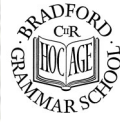


JOHN LISTER



11th August 1915

1895-1915 Aged 20

Private 1429 1/6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (Territorial Force). John Lister was born in 1895, the second surviving of seven children born to William Henry Lister of Horton and Helen Gray Conchar from Birmingham. John's grandfather, also John, worked his way up from a yarn packer in 1851 until he operated a spinning mill where he employed three men, fourteen boys and seventy-three girls in 1871. The business of J & W Lister and Sons leased part of Globe Mills, Hall Lane, Bowling (built in 1863). His son William inherited the company.

The younger John attended the Bradford Grammar School from 1906-11, by which time the family lived in Cecil Avenue, near Horton Park. What John did after leaving school we do not know—he may have worked for his father. This was the case for his younger brother Robert who was designated “*spinner*” in 1929 when his father died, and “*company director*” in the 1950s when his mother and sister died. When war was declared it seems likely, given that he was not old enough to have joined them before 1914, that John responded to the call for recruits to form an Old Bradfordians' company in the Bradford Territorials. There were 140 such new men in the battalion which was sent to Selby on 11th August, where their recruit training commenced. At the end of the month practically the whole battalion volunteered for foreign service. When the 6/West Yorkshire went abroad to France as part of 49th West Riding Division on 15th April 1915, he was a member of “C” Company which numbered around one hundred former pupils in its ranks.

In late July and early August the 6th Battalion was in and out of the line at Turco Farm, just to the north of Ypres. There was a daily toll of casualties from shellfire, sniping and trench foot. On 11th August they had been in the front line for five days when, the War Diary states, at 3.30 am “*Enemy fired 8 very large trench mortars into our salient at*



No Man's Cottage at same time firing 8 or 9 rounds Howitzers at communication trench to cut our wires. No appreciable damage done.” The following day they were relieved and left the line. The Diary records “*Casualties during occupation of trenches:- 1 officer wounded – 3 other ranks killed – 20 other ranks wounded*”. John Lister was one of the dead. He had been hit during the German shelling on the preceding day, as was recorded in a letter to his father by Old Bradfordian, Kenneth Bloomer: “*Had a lovely do the other day. My equipment was blown up by a trench mortar but I wasn't inside it. It killed poor old Johnny Lister whom you will remember in Second Upper. It upset me worse than anything that has happened.*” This area was fought over for the ensuing years so his grave was lost and his name was recorded on the Menin Gate. He was twenty and unmarried. He had been in the army for a year.



Old Bradfordians—'We will remember them'



Acknowledgements:

Lister's family information has been assembled from census and probate records accessed through Ancestry.com. The author is very grateful to Tricia Hart for generously sharing her research on individual members of the 6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment. Information about J & W Lister and Sons is at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broomfields, Bradford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broomfields,_Bradford). The 6th Battalion's War Diary account of the events of 11th August is at http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/60779/43849_2794_2-00122/696532?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.co.uk%2f%2fcgi-bin%2fsse.dll%3findiv%3d1%26db%3dUKWarDiariesWWI%26gss%3dangs-d%26new%3d1%26rank%3d1%26msT%3d1%26_F0007CF4%3d6th%2bWest%2bYorkshire%26MSAV%3d0%26uidh%3d6n6%26pcat%3d39%26fh%3d331%26h%3d696532%26recoff%3d%26fsk%3dBELFI5wlgADtawABEXE-61-%26bsk%3d%26pgoff%3d%26ml_rpos%3d332&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnRecord#?imageId=43849_2794_2-00124. Lister's Medal Index Card is also on Ancestry. A copy of the transcript of Bloomer's letters by Martin Shaw was supplied to me by Tricia Platts. There are problems with the dates in the transcripts, but the incident Bloomer describes seems to fit Lister's death, and there was no other Lister in Bloomer's company..

*This biography researched and composed by Nick Hooper July 2015.
(Nhooper1956@googlemail.com)*

