

In 2017, 100 years after his death at the Battle of Passchendaele, David Britton wrote a biography of his maternal uncle. This is what he has sent us regarding the book. The book will be situated in the Parish Hall for all to see.

**Ben Clayton was my mother's eldest brother.**

**My wife and I have visited a farm just outside the fenland village of Zonnebeke in Flanders.**

**In 1917 Ben died leading an attack on it.**

**The farm was a German Fortress in WW1 known to the British Army as the Zonnebeke Redoubt.**

**We were there, on the day, a hundred years later.**

**The Claytons were all brought up in School House, Edmondsley, where my grandfather was Headmaster of the school.**

**The old school used to be on the roadside, just above the house, and was built in the same style of the same colliery brick.**

**The new school is in what used to be the sports field, where there were goal posts, a running track and so on.**

**I was brought up in Edmondsley, and lived in School House from 1948 until 1970.**

**I still have about ten copies of the book.**

**If the Parish Council, or a local history group are interested, I would be happy to send a couple of them to you [no charge].**

**Ben enlisted as one of Kitchener's volunteers in the DLI after the Germans bombarded Hartlepool.**

**When he was killed three years later he was a Captain in the West Yorkshire Regiment [he had trained as a teacher in Leeds].**

**He won the M.C. on the day of his death.**

**He was only twenty two.**

**He was an art teacher and sent home sketches of his time in the Trenches.**

**The sketches are in the book.**

**I think your members and/or the local history group would find my account of Edmondsley over 100 years ago to be of interest, particularly the workings of the mine and Ben's life as a soldier.**

**Did you know that the village hall is the War Memorial for Edmondsley?**

**HMG gave money after the War for every place that had sent troops to the war to have a Memorial.**

**It was opened by my grandfather, John Clayton, the village Headmaster.**

**I have a photograph of him doing it, & the Ceremonial Key.**

**Claytonville, the streets of social housing past Beech Grove towards Blackhouse, were named after him.**

**The farm up Beech Grove was the country home of William Hedley, the man who built the early engines [before Stephenson], Puffing Billy & Wylam Dilly.**

**Hedley's main residence was Shafto House in Craghead, just at the bottom of Craghead Bank ,on the right, going towards Bloemfontain Terrace.**