

23 Ben Kelly d 9 May 1920



The gravestone is a prominent white cross just to the north-east of the North Chapel



Barrow News 15 May 1920

Barrow News Saturday 15 May 1920 used language not uncommon during the war and for a period afterwards:

VICTIM TO HUN BARBARISM

A Dalton soldier, named Ben Kelly¹, King's Own Royal Lancasters (T. F.), only child of Mr. and Mrs. John Kelly, died on Sunday night. Deceased, who was 23 years of age, was gassed twice in the war, and was made a prisoner. He suffered shocking treatment at the hands of the Germans, and returned home about a year ago with a shattered constitution, and was indeed a physical wreck.

Prior to the war he was an apprentice engineer at the Barrow Works of Messrs. Vickers, Ltd, and belonged to the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment of Territorials. On the outbreak of war he was called up and later went to France, where he was twice gassed. He was subsequently transferred to the 10th Manchester Regiment. In November 1917 he was taken prisoner of war and was put by the Germans to work in the gasworks at Hamburg. The food he received was bad and insufficient and in addition he had inadequate shelter and improper sleeping arrangements. These, with the indignities that the Germans knew well how to inflict on prisoners, resulted in a complete breakdown of health. He spent four and a half months in a German hospital and arrived home via Hull on 11th January, 1919, in a deplorable state of health. Although Pte. Kelly was 5ft. 10 in. in height he then weighed a little over six stone. In spite of medical XXX? (*unreadable*) and the united tender care of his parents he never recovered his former health and passed away on Sunday at the age of 23 years.

The funeral, on Wednesday, was largely attended, the local branch of the Discharged Sailors' and Soldiers' Association being represented by 22 members. Service was conducted in St. Margaret's Church by the Rev. J. S. Rothwell. The coffin, covered with the Union Jack, was borne by Messrs. Coward, Askew, Crayston, and Gibson. The latter had been himself a prisoner of war. At the grave side the "Last Post" was sounded by Bugler Hawkins, of the Church Scouts Troop. There were several beautiful wreaths, including one from the D. S. and S. Association. The family mourners were:- Father; the mother was unable to attend on account of illness; Nurse Neal, Macclesfield (fiancée); Mrs. Bamber (aunt), Miss Madge Bamber (cousin), Mr. and Mrs. Quine, Askam (cousins), Mr. and Mrs. Worthington, Barrow, Miss Spencer, Pennington, Mrs. Waugh, Barrow.

Note that the Allied naval blockade of German ports had severely restricted imports of food, and the German public were underfed by the end of the war. It is possible that Mrs. Kelly, who died in August 1920, was killed by the outbreak of flu, which may also have killed Pte. Kelly.

¹ The address is given in the burial record as 5 Lancaster St, Dalton

The International Red Cross website has information on some prisoners of war, including Ben Kelly:
<http://grandeguerre.icrc.org/en/File/Search/#/3/2/107/0/British%20and%20Commonwealth/Military/Kelly>

427420
KEL
Kelly Ben
Pte: 245147. Manchester.
B.
Ref. Miss M. Kelly.
5. Lancaster St.
Dalton-in-Furness
Lancs
P.A. 16837. 5-12-17. K. Ben. Pte.
245147. Manchester. B. Born
14.4.97. Asstam. Taken 4-11-
17. Unwounded. Arrived from
Dendermonde at Dülmen
Communique famille 13-12-17
P.A. 18971 (12-2-18) Kelly Ben
Pte 245147 Manchester Rgt "B"

KEL. 4.11.17.
Kelly Ben.
245147. Pte
16/Manc.
B" Coy
P.A. 16837
P.A. 18971

He was born on 4 April 1897, and taken prisoner 4 November 1917, unwounded. He arrived from Dendermonde at Dülmen. His mother is named as Madge Kelly, and the Red Cross wrote to the family on 13 December 1917.