

## 148: Arthur Leighton

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Arthur Leighton

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 3rd Bn. Royal Welch Fusiliers

Service Number: 12253

Date of Death: 01 November 1918

Age at Death: 35

Buried / Commemorated at: Neston Cemetery, Raby Road, Neston

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of Edwin Leighton and the late Catherine Leighton and the husband of Rebecca Leighton of 13, New St., Colliery, Neston

Arthur Leighton was one of many sons of collier Edwin and Catherine Leighton and he was born when Edwin was a collier on the Flintshire coalfield.

Edwin married Catherine Rogers of Nant y Flint at St Mary's Church, Halkyn, in April/June 1872 when she was just 17. Catherine died, whilst the family was living in Flint, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1894 and just a few months after the birth of twins Martha and Mary.

It is not known when Edwin moved his family from Flint to Neston but at the time of the 1901 census Edwin and the three unmarried sons living with him in New Street were all working at Neston colliery:

7	Edwin Leighton	Coal	Wid	47	✓	Coalmine	Wid					
	George	do	do	24	✓	labourer in	Wid					
	Arthur	do	do	19	✓	drawer in	Wid					
	Absolom	do	do	14	✓	labourer in	Wid					
	Catherine Leighton	Wash	Wid	18	✓	Washer	Wid					
	Martha	do	do	8	✓							
	Mary	do	do	8	✓							
	Phoebe	do	do	21	✓							

### 1901 census (extract) – 8 Smith's Cottages [New Street], Neston

Edwin Leighton	47	widower, coalminer	born Halkyn, Flintshire
George	24	labourer at colliery, above	born Halkyn
Arthur	19	drawer in coalmine, below	born Halkyn
Absolom	14	labourer in colliery, above	born Halkyn
Catherine	18	worker in laundry	born Flint
Martha	8		born Flint
Mary	8		born Flint
Phoebe	21		born Flint

By 1911 all Edwin's children, except Martha, had left home - why, in this census, Edwin's birthplace was recorded as 'Handley' (presumed to be a corruption of Hanley), Staffordshire is unknown as it is recorded in all other censuses as being Flint or Bagillt and it is known that he was born in the Holywell district in 1850:

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)				(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)			
I certify that—				I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.			
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex columns.				Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Tenements, or Apartments).			
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have composed their sum with the total number of persons.				Count the Kitchens as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.			
(3) After making the necessary corrections I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.				Signature _____			
Title of Enumerator _____				Postal Address _____			
1	Edwin Leighton	Head	39	Widower	21	18	10
2	Martha Leighton	Daughter	17	Single			
				Miner, labourer below ground			
				Housekeeping			
				Staff Handley 087			
				N. Dale Flint 456			
				2			

### 1911 census (condensed) – No. 8, Colliery, Little Neston

Edwin Leighton	59	widower, miner, labourer, below ground	born Handley, Staffs.
Martha	17	housekeeping	born Flint

Edwin recorded that he had been married for 31 years and, of his 18 children, 10 were still alive.

Whilst Edwin recorded that he had been married for 31 years and that he was the father of 18 children, this is inaccurate - he had been married to Catherine for 22 years and she had died 17 years before the 1911 census. It is probable that Edwin died on Wirral in mid-1933 when his age was recorded as 76.

### Twelve children of Edwin and Catherine are recorded in census returns:

- Sarah Elizabeth registered in Holywell in early 1877 but she has not been traced after the 1891 census when, aged 18, she was living with her parents and siblings in Flint.
- Edwin born on 7 April 1874 in Holywell and recorded living with the family in the 1881 and 1891 census returns. In 1891, aged 16, he was a labourer in the chemical industry in Flint. Edwin married Hannah Edwards (born 8 September 1877) at St Mary's Church, Bagillt, in late 1897 (they had no children) and in 1911 he was recorded as a 'rustic wood worker', aged 32, living with Hannah (30) in Altrincham. In the 1939 Register Edwin and Hannah were living at 1 Burgess Place, Altrincham, and Edwin was recorded as a *waterwork's watchman*. Edwin died in the Altrincham district (Bucklow), aged 68, in early 1943. Hannah may have died in early 1945 aged 67.
- George registered in Holywell in early 1876<sup>1</sup> and living with his parents and siblings in 1881, 1891 and 1901 (when he was a surface labourer at Neston colliery). On 5 November 1910, when he was a collier, 34, of Colliery Road, he married widow Annie Marshall of 2, Raby Road, at the Parish Church and Rachel Leighton was a witness. Annie Beedles (22) had married coachman John Marshall (36) at Neston Parish Church on 5 February 1898 and they had six children of whom four died young. In the 1911 census George (34) and Annie (35) were living at Annie's house (2 Raby Road, Neston) with Annie's two surviving children: Ivy May Marshall (9) and William Arthur Marshall (7). George was then an underground day-labourer at Neston colliery and, for some reason he gave his place of birth as Neston although he was born near Flint. It is probable that George and Annie had at least five children including: Percy, born late 1912 ; Edwin J. and Herbert<sup>2</sup>, born mid-1915 ; Herbert (born 30 June 1920) ; James Stanley (born 21 February 1917).

<sup>1</sup> Although, in the 1939 Register, his recorded date of birth was 25 December 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Both Edwin and Herbert died in July / September 1915 aged 0. Another son named Herbert was born 30 June 1920 (although he was mis-recorded at the Register Office as Herbert Marshall, his mother's previous name also being recorded as Marshall).

Annie Leighton died in mid-1933 aged 57 and in the 1939 Register widower George was still living at 2 Reeves Cottages, Raby Road, where he was recorded as a *labourer, formerly collier*. With George were unmarried sons Stanley (born 21 February 1917 and his birth was registered as James S), a bricklayer's labourer, and Herbert (born 30 June 1920), a market gardener's labourer.

George Leighton died in mid-1954 aged 78.

Edward

born in Holywell on 8 January 1878 and living with his parents and siblings in 1881 and 1891. Edward has not been found in the 1901 census but he married Rachel Price (born 15 January 1879) at St Nicholas' Church, Sutton, St Helens, in July / September 1899 and in 1911 Edward (31), Rachel (31) and four of their six children were living at Jackson's Row, Colliery, Neston. Edward was recorded as a collier (hewer) and their eldest child (also Edward, aged 11) had been born in the St Helens area – it is probable that Edward was then working as a collier on the South Lancashire coalfield<sup>3</sup>.

In the 1939 Register Edward, a builder's general labourer, and Rachel were living at 1 Severn Row in Little Neston. An unmarried son, Samuel (born 3 April 1913), a gardener in domestic service, was with them and another line of the Register has been redacted.

Edward and Rachel are buried in Neston Cemetery; Edward died, aged 71, on 24 June 1949 and Rachel died, aged 81, on 2 May 1961.

James / Phoebe

twins, born in Holywell on 1 February 1880). James died, aged 2, in Holywell in mid-1882.

Phoebe married farm labourer Edward Davidson (born 26 July 1879) of Puddington at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in late 1910 and in 1911 they were living at 7 New Houses, Ness (cottages, now demolished, which had been built to house colliery employees). Edward was then 31 and Phoebe was 32 and, at that time, they had no children. However, four children born after 1911 are known: Mary (born 14 December 1912) ; Edward Thomas (born 1 June 1915) ; George Charles (born 5 March 1917) ; Minnie Rosedale (birth registered early 1924).

At the time of the 1939 Register (29 September) Edward and Phoebe were living at 23 Talbot Gardens in Little Neston:

Edward Davidson      council labourer (sanitary work)

Phoebe

Mary                      cook in domestic service [she married Peter Bostock, in West Cheshire, in early 1941]

Edward T                builder's labourer

George C                market gardener

One line of the record has been redacted (presumed to be the details of Minnie)

Absalom Leighton    builder's labourer (ARP work) [Absalom was Phoebe's brother – see below for details]

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Leighton (born 15 January 1900), the eldest son of Edward and Rachel, married Mary H Norbury on Wirral in early 1921 and their first child, Edward jun, was born on Wirral on 13 April 1921. In the 1939 Register Edward, a general labourer, and Mary were living at 7 Severn Road, Little Neston, close to Edward's parents. Son Edward (a *farm labourer – cowman*) was with them and three lines of the Register have been redacted. It is believed that Edward and Mary had three other children: Rachel (registered mid-1922) ; Doris M (registered mid-1925) ; Aubrey (registered late 1932).

- Edward Davidson died in late-1957 aged 78 and Phoebe died in mid-1962 aged 82.
- Arthur registered in Holywell in mid-1882 and living with his parents and siblings in 1891 and 1901. Married Rebecca Williams and died in WW1 on 1 November 1918. He is the subject of this account.
- Catherine Ann born in Holywell on 30 March 1884 and living with her parents and siblings in 1891 and 1901. Catherine married Thomas Richard Hare (born 25 July 1881 in Mancot) at St John the Evangelist Church, Ravenhead, St Helens, in early 1907. In 1911 Thomas (28) was a coalminer (hewer) and he and Catherine (26) were living at 1 New Road, Colliery, with their three young children (all born at Colliery). Also in the 1911 household was Catherine's youngest sister, Mary Leighton (16).  
At the time of the 1939 Register they were living at 'Mayfield', Marshlands Road:  
Thomas R Hare      general labourer  
Catherine A  
                         Three lines of the record have been redacted  
Mary Leighton      born 30 August 1893      single      laundress at private school
- Mary was Catherine's sister (see details below).
- Absalom born in the Holywell district on 22 March 1886 and living with his parents and siblings in 1891 and 1901. In 1911 Absolom, 24, single, was a colliery stoker, above ground. He was boarding with William Hare (recorded as timber man in coalmine) and family at Jackson's Row, Colliery.  
In the 1939 Register Absolom, recorded as married although his wife was not recorded, was living with his sister Phoebe Davidson and her family at 23 Talbot Gardens, Little Neston. Absolom was recorded as a *builder's labourer, ARP work*, in 1939; no record of his wife or marriage has been found but he died on Wirral in mid-1964 aged 78.
- Alfred registered in Holywell in late 1888 and living with his parents and siblings in 1891. Alfred died in late 1892 aged 4.
- Martha the twin of Mary (born in Holywell on 30 August 1893) and living with her parents and siblings in 1901. Martha has not been traced in the 1911 census but she married John Edward Morris at Neston Parish Church on 10 January 1916. Both Martha (of 6 Colliery Row) and John (of Eastbourne) were 22; John was a soldier and his father, Thomas Morris, was a deceased collier. The witnesses were Thomas Richard Hare, Martha's brother-in-law, and Mary Leighton, Martha's twin sister. Nothing is known of John Morris's military career but no indication of his death in WW1 has been found and a John Edward Morris died on Wirral in early 1973 aged 78.
- Mary the twin of Martha (born in Holywell on 30 August 1893) and living with her parents and siblings in 1901. In 1911, aged 16 (and again in 1939), she was recorded in the household of her sister, Catherine, and brother-in-law Thomas Richard Hare and family at 1 New Road, Colliery, Neston. Mary was a witness at the marriage of her sister Martha in January 1916 but it is believed that Mary never married and that she died on Wirral in mid-1965 when her age was recorded as 70.

It is also believed that another son, also named Edwin, was registered in Holywell in late 1872 and died in early 1873.

Arthur Leighton married Rebecca Williams at St Helens Parish Church on 9 November 1907. Rebecca was a daughter of collier John Morgan Williams and Fanny and she was born in Little Neston in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1886 although there is no record of her baptism at Neston Parish Church or at St Winefride's. It is not clear why the couple married in St Helens as the family of John Morgan Williams was recorded as being in Neston at the time of both the 1901 and 1911 censuses.

In 1911 Arthur, now with two small children, had changed his occupation and was an iron worker and believed to be working in Shotton, probably at the new works of John Summers & Sons, the "Hawarden Bridge Steelworks", which had opened on a 6-acre site in 1896. However, he was still living in Neston on New Street:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.															
<p>Defer writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.</p> <p>The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.</p>														Number of Schedules <u>198</u> To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.	
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE Last Birthday and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.					PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.		
			State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under ann."	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Children still living.	Children who have died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employee, Worker, or Working on Own Account.				Whether Working at Home.	
1 Arthur Leighton	Head	49	married						Iron Worker	Smithy Works	Worker	At Home	Flint	British Subject	
2 Rebecca Leighton	Wife	25	married	3	2	2	0					At Home	Little Neston, Flint	British Subject	
3 Fanny Leighton	Daughter	3										At Home	Little Neston, Flint	British Subject	
4 Catherine Leighton	Daughter	1										At Home	Little Neston, Flint	British Subject	
5 Peter Burrows	Boarder	54	married						Coal Miner	Below Ground	Worker	At Home	Buckley, Flint	British Subject	
6 John Griffiths	Boarder	50	married						Coal Miner	Below Ground	Worker	At Home	Burslem, Staffs.	British Subject	
7 Martha Griffiths	Boarder	55	married	30	None							At Home	Creggan, County Armagh	British Subject	

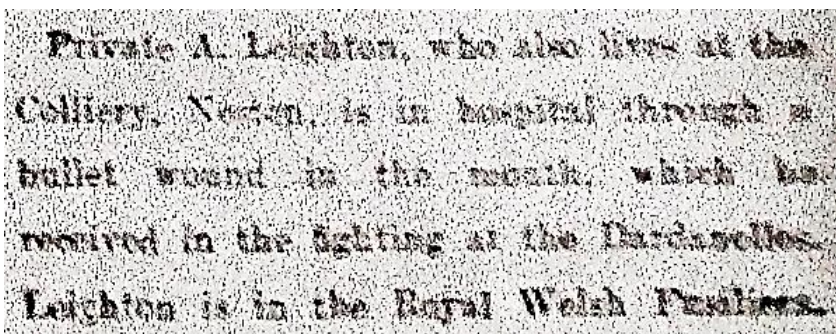
1911 census – Smith's Cottages [known to be 13 New Street], Little Neston

Arthur Leighton	28	iron worker, smithy works	born Flint
Rebecca	25		born Little Neston
Fanny	3		born Little Neston
Catherine	1		born Little Neston
Peter Burrows	54	married, boarder, coal miner (labourer below ground)	born Buckley
John Griffiths	50	married, boarder, coal miner (labourer below ground)	born Burslem, Staffs.
Martha Griffiths	55	boarder	born Creggan, County Armagh

Arthur and Rebecca had been married for three years and both children were still alive.

As Arthur's Service Record has survived we have some details of him. He enlisted in Shotton on 24 August 1914 when his age was recorded as 28 years 1 month and he was described as an ironworker. The following day he underwent his medical examination in Wrexham where he was said to be 5ft 8ins tall, of fair complexion, blue eyes, fair hair and an expanded chest of 37½ inches. Joining the Royal Welch Fusiliers he was sent to their Depot in Wrexham and posted to the 8<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion. This had been formed in Wrexham that month as part of Kitchener's First New Army and came under the orders of the 40<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 13<sup>th</sup> (Western) Division. The troops moved to Chiseldon on Salisbury Plain for training but in September 1914 part of the 40<sup>th</sup> Brigade moved to Cirencester. Near the end of February 1915 the Division concentrated at Blackdown in Hampshire; on 21 April Arthur was found guilty of being absent without leave and forfeited 6 days' pay.

Having spent 308 days in the UK Arthur was sent, on 27 June 1915, as part of the British Expeditionary Force to the Mediterranean. It is known that the troops landed at Alexandria and then moved to Mudros by 4 July to prepare for a landing at Gallipoli. Mudros, a small Greek port on the Mediterranean island of Lemnos, gained wartime significance with the determination of the Allies - chiefly the British and largely through the enthusiasm of Winston Churchill - in the early part of 1915 to attempt to seize control of the Dardanelles Straits some 50km away.



*Birkenhead Advertiser* – Saturday 11 September 1915  
On 4 September 1915 the *Birkenhead News* reported that he had ‘..been wounded in the mouth, and now lies in a Continental hospital. All his teeth have been knocked out.’

On 4 August 1915 the troops landed at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli and it was here, during the Dardanelles Campaign in modern-day Turkey, that Arthur received a serious gunshot wound to the ‘left angle of mouth’ which also removed his teeth in the upper jaw. His medical report indicates that this occurred on 11 August 1915, just one week after he arrived in Gallipoli.

On 11 September 1915 Arthur returned to Britain and, although no details are given, presumably received hospital attention although he later declined operations which would have enabled dentures to be fitted.

Nevertheless, Arthur remained in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, based in Britain, for a further 255 days until his discharge - *no longer physically fit for war service* - on 22 May 1916. Before his discharge, on 13 November 1915 (aged 29 years 10 months), Arthur was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 11<sup>th</sup> Coy. Royal Welch Fusiliers. This was a Reserve Battalion, administratively headquartered in Wrexham but physically based in Pembroke Dock until, in May 1915, it transferred to Litherland near Liverpool.

At the time of his discharge from the army Arthur had served for 1 year 273 days, just 75 of those days being on active service. At that time his civilian job was recorded as bar cutter and, still living at 13 Smith's Cottages, New Street, he had four children:

Fanny	born 18 January 1908 (or 21 December 1907)
Catherine	born 24 December 1909
Rebecca	born 29 April 1911
John Eli	born 31 January 1914

A further two children were born before Arthur died in November 1918:

Mary	born 9 August 1916
Alfred Thomas	born 30 August 1918

On discharge Arthur was stated to be of good character and it was noted that he was a sober, honest, good worker. However, the report of the Medical Board in April 1916 indicates that he had a heart condition as well as his inability to eat and digest normally, and it is probable that he was unable to return fully to normal civilian work:

<u>Cause of Discharge</u>	Medically unfit	S.S.W. mouth	/
<u>Report of Medical Board (dated</u>	11. 4. 16)	Ch. Heart-disease	

In action Augac Aug 11/15. Minus all teeth in upper jaw an irregular scar at right angle of mouth. As he cannot masticate his food suffers from chronic indigestion. Has been sent to 2 dentists for upper denture but as inner side of cheek is attached to upper jaw they say it cannot be done without preliminary operative treatment which he declines. Heart greatly enlarged suffers from shortness of breath & palpitation on any exertion. Result of S.S.W on active service permanent prevents 1/2 permanently.

Spencer 22.11.16

(10,971). Wt. 2732-36. 50,000. (2). 4/10. Op. 132. A. & E. W.

As with all soldiers returning from the war, Arthur was granted a pension based on his service and dependents and this pension was assessed at regular intervals:

<p>Medical Report. 21. 9. 17. Parents 40%.</p> <p>"wants state heart di. without matly in fine is employed.</p>	<p>3 OCT 1917</p> <p>11/- c + 6/- for four children 52 wks</p>	<p>6256</p> <p>11/ from 21.9.17 &amp; 6/ for 4. for (cancel remainder last award) for 39 wks. C. R.N.D. Ex. 25. 6. 18</p>
<p>Report of Med Bd: 30. 4. 18 Parents for Chronic disease of heart 40% for f S W only less than 20% G.F. 8. 5. 18</p> <p>S. W. A. stated. 10. 5. 18 40% 12 wks. R.O. 15 5 18</p> <p>Man died 1. 11. 18 M 12. 12. 18</p>	<p>22 MAY 1918</p> <p>11/- + 8/- for four. 52 wks c.</p>	<p>2554</p> <p>11/- and 8/- for four 52 c Ex. 24. 6. 19. A &amp; A. 26</p>

Part of the assessment of the Invalid Board showing that Arthur received 11s per week from 21 September 1917 with an additional 6s for his four children, this rising to 8s per week in May 1918. The document also notes that Arthur had a 'chronic disease of heart' and concludes 'man died 1:11:18'

It is almost certain that Arthur died, on 1 November 1918 (ironically just ten days before the signing of the Armistice), as a combined result of the effects of the facial gunshot wound received in Gallipoli and his heart condition. He died just 2½ years after his discharge from the army and is buried in Neston Cemetery.



The War Grave headstone in Neston Cemetery stands close behind a marble plaque, in the form of an open book, inscribed: 'Rebecca Leighton, beloved wife of Arthur the above Died 18 August 1965 aged 79 years'

The facing page of the 'book' is inscribed: 'In memory of Arthur Goldsmith Dear Grandson Killed on active service 25 August 1950 aged 21 years Also their beloved daughter Fanny Died 26 January 2003 aged 95 years'



891622/130494 Leighton Arthur 12283 22-5-16  
 DIED AFTER DISCHARGE.  
 WAR GRATUITY.  
 19/10  
 Transfer 4103 18/5/14  
 Regd. Paper 1914 Enc 14  
 Serial No. 1433  
 8.12.19 Wid Rebecca 4 10 -  
 W.D. 70. 5. 19

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In 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. In December 1919 Arthur’s widow, Rebecca, received a War Gratuity of £7 10s. equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £1150 in 2016. No outstanding wages were payable as Arthur’s death occurred after he had been discharged from the army.

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.



23 See sub card.

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
LEIGHTON	R. W. Fus.	PLC	12283
ARTHUR	"	"	"

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/1024	1158	Dischd. 22-5-16
BRITISH	do	do	
1914 STAR	J/2/281	108	

Sub list J/44  
 Theatre of War first served (28) Balkans.  
 Date of entry therein 28-6-15.

K. 1350.

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

The 1939 Register of 29 September provides some additional information on members of the family:

Rebecca Leighton (born 11 August 1886), Arthur’s widow, was living at 16, ‘Homecroft’, Marshlands Road with two of her children, Alfred (single, born 30 August 1918), an iron worker, and Mary Done (born 9 August 1916). Mary Leighton married

George Clifford Done at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in mid-1937; a son, Robert, was born in early 1938 and a second son, Alfred Leighton Done, was born in late 1942. In the 1939 Register two lines have been redacted.

Rebecca died on 18 August 1965 aged 79.

Of the children of Arthur and Rebecca Leighton it is known that:

Fanny Leighton, Arthur's oldest daughter, married Thomas Raymond Cottrell at Neston Parish Church in late 1928 and in the 1939 Register they are recorded as living at 5 Hadlow Terrace, Hadlow Road, Willaston:

Thomas R Cottrell	born 16 September 1906	steelworks, electric crane driver
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Fanny	born 21 December 1907	
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One line of the record has been redacted

Rebecca Goldsmith	born 29 April 1911	married
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One line of the record has been redacted

It is believed that Thomas and Fanny had a daughter, Audrey, who was registered in early 1930. Rebecca Goldsmith was Fanny's sister - see below for details.

It is not known when Thomas and Fanny died.

Catherine, the second daughter of Arthur and Rebecca, married Sydney Harris at Neston Parish Church in early 1929. Sydney have died in Neston in late 1936, aged 30, and Catherine married John Alan Carr in a Civil Marriage on Wirral in early 1939. Catherine may have died in East Wirral in early 1951 aged 41.

Rebecca Leighton jnr married George Goldsmith (he seems to have been a widower with at least two children) at Neston Parish Church in late 1928 and they had one child, Oliver Arthur Goldsmith (born Neston, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1929) who died, aged 21, whilst on active service on 25 August 1950 [see text box at end of this entry].

John Eli Leighton married Dorothy Norman at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in April/June 1939 although nothing further is known.

As noted previously Mary Leighton married George Clifford Done in mid-1937 and at the time of the 1939 Register Mary was recorded with her mother, Rebecca, at 16, 'Homecroft', Marshlands Road. Nothing further is known of Mary or George.

Nothing further is known of Alfred Leighton, the last child of Arthur and Rebecca.

### **Oliver Arthur Goldsmith ~ A Postscript**

Oliver Arthur Goldsmith was the only son of Arthur's third child, Rebecca and the family plot in Neston Cemetery notes that he was killed on active service, aged 21, on 25 August 1950.

The BBC News website of 5 December 2008 gave the following announcement (with minor errors):

#### **Appeal to 1950 RAF crash families**

**A search has begun for the relatives of two British servicemen believed to have died in a plane crash in the Malaysian jungle 58 years ago.**

The wreckage and human remains were found recently by expedition teams.

The Army wants to trace the families of Royal Army Service Corps dispatchers Oliver Goldsmith and Ray

Wilson, both aged 21 and born in Birkenhead. A memorial service is planned in Kuala Lumpur for the 12 victims of the crash during the Malayan Emergency. The guerrilla war for independence was fought between Commonwealth forces and the Malayan National Liberation Army. Rescuers were dispatched to the crash site after the plane came down on 25 August 1950. They reached the area a week later and buried casualties close to the site.

### **DNA testing**

This year both the Malaysian Army and the British Defence Attaché, based in Kuala Lumpur, have been involved in two expeditions to find the wreckage. The Army said a number of human remains were found at the site, and a service was planned at the nearest Commonwealth War Grave cemetery. DNA testing may have to be used to identify the remains.

The Ministry of Defence would provide funding for two relatives of each man to attend the service.

Driver Oliver Arthur Goldsmith was born in Birkenhead on 10 March 1929. His grandmother Rebecca Leighlin<sup>4</sup> lived at Homecroft at Marshlands Road in Neston.

Driver Ray Thomas Wilson, also born in Birkenhead on 20 November 1928. His father John Sydney Wilson lived at Mount Road in Tranmere.

The website <http://www.findagrave.com/> gives some additional information about the events of that day, together with a MOD photograph of Oliver:

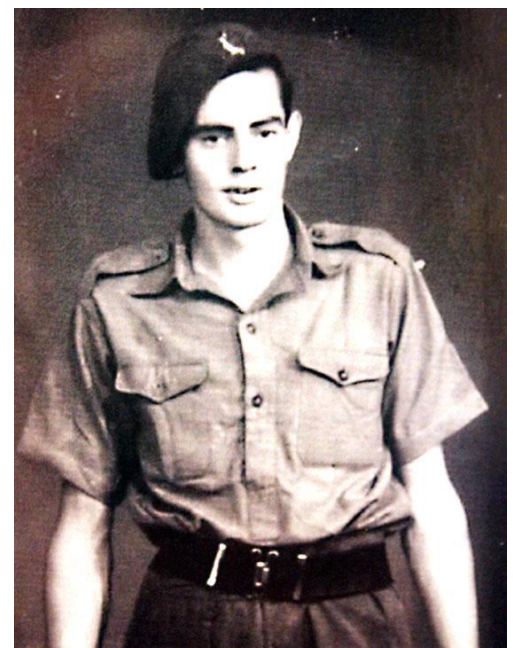
*Private Air Despatcher/Driver Royal Army Service Corps Age 21 From Neston, Cheshire*

*Pte Goldsmith was one of eight British servicemen, along with one British and three Malaysian civilians, killed in the crash of RAF Dakota KN630 deep in the Malaysian jungle near Kampung Jendera in Gua Musang. The crash happened when the country was struggling with communist insurgents, a period known as the Malayan Emergency (1948-60), when British, Commonwealth and other security forces in Malaya fought the insurgents. The aircraft, from the RAF's 52nd Squadron based in Changi, Singapore, flew out of Kota Baru on a target-marking mission to drop a marker flare at a clearing for eight Lincoln bombers. It was making a second pass when it crashed, likely due to engine failure during adverse weather conditions.*

*The search-and-rescue party took nine days to reach the site on foot on Sept 3 that year. Owing to the difficult jungle terrain and security situation which put the rescue party at risk of attack, the remains of all 12 were initially buried in a shallow grave near the aircraft wreckage.*

*Efforts to arrange a proper burial were initiated by Dennis Carpenter, the brother of Sgt Geoffrey, when he met the Malaysian defence attaché in London in July 2008. For the next two months, the Malaysian army and its museum officials managed to re-locate the crash site, near a stream. On Nov 3 that year, a 150-strong team comprising the armed forces, police and forensic archaeologists recovered the remains of the 12, later confirmed by DNA analyses.*

*The Britons who perished were identified as RAF crew pilot Lt Edward Robert Talbot, 27, navigator Sgt Geoffrey Carpenter, 23, and signaller Sgt Thomas O'Toole DFM, 34. The Royal Army Service Corps air despatchers were Cpl Philip Bryant, 25, and drivers Pte Peter Taylor, 20, Pte Roy Wilson, 21, and Pte Oliver Goldsmith, 21. The passengers were army officer Major John Proctor, 32, and land development officer Anker Rentse.*



Oliver Arthur Goldsmith,  
Arthur Leighton's grandson

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<sup>4</sup> She was Rebecca Leighton



*The Malaysians were police constable Mohammed Abdul Jalil, civilian Yaacob Mamat and an Orang Asli guide, Saiap Alais Sherda, from the Sakai tribe. Mohammed Abdul's remains were reburied at his hometown at the Bukit Terih Muslim cemetery in Muar, Johor, on April 6, 2011.*

*A reburial ceremony was held on March 15, 2012 at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Cheras. It was carried out with full military honours in the presence of both British and*

*Malaysian Defence Ministry officials, and members of the Ex-British Army Association of Malaysia. Family members present were Dennis Carpenter and his daughter Christine Considine; Glenwyn Davies, daughter of Thomas O'Toole DFM; Vickie Betsworth and Sheila Tebbett, sisters of Philip Bryant; Paul Taylor, the half-brother of Peter Taylor; Barry Wilson, the brother of Roy Wilson; Margaret Wanstall and Frank Goldsmith, half-sister and half-brother of Oliver Goldsmith; and Linda Bahnan, daughter of Edward Robert Talbot. The families of the deceased, who were flown in by the British Defence Ministry's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, were presented with the Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll.*

The Chester Chronicle of 7 March 2012 reported:

*A FAMILY from Neston will make an emotional 6,500-mile journey to see their relative buried with military honours.*

*Soldiers Oliver Goldsmith, 21, from Neston, and Roy Wilson, from Birkenhead, 21, lost their lives when their plane crashed deep inside the Malaysian jungle during a conflict called the Malayan Emergency in 1950.*

*A rescue party reached the crash site on foot nine days later but all 12 crew and passengers had died and they were buried in a shallow grave.*

*Now, 61 years later, following an expedition to the crash site in 2008, the families of those who died on board RAF Dakota KN630 will see them buried in their final resting place in the Cheras Road Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery in Kuala Lumpur.*

*Relatives will also be presented with the Elizabeth Cross in recognition of their loss and sacrifice.*

*Mr Goldsmith's cousin Alf Done, 69, who lives with his wife Pat, 63, in Neston, said: "I was only eight or nine. My granny brought him up.*

*"He was Oliver Arthur Goldsmith but everyone called him Arthur. Granny loved Arthur and was broken-hearted when he died.*

*"I do feel proud of him and proud to represent the family because at the end of the day he was in the army and he was doing his job."*

*Mr Goldsmith and Mr Wilson were both Royal Army Service Corps army despatchers.*

*Investigations revealed the Dakota suffered catastrophic engine failure and crashed into a ravine during a 'target marking' mission for bombers. After representations were made to the Malaysian authorities, an 150-strong expedition went back and recovered the bodies.*

*The remains of the crew and passengers will be buried in a single grave on March 15.*