

LOUIS BERTRAM HAWKSWELL



18th September 1918

1896-1918 Aged 22

Lieutenant, 6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (T.F.), attached Royal Air Force.

Louis was the grandson of William Hawkswell, a Leeds cloth manufacturer, who filed for bankruptcy in 1882. He was the second son and one of five children born to Woodhouse Hawkswell and his wife Elizabeth. She was German, and as there is no record of Woodhouse in England after 1881 and before 1894, it is possible that their marriage in 1892 took place in Germany. By 1894 Woodhouse was a textile designer living in Morley, and later in Eccleshill, which is where Louis was born on 31st August 1896. In 1911 the family lived opposite Lister Park at Laurel Bank on Keighley Road. Woodhouse was at that time manager of a cloth mill. By the early 1920s he was a Bradford clothing manufacturer.

In 1904 Louis attended St. Bede's Grammar School, a recently established Catholic foundation close to the site of the Bradford Grammar School on the edge of the city centre. He transferred to B.G.S. in 1908 when he was twelve and studied there on the Modern side until 1911. In all his three years he showed talent in Art, and in his final year he did well in German. This may have played a role later in his life. His younger brother John was also at the school. Louis left just before he was fifteen. It is possible that like his elder brother Frederick he was apprenticed in their father's mill, but in 1914 he was described as 'Apprentice to Wool Trade' with the firm of Sir Titus Scott (Bart.), Sons & Co. Ltd, cloth coating manufacturer whose premises were in Saltaire.

Louis was eighteen a few days after the British forces first engaged the Germans at the Battle of



Mons (24th August 1914). He enlisted in the 3/6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment in Bradford in 1915, and at the end of the year he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. When he went on active service to France in October 1916 he was posted to the regiment's 9th Battalion which had recently suffered heavy casualties in the Somme fighting. After five weeks he was seconded to Intelligence Corps Head Quarters at G.H.Q., but he had returned to 9/West Yorkshire by March 9th 1917 on which day he departed to join the Royal Flying Corps.

Three days later Louis Hawkswell reported to the Royal Flying Corps at Reading, then to a Training Squadron at Scampton Aerodrome in Lincolnshire. Although he passed as a pilot, Hawkswell did not serve overseas. He was in hospital for two weeks in summer 1917 following which he was considered not to be fit for General Service as a pilot. Despite this he was promoted to Lieutenant at the end of January 1918, and he was passed fit to fly as a pilot in March 1918. Even then he was not sent to France, although he was experienced at flying different aircraft. He was at Scampton again in September when he went up in a Sopwith Camel. He stalled on a turn and spun into the ground from 150ft. He died from his injuries. He was 22. His body was brought back to Bradford and was interred in Nab Wood Cemetery.



Acknowledgements:

No photo of Hawkswell appears to exist. The family was researched using Ancestry.com, but there is no record of Woodhouse and Elizabeth's marriage, no baptismal records for their children, and they are not recorded in the census for 1891 and 1901. His years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports for 1909-10, 1910-11, and 1911. William Hawkswell's bankruptcy is in the *Bradford Observer* for 4.10.1882 and *Yorkshire Post* 9.10.1882. Woodhouse Hawkswell is recorded as a Designer in the 1894 *White's Directory of Leeds and the clothing district*. The electoral registers show he lived at 27, Bank, Eccleshill 1898-1904. Louis is entered in the St. Bede's School memorial book, available at <http://sbsj.co.uk/st-bedes-history-and-old-boys-information/>, where the year 1904 is given. *Grace's guide* 1922-3 contains an advert for Woodhouse Hawkswell, Manufacturer of men's and women's clothing, 2 Union Street, Bradford.

Hawkswell's military career is from his R.A.F. file, T.N.A. AIR/76/216/89; from the April 1916 *Army List* <https://digital.nls.uk/british-military-lists/archive/104100536>, 1034c; 9th Battalion West Yorks War Diary WO95/1809/2 entries for 16.10 and 21.11.1916 and 9.3.1917 (starting at fol.105); *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 31.1.1918. I acknowledge that I was directed to two entries in the War Diary and to the circumstances of Louis' death by posts on Great War Forum, <https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/194712-lieutenant-louis-bertram-hawkswell/> > accessed 16.9.2018. The *Register of Soldiers' Effects* gave his battalion as the 10th, a statement which seems to be in error. Louis is buried at S.35.

The Bradford Roll of Honour records that Louis' elder brother Frederick William Hawkswell served in the 6th Battalion West Yorks and Royal Engineers. He survived the war.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in September 2018. For further information, contact Nhooper1956@googlemail.com, or see <http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>.