

EDWIN STAPLEY ADE 2 OCTOBER 1877 – 21 MARCH 1917

Edwin Stapley Ade is an ancestor of mine whose name appears on the WWI memorial in St John sub-Castro Church, Lewes and also the Town War Memorial in the High Street. Edwin was related to me through my great-grandmother, Caroline Baker nee Ade who was George Ade's (Edwin's father) sister. Edwin was my first cousin twice removed.

Edwin Stapley Ade was born in Lewes, Sussex on 2nd October 1877 to parents George Stapley Ade and Maria Ade (formerly Douglass). His siblings were Nelly Ade, born 1869, Mabel Ade born 1872, and Bertha Ade born 1876. Edwin was born at 14 Abinger Place, Lewes in the parish of St John sub-Castro.

In the 1881 census the family lived in St Martin's Lane, Lewes. George Ade, Edwin's father, was recorded as being an Ironmonger's Assistant.

In the 1891 census the family were resident at 4 Grange Road, Lewes and George Ade continued to be employed as an Ironmonger's Clerk.

In the 1901 census, George and Maria Ade were the Licensed Victuallers at the Pelham Arms, High Street, Lewes. Edwin at this time was employed as a Printer's Clerk in Brighton and was a boarder in Russell Square, Brighton. After a brief time he returned to Lewes when he was married to Lois. They lived initially in Soap Factory Lane, Cliffe, Lewes.

In the 1911 census, Edwin was living with his wife, Lois and his daughter, Renee (Irene) at 19 St John's Terrace, Lewes in the parish of St John sub-Castro. He was employed as a Timber Merchant's Clerk at Parson's Timber Yard, Lewes, and a well-known Lewes business in its day.

Edwin was a well-known local figure around the Lewes area. He was a member of the Lewes Operatic Society and also the choir of St John sub-Castro. He was a member of the Ancient Order of Druids who met at the Coronation Lodge, in Fisher Street, Lewes. He was a member of St Michael's Cricket Club and excelled at billiards.

Edwin volunteered to service in the Royal Sussex Regiment, 13th Battalion. He was seriously wounded on 16th February 1917 at Ypres, and suffered a shell injury to his knee. This resulted in having to have his leg amputated below the knee. He returned to England where he developed pneumonia whilst in hospital and subsequently died on 21st March, 1917, leaving a widow, Lois and a daughter Irene (Renee).

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The following was supplied by Dr Graham Mayhew who has researched the names on the Lewes WWI memorial for the centenary in 2018.

“Sergeant Edwin Stapley Ade

13th Royal Sussex Regiment wounded at Ypres, died 21st March 1917 age 39.

Born in Lewes in 1877, his father was George S Ade, an ironmonger's clerk. After leaving school he followed his father in becoming a clerk, in 1901, to a printer in Brighton, but by 1911, having married in March 1908, he was back in Lewes, as a timber merchant's clerk, for Parsons Brothers and living in St John's Terrace. He subsequently moved to St Swithun's Terrace. A popular local man, he was a former Volunteer, re-joining the 5th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment when war broke out. Initially, serving at home, he was sent abroad in October 1916, part of a draft of 135 reinforcements mainly from the 5th and 9th Battalions which reached the 13th Battalion near Thiepval on 1st November and was described in the Battalion War Diary as “very satisfactory lot of men”. He was a well know vocalist and was a member of the Lewes Operatic Society, St John's sub-Castro Church Choir, and the Coronation Lodge of the Druids which met in Fisher Street. On 14th November the battalion was transferred from the Somme to the Ypres Salient where soon after his arrival he was seriously wounded by shrapnel, which badly shattered his leg, necessitating its amputation. Transferred to hospital in England he initially made good progress but contracted pneumonia and died on Wednesday 21st March 1917. He is buried in Lewes Cemetery. He left a widow and a daughter, Irene, born in January 1914.”

Sussex Express - Friday 30 March 1917

“Much regret has been expressed locally at the death of Lance-Corporal Edwin Stapley Ade, a popular Lewes man, who died in hospital at Napsbury on Wednesday last after having been seriously wounded while he was on Service with the Royal Sussex Regiment. Deceased, who was 39 years of age, was known in the county town as a vocalist. He was also a member of the old Volunteers. When war broke out he decided that he could not remain in civil life, at home. He went abroad in October, 1916, and had not been away from England long when he received the serious wounds from the effects of which he ultimately died.

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Comparatively recent reports concerning deceased's condition showed that he was making progress. Consequently the news of his death came as a shock to many who knew him. The funeral took place on Monday 26th March at Lewes Cemetery, and was conducted by Prebendary F. J. Poole. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack. Three volleys were fired at the graveside by members of the Royal Defence Corps, and the Last Post was sounded. “

The Lewes Town War Memorial was commemorated in September 1922 and Edwin's name appears in second place on the memorial. A wreath was laid in his memory from his wife, Lois and Renee, as well as from members of the Ancient Order of Druids, Coronation Lodge.

Edwin was awarded the Victory and British Medals.

At the time of his death, Edwin held the rank of Sergeant and not Lance Corporal as stated above.

Sue Jones

(From my Family History Records)