

Rifleman Bruno Whittle
Regimental Number: 96435
1/5th Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment

born: 1899 - died: 24 May 1918

Bruno Whittle was at least the third in the Whittle line in Lancashire to be called Bruno. Both his father (born about 1857)¹ and his grandfather (born about 1825)² were called Bruno and lived in Lancashire. Bruno was born in 1899 near Bolton, Lancashire,³ the son of Bruno Whittle and his wife, Betsy Dagnall.^{4 5} He was the second youngest of twelve children – ten of whom survived to 1911. There were five girls: Elizabeth Ann (born about 1879), Mary Isabella (also known as Bella) (born 1880), Hannah (born about 1885), Emma (born about 1891) and Dorothy (born about 1893); and five boys: Charles (born about 1883), Joseph (born about 1888), Lewis (born about 1895), Bruno and the youngest child, William (born about 1901).⁶

With the industrial revolution, textile manufacturing moved from homes to factories and the industry grew quickly in the 19th century,⁷ particularly in Lancashire which became a centre for cotton manufacturing. By the mid-19th century, Lancashire dominated the textile world market. All working members of the Whittle family were in the textile industry, in a range of occupations that reflected the labour intensiveness of the industry at that time: winders (winded thread onto the spindles used in shuttles, piecers (pieced together any threads which broke; work usually done by children or women), spinners (tended the creel and other aspects of a yarn tufting or twisting machine or other kind of loom), card room hand (worked in the carding room of the mills) and rovers (operated a machine to prepare the carded fibre into rolls).⁸ No doubt, had Bruno survived the war, he would also have worked in the textile industry.

In 1911, the family was living at 34 Queen Street, Farnworth in Lancashire. There were eight members of the family living in a five-room house. Bruno was at school.

Bruno enlisted in Bolton, Lancashire, initially in the 1st Lancashire Hussars. He transferred to the 5th Battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment. A history of the King's Liverpool Regiment suggests that, although there was considerable shell fire, the spring months of 1918 were relatively uneventful.⁹ However, for Bruno, May was decisive. On 24 May he was shot and was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gun shot wounds to his left wrist and back. He died and was buried that same day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row C, Grave 15). The chaplain J. K. Tibbits presided over the burial of Bruno, who was a member of the Church of England. His mother, who was still living at 34 Queen Street, Farnworth was notified of his death¹⁰ and received the monies the army owed Bruno after his death.¹¹

While it may not have been an important month for the King's Liverpool Regiment, it was for the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. There were 115 deaths at this CCCS in May – more than in any of the other three and a half months that the 1st CCCS was in Pernes. On 24 May, 200 soldiers were admitted to the



B. Whittle in Pernes British Military Cemetery
(Source: Author, July 2015)

CCCS, bringing the total patients remaining at the CCCS to 418.¹² The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.¹³

Bruno was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁴

Sadly, Bruno was not the only Whittle son to die in World War I. The eldest son, Joseph, serving with the East Lancashire Regiment, was killed on 15 July 1916¹⁵ near Thiepval, 40 kilometres north-east of Amiens. The following day, his brother, Lewis, serving with the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, was killed near Morlancourt, France¹⁶ – just fifteen kilometres away – on 16 July 1916.¹⁷ Two years later, Bruno was killed, 80 kilometres further north.

All the Whittle sons are remembered on the online memorial, Bolton Remembers, and there is a memorial to Bruno in St. Paul's Churchyard, Walkden.¹⁸

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¹ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 January 2015), entry for Bruno Whittle, Registration district: Chorley, Sub-registration district: Croston, ED, institution, or vessel: 3, Household schedule number: 55, Piece: 4200, Folio: 34, Page Number: 11

² "1871 England Census," entry for Bruno Whittle

³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 January 2015), entry for Bruno Whittle, Registration district: Bolton, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8c, Page: 350

⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2015), entry for Bruno Whittle, Registration district: Bolton, Registration District Number: 461, Sub-registration district: Farnworth, ED, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 23260

⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 December 2014), entry for Bruno Whittle, Registration district: Bolton, Inferred County: Lancashire, , Volume: 8c, Page: 376

⁶ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 January 2015), entry for Emily E. King, Registration district: Hardingstone, Sub-registration district: Brafield, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 1415, Folio: 23, Page Number: 15, Household schedule number: 116. "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2015), entry for Bruno Whittle

⁷ "The Lancashire Census" (<http://www.lancashirecensus.co.uk/facts.htm>; accessed 12 January 2015)

⁸ "Obscure Old English Census Occupations" (<http://www.worldthroughthelens.com/family-history/old-occupations.php>: accessed 12 January 2015). Wiktionary (<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/creeler>: accessed 12 January 2015)

⁹ "The History of the King's Regiment (Liverpool Regiment), 1914-1919: Volume III – July 1917 – 1919" (<http://lib.militaryarchive.co.uk/library/infantry-histories/The-History-of-the-Kings-Regiment-Liverpool-Regiment-1914-1919.asp>: accessed 12 January 2015), p. 653-6

¹⁰ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2014), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 518

¹¹ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 19 January 2015), entry for Bruno Whittle

¹² "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," Library and Archives Canada (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 15 December 2014)

¹³ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

¹⁴ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2014), entry for Bruno Whittle

¹⁵ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 January 2015), entry for Joseph Whittle

¹⁶ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 13 January 2015), entry for Whittle, L.

¹⁷ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 13 January 2015), entry for Lewis Whittle

¹⁸ "Bolton Remembers: An online reference documenting Bolton's war dead" (<http://boltonremembers.org/name/whittle-bruno-private-kings-liverpool-regiment/>: accessed 12 January 2015)