

154: John William Moss

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: John William Moss

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: Depot South Wales Borderers

Service Number: 30801

Date of Death: 27 February 1919

Age at Death: 31

Buried / Commemorated at: Christ Church Churchyard, Willaston

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of Mary Moss of Bank House, Burton, and the late John Moss.

John William Moss was born in Birkenhead, the last child of coachman John Henry Moss and Mary.

John Henry Moss was born in Thursford in North Norfolk in 1855 and he married Mary Pritchard at St Mary's Church, Kirkdale, Liverpool, in July/September 1878. In 1881 the family was living at Walton, north Liverpool, where John was a coachman:

41 Sandy Lane	116						
43 " "	1	John Moss	Head	23	coachman	Norfolk, Thursford	
		Mary "	Wife	26		Cooms Riglaw, Shropshire	
		Emily "	Daughter	6 weeks		Liverpool, Lancashire Aintree	
		Sarah Pritchard	Mother-in-law	65	No occupation	Salop, Charlton Hill	

1881 census (extract) – 43 Sandy Lane, Walton-on-the-Hill, Lancashire

John Moss	23	coachman	born Norfolk, Thursford
Mary	26		born Cooms Riglaw, Shropshire
Emily	6 weeks		born Liverpool, Aintree
Sarah Pritchard	65	widow, mother-in-law, no occupation	born Shropshire, Charlton Hill

By the time of the 1891 census the family, which now included John William Moss (his birth was registered in Birkenhead in late 1887), had moved to Birkenhead:

John Moss	Head	M	33	coachman, general	Norfolk, Thursford
Mary	Wife	M	36		Shropshire, Coombs
Emily	Daughter		10		Lancashire, Aintree
Richard P.	Son		8		" "
Hannah H.	Daughter		6		Birkenhead
John W.	Son		3		" "

1891 census (extract) – 14, Westbourne Road, Birkenhead

John Moss	33	coachman, general	born Norfolk, Thursford
Mary	36		born Shropshire, Coombs
Emil (?)	10		born Aintree
Richard P.	8		born Aintree
Hannah H.	6		born Birkenhead
John W.	3		born Birkenhead

By 1901 the family was living at Egremont and John Moss was recorded as a greengrocer. Emily had married Frederick William Wainwright, a ship's rigger of Bebington at a Civil Marriage in Birkenhead in early 1898 and Frederick, their first child, was with John and Mary Moss on the night of the census:

John Moss	Head	M.	42	Greengrocer	Charn account	Norfolk, Fakenham
Mary do.	Wife	M.	45			Salop, West Felton
Hannah do.	Daughter	S.	16			Cheshire Birkenhead
William do.	Son		13			do. do.
Frederick Wainwright	Gr. son		2			do. Egremont

1901 census (extract) – 28 Gresford Place, Egremont, Liscard

John Moss	42	greengrocer	born Norfolk, Fakenham
Mary	45		born Shropshire, West Felton
Hannah	16		born Birkenhead
William	13		born Birkenhead
Frederick Wainwright	2	grandson	born Egremont

By 1911 John and Mary Moss, together with John William Moss, were living at the Weatherstone Cottages on Hanns Hall Road between Neston and Willaston:

1	John Moss	Head	56	86	Married 33			Coachman	170	Thursford Norfolk
2	Mary Moss	Wife	58		Married 33	5	4		270	Combs Salop
3	John W. Moss	Son	24		Single			Labourer	121	Birkenhead Cheshire
4	Emily Wainwright	Grand daughter	11		Single			School	124	Egremont Cheshire
5										
6										
15										

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

Total		
Males	Females	Persons
2	2	4

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Parlours, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closets, bathrooms, nor warehouse, office, shop, or outhouse.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: John Moss
Postal Address: 4 Weatherstone Cottages Willaston Cheshire

1911 census (condensed) – 4 Weatherstone Cottages, Willaston

John Moss	56	coachman (domestic)	born Thursford, Norfolk
Mary	58		born Combs, Shropshire
John W.	24	labourer, dye works	born Birkenhead
Emily Wainwright	11		born Egremont

John and Mary had been married for 33 years and four of their five children had survived.



The short row of houses forming Weatherstone Cottages. No. 4 is indicated.

Emily Wainwright was the second child of Emily (née Moss) and Frederick Wainwright; they had eight children at this time, were living on Mill Lane, Willaston and Frederick (aged 35) was a labourer at an analine dye works. Indeed, it is highly probable that both John William Moss and Frederick worked at the large Meister Lucius & Brüning plant in Ellesmere Port (see text box below) although it is possible that they worked at the BASF (Badische Anilin-und Soda-Fabrik) factory which had been established on Magazine Road, Bromborough, in 1907 to manufacture dye and pharmaceuticals. Following the war, in 1917, this plant was bought by Lord Brotherton (Edward Allen Brotherton of Wakefield) and became the Port Rainbow Brotherton and Co. Mersey Chemical Works. Later, it became Albright & Wilson.



<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EPW025168> © copyright Historic England

The Port Rainbow Brotherton and Co. Mersey Chemical Works on the banks of the Mersey in Bromborough

Little is known of the army service of John William Moss although it is known that he first enlisted with the 8th Battalion Cheshire Regiment (Service Number 11614) before a transfer to the Base Depot of the South Wales Borderers which may have been based at Kinmel Park, Bodelwyddan.



The war grave of John W. Moss in Christ Church Churchyard, Willaston

Although no details are known, it is understood that John may have been the victim of a gas attack during the war and it is known that he died on 27 February 1919, in Tranmere Military Hospital in Birkenhead. Aged 31 he was buried in Willaston where he is commemorated on the village War Memorial as Pte. W. Moss.

John's father, John Henry Moss, died in early 1919 - around the same time as his son - aged 63 and, for reasons unknown, Mary Moss moved to Bank

House, Burton, sometime after this date. It is highly unlikely that Mary Moss bought this property; built by the Congreves when they owned Burton it was the 'dower house' for their residence, Burton Hall, used to house the senior unmarried females of the family.

PTE. W. MOSS
John William Moss commemorated on the Willaston War Memorial



Burton had, in 1903, passed to the Gladstones and they retained the village until October 1924. If it was before this date that Mary Moss moved to the village, then it is most probable that she moved to Bank House to work for the Gladstones in some capacity, although she would have been about 67 in 1920.

Mary Moss died in July/September 1944 in East Wirral aged 89.

912737	<i>John William Moss</i>	<i>2nd Bn 27th Div Shrewsbury 32 - 9</i>	<i>3.12.1919 Mo. & Sole Leg 32 - 9 May.</i>
	<i>John William</i>	<i>St. Helen's Barracks 8-19. Plc. Mil. Hosp. 30801, Bikenhead</i>	
	<i>, Including War Grat 26-10-</i>		

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 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. John’s mother Mary, as sole legatee, received a payment of outstanding wages of £5 10s 9d from the army and an unusually large War Gratuity of £26 10s. This, a total value of £32 0s 9d, is equivalent to a labour value (wages) of around £4980 in 2016.

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.

Name	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
<i>MOSS</i>	<i>Ches R.</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>11614</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>S. Wales Bord.</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>30801</i>

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
<i>VICTORY</i>	<i>5/1/101 812</i>	<i>25/6</i>	<i>Died 27. 2. 19</i>
<i>BRITISH</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	
<i>15 STAR</i>	<i>5/1/28</i>	<i>10</i>	

Theatre of War first served in	<i>(2B) Balkans</i>
Date of entry therein	<i>17. 7. 15</i>

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

2576(b)		SOUTH WALES BORDERERS		REGIMENT OR CORPS.		ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and British War Medal granted under Army Orders 301 & 266 of 1919.		of 19	
Regtl. No.	Rank	NAME	In sequence Units and Corps previously served with by each individual and Regtl. Nos. therein; the highest rank, whether substantive, acting or temporary, recorded as having been held for any period in a theatre of War, unless reverted for misconduct, being shown against the name of the regiment or Corps which is to be inscribed on the medal.	Theatres of war in which served	Classes awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations		REMARKS	
<i>30801</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>MOSS, John William</i>	<i>8/Ches R. Pte 11614</i>			(a) Presented	(b) Despatched by Post	(c) Taken into Stock	
			<i>S. Wales Bord. 30801</i>						<i>INFANTRY BASE DEPOT</i>
			<i>2/S. Wales Bord.</i>						<i>INFANTRY BASE DEPOT</i>
			<i>S. Wales Bord.</i>						<i>INFANTRY BASE DEPOT</i>
			<i>10/S. Wales Bord.</i>						<i>INFANTRY BASE DEPOT</i>

WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920

Aniline compounds and the significance of the local dyeworks

Aniline, an organic [carbon-based] chemical was first isolated in 1826 and it was soon discovered that it could be produced from coal tar and could be used as a permanent synthetic mauve dye for clothing. Aniline was first produced in quantity in England in 1856 but large-scale production techniques were developed only in Germany. By 1913 there were eleven factories in Britain producing aniline and one of these, owned by the German company Meister Lucius & Brüning (a subsidiary of Hoechst), was founded in Ellesmere Port in 1908 to manufacture drugs in addition to dyes. By the outbreak of WW1 it was known that aniline and related organic chemicals, often derived from the waste tar from local gasworks, were important constituents of a range of medical compounds and explosives and so the strategic significance of industrial plants creating these chemicals was realised. Consequently, the dyestuffs industry underwent a revolution during WW1, particularly as huge quantities of stable colours (particularly khaki) were required for uniforms and as the demand for related explosives, mustard gas (first developed for the German army in 1916) and drugs increased. Two drugs which were essential during WW1 were being produced at the Ellesmere Port plant from about 1910:

Salvarsan was the best therapy for syphilis, which was described as *the worst scourge of war* as venereal disease affected one in every 5 of the troops. When war broke out supplies of Salvarsan from Germany soon became unobtainable in Britain.

Novocain (Procaine), a local anaesthetic and anti-inflammatory drug which was first synthesized in Germany in 1905 as a replacement for cocaine.

Mr. E. H. Scholl, the British-born manager of the pharmaceutical department of Meister, Lucius & Brüning at Ellesmere Port, had been based at the works in Germany before moving to the London office in 1907. He offered to make all of the Salvarsan required by Britain and gave information on stocks to Robert Morant at the National Health Insurance Commission. Members of the Committee on the supply of laboratory reagents, including staff from the National Health Insurance Commission, were sent to Ellesmere Port to evaluate production methods. They reported back that the synthesis would not be easy as the German patents for Salvarsan were so vague as to be unhelpful with regard to the methods of synthesis. Furthermore, the German workers, anticipating war, departed in the summer of 1914 leaving only M. Dünchmann, the Works engineer, and a man named Hummerich who sabotaged the plant, and destroyed all the records. The Ellesmere Port plant was sequestered and put up for sale, but it was November 1916 before the dye manufacturer Herbert Levinstein bought it.

After securing the Ellesmere Port factory, Levinstein's dye firm built up a research department of 30 chemists and made Novocain and Acriflavine from November 1916 as well as Trypaflavine, Proflavine and Euflavine and substantial amounts (254 kg) were given free to the Government. Additionally, by 1916, indigo dye became available in sufficient amounts to satisfy the Scottish and Lancashire printers and dyers, largely meeting the demand for military uniforms.

[The information on the Ellesmere Port plant is based extensively on: *British Pharmaceutical Industry, Synthetic Drug Manufacture and the Clinical Testing of Novel Drugs 1895-1939*, a thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Life Sciences, 2005 Keith John Williams]

Soldier from the wars returning,
 Spoiler of the taken town,
Here is ease that asks not earning;
 Turn you in and sit you down.

Peace is come and wars are over,
 Welcome you and welcome all,
While the charger crops the clover
 And his bridle hangs in stall.

Now no more of winters biting,
Filth in trench from fall to spring,
Summers full of sweat and fighting
 For the Kesar or the King.

Rest you, charger, rust you, bridle;
Kings and kesars, keep your pay;
Soldier, sit you down and idle
 At the inn of night for aye.

"Soldier from the wars returning"

A. E. Housman
(1859 - 1936)

