

## **Frederick William Jackson ASH**

**Born:** 1877, Shalfleet

**Parent(s):** Sarah Ann Ash (later Sarah Bricknell)

**Last known address:** Chawton, Northwood

**Last known occupation:** Skilled bricklayer

**Service number:** 99661                      **Regiment:** 221<sup>st</sup> Army Troops Company Royal Engineers

### **Service history summary:**

- enlisted :     August 1915, Parkhurst
- rank:           Sapper
- decorations: British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Died:** 11<sup>th</sup> January 1917                      **Age:** 39

**Buried:** [Etretat Churchyard extension](#)

**Family:** Frederick was born on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1877 to a 17-year-old housemaid, Sarah Ann Ash, at Watchingwell Cottage, Shalfleet. His father's surname was probably Jackson as Sarah later called herself Sarah Jackson. In 1881 he was living in Shalfleet with his grandparents, James Ash, a labourer, and his wife Martha, while his mother worked as the single live-in servant for an 'artificial manure' i.e. fertiliser merchant in Castle Road, Carisbrooke. By 1891 Frederick had moved to East Lane, Arreton with his grandparents and was already working as an agricultural labourer like his grandfather. His mother was still working in Carisbrooke as one of the two live-in servants employed by John George Pinnock, a draper and outfitter at West Dene House, Carisbrooke Road. In 1893 under the name Sarah Jackson she married John Bricknell, a carpenter, the widower of her younger sister Emily Ash.

In August 1899 Frederick married Laura Cousens, daughter of James Cousens, a policeman, at All Saints Church, Ryde. Frederick was described on the marriage certificate as a policeman (or rather in the officiating minister's careless scrawl "ploiceman") living in Ryde Parish. The notice in the *Isle of Wight Observer*, however, describes him as being from Gatcombe, where his grand-parents James and Martha Ash were now living. Frederick and Laura had one daughter, Beatrice May, who was born in 1900. She married Frederick John Hill at All Saints, Ryde in 1920. Laura was married again in 1927 when she wed George Henry Woodnutt at St Michaels, Swanmore.

Half-sisters: Hilda (1893), Florence (1895) and Constance (1900)

**Northwood/Gurnard connection:** Frederick's police career does not appear to have lasted and in 1901 he was working as a farmer's carter in Shide, living with his wife and daughter in Pan Cottages, Shide. The farm in question could have been Morn Hill or Little Pan Farm. Also living at Pan Cottages was Frederick's uncle,

Charles Ash, an agricultural labourer, with his wife and two sons. In 1911 Frederick and his family had moved to Gatcombe where he was working as a waggoner, possibly on Tuckers Farm. However, Frederick describes himself as a "skilled bricklayer" living in Chawton, Northwood, when he enlisted at Parkhurst in August 1915. Laura and Beatrice appear to have moved back to Ryde, possibly to live with Laura's parents, in Wray Street and later Swanmore Street. Among Frederick's other relations listed on his service record was his mother Sarah (Ash) Bricknell, now living at 110 Pyle Street, Newport, and his half-sisters.

**War record:** Frederick's enlistment papers record him as having had previous service experience with the Royal Garrison Artillery but it is unclear what period of his life this refers to. He was assigned to the 221<sup>st</sup> Army Troops Company of the Royal Engineers. The Company was sent first to Buxton in Derbyshire where they stayed until the end of January 1916, when they embarked for France. While in Buxton they took part in a Military Tournament at the October Agricultural Show and a "Sappers Supper" with a sing-song at the end of December. The Company had 20 draught horses so as an experienced carter Frederick probably drove them.

The Company's War Diaries show that they were initially based at Albert in northern France where they built pipe-lines, erected water-tanks, sheds, bath houses and other buildings. During the Battle of the Somme in the summer of 1916 the Company followed the Australian troops through Sausage Valley. On 5<sup>th</sup> December a hospital, which the Company was presumably involved in constructing, was hit by a shell which knocked out two wards or walls and damaged others. One man was killed and Sapper Ash was injured, breaking his thigh. Unfortunately he did not recover and died on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1917 aged 39, less than a year after he had arrived in France. He was buried at Etretat.