as well as those who died, unveiled in Cononley school shortly after the end of the war.



Cononley School WW1 Roll of Honour
Photograph courtesy of David Gulliver

Post-war life

Wherever it was that Frank served, although he returned to the local area after the war, he did not come back to Farnhill.

The 1921 census records him living at 61 Main Street, Crosshills, with his mother and some of his siblings. He was employed as a general labourer by Skipton Rural District Council.

Frank's mother, Mary Ellen died in Crosshills on 24th December 1921 – 22 years to the day after her first husband. (Her second husband, William Stansfield, had died in late 1914.)

On the 12th June 1926 Frank Leese married Florence Ellen Croasdale, of Colne, in the Wesleyan School Chapel, Collingwood Street, Colne. Both parties gave their address as 16 Brown Street West, which was the Croasdale family home. Frank gave his occupation as an Engine Tender.

19____. Marriage solemnized at <u>the Wesleyan School Chapel Collingwood Street Colne</u> in the District of <u>Burnley</u> in the County of <u>Lancaster</u>								
Columns -	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No.	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	Twelfth June 1926	Frank Leese	24 years	Bachelor	Engine Tender	16 Brown Street West Colne	Thomas Jonathan Leese (deceased)	Engine Driver
		Florence Ellen Croasdale	36 years	Spinster	—	16 Brown Street West Colne	William Croasdale (deceased)	Retired
Married in the <u>Wesleyan School Chapel</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Wesleyan Methodists</u> by <u>Certificate</u> This Marriage was solemnized between us, <u>Frank Leese</u> in the Presence of us, <u>Ethel Smith</u> And in the Presence of <u>Fanny Morris</u> <u>Florence Ellen Croasdale</u> <u>Clifford Ashworth</u> Authorised Person for <u>the said school chapel</u>								

Leese – Croasdale marriage certificate
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The couple remained at the Brown Street West address until at least 1933, but by the time the 1939 Register was created at the start of WW2 – to enable ration cards to be issued – they had moved to Barrowford.

On the 1939 Register, Frank gave his occupation as “Maintenance Engineer, Stationary Steam Plant”.

Note: A near neighbour who remembers Frank and Florence in their later lives has told the project that Frank managed heating systems – including at Craiglands Hotel in Ilkley, which had a steam room and a Turkish bath at the time Frank worked there.

By 1941 the couple had moved to 15 Crabtree Street, Colne, which is where they were living when Florence Ellen died in 1968.

After his wife’s death, Frank’s own health deteriorated and shortly afterwards he was found collapsed at home and admitted to hospital in Burnley. Although he recovered, he did not return to Crabtree Street and was found a place at Woodside Hostel, a Lancashire County Council home for the elderly in Padiham.

Frank Leese died of heart disease, bronchitis and emphysema, at Burnley General Hospital on the 16th May 1975. He was aged 83.

Postscript

Frank and Florence Ellen had no children.

Of Frank’s many siblings, several are known to have married and had children, and it is likely that there are descendants living in the Skipton and Burnley areas.

Frank Leese – a life in summary

Born: 20/9/1891, Skipton

Baptised: 6/10/1891, Christ Church Skipton

Died: 16/5/1975, Burnley General Hospital **Aged:** 83

Home address: Woodside Hostel, Burnley Road, Padiham

Parents

Father: Thomas Jonathan Leese;
b. 1854, Rugeley (Staffs.); d. 24/12/1899, Skipton

Mother: Mary Ellen (nee Oldcroft/Holdcroft/Houldcroft);
b. 1855, Norton in the Moors, Staffs; bapt. 12/2/1857 Norton in the Moors, Staffs;
d. 24/12/1921, Crosshills – as Mary Ellen Stansfield

Married: 1875, Stoke-on-Trent (Registration district)

Mary Ellen Leese married William Stansfield; 1904, Skipton (Registration district)

Siblings

John William; b. 1875, Norton-in-the-Moors, Staffordshire;
m. Ellen Whitaker, 1903, Skipton (Registration district);
d. 1956, Skipton (Registration district)

Mary E.; b. 1877, Stoke-on-Trent (Registration district);
m. Hartley Smith, 1901, Skipton (Registration district)

Jonathan; b. 1878, Stoke-on-Trent (Registration district);
m. Christina Cameron, Dingwall, Scotland 1906/7
d. 7/12/1962, Dingwall, Scotland

Agnes; b. 1881, Stoke-on-Trent; m. George William Richardson, 21/10/1908, Kildwick;
d. 1909, Skipton (Registration district)

Alice; b. 1884, Motherwell

Elizabeth; b. 1886, Motherwell; d. 26/2/1963, Farnhill

Thomas; b. 24/2/1888, Skipton; bapt. Christ Church, 20/3/1888;
d. 1888, Skipton (Registration district)

Albert Edward; b. 2/1/1890, Skipton; bapt. Christ Church, 18/2/1890;
m. Letitia Bartrim, 26/12/1914, Keighley; d. 2/2/1959, Keighley

Bertie; b. 21/9/1891 (Frank's twin), Skipton; bapt. 6/10/1891, Christ Church;
m. Margaret Hartley, 1921, Colne; d. 8/12/1964, Wednesfield

WW1 service

Not known.

Marriage

Wife: Florence Ellen Croasdale: b. 21/8/1889, Burnley (Registration district);
d. 1968, Burnley (Registration district)

Date: 12/6/1926; Wesleyan School Chapel, Collingwood Street, Colne

Children

None known.

