

Banstead Remembers

*Corporal Henry Penson
of Diceland Road*

*17th (Duke of Cambridge's Own) Lancers
Served in France
Killed in action, aged 28*



FRIDAY 2nd 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

Henry Low Penson was born in Banstead in 1889. His family moved to Ewell when he was 9 years old. After working as a railway porter, Henry joined the Lancers in 1909 and served in France during the war. Please come and remember the sacrifice made by our local men in the Great War.

*We will remember **each** one*

Corporal Henry Penson of Diceland Road

Henry Low Penson was born at home in Diceland Road on 8th September 1889 and was baptised at All Saints on 27th October. He was the eldest of Henry and Annie Penson's seven children.

Henry senior had come to Banstead from Lincolnshire in the 1880s and married Annie Blunden, a domestic servant, at All Saints in 1888. Henry and Annie lived in one of the first houses to be built in Diceland Road. Henry was a carter and labourer and probably helped to build the houses of Diceland Road. The family moved with Henry's carting work and went to Perrotts Farm in 1895 and then to Priest Hill Farm, Ewell, in 1898, when Henry junior was 9 years old.

Young Henry began his education at the Village School in Banstead and had reached Standard I by the time he joined the West Street School in Ewell in November '98. He left in April 1903, aged 13, to work as a gardener's boy. He later found work on the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway as a porter and part-time signalman, working at Holmwood and then Box Hill stations.

In 1909, Henry resigned from the LB&SCR and joined the Army. He served with the 16th (The Queen's) Lancers and was based in Norwich in 1911 but then transferred to the 17th (Duke of Cambridge's Own) Lancers, with whom he served in India.

The 17th Lancers were in Sialkot, India, when war broke out. They arrived in France in November 1914. Opportunities to use the cavalry were few and far between and so the cavalrymen were often pressed into service as infantrymen or pioneers and the 17th Lancers were in the trenches within weeks of reaching the Western Front.

Time and again during a battle, the cavalry would wait behind the lines for the infantry to make breakthroughs for them to exploit only to end up trooping home disappointed as yet another attack ran into difficulties. The cavalry's two big opportunities came at High Wood in July 1916, during the Battle of the Somme, and at Monchy-le-Preux in April 1917, during the Battle of Arras, and both ended up in carnage for both men and horses. Luckily, the 17th Lancers avoided both disasters.

After once more waiting in vain to go into action during the Battle of Cambrai, the Lancers put their horses into winter stables and returned to the trenches. On 3rd February 1918, a Lancers outpost was shelled and Henry was killed. He was 28.

Henry is buried in Hargicourt British Cemetery, near St Quentin. He is not commemorated in Banstead but is remembered on the Dipping Well Memorial at Bourne Hall, on the memorial in St Mary's churchyard in Ewell and on the Ewell West Street School Roll of Honour which now hangs in Bourne Hall Museum.