

## William Ward (1889 – 1963)

William Ward was the eldest of nine children. He was born in Keighley, and the first indication of his connection with Farnhill was when he was married in 1915.

He served with different units of the Royal Field Artillery, before and during WW1. He had four children and, after his discharge, was very involved in local issues.

William was a milk dealer before becoming a master butcher and taking over a shop in Keighley.

He and his wife lived in Kirkgate, Farnhill, in the property which had been the Ship Inn. He died in 1963.



Photograph courtesy of David Horner

### Pre-war life

William Ward was the first of nine children born to John Edward Ward, originally from near Spalding in Lincolnshire, and Elizabeth Ellen (nee Hey), from Keighley. The other children were:

Edith; b. 1891

John Edward; b. 1893

Walter; b. 1895

Herbert; b. 1898

Gladys Mary; b.1900

Ivy; b. 1902

Elizabeth Ellen; b. 1905

George; b. 1908

William was born on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1889, in Keighley, and was baptised on the same day at Cavendish Street Methodist Chapel.

3/3	May 20 1889	William	John Edward & Elizabeth Ellen	Ward	31 Wellington Street Keighley
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William Ward Baptismal entry  
By kind permission of Josie Walsh

**Note:** Baptism following immediately after birth only usually happened when the child was not expected to survive. In this regard it may be significant that all of William's siblings were baptised at St. Andrew's Church, Keighley. Perhaps a baptism could not be arranged at St. Andrew's at short notice and the Chapel was the only option.

There is very little information available on William's early life. His family seem to have moved around the area quite a bit, with his siblings being born at various addresses in Keighley itself and nearby Braithwaite.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1906 William joined 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion West Riding Regiment (Private, no. 365), a territorial unit, signing on for a period of six years. His service documents, which are very confusing and difficult to interpret, suggest that he had previously been a member of 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion Yorkshire Regiment from which he had purchased a discharge having served just 79 days. He also claimed that he was aged 18 years and 11 months, although he was actually just 17 years and six months. He gave his next of kin as his father, John Edward, who was living at 16 Lustre Street, Keighley.

In April 1908 he was transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> battalion West Riding Regiment and, on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1908, William signed on for a seven-year term with the Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery Special Reserve, as a Driver. This time he claimed to be 20 years old, although he was just 19 years and five months.

3514  
No. 5395 Name William Ward  
MILITARY HISTORY SHEET.

I. Service at Home and Abroad.

COUNTRY	FROM	TO	YEARS	DAYS	N.B.—The Country only to be shown—it is not necessary to show separately the service in the different stations of same country. England, Scotland and Ireland to be shown under the general term "Home."
Home.	19.10.08	18-10-15	7	—	For mode of computing Service Abroad, see King's Regulations.

Extract from William Ward's Royal Field Artillery service record – 19/10/08 to 18/10/15, all served at "Home"  
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The Special Reserve was, like the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> battalions of the West Riding Regiment, a domestic unit. On the 1911 census William was still living with his family, by now at 16 Woollen Street, Keighley, and was recorded as being a warp dresser for a company making fancy goods (probably items made of silk or fine cotton).

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 Pension 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 Edward Ward	Head	56	Married	Labourer. Loom making	Lines. Huddling
2 Elizabeth Ellen Ward	Wife	42	Married 23 9 7 2	Warp Dresser	Yorks. Keighley
3 William Ward	Son	22	Single	Warp Dresser	Yorks. Keighley
4 John Edward Ward	Son	18	Single	Labourer. Loom making	Yorks. Keighley
5 Walter Ward	Son	16	Single	Dyers Labourer.	Yorks. Keighley
6 Gladys Ward	Daughter	11	—	School	Yorks. Keighley
7 Amy Ward	Daughter	9	—	—	Yorks. Keighley
8 Elizabeth Ellen Ward	Daughter	6	—	—	Yorks. Keighley
9 George Ward	Son	3	—	—	Yorks. Keighley
10 John Stephenson	Boarder	31	Married 11 1 1	Labourer. Power	Yorks. Keighley

Extract from the 1911 census return for 16 Woollen Street, Keighley  
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## William Ward during WW1

Britain went to war with Germany on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914. On the 8<sup>th</sup> William Ward received mobilization orders and the following day was posted to 137 battery of the Royal Field Artillery.

Between 4<sup>th</sup> November and 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914 William was in the Royal Hospital at Woolwich and then, shortly afterwards, must have returned home to be married.

On 12<sup>th</sup> January 1915 William Ward married Jane Earnshaw, by special licence, at St. Peter's Church in Keighley. He gave his occupation as "Driver RFA".

19 15. Marriage solemnized at <u>St. Peter's Church</u> in the <u>Parish</u>								
of <u>St. Peter's, Keighley</u> in the County of <u>York</u> :								
Column No.	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.
159	<u>Jan 12 1915</u>	<u>William Ward</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>Bachelor</u>	<u>Driver R.F.A.</u>	<u>Farnhill Kildwick</u>	<u>John Edmund Ward</u>	<u>Moulder</u>
		<u>Jane Earnshaw</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>Spinster</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>140 Kensington Street Keighley</u>	<u>Wm Earnshaw</u>	<u>Mechanic</u>
Married in the <u>Church of St. Peter</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Church of England</u> by <u>License</u> <u>Walter Ward</u> by me, <u>Robert Stanfield, Vicar</u>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <u>William Ward</u> and <u>Jane Earnshaw</u>			in the Presence of us, <u>Walter Ward</u> and <u>Wm Earnshaw</u>					

Ward – Earnshaw marriage certificate  
(c) Crown Copyright

Jane was originally from Glusburn but gave her address as 140 Kensington Street, Keighley. William, by contrast, gave his address as Farnhill, Kildwick – the first indication that he was living in the village.

William Ward served in a number of different units of the Royal Field Artillery, including the Reserve Brigade HQ, before being transferred to the 19<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battery, from where he was discharged on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1915, on completion of his seven year period of service. On his discharge form he finally gave his correct age to the military – saying that he was 26 years and five months, a milk dealer, and intended living at 140 Kensington Street, Keighley.

There is no evidence to suggest that William served abroad between August 1914 and October 1915, indeed his Royal Field Artillery service records are clear that he was only ever stationed at "Home" – meaning somewhere in the UK – during this period.

Name <u>William Ward.</u> (The name must agree strictly with that on enlistment, unless changed subsequently by authority.)	
Corps <u>Royal Field Artillery</u> Battalion, Battery, Company, Depot, &c. <u>19<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battery</u> (If attached to the Regular Establishment of the Special Reserve or Permanent Staff of the Territorial Force, &c., or to General Staff of the Army, it should be so stated.)	
Date of discharge <u>18<sup>th</sup> October 1915</u>	
Place of discharge <u>WOOLWICH.</u>	
1. Description at the time of discharge.	
Age <u>26</u> years <u>5</u> months Height <u>5</u> feet <u>8</u> inches Chest measurement { girth when fully expanded <u>38</u> ins. range of expansion <u>2</u> ins. Complexion <u>Yellow</u> Eyes <u>Brown</u> Hair <u>Black</u> Trade <u>Milk Dealer</u> Intended place of residence (To be given as fully as practicable) <u>140 Thengington St. Keighley Yorks</u>	Descriptive marks. <u>Nil</u>
(The measurements and description should be carefully taken on the day the man leaves his unit, but in the case of men sent home from abroad for discharge, the age and intended place of residence should be left blank to be filled in by the Officer who confirms the discharge at home.)	
2. The above-named man is discharged in consequence of <u>Termination of engagement. (Special Reservist)</u> <u>Para: 392 sub para XXI K.R.</u>	
(The cause of discharge must be worded as prescribed in the King's Regulations and be identical with that on the discharge certificate. If discharged by superior authority, the No. and date of the letter to be quoted.)	
3. Military character:— <u>very good.</u>	

Extract from William Ward's discharge papers from the RFA  
Used under licence from the National Archive

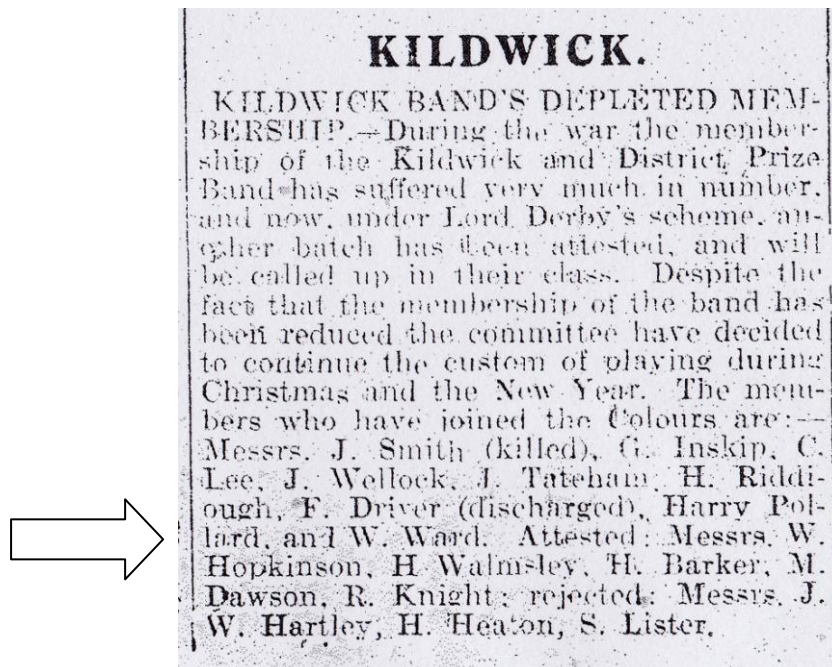
Whether William rejoined the army at some point during the war is not known, although there a number of pieces of evidence to suggest that he did:

- In the West Yorkshire Pioneer of 19<sup>th</sup> November 1915 there was a report of an event held in the Institute building, in Farnhill, in aid of the local brass band; arranged to "provide winter comforts for the lads serving with the Colours". The piece ended with a list of the men who were "to be remembered", which included W. Ward. Why would William Ward need winter comforts if he had already been discharged the previous month? His inclusion in this list only makes sense if he had already rejoined the army.

A slightly different report of the same event was published in the 20<sup>th</sup> November edition of the Keighley News. In this the name W. Ward is included in "a complete list of the men who have joined the colours from Kildwick and Farnhill."



- A month later, on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1915, the West Yorkshire Pioneer ran an article on the members of the Kildwick Brass Band who had “joined the Colours”. The piece clearly indicates a man who had been killed and one who had been discharged. William Ward is not designated as having been discharged, suggesting that he was once again a serving man.



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- William and Jane's first child, a daughter they called Edna, was born on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1916. When about 15 months old (an estimate, she appears as a young child but not an infant) she was photographed with her parents.



Young Edna Ward with her parents  
Photograph courtesy of Penny Lewis

In this photograph William is quite clearly wearing an RFA uniform – but why, if he had been discharged in October 1915 ? The photograph, probably taken in the first half of 1918, strongly suggests that William Ward rejoined the RFA after his October 1915 discharge. Whether this was as a volunteer or as a conscript is not known.

## Post-war life

William and Jane appear on the electoral roll for Farnhill for the first time in spring 1919; they were living at 32 Main Street, Farnhill.

By this time William had already become involved in local issues as the leader of local ex-servicemen demanding to be given allotments or smallholdings. The movement to provide each returning serviceman with a plot of land was strong in the post-war period and the group's initial meeting, held in the Institute on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1919, was reported in the Craven Herald.

### KILDWICK & FARNHILL.

**Smallholders' Association.**—A meeting of over twenty ex-soldiers was held in the Kildwick and Farnhill Institute on Thursday evening last to consider the question of the formation of a Smallholders' Association for the parish. Mr. W. Ward, who presided, said it was time the Farnhill ex-service men had each a piece of land to work on. There are at present about forty ex-service men in the parish.—Mr. Laurence Preston (Sutton) outlined the scheme carried out at Sutton, and said they must be united. At the present time land was almost unobtainable at an economic rent. Some of their critics argued that an acre of land would keep nobody, but would keep the holder poor. He himself was not a reactionary, but was out for the land promised to the returned men.—Mr. A. Howorth (Silsden) said all the land in Denmark was in small holdings, and in the South of France there was a splendid system of peasant proprietorship. If the ex-service men in the whole of the parishes round about would amalgamate, they would be able to get something tangible.—Mr. C. Shirley, chairman of the Sutton Smallholders' Association, said he did not agree with the statement that an acre of land would not keep anybody. He could make an acre of land keep himself and other two men besides. He was sure healthy employment would best help men to forget many of the sad things they had experienced across the channel. It was decided to form an association for the parish, to hold a meeting on Monday and appoint a deputation to meet the Parish Council on the following evening.

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On 29<sup>th</sup> August 1919 Jane gave birth to the couple's first son, Herbert. Two further children would follow: Doris, born on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1921; and Norman, born on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1926.

The 1921 census records the family, William, Edna and their three children, living at 32 Main Street. William was working as a Warp Dresser for a company in Skipton.

The Kildwick School pupil admissions records for 1918 to 1931 (the only years for which records have been found) record the attendance of three of the Ward children:

- Edna, from 27/10/1920 (aged 4 years) to 17/10/1930 – when she left having reached the age of 14.
- Doris, from 12/5/1924 (aged 3 years and 3 months) to 18/4/1935 – when she left having reached the age of 14.
- Norman, from 10/3/1931 (aged 4 years) to 21/3/1940 – when he left having reached the age of 14.

**Note:** There is no record for Herbert Ward, but a page is missing from the records covering most of 1922 and 1923, when it is likely he would have started.

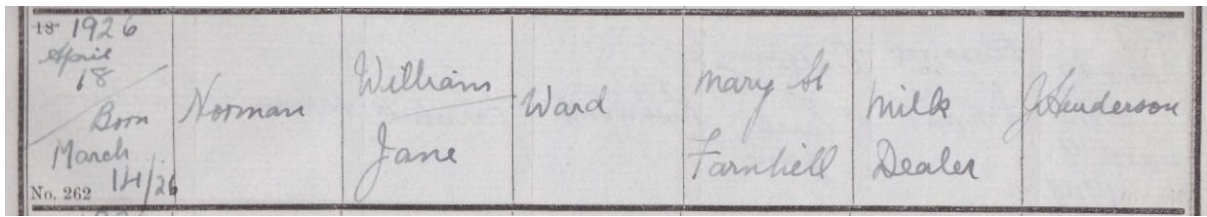
Three of the Ward children appeared together on a 1931 class photograph taken at Kildwick school.



Kildwick school photograph, October 1931. Herbert Ward is back row, far right;  
Doris Ward second row from back, second left; and Norman Ward front row, third right.  
Photograph given to Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group by the late Ruth Ward.



It was just before Norman's birth that the family moved from Main Street to 1 Mary Street, Farnhill.



Norman Ward's entry in Farnhill Methodist Chapel's baptismal record.  
He was the only one of the Ward children to be baptised in the village.  
Scanned by Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group.

On Norman's baptismal record, William is recorded as being a Milk Dealer, the profession he gave on his October 1915 discharge form. This is the occupation that Keith Bunnett, a former resident of Farnhill who knew the Ward family, remembers him having in the years before WW2.

However, at some point in the 1930s, William Ward must have taken over a butcher's shop (near Church Green in Keighley), as that was the occupation he gave when the register was compiled in September 1939 to allow ration cards to be issued at the start of WW2.

Keith Bunnett also recalls the Ward family children joining the forces in WW2. He believes that Norman was a paratrooper, and that Herbert was in the Green Howards and served alongside the famous Yorkshire spin bowler Hedley Verity, who was wounded and captured during the Allied invasion of Sicily in 1943 and died later in Italy.



Herbert and Doris Ward, photographed during WW2  
Courtesy of Mandy Wass



On 24<sup>th</sup> February 1940, Edna Ward married Albert Horner in Farnhill Methodist Chapel.

1940. Marriage solemnized at <u>Methodist Church, Farnhill</u> in the District of <u>Skipton</u> in the County of <u>York</u>								
Column—	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.
19	Twenty Fourth day of February 1940.	Albert Horner	23 Years	Bachelor	Textile Dyeing Clerk	Smithy Cottage Crosshills	Walter Horner	Boatman Farmer
		Edna Ward	23 Years	Spinster	Artificial Silk Butler and Mender	1, Mary Street, Farnhill	William Ward	Butcher
Married in the <u>Methodist Church, Farnhill</u> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Methodists</u> by <u>certificate</u>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, { <u>Albert Horner.</u> } in the Presence of us, { <u>William Ward</u> } And in the Presence of { <u>Reginald Hodgkinson</u> } { <u>Edna Ward.</u> } { <u>Doris Ward.</u> } { <u>the said church.</u> } Authorized Person for								

Farnhill Methodist Chapel marriage register  
Photographed by Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group

The other three children all married in post-WW2 period, which also saw Jane and William move from Mary Street to 1 Kirkgate, the former Ship Inn. The building had been used as a local Home Guard HQ during the war.

William Ward died of pneumonia in Victoria Hospital, Keighley, on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1963, aged 73. The following obituaries appeared a few days later in the local press.

**Farnhill**  
MR. W. WARD.—By the death of Mr. W. Ward, of Farnhill, the village has lost one who greatly loved his village and was deeply respected by the community. Mr. Ward was a master butcher at Keighley prior to his illness. The funeral was on Monday, with cremation at Oakworth. Mr. Ward is survived by a widow, two sons and a daughter.

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**FARNHILL**  
**FORMER BUTCHER DIES**  
A former Keighley butcher, Mr. William Ward, of Kirkgate, Farnhill, died in Victoria Hospital on Friday, April 26, aged 73. He leaves a widow and two sons and two daughters. He formerly had shops in Church Green and Aireworth Street. He lived all his married life in Farnhill.

By kind permission of Keighley News

## Postscript

Jane Ward died, of pancreatic cancer, less than two months after her husband, on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1963.

Several of William Ward's children had offspring and it is known that there are descendants still living in the local area.

## William Ward – a life in summary

**Born:** 20/5/1889, Keighley  
**Baptised:** Cavendish Street Methodist Chapel, Keighley  
**Died:** 25/4/1963, Victoria Hospital, Keighley **Aged:** 73  
**Home address:** 1 Kirkgate, Farnhill

### Parents

**Father:** John Edward; b. 1862, Spalding; d. December 1930, Keighley; buried 29/12/1930, Utley  
**Mother:** Elizabeth Ellen (nee Hey); b. 1869, Keighley;  
d. December 1921, Keighley; buried 21/12/1921, Utley  
**Married:** 1/5/1897, Kildwick

### Siblings

Edith; b. 17/3/1891, Keighley; d. 17/2/1893, Keighley  
John Edward; b. 24/2/1893, Keighley; m. Elizabeth Quin, 12/6/1920, Keighley; d. 1973, Keighley  
Walter; b. 5/7/1895, Keighley; m1. Mary Jane Dodd, 26/1/1920, Keighley;  
m2. Kathleen Mosley, 30/9/1933, Keighley; d. 1965, Worth Valley (Registration district)  
Herbert; b. 26/2/1898, Braithwaite; d. 1900  
Gladys Mary; b. 13/8/1900, Braithwaite; m. George Thomas Lawrence, 2/4/1923, Keighley;  
d. 1958, Worth Valley (Registration district)  
Ivy; b. 27/6/1902, Braithwaite; m. William Henry McNicholl, 1/12/1923, Keighley  
Elizabeth Ellen; b. 19/6/1905, Keighley; m. Arthur Buckley, 5/11/1927, Keighley;  
d. 1972, Worth Valley (Registration district)  
George; b. 7/5/1908, Keighley; d. 1979, Bradford (Registration district)

### Relationship to other volunteers

None known.

### WW1 service

**Mobilized:** 8/8/1914 (from Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery Special Reserve)  
**Service period:** 9/8/1914 to 18/10/1915  
**Regt:** Royal Field Artillery; initially 137 battery, later Reserve Brigade HQ  
and 19<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battery. Driver; nos. 3517, 5393, 165322  
**Medals:** not known  
**Home address:** 16 Lustre Street, Keighley

### Marriage

**Wife:** Jane Earnshaw; b. 29/12/1890, Glusburn; d. 12/6/1963, Farnhill  
**Date:** 12/1/1915, at St. Peter's, Keighley



## Children

Edna; b. 14/10/1916, Skipton (Registration district);

m. Albert Horner, 24/2/1940, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;

d. 21/7/1978, Farnhill

Herbert; b. 29/8/1919, Skipton (Registration district);

m. Frances Jean Marshall, 21/7/1945, Bradford (Registration district); d. 1996

Doris; b. 10/2/1921, Keighley (Registration district);

m. William Christie Biggs, 1945, Skipton (Registration district); d. 1977

Norman; b. 14/3/1926, Skipton (Registration district);

m. Mary Wood, 1949, Staincliffe (Registration district); d. 11/1/1979, Farnhill

