

**ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON**

**WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT**

# **Robert Edmund Poole**

**Name:** Robert Edmund Poole

**Rank:** Private

**Service Number:** 7652

**Regiment:** Somerset Light Infantry

**Battalion/Unit number:** 1st Battalion (11th Infantry Brigade, 4th Division)

**Date/year of Birth:** 28th October 1885

**Place of Birth:** Taunton

**Place of Residence:** King Street, Taunton

**Date of Death:** 26th August 1914

**Place of Death:** France

**Burial/Memorial:** La-Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial

Robert Edmund Poole was the son of Robert and Eliza Poole. His father was employed as a railway labourer and in 1891 the family was living in King Street, Taunton, where they had lived for at least two generations. He had an elder brother Alfred and three sisters Edith, Alice and Florence. The family does not appear on the 1901 census.

Robert's father had been employed on the Railway and on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1903 Robert had also started working for the great Western Railway as a cleaner on a wage of one shilling and ten pence a week. However he left on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1905 and by 1911 Robert had joined the 2nd Battalion Somerset Light Infantry and was based in Malta. Robert is not included on the Taunton Deane enlistment list as he was already a serving soldier.

The second battalion was stationed variously in Malta, China and India between 1908 and 1914, and remained in India throughout the war period. From the census we know that in 1911 Robert was in Malta. However in August 1914 he was with the 1st Battalion on the Western Front as part of the Expeditionary Force when he was killed in action on 26th August, in the opening stages of the war. His battalion had landed at Le Havre only four days before and the force he was with was surprised by the advance of German cavalry. He died during the battle of Le Cateau, which

proved to be a holding operation enabling the allied forces to make a "tactical retreat" in the face of overwhelming German forces. The war diary records that 278 officers and men were killed, wounded or missing on that day; two other men recorded on the St. James Memorial died the same day.

His name is commemorated on the memorial at La-Ferte-sous-Jouarre as one of the many missing in the Marne offensive. The inscription on the memorial reads:

*To the glory of God and the lasting memory of 3888 British officers and men whose graves are not known who landed in France in the month of August 1914 and between then and October fought at Mons and Le Cateau and on the Marne and the Aisne.*

