

Park Lane Chapel WW1 Commemoration

“Refurbished chapel window dedicated to fallen soldiers unveiled” was the headline from the half page spread in our local paper the Wigan Observer. When I contacted the newspaper I was surprised that they were quite so interested in the history of our little chapel. They sent down a photographer and published a lovely article about our roll of honour window, which was looking somewhat shabby. The window has been refurbished and was rededicated on the 3rd of August at 11am during a special commemoration ceremony which honoured the men of the chapel who fell during this war to end all wars. They are as follows:

Rifleman Harry Fletcher 6th July 1917 from Bryn, age 23

Lance Corporal William Edwin Bradshaw 15th July 1916 from Ashton age 21

Sergeant John Brimelow 26th of October 1917 from Bryn age 28

Sapper Seymour Marcus Derbyshire 24th May 1917 from Bryn age 27

Private William Darbyshire 15th October 1917 from Bryn age 37

Private James Edward Hughes 20th December 1917 from Ashton age 30

Private William Murphy 24th June 1917 from Goose Green, Wigan age 20

Private James Lomax 10th April 1920 from Pemberton age 30

Lance Sergeant William Yarwood 22nd October 1917 from Bryn age 24

Private Henry Melling 18th September 1918 from Bryn age 26

All these men were killed in action with the exceptions of Sapper Seymour Marcus Derbyshire who died of his wounds after battle and Private James Lomax who died in 1920 of wounds sustained during the war. In 1925 the congregation of Park Lane Unitarian Chapel built an extension to the school as a Memorial Room dedicated to the memory of those men connected with the chapel who had perished in the First World War. As well as this utilitarian memorial a marble tablet was erected in the room inscribed with all the names of the fallen. A beautiful stained glass window was commissioned for the chapel and, additionally there is a framed Roll of Honour, “The Scrap of Paper” naming all those who pledged to serve King and country. The inscription on the founding stone outside the ‘Soldier’s Room’ reads:

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE GREAT WAT 1914-1918 THIS
STONE WAS LAID BY PETER GORTON, ESQ JULY 29TH 1925

Peter Gorton was manager at Bryn Hall Colliery. The choice of Peter Gorton was most apt as many of the men who died were colliers.

In the service of commemoration on the 3rd of August at 11am the Rev Lynne Readett, Minister at Park Lane Unitarian Chapel illustrated that each one of these men named were more than just a name upon a record.

From Rev Lynne Readett