

## PRIVATE JOHN HENRY ASBURY

*Service Number: 11998*

*9th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment*

*Died Friday 21st July 1916, Aged 20*

*Born Smockington*

*Enlisted Nuneaton*

*Memorials: Burbage St Catherine's Church, Wesleyan Burbage*

*Grave St Catherine's Churchyard*



John Henry known to his family as Harry, was the eldest son of Ann and Arthur Asbury of Sketchley Road, Burbage. Born on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1896 Harry was educated at Burbage Church School under the headship of Charles Higham.



*Figure 32 Harry with his Mother, father and two younger brothers*

Shortly after the outbreak of war he left his job at Sketchley Dye Works and enlisted with the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Leicestershire Regiment in October 1914. Part of the third of Kitchener's new armies, the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Leicester's trained at Perham Downs and Aldershot before embarkation to France. By the end of 1916, this Battalion alone had lost 491 men. From 1915, Harry had served at the front and was probably part of the British offensive of the Somme, which had started on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. On the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> July a main battle was at Aubers Ridge near Artois where 7,080 British and Australian Troops were killed without any progress or ground being gained, perhaps Harry was injured here.



*Figure 33 123 Sketchley Road, Burbage*

On the 20<sup>th</sup> July Harry wrote a letter to his parents from a troop ship bringing casualties back to Dover from France telling them he had been shot above the knee and had a broken leg, but was 'going on first rate and not to worry'. Sadly, he would die the day after writing his letter home.

THE FALLEN

July 20.  
 Dear Mother & Father,  
 I do not know if you know I have been wounded or not but I stopped a rifle bullet just above the knee & it has also broken my leg. We are nearly at Dover now after about eighteen hours ride so you may guess

Figure 34 Letter home page 1

I do not feel much like writing tonight well cheer up & do not worry over me for I am going on first rate so far & am longing to see you all again before long. I will write again when I have got the address of the hospital we are being sent to.

Figure 35 Letter home Page 2

Well I write to you for this time, please excuse short letter from your loving  
 Son Harry.

Figure 36 Letter home Page 3

After over 18 hours travelling, he was transferred to Netley Military Hospital at Southampton. In his final hours he was treated by the Burbage Rector's son, Dr Fletcher, a Doctor and Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps stationed at Netley. Along with Harry's last letter and personal effects, the family still have the wire notifying them of his death. Just a basic printed form with Harry's details written in. The body was brought back to Burbage the following week and was laid to rest in the village churchyard the same afternoon.

A firing party of thirteen from Glen Parva, consisting of men who had recovered from wounds, under Sergeant I Green, the well-known Barwell Cricketer, attended to give the deceased military honours, while six others bore the coffin to the graveside.

W 620-501 20110 210 G.R.E. 21  
 104  
 Army Form B. 104-82

No. 11992 LEICESTERSHIRE REGT  
 (If missing, please quote above No.)

Record Office,  
 LACEBY ROAD, Station,  
 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1916.

Sir,

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has this day been received from the War Office notifying the death of  
 (No.) 11992 (Rank) Private  
 (Name) Asbury, John Henry (Regiment) 9th Battalion  
 LEICESTERSHIRE REGT, which occurred at Netley, Base Hospital,  
Southampton on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
 of July 1916, and I am to express to you the sympathy and regret of the Army Council at your loss. The cause of death was  
Wound received in action

If any articles of private property left by the deceased are found, they will be forwarded to this Office, but some time will probably elapse before their receipt, and when received they cannot be disposed of until authority is received from the War Office.

Application regarding the disposal of any such personal effects, or of any amount that may eventually be found to be due to the late soldier's estate, should be addressed to "The Secretary, War Office, London, S.W.," and marked outside "Estate."

I am,  
 Sir,  
 Your obedient Servant,  
W. H. G. Asbury  
 125, Northey Lane,  
 Buxton

W. H. G. Asbury  
 Lieut. Colonel in Charge of Records.

Figure 37 Report of Death Pte Asbury



Figure 38 Pte Asbury Memorial Card

The coffin was a shell storage box covered with a Union Jack and the deceased's cap and belt. The service was conducted by Rev. J P A Fletcher, Charles Higham read the lesson and the village schoolchildren sang the hymn 'Jesu, lover of my soul'. Most of the village witnessed the interment, a volley being fired followed by a bugler sounding the last post and the firing party presenting fixed bayonets. Rather than wait for the usual military Portland stone memorial, the Asbury family 'went into debt to the sum of £40 to provide John with a lasting memorial, which has been, lovingly maintained for over 90 years.



Figure 39 Harry's Medals



Figure 40 Pte Asbury Newspaper Cutting

THE FALLEN

Record Office,  
Lichfield  
26.11.20.

I am directed to transmit to you the accompanying  
1914-15 Star  
which would have been conferred upon No 11998  
Pte Asbury J.H. Leicester Regt.  
had he lived, in memory of his services with the  
British Forces during the Great War.  
In forwarding the Decoration I am commanded  
by the King to assure you of His Majesty's high  
appreciation of the services rendered.  
I am to request that you will be so good as to  
acknowledge the receipt of the Decoration on the  
attached form.

I am,  
Your obedient Servant,  
W. May Lt Col  
for Mr A.J. Asbury for % Records.

Figure 41 Pte Asbury Decoration Letter



Figure 43 St Catherine's Churchyard

Record Office,  
LICHFIELD.

I am directed to transmit to you the accompanying  
British War and Victory Medal  
which would have been conferred upon 11998  
J.H. Asbury  
Leicestershire Regiment.  
had he lived, in memory of his services with the British  
Forces during the Great War.  
In forwarding the Decoration I am commanded by  
the King to assure you of His Majesty's high appreciation  
of the services rendered.  
I am to request that you will be so good as to  
acknowledge the receipt of the Decoration on the attached  
form.

I am,  
Your obedient Servant,  
W. Asbury  
for Officer % Records.

Figure 42 Pte Asbury Medal Letter

BURBAGE  
Rose Garden of Remembrance.

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MAJOR HURST hopes that  
Mr & Mrs Asbury's Family  
will be able to be present at the  
Planting of the Memorial Roses, on  
Saturday, March 26th. 1921, at 3 p.m.

Figure 44 Asbury Family Invitation to Rose Planting

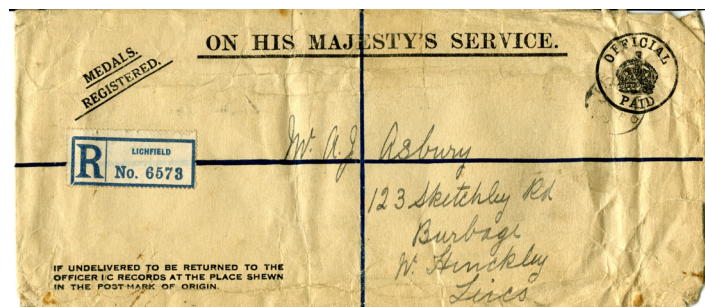


Figure 45 Pte Asbury Medals Envelope