

May Hartley (13th May 1888 – 22nd November 1916),

**the only female name on the Roll of Honour at St Matthew's Church,
Lightcliffe, West Riding of Yorkshire**

her brothers and sister and other family.

Driver Benjamin Hewitson Hartley (28th July 1884 – 1st December 1958),

Corporal Hugh Hartley (26th November 1896 – 25th January 1944)

Staffe Nurse Ida Hartley Q.A.I.M.N.S (8th July 1886 – 9th April 1958)

May Hartley was born on 13th May 1888 the fifth child but third daughter of John Alfred Burnett and Annie Hartley and baptised on 27th June 1888. The baptism record from St Simon, Leeds gives the family's address as 23 Newlay St., Leeds and the father's "Quality, Trade or Profession" was "Stuff- presser".

John Alfred Burnett Hartley had married Annie Hewitson on 20th June 1880 at St Peter's, Leeds. By then he was already a "Stuff presser"; a Stuff Presser placed the cloth within sheets of special stiff press paper and passed it into a hot-pressing machine which gave the finish to the cloth.

John Alfred Burnett Hartley was from Bramley, the son of Benjamin Hartley a Cloth Mill Overlooker. Annie Hewitson was also from Bramley the daughter of Benjamin Hewitson, a farmer. Their first child Archie arrived on 21st December 1880 and was baptised on 30th January 1881 at St Peter's, Bramley near Leeds and so appeared with his parents on the 1881 census at an address in Dickenson Hill, Bramley, Leeds.

During the next decade the family lived at 6 Walton St., Burley, Leeds where Kate Maud (1883) was born and then at addresses in Bramley where Benjamin Hewitson (1884) and Ida (1886) were born before May's arrival in 1888. The family appear to have moved before 1890 when another son, Oliver, was born as subsequent censuses gave his birthplace as Lightcliffe or Hipperholme. By the time of the 1891 census the family were living at an address on "Leeds & Wakefield Rd., Hipperholme cum Brighouse". Oliver and twins, Annie Elizabeth (1891) and John Alfred (1891), were baptised at St Matthew's, Lightcliffe on 24th January 1892. Sadly John Alfred died just a month later and was buried in St Matthew's Churchyard on 25th February 1892 just a few weeks old. Ivy (1894) and Hugh (1896) completed this Hartley family. They too were baptised together at St. Matthew's Church on 1st August 1897.

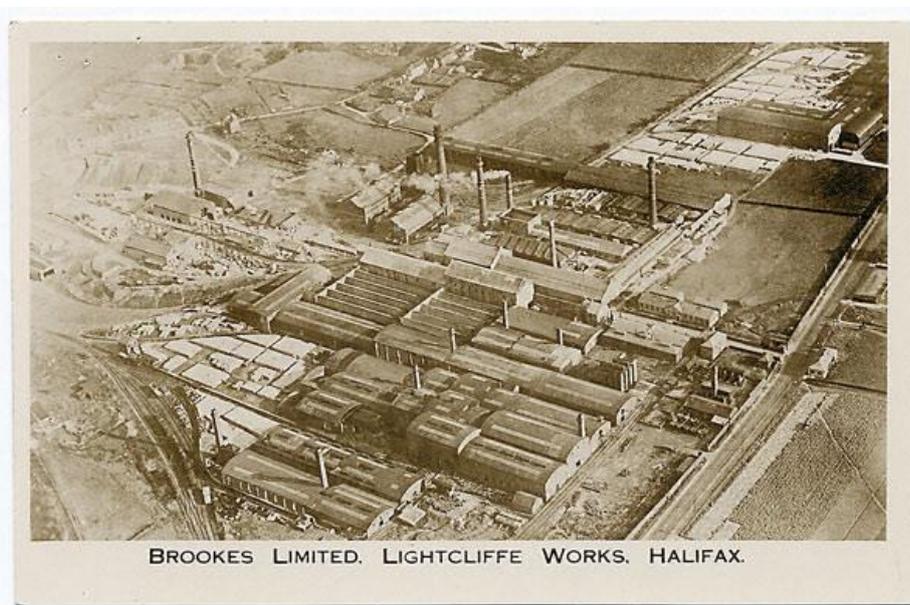
On the night of the 1901 census all the family, apart from Kate Maud who was a live-in servant in Halifax, were at home which was in "Bramley Lane, Hipperholme". Father John Alfred Burnett was a "Stuff Finisher – Factory" (difficult to read), 20 year old Archie was a "Cabinet Maker" and 16 year old Benjamin was a "Painter & Decorator". But 14 year old Ida and 12 year old May were also "Workers", both described as "Cotton Card room hand". Mother Annie and the younger children have no occupation. Presumably the children were at school and their mother had enough to do looking after this large family.

Three of May's older siblings got married in the 1900s, all at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe; Kate Maud to Fred Heaton on 9th October 1904, Benjamin Hewitson to Edith Booth on 28th July 1906 and then on 20th April 1908 Archie to Ellen Isaacs.

By the 1911 census John Alfred Burnett Hartley was still a Stuff Presser for a Stuff Dyeworks. All six of the Hartley children – hardly children – who were still living at home were working. Most of them worked for a “Carpet Manufacturer – the same one, Firths of Bailiff Bridge. Ida was a “Weaver”, May a “Filler Printing Dept”, Oliver a “Grocer's Assistant” for the Cooperative Stores, Ann Elizabeth a “Designer's Copyist”, Ivy a “Fringer” and Hugh a “Yarn Scourer”. They and their parents were living at “32 Springfield Terrace, Bailiff Bridge, Brighouse”, a 5 roomed house.

This was the address that sister Annie Elizabeth was married from on 26th October 1912. May Hartley may well have been a bridesmaid on this occasion as she was a witness to this marriage of her younger sister to Norman Lister at St Matthew's church, Lightcliffe. Presumably May was also still living at this Bailiff Brige address with her parents and unmarried siblings. Various nephews and nieces had been born and some are recorded as having been baptised at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe where May Hartley was a Sunday school teacher.

When WW1 broke out May Hartley became a munitions worker at Brookes' explosive works, Lightcliffe. Brookes Limited was a quarrying company formed in 1840 which then grew steadily. The firm of Brookes Chemicals Ltd was born out of Brookes the stone quarry owners, when one of the factories was used to produce picric acid, an explosive, for shells.



May Hartley (13th May 1888 – 22nd November 1916)

May Hartley was accidentally killed in a fall at the munitions factory on 22nd November 1916. Hers is the only female name on the Roll of Honour in St Matthew's church. Her death was recorded in the Brighthouse Echo for Friday 24th November as follows:-

Young Woman's Fall

A HIPPERHOLME FATALITY

SAD HOIST ACCIDENT

On Wednesday morning a sad accident occurred at Messrs Brookes, Ltd Hipperholme, a single woman, named May Hartley, aged 28 years, of 80 Wakefield Road, Bailiffe Bridge, being the victim. About half-past ten, whilst following her usual employment, the young woman inadvertently stepped on to the trap-door of a hoist and fell through, falling a distance of

some ten or twelve feet into the room below. She was picked up unconscious and Dr Mills was sent for, her injuries, which were mostly to the head, receiving careful attention. Nothing availed, however, and she died in less than half an hour.

The unfortunate young woman was well known and highly respected in the Bailiffe Bridge district. Before going to work at Hipperholme she was employed at Messrs. Firths' carpet works.

The Coroner has arranged to hold an inquest this morning.

A day later, Saturday, November 25th 1916 the Halifax Courier had details of the inquest on page 8.

FALL THROUGH TRAP DOOR

YOUNG WOMAN'S TRAGIC END

STORY AT YESTERDAY'S INQUEST

The circumstances leading to the death of May Hartley (28), 80 Wakefield-road, Bailiff Bridge which took place in some Hipperholme works on Wednesday were inquired into yesterday in Ebenezer School Bailiff Bridge, by Mr E.W.Norris. Mr H.W.Younger, H.M. Inspector of Factories, was present, also Mr W.F.W. Rhodes who represented the family.

John Alfred Hartley, the father, said before his daughter worked where the accident took place, she was a blanket weaver, She left home in her usual health at 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday.

Mary Eliz Lister, a companion employe[sic], said they were working one storey up. There was a hoist, or crane, down which they lowered goods into

railway trucks through a series of trap doors. Three of them worked in that room, herself, deceased, and Doris Marsden. About 9.45 a.m. on Wednesday, deceased was going across the room intending to sweep the steps leading to another room. She took the shortest cut across the room stepped on one of the trap doors. She cried out "Oh" and disappeared. She (witness) ran to the hole, and could see deceased lying below with her head against a rail. The one who worked below, where goods were received, usually closed the trap doors.

Doris Marsden, Hove Edge, who had worked at the same works for seven months, said she knew there were about six trap doors in the floor for lowering goods, but she was only aware of one being generally used. The aperture would be a yard square. The trap doors were usually safe because they had walked over them. She could not say how they were fastened, but she had seen the doors taken off, and

reared against the wall. The doors where the accident happened had been opened that week. Several times on the morning of the accident they had walked backwards and forwards, probably over that particular door with no mishap. The doors, when closed were not particularly noticeable, When walking over the doors they did not creak.

Replying to Mr Rhodes, witness said she did not think more than one series of trap doors was open at a time. The doors were usually put back by the overseer and his assistant.

To a juror, she said each series of doors was used for the same aperture. They fitted on to a small ledge. She did not know, she told the Coroner, if the trap doors would fit several ways.

The Coroner said the hole under consideration was slightly out of square, 3ft. 9in. by 3ft., so that the doors would only fit one way.

Wilfred Iredale, Brookeville-avenue, Hipperholme, who was working in an adjacent room, said on Wednesday morning he heard a scream and a thud. He saw deceased lying outside the rails, with her head on one rail. She was unconscious, and appeared to be dead. One part of the trap door was lying between the rails. Deceased was taken to the offices. She appeared to breathe a little.

Harry Rimmer, foreman, said he had charge of the place where the accident took place. There were seven trap doors. They were not all the same size, and only the one under consideration, the biggest of them, was generally used. One door of the trap deceased fell down had a broken hinge. The hinges on the other doors had been removed when the building was adapted to its present work. Several of them were nailed down, but not all. No.5, where the accident took place, was not nailed down, but No. 6 was, though on the Tuesday it had been forced open so that they could

load a wagon. Both traps were closed on the Tuesday night, care being taken to put the doors in their proper places. Both he and the assistant foreman jumped on them to see if they were safely laid. The distance from the trap doors to the railway lines was 13ft.. He did not know if the doors had been opened after Tuesday. There had been no need to do so. There was no "play", for the doors, there being not more than a sixteenth of an inch space to spare. There was an inch and a half ledge for the doors to rest on. To open them, they had to be knocked up from below. Securely fastened as he left it, he could not see how it could give way. It was at present in position and resisted all trials.

Pressed on this point by Mr Norris, witness said unless there had been some interference with the door after he left it safe on Tuesday night, the accident could not have happened.

Mr Norris: You can't suggest that anybody would have opened the door? – I can't imagine how it could have happened. Witness told Mr Younger that after the accident, half of the door remained in position quite safe.

To Mr. Rhodes he said he passed over the trap doors several times before nine a.m. on Wednesday. The doors had not been touched from the night before, so that if there had been tampering with the doors, it had been done after that. He did not suggest the girls tampered with them. Still, replying to Mr Rhodes, he said he did not know why No. 5 doors were not nailed.

Mr Rhodes: Doesn't it look like oversight on somebody's part that this was not nailed?

Witness though(t) it did, but said the matter had been done before the building was adapted to its present use. One could not pull the doors open from above with the fingers. Though not very fast, the doors

could only open by a knock from underneath.

Fred Hartley Greenwood, assistant foreman, said he and Rimmer were satisfied the doors were properly closed on Tuesday night, because they jumped on them. On Wednesday morning at 7.20 he knocked up No. 6. He was not likely to have knocked up No. 5 door in mistake, because the truck to be filled was only empty at the part under No. 6.

Emma Sykes, who laid out the body, said there were no marks except discolouration at the back of the head. The nose was bleeding.

Mr Norris, addressing the jury, said it appeared that if the hinges had been on that particularly door an accident would have

been unlikely. The others not in general use were nailed down, but where the accident took place they were not nailed down. Were those responsible for the oversight of the place justified in presuming that the doors were safe without being nailed down? Ought it to have occurred to a responsible person that failing to nail down a door without hinges would be likely to result in a fatal accident?

After retirement of half-an-hour, the jury found death was due to an accidental fall, and that there was no criminal negligence.

Mr W, Slater-Greenwood, who represented the employers, expressed their regret at the accident and their deep sympathy with the bereaved family.

The Brighthouse Echo had a similar report of the inquest on Friday 1st December 1916 and then details of the funeral.

THE FUNERAL

The funeral took place at the Lightcliffe Old Church on Saturday afternoon last. As the cortege left the late residence of the deceased the route was lined with sympathetic spectators. The following were the chief mourners :- Mr. and Mrs. Hartley (father and mother), Mrs A Hartley (sister in law), Mrs Heaton (sister) Driver B.H.Hartley (brother), Miss Ida Hartley (sister), Mr O. Hartley (brother), Mrs N. Lister (sister), Corpl. H. Hartley (brother), Miss Ivy Hartley (sister), Mr Heaton (brother in law), Mrs B.H. Hartley (sister in law), Mrs Ellis (aunt), Mrs Wright (aunt), Mrs Claughton (cousin), Private W.Gomersall and Miss B. Wilkinson

(friends), Mr Wheatcroft, Miss L. Hearst, Mrs Jowell, Miss H.Oates, Mrs Sykes, Miss Kershaw, Mrs Kaye, Miss A.Empsall, Miss Ward, Miss Gregson, Mrs Thorpe, Miss A. Gomersall, Miss E.Gomersall (members of the Girls' friendly Society).

Walking were the office staff and other work people from the place where the deceased had been employed, also members of St Aidan's School, the G.F.S., and members of her Sunday School class.

The vicar, Rev. H.L.Taylor, assisted by Rev. D.P.Williams (curate), conducted a short service at the house in Wakefield Road, and also at the graveside.

May Hartley was buried in the St Matthew's Churchyard, Lightcliffe on 25th November 1916 in grave 56D. The memorial has recently been restored.



Driver Benjamin Hewitson Hartley (28th July 1884 – 1st December 1958)



Benjamin Hewitson Hartley and his bride Edith Booth on their wedding day
by kind permission of their granddaughter Christine Hartley

The **Driver B.H.Hartley** at his sister's funeral was her brother Benjamin Hewitson Hartley who had married Edith Booth on 28th July 1906 at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe. At the time he lived in Bramley Lane and she at 13 Ripley Street Their eldest son, Wilfred was born on 29th October 1906 and baptised at St Matthew' Church on 25th November 1906 when his parents' address was 5 Bramley Lane. His brother Cyril Hewitson Hartley arrived on 13th May 1909 and was baptised a month later again at St Matthew's Church on 13th June 1901. At the time the family lived at 50 Wakefield Road. They moved again before the 1911 census to 18 Ripley Street, Lightcliffe, Halifax when Benjamin was a "House Painter and Paperhanger"

Benjamin Hewitson Hartley was almost certainly **the Driver Benjamin H Hartley** who drove for the Royal Field Artillery (service number T796362) and for the Royal Engineers (service number 482601) during WW1. He obviously survived the war. Here is his UK, WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914 – 1920 record.

482601.	SPR.	HARTLEY, Benjamin.	R.F.A.(T)	07mm
	H.		796362.	DVR
			Royal Engineers.	✓
			482601.	

And then his British Army WW1 Medal Rolls index card.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
HARTLEY	R.F.A	Dvt	(D) 796362
	R.E.		482601
Benjamin H.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	RE/101 B149	42900	
BRITISH	— do —		
STAR			

Benjamin Hewitson and Edith Hartley's granddaughter, Christine Hartley, remembers them living at 94 Wakefield Road, Lightcliffe with an aunt, uncle and cousins residing at 27 Ripley Street. He was the Benjamin H Hartley who died aged 74 on 1st December 1958 in Lightcliffe. His wife Edith died on 29th December 1976 also in Lightcliffe. Their sons Wilfred and Cyril Hewitson Hartley passed away in 1986 and 1985 respectively..

D.M.Barker
January 2016

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