

21 Corporal Gilbert Fell: accidentally killed 28 Feb 1918, Formby

Most of the war dead buried in Barrow died in local hospitals: North Lonsdale, Devonshire Road and Cambridge Street (The school children were sent to other premises, and the school buildings used as a hospital). Most died of illness rather than of battle injuries.

Here is an exception:



Where is the grave?

This is a family grave rather than a standard war grave. It is white and imposing.

Walk up the drive from Devonshire Road, past the North Lodge, take the first left, then left again and it is on the right-hand side.



Reading the inscription

In loving memory of
GILBERT FELL
CORPORAL 2/5TH K. O. R. L. REGT
ACCIDENTALLY KILLED AT FORMBY WHILST
ATTENDING THE WESTERN COMMAND
SCHOOL OF MUSKETRY FEB 28TH 1918
AGED 25 YRS

a fearful accident on the firing range is brought to mind. The truth is more prosaic:

BARROW NEWS SATURDAY MARCH 9, 1918

BARROW SOLDIER KILLED

----- KNOCKED DOWN BY EXPRESS

A verdict of 'Misadventure' was returned at the inquest conducted by Mr. Samuel Brighthouse at Formby, on Monday, touching on the death of Corporal Gilbert Fell (25) of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment.

Deceased, whose home was at 51, West View-road, Barrow, was knocked down by the 10.20p.m. train from Southport to Liverpool, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, last Thursday night, between the Formby Power House and Altcar Station. From the evidence it appeared that Corpl. Fell, who was attending a course on instruction at a School of Musketry, was returning to camp after a visit to the Wesleyan Club for soldiers at Formby, when, by a crossing, he was caught by the train, travelling at 45 miles an hour, receiving injuries to the head from which he succumbed immediately.

Another non-commissioned officer, who had been accompanying him, escaped, having become separated by a few yards from his companion. A heavy gale was blowing at the time, and the Coroner remarked that probably the general unfavourable weather conditions confused the soldiers as to their precise position, being strangers to the district, and that the heavy wind rendered hearing difficult.

The deceased father, who described himself as an electrician connected with the Furness Railway, living at West View-road, was invited by the Coroner to take a seat near him for the convenience of asking questions.

Coroner : You don't see anything in the evidence for which to blame anybody?

Mr. Fell : No, sir. I am quite satisfied.

The jury returned a verdict as stated.

The Wesleyan Club is likely to have been teetotal, so drink is unlikely to have caused the accidental death of Corpl. Fell. Corporal Fell's parents were Thomas Robinson Fell & Mary Ann Fell of 51 West View Road CWGC