

William Mason



William was born in Brentford in July 1893 to John Mason, a labourer from Brentford and Elizabeth (née Rumbelow) from Holborn who had married on August 20th 1877, at St Paul's Church, Old Brentford. The family lived at 3 Red Lion Yard in Brentford and by 1901, John was working for a local miller as a chaffcutter, a person responsible for cutting straw stalks, and Elizabeth was a laundress.

William's father, John, died in 1908, aged 56 and according to the 1911 census, the family had moved to 6 Red Lion Yard. William was working for Kingham's in Brentford as a carman. By then Elizabeth, a widow, was working in a laundry as an ironer, as was her daughter, Annie. By 1911 also, as Elizabeth declared on the census record, she had five surviving children still alive, out of the eight that had been born. These were William's siblings:- Elizabeth, born 1881; Mary-Ann, born 1886; Annie, born 1890 and Emily, born 1900. John/ Jack, William's brother, born in 1878, had died in 1898. Joseph Kingham and Sons Ltd were a wholesale grocers operating out of 40 Kew Bridge Road, Brentford. Their telephone number was Ealing 66! There was a wharf and gantry for unloading barges directly into the warehouse and a car park for those few employees who drove cars. Everyone had a designated space and woe betide anyone who parked in the wrong place! Kingham's had their own brand "Sandersons" of flour, cake mixes and dried fruits, made in the factory at Brentford. They had over 100 employees and it was not unusual for young couples to meet at work and marry.

When war broke out, William enlisted into the King's Royal Rifle Corps, 2nd Battalion as a Rifleman, service number 57570. The battalion was stationed at Blackdown in Aldershot at the outbreak of the war. In 1918 it was involved in The Battle of Estaires, The Battle of Hazebrouck, The Battle of Bethune, The Battle of Drocourt-Queant, The Battle of Epehy, The Battle of the St Quentin Canal, The Battle of Beurevoir and The Battle of the Selle.

At this battle on 17th October 1918, and aged 24, William was killed in action. His battalion was involved in attacking along a ten mile front to the south of Le Cateau, preparing to advance to the German line beyond the River Selle, despite strong German resistance. William was buried in the Busigny Communal Cemetery Extension (*see right for a photo of that cemetery*), grave ref VI Q 23. He was awarded the Victory and British medals and listed his beneficiary as Rebecca Day, presumably his girlfriend or even fiancée.



William's mother, Elizabeth, lived until 1939 when she died in Brentford aged 82.