Edward Charles Slater 05.06.1887 – 15.12.1917

Edward Charles Slater was baptised on the 5th June 1887 in Alderley Edge, the son of John and Mary Slater.

In the 1881 census Edward was living in Welsh Row, Alderley Edge with his parents and his brother John and sisters Harriet and Emily.

By 1901 the family had moved to Nether Alderley.

By 1911 Edward had left home and was living with his wife Alice in Oak Road, Mottram St. Andrew who he had married in 1909 at All Saints Church, Siddington. Alice’s maiden name was Coppock and Edward’s occupation was a bricklayer.

They had five children. Edward, Frank, Joey, Wallace Charles and Ellen. They also had a foster child named George. Edward was baptised in Prestbury in 1911, Joey in 1912, Frank in 1914, Wallace Charles in 1917 and Ellen in 1920.

Edward enlisted in Mottram St. Andrew and served as gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) in the 63rd Siege Battery in France and Flanders and he was awarded the Victory Medal and the British Medal. His army number was 171714.

Siege Batteries were equipped with heavy howitzers sending large calibre high explosive shells in high trajectory, plunging fire. The usual armaments were 6inch, 8inch or 9.2inch howitzers, although some had large rail or road mounted 12inch howitzers. The 63rd Siege Battery had two rail mounted 12inch howitzers and were sent to France on the 2nd March 1916. As British artillery tactics developed the Siege Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery as well as putting destructive fire down on strong points, dumps, stores, roads and railways behind enemy lines.

He was killed in action on the 15th December 1917 and is buried in the La Brique Military Cemetery Number 2 in Belgium. His wife Alice May was informed of his death on Christmas Day 1917.

Alice May Slater is buried in Prestbury church yard.
Edward Charles Slater with his wife Alice May and their children Edward, Frank, Joey, Wallace Charles and George. (a foster child). Their daughter Ellen had not been born when the photograph was taken.

**Henry Slater 1895 -01.07.1916**

Henry was born in Over Alderley in 1895 the son of Fred and Ann Slater.

In 1901 Henry was living on the Common, Mottram St. Andrew with his parents and brothers Frank and Frederick William and his sister Margaret Ann (born 28.06.1900).
In 1911 the family were living in New Road, Butley and Henry was employed as an agricultural labourer. By now he had another sister Jessie (born 28.03.1902).

Both Margaret and Jessie attended Mottram St. Andrew School in Priest Lane.

Henry enlisted in Macclesfield aged 19 on the 10th September 1914 and served as a rifleman in the 1st battalion Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort’s Own). His army number was 11987, formerly 3324 in the Lancers.

He was drafted to France on the 13th July 1915.

He served in France and Flanders and was killed in action on the 1st July 1916. He has no known resting place but is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial Cemetery in France.

He was awarded the British Medal and the Victory Medal. At the time of his death his mother had already died and his father and two sisters were still living in New Road, Butley.

The Thiepval Memorial Cemetery is near the village of Thiepval on the D73 off the D929 the main road between Bapaume and Albert.

The 1st July 1916, the day of Henry’s death, was the start of the battle of the Somme that commenced at 07.30 am after a long artillery bombardment that eliminated any surprise but failed to destroy the German barbed wire. The assault resulted in catastrophic losses as the British troops went forward across no man’s land in long lines to be mowed down by German machine guns that the British artillery had failed to suppress. The British suffered an appalling 57,450 casualties on this day. When the battle ended on the 18th November 1917 there had been over 400,000 British casualties.

**Herbert Louis Stearn 26.03.1899 – 30.06.1919**

Herbert Louis Stearn was born in Saltersford, Kettleshulme the son of Arthur Charles (died 02.11.1933 aged 69) and Fanny Stearn (died 28.09.1947 aged 85). He was baptised at Prestbury on the 26th March 1899.

In the 1901 census he was shown as living at Lee Hall, Mottram St. Andrew where his father was employed as a domestic coachman.

In the 1911 census the family was still living at Lee Hall and his father’s occupation was a coachman.

Herbert Louis Stearn had 3 brothers and 1 sister. Their names are Percy Charles Stearn, Arthur Harry Stearn (died 25.02.1915 aged 25), Elsie Stearn and Geoffrey Spencer Stearn (died 11.07.1913 aged 16).

He also had another brother Geoffrey, born 28.10.1914, who attended Mottram St. Andrew School in Priest Lane when the family were living at Legh Hall Cottage.
Herbert served as a private, army number 48986, in the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Regiment and was awarded the British Medal and the Victory Medal.

He died on the 25th June 1919 aged 20 and is buried in Prestbury Church Yard.

His brother Arthur Henry Stearn married Annie Beswick in 1914 at St.Mary’s, Alderley Edge.

His brother Percy Charles Stearn married Jessie Cliff on the 27th September 1916 at St. Peter’s, Prestbury.

His brother Geoffrey Spencer is buried in Prestbury Church Yard having died at the age of 16 on the 11th July 1913.

Albert Thirlwall 1889 – 20.05.1916

Albert was born in Manchester in 1889 the son of Frederick Stanley and Alice Maud Thirlwall (maiden name Howe).

He had 3 brothers Frank, Walter and Stanley and 6 sisters Lucy, Jessie, Grace, Daisy, Eva and Kate.
In the 1911 census the family were living in the Hough, Macclesfield Road, Wilmslow and Albert was employed as a domestic gardener.

Albert served as a private (signaller) in the 10th battalion Cheshire Regiment, army number 14157, in France and Flanders, having enlisted in Macclesfield on the 1st September 1914 aged 25. He was awarded the British Medal and the Victory Medal. He served within the UK for a little over a year until 25th September 1915. During this time he trained as a signaller. The battalion embarked from Folkestone on the 26th September 1915 for service in France.

Between the 17th and 21st May 1916 the 10th battalion Cheshire Regiment were in action against the enemy to the north of Arras.

On the 17th May they returned to the trenches near Mont – St – Eloi, a small village 8 km North West of the French town of Arras.

At about 10 p.m. on the 18th May a localised attack was made by the enemy involving severe hand to hand fighting that resulted in the enemy having troops very close to the Cheshire’s own front line.

He was killed in action on the 20th May 1916 aged 27.

He has no known resting place but is commemorated on the Loos Memorial Cemetery which is located 1 km west of the village to the north east of the N943 road between Lens and Bethune.

The 20th, the day Albert died, was marked by continuous German shelling throughout the day.

His brother Walter married Maggie Brough in Hurdsfield on 18th June 1932 and his sister Kate married William Jackson Heighway in Wilmslow on the 1st October 1932.

His name is also recorded on the Wilmslow war memorial.

**Stanley Thirlwall 1893 – 06.11.1917**

Stanley was born in Wilmslow in 1893 the son of Frederick Stanley and Alice Maud Thirlwall (maiden name Howe).

He had 3 brothers Frank, Walter and Albert and 6 sisters Lucy, Jessie, Grace, Daisy, Eva and Kate.

In the 1911 census the family were living in the Hough, Macclesfield Road, Wilmslow and Stanley was employed as a copper miner’s apprentice.

Stanley served as a private in the 7th battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers, army number 70647, formerly 27469 Cheshire Regiment in Egypt and Israel. He enlisted in Wilmslow and after training was drafted with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to Egypt.
By October 1917 General Allenby’s force had been entrenched in front of a strong Turkish position along the Gaza to Beersheba Road for some months. An attack was carried out commencing the 31\textsuperscript{st} October 1917 and it is assumed that Stanley died during this action.

He was killed in action on the 6\textsuperscript{th} November 1917 aged 24 and is buried in the Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel. The cemetery is on the edge of the Negev Desert 75 km south west of Jerusalem.

His name is also recorded on the Wilmslow war memorial.

He was awarded the British Medal and the Victory Medal.

**Ernest Thomson 1892 – 01.03.1917**

Ernest was born in Prestbury in 1892 the son of George and Hannah Thomson (maiden name Priestnall), and brother of William who served in the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment. He was christened with his sister Ellen at Prestbury on 22\textsuperscript{nd} January 1893, when the family was living in Kettleshulme.

In the 1901 census he is shown living in Alderley Road, Prestbury, son of George (farmer) a widower, and his brothers and sisters Elizabeth, Ellen, George and William.

In the 1911 census Ernest is shown as an agricultural labourer living at Goose Green Farm, Oak Road, Mottram St.Andrew with his father George (widower) and his brothers and sisters George, Annie Elizabeth and cousin William John Lindsay Thomson.

He enlisted in Chester on the 29\textsuperscript{nd} August 1916 when he was working as a waggoner on a farm in Llansanffraid, Monmouthshire and served as a private in the 20\textsuperscript{th} Battalion of the Manchester regiment in France and Flanders, army number 40562.

The 20\textsuperscript{th} (5\textsuperscript{th} City) Battalion, Manchester Regiment was raised in Manchester on the 8\textsuperscript{th} November 1914. They moved to Morecambe for training and in April 1915 moved to Grantham to join the 91\textsuperscript{st} Brigade, 30\textsuperscript{th} Division. They left for France in November 1915 landing at Boulogne. On the 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1915, the 91\textsuperscript{st} Brigade transferred to the 7\textsuperscript{th} Division. In 1916 they were in action during the Battles of the Somme, including the capture of Mametz, the Battle of Bazentin, the attack on High Wood, the Battle of Delville Wood, the Battle of Guillemont and the Operations on the Ancre that took place between the 11\textsuperscript{th} January 1917 and the 13\textsuperscript{th} March 1917.

He was killed in action on the 1\textsuperscript{st} March 1917 age 25 and it is assumed that his death occurred during the Operation on the Ancre.

He is buried in the Queen’s Cemetery, Bucquoy, France. The cemetery is located on the D919, Arras to Amiens Road, 15km south of Arras.
His wife Mary Jane Thomson (maiden name Morris) was advised of his death at Wren Cottage, Llansanffraid, Monmouthshire. They were married in 1916 at Llanfyllin which is very close to Llansanffraid.

He was awarded the British War medal and Victory medal that were sent to his widow in Llansanffraid.

**William Thomson 1880 – 04.10.1917**

William Thomson was born in Wilmslow in 1880 the son of George and Hannah Thomson (maiden name Priestnall) and brother of Ernest Thomson who served in the 20th battalion Manchester Regiment.

In 1881 William was living with his mother Hannah at his maternal grandmother’s home Hill Top Farm, Butley.

In 1891 William was living at New Lane, Prestbury with his father George (farmer), mother Hannah and his brothers and sisters John, Charles, George, Ann Elizabeth and Nellie.

In 1911 William was employed as a salesman and was living in Oak Road, Mottram St. Andrew with William Hatton, butcher.

William enlisted on the 16th December 1915 in Macclesfield, aged 36, when living at Legh Arms, Prestbury. He was an acting corporal in the 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment, army number 50563. When he enlisted his father was living at Goose Green Farm, Mottram St. Andrew.

He embarked from Southampton on the 8th February 1917 arriving in Rouen on the 11th February 1917.

William was killed in action on the 4th October 1917, possibly at the battle of Broodseinde which was part of the 3rd battle of Ypres that occurred between 31st July and 10th November 1917. He is buried in the Larch Wood Cemetery at Zillebeke, Belgium.

In his will he left £101 to his sisters Annie Elizabeth Grange (wife of Arthur Grange) and Nellie Thomson (spinster).

He was awarded the British medal and Victory medal.

**George Walker – 24.10.1914.**

George was born in Houghwood, Staffordshire, the son of John William and Lydia Walker.

The 1891 census shows the family living at 58 Wood Lane, Hinstock, Staffordshire.
By 1901 the family had moved to Lancashire and were living at 3 Bridgewater Street, Swinton where his sister Doris was born on the 2nd September 1900. She was baptised at St. Catherines, Barton upon Irwell.

His mother Lydia must have died sometime between 1891 and 1901 because the 1901 census shows his father’s wife as Sydoner, the mother of his sister Doris.

His other brothers and sisters were Harriet, John William, Arthur, and Lucy.

By 1911 the family had moved again, this time to Cheshire and were living at the Red House, Prestbury where George was employed as a postman. His brother John William was in charge of the village post office.

He married Katherine Williams at Prestbury Church on the 16th January 1913 when they were both recorded as living in Mottram St Andrew. He is shown as a soldier on his marriage certificate. His father’s occupation was shown as a Woodsman.

He enlisted in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in Macclesfield. He served as a private in the 1st Battalion, army number 10951, and saw action in France and Flanders and was killed in action on the 24th October 1914. He was awarded the Victory Medal, The British Medal and the 1914 Star.

He has no known resting place but his death is commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ypres.

At the outbreak of the First World War the 1st Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers were serving in Malta and they were immediately brought home and landed at Southampton on the 3rd September and Zeebrugge on the 7th October. His service number indicates that he joined between 1911 and 1912 and he was therefore a regular soldier. It is unlikely that he would have been a volunteer to have been killed so early.

The Royal Welsh Fusiliers were in the 7th Division and the following are extracts from the War Diaries of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers provided by the Trust based at Bodelwydden Castle.

The 7th Division was formed during September and October, by the bringing together of regular army units from various points around the British Empire. They were assembled in the New Forest in Hampshire before moving to Belgium. The Division landed at Zeebrugge in the first week of October 1914 and ordered to assist in the defence of Antwerp. However by the time they arrived the city was already falling and the 7th was ordered instead to hold certain important bridges and other places that would help the westward evacuation of the Belgian army. The Division then moved by rail to Ghent and then marched west to Ypres which was reached on the 14th October. The men were exhausted by the long marches, as much as 30 miles in 24 hours, with little sleep and lack of food.

On arrival at Ypres the Division was ordered to establish an outpost line to the east and south east of Ypres between Vormezeele and Zillebeke. An advance began early on the 16th and the Battalion occupied Zonnebeke shortly after the German
evacuation, and began preparing trenches. The 8 mile front was too long for a
Division with inadequate artillery. They advanced again on the 19th towards
Klaythoek but when within 200 yards of the objective they were ordered to withdraw
and by dusk they had reached Zonnebeke having suffered considerable casualties.

The German attack, which began on the 20th, was pressed in deadly earnest on the 21st.
The Royal Welsh were in the path of the attack but successfully held out from
daybreak until 4 pm, by which time their position had been pulverised. The Battalion
had made a memorable and magnificent defence, outnumbered, with a long line to
hold which it had no time to prepare properly for defence against shell fire, let
alone for a bombardment of such weight and intensity. Many trenches were blown in
as a result of shells bursting on the parapet. There was little support and supplies of
ammunition difficult to bring forward. A message was received at 3.30 pm to hold the
line at all costs. Many men were taken prisoner and the Battalion withdrew to a
secondary line some 250 yards to the rear, then at 1.30 am on the 22nd fell back to
Eksternest in reserve.

They moved forward again in the afternoon of the 22nd to support a position east of
the Hannebeck River before withdrawing to the former line at 8 pm.

On the 23rd a party was sent out at 5.30 am to collect the dead and wounded from
Zonnebeke but were fired on by a number of the enemy dressed in British uniforms.
The troops were ordered to retire if they met with opposition and to return to their
original positions. The Battalion moved forward again at 2 pm and ordered to take up
support position. There were no tools available to entrench with and the Commanding
Officer ordered the men back to their former positions.

At 8 am on the 24th the Battalion moved forward to occupy a covering position due to
a force of Germans having penetrated the front line. By now their strength was
recorded at just over 400 when they came under heavy shrapnel fire during the
afternoon resulting in 1 killed, 13 wounded and 2 missing.

This is when George Walker was killed by shrapnel at Zonnebeke.

An army gratuity was paid to his widow Katherine Walker.

John Frederick Waller 12.03.1893 – 09.07.1916

John was born on the 12th March 1893 and baptised on the 6th June 1893 at the Hough
Wesleyan Methodist Chapel the son of Alfred and Florence Annie Waller.

In 1901 John was living at the Common, Mottram St. Andrew, with his parents and
his brother Alfred and sister Gladys. His father’s occupation was as an agricultural
labourer.
John enlisted in Manchester on the 12th January 1915 when the family were living at Cemetery Lodge, Warford Road, Alderley Edge.

He served in the 18th battalion Manchester regiment, army number 11025, and was promoted to Lance Corporal on the 3rd April 1915.

The battalion moved to Heaton Park, Manchester where their training intensified in the vast open spaces. On the 24th April 1915 the battalion marched to London Road Station (now named Piccadilly) and entrained for Grantham, Lincolnshire and joined the 30th Division. On the 7th September the battalion arrived at Larkhill Camp on Salisbury Plain in preparation for their move to France. On the 8th November the battalion shouldered arms and marched to Amesbury on the first leg of their journey to active service. They arrived in Folkestone and boarded a troop ship that took them to Boulogne. On the 6th January 1916 with training completed, the battalion was deemed ready to take its place in the line. It marched eastwards towards the trenches in the Somme marshes around the village of Vaux. The battalion suffered its first casualty on the 11th January when Private Browne was shot by a sniper. On the 28th January the battalion endured heavy shelling. On the 1st February the battalion was reinforced with 25 NCOs and men from the 25th battalion of the Manchester regiment.

On the 19th March the battalion were relieved by the 8th East Surreys and marched to Bois de Tailles where it stayed until the 29th March. During the 2 months spent in the trenches the battalion had lost 130 men either killed, wounded or missing. On the 29th March the battalion was relieved by the 20th Kings Liverpool and proceeded to Freshencourt where they were mainly involved in constructing new railway lines. On the 8th May the battalion took over the trenches from the 16th Manchester regiment in front of Maricourt. They were relieved by the 16th Manchester regiment on the 14th May.

As the 1st July approached it was evident to the men that a major battle was imminent. The battle of the Somme commenced on the 1st July and the 30th Division were given the task of assaulting the village of Montauban. At 07.22 am a ferocious bombardment opened up on the German positions which intensified as zero hour approached. At 07.30 am along the entire length of the allied front whistles blew and the men scrambled from their front line trenches and began the 3,000 yard advance on the enemy positions. By 10.30 am the men finally arrived in the village of Montauban and for the rest of the day frantically dug trenches and secured their position to be ready for the inevitable German counter attack. The attack had resulted in the loss of 5 officers and 170 other ranks from the battalion. From the 4th to the 7th July 1916 the battalion was involved in clearing the battlefield and provided burial parties for the brigade. On the 7th July the battalion went in support of the attack on the enemy lines in Trones wood. At about 3pm the battalion headquarters was struck by a shell wounding the commanding officer who died the next day. During the night enemy bombing attacks were repulsed and the enemy driven off. Throughout the 8th July and the following night shelling was intense and casualties were heavy. Three times the enemy attacked and were repulsed by Lewis gun and rifle fire. By mid day on the 9th July the battalion’s position had become impossible and they were ordered to withdraw. At 10 pm with less than 100 men remaining the battalion moved to Chimney trench where it remained for the next 28 hours. The trenches offered little protection from the constant shelling and was regularly strafed by machine gun fire resulting in many casualties.
It is concluded that John Frederick Waller was killed during the above action on the 9th July 1916 aged 23.

He has no known resting place but is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial Cemetery which is near the village of Thiepval on the D73 off the D929 the main road between Bapaume and Albert.

The fighting continued after his death and by the 14th July the whole nature of the battalion had changed due to most of the original pals lying on the battlefield where they fell or wounded in various hospitals. When the news of the losses reached Manchester there was not a street that was left unaffected and the curtains of many houses remained tightly drawn as the families and loved ones mourned their losses.

**Frank Simpson Wright 14.12.1884 – 27.03.1918**

Frank Simpson Wright was born in Rostherne, Cheshire the son of James Wright and Elizabeth Wright.
He attended Appleton Thorn and High Legh schools.

In 1901 the family were living at Swineyard Lane, High Legh.

By 1911 the family were living at Collinwood Mount, Mottram St. Andrew. The 1911 census shows Frank’s occupation as a Meat Salesman Manager and that he was single.

The 1911 census gives his father’s occupation as Market Gardener and shows that he had 3 brothers and a sister.

His brothers were John Arthur Wright, metal worker, born 1883 in Rostherne, Joseph E. Wright, poultry dealer, born 1892 in Rostherne and Peter J. Wright, cabinet maker’s apprentice, born 1893 in Rostherne. His sister was May Wright, born 1888 in Rostherne.

Frank married Lizzie Bower, the daughter of Ralph and Elizabeth Bower of Mottram St. Andrew, on the 27th August 1913 in Prestbury. They had a daughter Elizabeth born on the 10th April 1917 when living at 6 Ravenoak Road, Cheadle Hulme.

His brother Joseph Edwin Wright married Ann Bower, the sister of Lizzie, in Prestbury on the 11th October 1915. They had a daughter Annie born on the 7th November 1916 whilst living at the same address, 6 Ravenoak Road, Cheadle Hulme.

Frank enlisted in the 2nd battalion of the Grenadier Guards, army number 28267, in Stockport and served in the First World War in France and Flanders. His service number indicates that he enlisted late in the war.

He was killed in action on the 27th March 1918 aged 33 and is buried in Bucquoy Road cemetery, Ficheux. The cemetery is located on the D919 between Arras and Ayett, 9km from Arras. There are 1,166 buried there.
On the 20th March 1918, the Grenadiers had gone into reserve at Arras. The next day, the Germans launched a massive and successful attack on the Allied lines between Arras and St. Quentin. Shells began to fall on Arras and this confirmed the rumours of the attack that Frank would have heard. By the 25th, the Battalion had been ordered back into the front line to take up a defensive position between Ayette and Boisleux-St-Marc, south east of Arras. Throughout the morning, other Battalions withdrew through the new front line. At about 7 pm, the enemy was spotted advancing carefully over the crest of a hill. The advance was being covered by machine guns, which caused some casualties. The attack was stopped by determined fire from the grenadiers and there was no further action during the night.

The Battalion was now ordered to a new position astride the Arras to Albert railway. This was a dangerous position as it was overlooked from the outskirts of the village of Moyennwville. To their front were a number of deserted huts on high ground which could give cover for enemy snipers and machine gunners.

Soon after dawn on the 27th the Germans appeared, but attacked in a different way from normal. They were not moving forward in close formation but running forward in twos and threes and then taking cover. This was difficult to counter as the British artillery could not be brought to bear to break up the attack. However, concerted rifle fire from all along the line took many casualties and the enemy was unable to make progress.

However, all through this time, the Germans were shelling the Guards’ trenches causing many casualties. The Regimental History records, however, that the men found time to bring down one of the enemy’s aeroplanes which had ventured too low. The Guards’ Battalions on this front held their line for several days until they were relieved.

Sometime during the two days, Frank was severely wounded and will have been evacuated from the trenches and taken to the 43rd Casualty Clearing Station, where he died. He is buried in the adjacent cemetery, the Bucquoy Road Cemetery, Fisheux. His headstone is inscribed “Thy purpose, Lord, we cannot see, but is well that’s done by Thee”.

He was awarded the British Medal and the Victory Medal.

At the time of his death his wife was living at 1 Ravenoak Road, Cheadle Hulme.

His brothers Joseph and Peter survived the First World War and their names are recorded on the side panels of the memorial.

In 1903 Collinwood Mount opened as a tearoom.

In 1919 Collinwood Mount opened as a general store by Kate and Jack Wright.
28267 GUARDSMAN
F.S.WRIGHT
GRENADIER GUARDS
27TH MARCH 1918 AGE 33

THY PURPOSE LORD
WE CANNOT SEE
BUT ALL IS WELL
THAT'S DONE BY THEE