

Banstead Remembers

Private George Turner

55 Ferndale Road

8th The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Served in France

Killed in Action, aged 19



SATURDAY 9th SEPTEMBER

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

George Turner grew up in Banstead but left the village a year before war broke out. He fell in the Battle of Loos (September 1915). George's connection to Banstead has only recently been discovered so we were unable to commemorate him on the centenary of his death. Please come and remember the sacrifice made in the Great War.

*We will remember **each** one*

Private George Turner *55 Ferndale Road*

George Richard Turner was born on 20th May 1896. He was the eldest of seven children born to Richard and Ellen Turner (nee Brewer) of 25 Stephendale Road, Fulham. George was baptised at St Matthew's, Fulham, on 29th July.

The Turners moved several times while George was young and came to Banstead when he was about 9 years old. Richard was a builder and was one of the many tradesmen who were working on the new houses being built in the Diceland-Ferndale Roads area at the time. The Turners moved into 3 Fern Terrace, the third in a terrace of four houses, in Ferndale Road. Today the house is number 55.

The children attended school in the village. George was "*of a studious nature*" and won a free scholarship to Sutton Grammar School, starting there in 1908 and leaving in 1911, when he was 15. He won a trades scholarship and was apprenticed as a bricklayer to James Pink, a builder based in Kingswood and Merstham. In 1913, the Turners moved again, to Cambridge Cottage, Lower Kingswood, a flint cottage which still stands today beside the Brighton Road.

George was working as a bricklayer when he joined the Army at Croydon on 6th March 1915, signing on for the duration of the war. He added three months to his age so that he appeared to be 19 years and 1 month old, just old enough to serve overseas. He joined the 8th (Service) Battalion of The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) and trained at Shoreham and Aldershot throughout the spring and summer. The 8th Queen's left for France at the end of August and then spent the best part of a month billeted in farms as they waited to go into action.

The Battalion was to take part in the Battle of Loos at the end of September. The Big Push at Loos was part of the northern pincer of an Anglo-French attempt to pinch out a broad salient (bulge in the line) that the Germans held and trap three German armies. Chlorine gas would be used for the first time by the British. The attack was scheduled for 25th September, the hour dependent on the wind speed and direction.

The 8th Queen's were in reserve and were ordered forward in the evening, 11 hours after the attack had begun. They struggled through trenches jammed with wounded and all the traffic of battle and arrived in the Loos valley, south of Hulluch, at 2am. In the morning, they attacked the second line of German defences. They advanced into a killing zone. The Queen's came under heavy fire from machine guns on both their flanks and front, from point-blank artillery, and also from British shells. Two hours later the survivors made it to the German wire only to find it untouched by British shelling. They could not cut through and were shot down in numbers as they tried.

The 8th Queen's suffered 439 casualties on 26th September 1915. George was among of the missing and was later confirmed as having been killed. He was 19 years old.