

Carl Shrewsbury

1892 - 1915

Educated in St Catherine's Society Oxford

Died at Loos, aged 23, on 13 October 1915

Family and Education

Carl Brammell* Shrewsbury was born between January and March 1892 at Rawtenstall, Lancashire. He was given the surname of his mother, Mary Cleverton Shrewsbury, who had been living with her parents and working as a 'mother's help' at the census in the year before his birth. Mary never married, being described on her probate record as a 'spinster'. Her father was a Wesleyan Methodist minister, John V B Shrewsbury (born in Cape Town, South Africa), so this was a difficult and embarrassing situation.

One of Mary's sisters, Julia, and her husband Frederick James Briggs, another Wesleyan minister, seem to have offered a home to Mary: Carl was living with them all in Islington at the 1901 census, and Mary was with the couple in Wales in 1911. In 1901 there was a visitor at the household called Elizabeth Brammell, presumably a family friend after whom Carl was named: Julia had been visiting Elizabeth and her husband in 1891.

By 1911 Carl was 19 but still a school student, living in Broughton near Manchester but visiting John Lewis Paton, the High Master of Manchester Grammar School, alongside Solomon Michaels, an Oxford student. Perhaps some 'cramming' was taking place, as Carl became an Oxford student in the autumn of 1911. He did not join a college but took the cheaper option offered by the St Catherine's Society, which provided more limited facilities to its students and supervised their studies whilst they lived in approved lodgings in the town.

War Service: 5th Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment

Carl's war service began on 5 March 1915. He joined the 5th Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment (part of Lincoln and Leicester Brigade, North Midland Division, which in May 1915 was retitled as 138th Brigade, 46th (North Midland) Division). He trained as a Second Lieutenant and landed in France on 13 July 1915: he may have been involved immediately in the German liquid fire attack at Hooge. A few months later, in the Battle of Loos, his unit took part in the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October. His battalion was one of the first two to go over the top into entrenched German machine gun fire, and was wiped out in less than half an hour. 97% of the battalion have no known grave. Carl, leading his platoon, died aged 23. He is remembered on the Loos Memorial and on the St Catherine's Society war memorial.

* Carl's Commonwealth War Graves Commission certificate has the spelling as Brannell. That is almost certainly an error.

This is the story of one of the men who appear on a war memorial at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Oxford, UK. These stories were compiled in 2018-19 from a variety of family history and military sources. In particular, Chris Baker's site, 'The Long, Long Trail' has provided valuable details of the men's experience of battle:

<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>