

Thomas Hayward



Lance-Corporal, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Enlisted at Devizes, September 6th, 1914. Sent to the Dardanelles, July 23rd, 1915. "Was with the Dublin Fusiliers when ordered to go over the ridge at Gallipoli. We held the ridge for three days at terrible cost." Killed in action, August 6th, 1915.



TOM HAYWARD was born in 1893 in Corsham, to Charles and Eliza (née Gibbons). The family lived in Porch Cottage in Pickwick at the time of his birth and Charles was a stone quarrier. Tom was part of a large family – he was the youngest of twelve children – and in 1901, when he was seven, he was living with his parents, his sister Mary and his brothers Jesse, Fred, Frank and Harry. Charles was still working in the quarry as a freestone picker in that year, but he died in 1903 when Tom was only ten years old. By 1911 Tom had left school and was employed as a labourer on the local estate, where

CORSHAM COMMEMORATES

he worked until September 1914, when he was the first to volunteer at a recruitment meeting in Corsham organised by Lord Methuen. He was reportedly a full-back for Corsham Football Club.

He enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment but was transferred to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was a Lance Corporal in the Fusiliers when he was shipped to Turkey in July 1915, arriving at the front and the heavy fighting around Gallipoli on 9th August. He was reported as missing and then confirmed as killed in action only one week later, on 16th August, aged 21. He is remembered at the Helles Memorial in Gallipoli.

Thomas had five brothers and was part of a wider Hayward family living in the Corsham area. His brother Frank served in the Navy during World War I and continued until 1923, when he retired, and there are other Haywards who are recorded as serving during World War I and returning after



The memory of Thomas Hayward lives on in the improvised photo frame he sent home during the war and his medals.

CORSHAM COMMEMORATES

the war. His mother Eliza Hayward lived in Corsham until she died in 1931.

In an addition to Thomas's story we have heard from his great-niece, Vivienne Wheeler, who lives in Westbury and who has been able to share her Hayward family history, including Thomas's medals, which she treasures, and, interestingly, a photograph of Thomas set in a 'trench biscuit'. Trench biscuits, which were supplied to the troops, were notoriously hard, and as a consequence made very good picture frames – there are even examples of heart-shaped photos sent home to loved ones in biscuit frames. We were very pleased to hear from Vivienne, who also supplied information about Thomas's brother Frank, who is listed in the 'those that served' section of *War Records of Corsham*.