

# *Burgh Heath Remembers*

*Lance Corporal Edward Beadle*

*Born at Canons Farm Cottages, Canons Lane*

*2<sup>nd</sup> South Wales Borderers*

*Served in France*

*Killed in action, aged 32*



## **SUNDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL**

at All Saints Church, Banstead

10:50am: a short service of remembrance will be held

11:00am: 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

The Battle of Arras is often forgotten, overshadowed by the fighting that took place before it on the Somme and afterwards at Passchendaele. Eight men from Banstead and Burgh Heath were killed in the battle. Edward was one of two Burgh Heath men to lose their lives on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1917.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Lance Corporal Edward Beadle* *Born in Canons Lane, Burgh Heath*

Edward John Beadle was born at home on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1884 and was baptised at All Saints in December of that year. He was the son of Edward and Laura Beadle. The family lived at Canons Farm Cottages and Edward senior worked as a farm servant at Canons Farm.

By the time young Edward was seven years old, his family had moved to Waddon Marsh Lane, Croydon, where his dad and elder brother worked as cowmen on a nearby farm. Edward joined the Parish Church Infants School in October 1890. After finishing school around the turn of the century, Edward became first a brickmaker and then a yard foreman and storekeeper for Croydon Borough Council. He married Lily Lambert in Croydon in 1905 and they had a daughter, Lilian, in 1908.

Edward enlisted in the Royal Welch Fusiliers on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1915, probably under the Derby Scheme. He may have volunteered to begin his service immediately but, like many men, he probably chose to defer until he was called up. As a married man, he would not have been called up to serve until June 1916. After training on the Home Front, Edward would have gone out to France in the autumn or the winter of 1916-17. Although he had joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers, many regiments were in need of reinforcements and it was common for men to be posted to other units and so in early 1917, Edward found himself serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the South Wales Borderers instead.

The Battle of the Somme was over but a new offensive was soon to begin. The Battle of Arras was fought to divert German reserves north so that the French could try and break through on a wide front along the River Aisne, far to the south. The battle began on Easter Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917, and that day saw the largest gains made from a standing start in the war so far. The Canadians captured Vimy Ridge and the British Third Army smashed through the first two lines of German defences east of Arras. After two days of fighting for control of the *Monchyriegel* switch line, which ran between Feuchy and Wancourt, the British advanced into the village of Monchy-le-Preux, on top of a ridge of high ground that ran between the Scarpe and Cojeul rivers. There the advance halted and the First Battle of the Scarpe came to an end.

The French attack on the Aisne began on 16<sup>th</sup> April. It was a failure, the Germans knew they were coming and were ready for them. The British pressed on with their offensive, hoping to ease the pressure on the French, and as dawn was breaking at 4:45am on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, they renewed their attack on a 9-mile front which centred on Monchy-le-Preux.

East of Monchy, Edward advanced with the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Wales Borderers. British shells dropped short and hit the Borderers but they kept going and took Shrapnel Trench and then moved up the gentle slopes of Infantry Hill, shooting their way through Arrow Head Copse and the Twin Copses. They could go no further as the failures of the attacks either side of them meant that their position was vulnerable. Reinforcements were hurried to fill the gap on their left (the result of the failed attack to the north, in which another Burgh Heath man, Thomas Riches, was killed) and deal with the snipers and machine-gunners there. Edward was killed during the fighting that day. He was 32 and left a widow and young child.

Like all but one of the other local men who lost their lives in the Battle of Arras, Edward has no known grave and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. There are no names inscribed on Croydon Cenotaph but Edward is remembered on Croydon's Roll of Honour