

# WILLIAM FERDINAND LUNN

Private, L/11214, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment.

Died on 23rd April 1917, Hindenberg Line, Arras, age 19

William was born at Pirbright on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 1897 and baptised at St Michael & All Angels on 10<sup>th</sup> October in the same year. He was the eldest child of Charles Albert Lunn, a platelayer on the London & South Western Railway and his wife Florence Bertha Lunn. Father Charles was born at Sandhurst in 1867. Florence Barthe, 7 years younger, was a Londoner and they had married at St Bartholomew the Great in the City in April 1895. When William Ferdinand was born the family had just moved to one of the Sandpit Cottages in School Lane, where they had moved to that year.

This was also their home in 1901, now with 2 more children. Anyone who has visited Sandpit Cottages will know how tiny they used to be, so it would have been quite a squeeze then with 5 in the family. By 1909, with 3 more children, the overcrowding can only be imagined and trying to make ends meet on a platelayer's wages difficult. That year the family moved to White Acre Cottage, close to the railway at Pirbright Junction.



The 12-year-old William had quit Pirbright School ("left the village") with his brothers and sisters that year, but they didn't transfer to Brookwood, so he may have tramped over the heath to Frimley School for 2 years.

As a 14 year old lad and under 4 feet 8 inches tall, William followed his father and commenced employment with the L & SWR at Brookwood as a Lamp Lad on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1912 with a wage of seven shillings a week (37.5p). This was a filthy job, cleaning, filling and trimming the wicks of the dozens of paraffin lamps, but as the second breadwinner in the family, the wages would have been more than welcome. He continued to work with the railway for almost three years and progressed to 10 shillings a week (50p) before he resigned his post on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1915.

Shortly after leaving the railways William almost certainly signed up to do his duty for 'King and Country' at Stoughton Barracks, Guildford when he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. He would have fought with the battalion on the Somme before it moved to Arras to take part in an attack on the Hindenberg Line in April 1917 and it was here that he was missing, presumed dead. He is remembered on Bay 2 of the Arras Memorial, along with 122 officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion who died that day.

He would never have known his baby sister, Ruby, born a month afterwards, in May that year.