

Banstead Remembers

*Private John Henry Baldwin
of 3 Devonshire Cottages, Garratts Lane*

*1/12th London Regiment (The Rangers)
Served in Malta, Gallipoli and France
Died in Germany, aged 24*



TUESDAY 28th FEBRUARY

at All Saints Church, Banstead

11:50am: a short service of remembrance will be held

Noon: a church bell will be tolled 100 times

The churchyard flag will be raised to half mast at 7:30am and lowered at 5:30pm

John Henry Baldwin was a gardener who lived at Devonshire Cottages, where Shrubland Court is now. He served with the 2/2nd London Regiment in Gallipoli and then transferred to The Rangers. Wounded and captured on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, he died of illness in Germany.

*We will remember **each** one*

Private John Henry Baldwin of 3 Devonshire Cottages, Garratts Lane

John Henry Baldwin, known as "Jack", was born on 21st December 1892 at Heath House (now Greenacre School), in Sutton Lane, Banstead. He was the third of five children born to Henry and Anna Bella Baldwin. The family lived at several addresses in the Banstead area and Jack was born when they were living in the stables at Heath House, where his father worked as a cowman.

Jack's father tried to take his own life in 1897 and was admitted to the Epsom Workhouse, where he remained for the rest of his life. With several young children to look after on her own, Anna Bella was unable to work without help so the family took care of one of Jack's sisters and a wealthy benefactor paid for 5-year-old Jack to live in a boys home in the Kent countryside while his mother took in laundry.

He later returned to live with his mother at 3 Devonshire Cottages, where Shrubland Court is now, in Garratts Lane. Jack worked as a gardener, perhaps at nearby Garratts Hall. He was a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters' Epsom Court.

He joined the Army, probably on 28th November 1914, and chose to serve with the Royal Fusiliers, joining their 2/2nd (Territorial) Battalion, who trained on Epsom Downs and then in Tonbridge, Kent. After serving as a garrison in Malta throughout the first half of 1915, they went to Egypt and then fought in the trenches of Gallipoli during the autumn and winter. After the evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula, the 2/2nd London Regiment went to France in April 1916. There they were disbanded and the men joined other battalions of the London Regiment. 200 men, including Jack, were attached to the 1/12th London Regiment (The Rangers) in late May.

The Rangers took part in the diversionary attack at Gommecourt on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Jack was wounded in the leg that day and did not return from the German trenches. He was captured and taken to Germany, where he was treated in hospital for several weeks.

After being released from hospital, Jack was incarcerated in Langensalza Camp, in Thuringia, central Germany. The diet was poor, the work was hard and the conditions were cramped and insanitary. On 28th February 1917, Jack died in captivity from pleurisy, swelling of the lining of the lungs, probably after having first contracted pneumonia or tuberculosis. He was 24 years old.

Jack was buried in Langensalza Camp's No.2 Cemetery but was reburied at Niedierzwehen Cemetery at Cassel when the Commonwealth war casualties were concentrated at four German cemeteries in the 1920s. He is commemorated on the Banstead War Memorial and on the Garton War Memorial in All Saints churchyard.