

118: James Brierley

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: James Brierley

Rank: Gunner

Battalion / Regiment: Royal Garrison Artillery, Lancashire & Cheshire

Service Number: 1458 Date of Death: 22 February 1916 Age at Death: 34

Buried / Commemorated at: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West Flanders, Belgium

Additional information given by CWGC: Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Brierley, of Banks Rd., Heswall; husband of Edith Brierley, of 2, Elton Cottages, Grange Mount, Heswall, Birkenhead

James Brierley was born 31 August 1881, in Parkgate, the 5th son (possibly the 7th child) of fisherman Samuel and Jane Brierley. He was educated at the Church School, Neston.

Fisherman Samuel Brierley married Jane Davies at St Peter's Church, Liverpool, in April / June 1870 and their first child, Robert Railton Brierley, was born late in that year and baptised at Neston Parish Church on 2 April 1871.

In the 1881 census, taken shortly before James' birth, the family was living in Parkgate midway between the Sawyer's Arms and Pengwern Arms (now The Boathouse):

NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of		Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN
			Males	Females		
Samuel Brierley	Head	M	36		Fisherman	Cheshire Parkgate
Jane do	Wife	M		33		do Neston
Robert do	Son		12		Scholar	do Parkgate
John do	Son		10		do	do do
George do	Son		8		do	do do
Thomas do	Son		6		do	do do
Elizabeth do	Daughter			4	do	do do
Margaret do	Daughter			1	do	do do

1881 census (extract) – Parkgate

Samuel Brierley	36	fisherman	born Parkgate
Jane	33		born Neston
Robert	12		born Parkgate
John	10		born Parkgate
George	8		born Parkgate
Thomas	6		born Parkgate
Elizabeth	4		born Parkgate
Margaret	1		born Parkgate

Thomas Brierley died, aged 13, and was buried at Neston on 1 June 1889.

By the time of the 1891 census the family had expanded and had moved to Leighton although Robert, the eldest child, has not been located in the 1891 census:

Samuel Brierley	Head	40	fisherman						
Jane	Wife	41							
John	Son	18	fisherman						
George	Son	16	fish hawk						
Betsy	Daughter	12							
Margaret	Daughter	10							
James	Son	9							
Martha	Daughter	7							
Alice	Daughter	5							
Sarah J.	Daughter	3							
Samuel Davies	General Labourer	48							

1891 census (extract) – Leighton, Neston

Samuel Brierley	40	fisherman	born Neston
Jane	41		born Neston
John	18	fisherman	born Neston
George	16	fish hawk	born Neston
Betsy	12		born Neston
Margaret	10		born Neston
James	9		born Neston
Martha	7		born Neston
Alice	5		born Neston
Sarah J.	3		born Neston
Samuel Davies	48	general labourer	born Neston

James Brierley was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 16 September 1881.

Robert Brierley (20) married Eliza Ann Edwards (21) at Neston Parish Church on 13 April 1890 and, although he was then described as a mariner, he later became a collier. Although Eliza (her father, Ambrose Edwards, was recorded as a miner) was living in Neston when she married she originated from Esclusham near Wrexham and Robert and Eliza soon moved back to North Wales, their first child (Mary Jane) being born in Esclusham in mid-1893.

By the time of the 1901 census, when the family was living on Wrexham Road, Esclusham, Robert and Eliza had four children - all girls - and Robert (30) was a coalminer.

Eliza Brierley died in the Wrexham area in late 1908, aged 41, and Robert married widow Sarah Ann Pugh at St James' Church, Rhosddu Road, Wrexham, in April / June 1910.

In the 1911 census Robert (40, coalminer) and Sarah (43, born India) were living at 29 Trinity Street, Rhostyllen, Wrexham with two of Robert's daughters and Elise Pugh, Sarah's daughter.

Although all of Samuel Brierley's children were born in Parkgate the family had, by the time of the 1901 census, moved to Banks Road, Heswall, the road which leads to the slipway into the estuary. In fact, it seems as though three Brierley families from Parkgate, all involved in fishing, moved to Banks Road at around the same time although the reason for this is unknown. Indeed, the three families were living in adjacent properties in 1901 although they appear to have been operating their fishing businesses independently:

Samuel Brierly, James' father, died in Neston in early 1910 aged 59 and in the 1911 census Jane (63) was still living at 2 Banks Road, Heswall, with three unmarried children: John (38, fisherman living on own account) ; Margaret (31, no occupation recorded) ; Sarah Jane (28, no occupation recorded). The census noted that of Jane's eleven children nine had survived.

James Brierley's Service Record notes that he enlisted in the General Service Infantry (G.S.) on 7 September 1914 and was given the Service Number 16364. At that time he gave his birthplace as Heswall, stated that he was 33 years and 163 days old and was a labourer. He was described as being 5ft 7ins tall, weighed 127lb (9 stone / 57.7 kilos) and had a 38-inch expanded chest. It was noted that 'teeth not too bad', that he had a fresh complexion and dark brown hair. However, this part of James's service lasted for only 38 days as he was discharged on 14 October as being medically unfit for military service as a result of varicose veins. At that time he had seven children, the six recorded on the 1911 census and Samuel (their last child) who was born in July/September 1916. His address on discharge was 2, Elton Cottages, Grange Mount, Heswall (off the west side of Pensby Road).

Notwithstanding his earlier discharge, James re-joined the army and enlisted in Liverpool with the 39th Siege Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. Unfortunately, no record of this service has been found but it is believed that he volunteered and enlisted on 29 December 1914, just two months after he was discharged.

Siege Batteries RGA were equipped with heavy howitzers, sending large calibre high explosive shells in high trajectory, plunging fire. The usual armaments were 6-inch, 8-inch and 9.2-inch howitzers, although some had huge railway- or road-mounted 12-inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Siege Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting



Three 8-inch howitzers of the 39th Siege Battery firing from the Fricourt-Mametz Valley during the Battle of the Somme, August 1916. [Timeline Photos: www.facebook.com/450822585061599/photos/]

destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines. Although it is known that the 39th Siege Battery moved to France on 2 November 1915, no details of their actions during February 1916 are known.

In late January 1916, less than one month before James was killed, the army sent Army Form W.3214 to

Receipt for Armlet.

To

The Chief of Police,

Heswall

Will you please be good enough to have the accompanying Armlet and pamphlet delivered to:—

M^r J. Brierley. late N^o 16364 CHESHIRE REGT.2. Hilton Cott. Grange Stoff Pilsley Rd. Heswalland obtain and forward to me hereon his receipt for the same. ChasOfficer i/c Records,
No. 4 District.

CHESHIRE REGT.

RECEIPT.

Received the above-mentioned Armlet and Pamphlet.

Place _____

Date _____

(2651.) Wt. 11342. -M 50. 506 M. 12/15. J. T. & S., Ltd.

'The Chief of Police, Heswall', and an 'accompanying Armlet and pamphlet' to be delivered to James Brierley. This was a preliminary measure under the Group Scheme (unofficially known as the Derby Scheme), a means of increasing the number of volunteers for the armed forces at a time when numbers were decreasing.

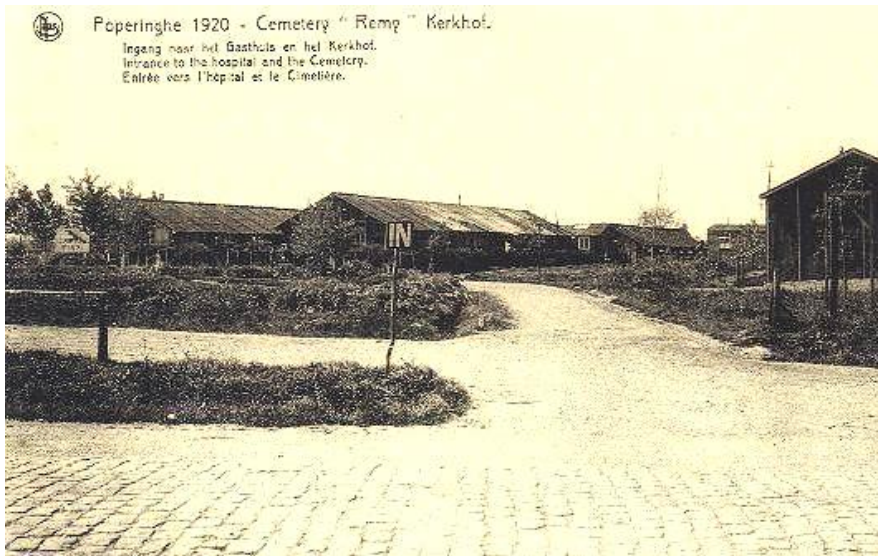
On 11 October 1915 Lord Derby (Edward Stanley, the 17th Lord Derby) was appointed Director-General of Recruiting and brought in a recruitment programme five days later. Men aged 18 to 40 were informed that under the scheme they could continue to enlist voluntarily or attest with an obligation to come if called up later on. The War Office notified the public that voluntary enlistment would soon cease and that the last day of registration would be 15 December 1915.

Men who attested under the Derby Scheme, who were accepted for service and chose to defer it were classified as being in "Class A". Those who agreed to immediate service were "Class B". The "Class A" men were paid a day's army pay for the day they attested and were given a grey armband with a red crown as a sign that they had so volunteered. They were officially transferred into Section B Army Reserve and were sent back to their homes and jobs until they were called up. As James had, at the time of arrival of the armlet and pamphlet, already re-enlisted, Sergeant (Albert Edward) Llewelyn of the Heswall Constabulary wrote back to return the items.

Whilst no details of the circumstances of James's death on 22 February 1916 are known, it is understood that he received a wound to his stomach from which he later died at No. 10 Casualty Clearing Station then located at Remy Siding near Abeele. This was the site of a large casualty clearing station complex, started near a farm called

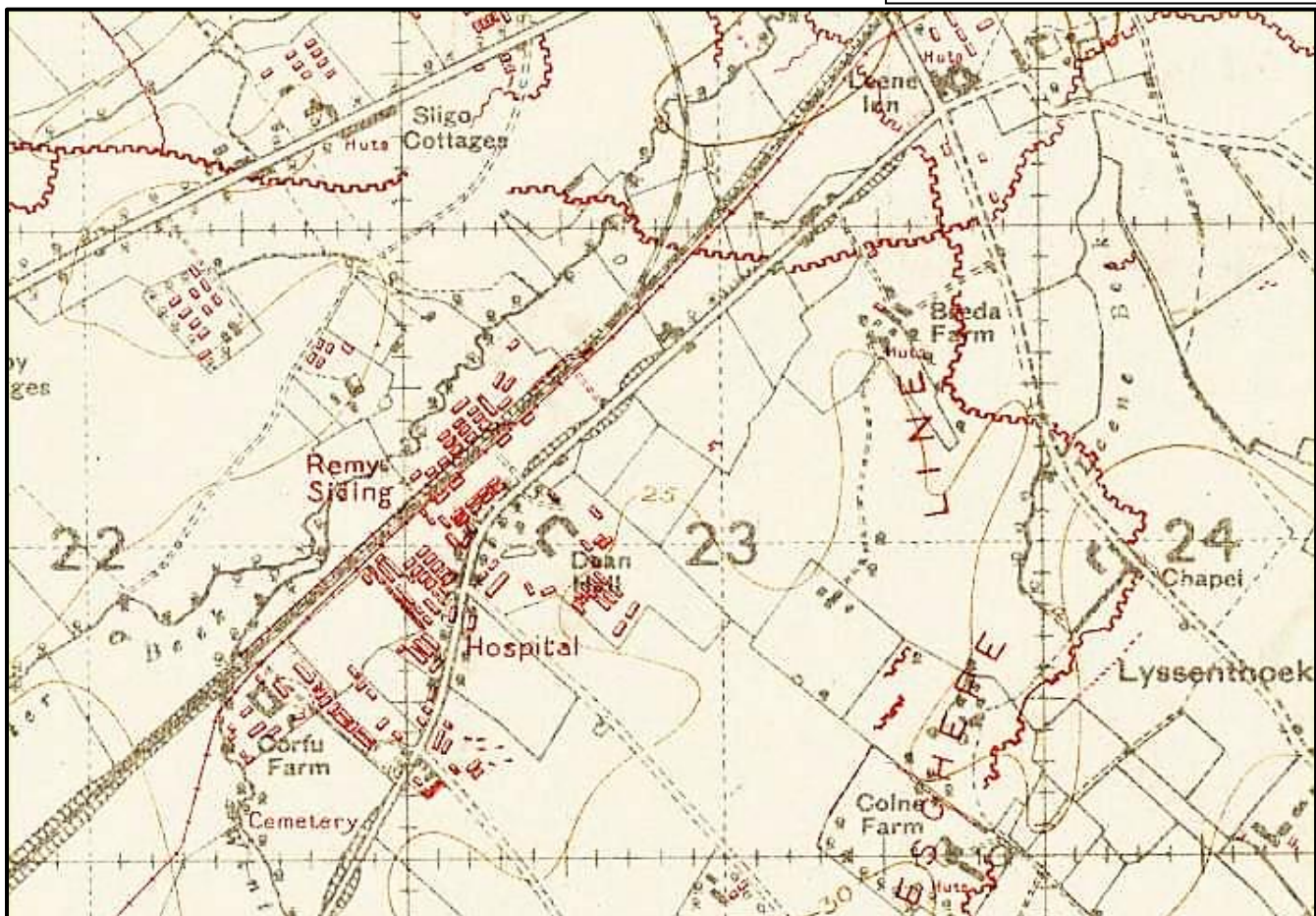
Cheshire Constabulary.
Heswall Station.
29th Jan'y 1916.
Sir,
With reference to the enclosed Armlet, the address should be 2 Bolton Cottages, Grange Mount Avenue, Heswall.
J. Brierley late N^o 16364. Ches Regt. is now serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery B. E. F. Consequently I return the Armlet & Pamphlet.
I am, Sir,
Your Obedt Servant
A. E. Llewelyn, Sergt B.C.

Remy Farm, the "sidings" being the name given to the rail line linking to the railhead at Poperinge.



The main entrance to the Remy Sidings Casualty Clearing Station in 1920. [Source: <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/>]

Military trench map showing the location and structure of the hospital complex at Remy Siding. Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery at Poperinge, where James Brierley is buried, is a short distance to the east.



James Brierley was then serving with the Lancashire & Cheshire Royal Garrison Artillery which had been formed in 1908, on the organisation of the Territorial Force, by the amalgamation of the 1st Lancashire R.G.A. (Volunteer Force) and two companies of the 1st Cheshire R.G.A. (V.F.). The object of the amalgamation was to enable the Artillery Defences of the Mersey to be manned by one unit, and thus avoid a divided command.

[Additional information and photograph from De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1918]

Jane Brierley, James' mother, died at home in Banks Road on the 31 March 1917 aged 68 and she was buried at Heswall Parish Church.

Margaret Brierley, James' unmarried sister, died in mid-1928 aged 48.

John Brierley, one of James' brothers, died in early 1930 aged 58.

Frances Jane Brierley, James' daughter, married Joseph William Pritchard at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in mid-1926.

Dorothy Brierley, James' youngest daughter, married Charles Kelly at Holy Trinity Church, Hoylake, in late 1928. Although the family has not been located in the 1939 Register it is believed that they had at least 3 children: Edith D B (mid-1936) ; Peter J (early 1939) ; Keith (mid-1944).

Samuel Brierley, James' youngest child, married Maudwena Jones at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in July / September 1935. At the time of the 1939 Register the family was at 9 Yale Street, Wrexham:

Samuel Brierley	born 12 August 1914	born Neston	timber haulier
Maudwena	born 24 June 1908		

One line of the record has been redacted

They are believed to have had the following children, all born in the Wrexham district: Shirley (mid-1936) ; Clifford (late 1938) ; David J (mid-1945).

It is not known when Samuel and Maudwena died.

Robert Railton Brierley, James' brother, died in Wrexham in early 1945 aged 74. He had married, in mid-1910, widow Sarah Ann Pugh in the Wrexham district and it seems that they moved to Doncaster, on the Yorkshire Coalfield. Sarah died in the Doncaster area in early 1939, aged 73, and in the 1939 Register Robert (born 29 October 1870, coal packer) was recorded as living at 35 Grantham Street, Doncaster with coal hewer Oswald and Amy Love.

In 1939 Edith S Brierley, James's widow, was living at 1 Miller's Cottages, Downham Road South, Heswall:

Edith Brierley	born 30 June 1882	widow	
William Edwards	born 18 September 1873	single	general labourer
Susannah Brierley	born 2 July 1915	married	

One line of the record has been redacted

James Brierley jnr, a son of Edith and James snr, married Susannah Morris at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in mid-1936 and a son, Ernest, was born in the same year. A second son, David R Brierley, was born in late 1939.

Edith S Brierley, died on Wirral in early 1968 aged 85.

Record No.	Registry No.	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS			CHARGES			Date of Authority	To whom Authorised	Amount Authorised				
					Account and Date	£	s.	d.	Account and Date	£			s.	d.	£	s.	d.
780646	188814	Brierley James	Lancs 22-2-16	22-2-16 Preston	3	5	8	16	7	2	9	1	6.1.19	Wid. Edith	13	9	
284834	188814	Brierley James	R. G. A. (Lancs Cheshire) 29 Siege Bty No. 10 - Gnr 1458	22-2-16 Preston	4			16	7	2	9	1	6.1.19	Wid. Edith	16	7	Self chosen

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In mid-1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. Two separate records were made of James’s entitlement and Edith, his widow, received payments 13s 9d, £2 9s 1d and a War Gratuity of £4. This, a total value of £7 2s 10d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £1110 in 2016. Another payment, of 16s 7d, appears to have been retained.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

46, Longville-street.
ROLL OF HONOUR.
 BRIERLEY – In loving memory of Gunner James Brierley (R.G.A.), the beloved husband of Edith Brierley, of Grange Mount, Heswall, and first son of Jane and the late Samuel Brierley, of Backhouse road, Heswall, who died of wounds, in France, February 22, 1916, aged 34 years.
 Thy purpose, Lord, we cannot see,
 But all is well that's done by Thee.
 (Sadly missed by his loving Wife and Children.)
 BRIERLEY – In loving memory of my dear son, Gunner James (Jim) Brierley (R.G.A.), who died of wounds, in France, February 22, 1916, aged 34 years.
 Sleep on dear son, in a soldier's grave –
 A grave we shall never see;
 But as long as life and memory last
 We shall still remember thee.
 (Ever remembered by his Mother, Sister, and Brother.)

British Army
 WWI Medal
 Rolls Index
 Cards, 1914-1920

Name	Co. No.	Rank	Regt. No.
BRIERLEY James	RGA (22)	Gnr	1458
Medal	101	Page	
VICTORY	T.A. 16. 3a/2	2120	
BURTON	15 Star	RGA 14	
Theatre of War first served in	3/1/15		
Date of entry therein			

Liverpool Echo - Thursday 22 February 1917



James Brierley’s grave at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West Flanders, Belgium.



James Brierley.