

## 97: William George Ross Butcher

William George Ross Butcher - he was known generally as George - served as a Second Lieutenant with 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion The King's (Liverpool Regiment) during WW1 and he died on 24 May 1921, 2½ years after the 1918 Armistice. Although recorded on the Neston URC plaque, William is not recognised as a war casualty by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (as at November 2018).

William was the 7<sup>th</sup> child of farm manager Charles and Janet Butcher of Neston.

Charles Francis Butcher married Janet Wingate Thomson at Our Lady & St Nicholas & St Anne, the Liverpool Parish Church, in April/June 1884. Janet Thomson was a daughter of James and Mary Thomson, the bailiff/steward of Hinderton Farm, the farm adjacent to Hinderton Hall. At the time of the 1891 census Charles and Janet were living at Victoria Farm, Bebington Road, Lower Bebington although, previously, they had lived in Wheelton (north of Chorley) in Lancashire. In April 1891 the household in Bebington consisted of:

Charles Butcher	33	farmer & contractor	born Bispham, Lancs.
Janet Wingate	31		born Hinderton
Frederick John	6		born Wheelton, Lancs.
Frances Mary	4		born Wheelton, Lancs.
Jessie Thomson	5		born Wheelton, Lancs.
Edith May	1		born Lower Bebington
Jane Barlow	27	general servant, domestic	born Thingwall

By the time of the 1901 the family had moved from Bebington to Neston and William, and succeeding children, were born there.

William George Ross Butcher was born on 30 December 1895 although he doesn't appear to have been baptised at Neston Parish Church or at St Winefride's RC church.

<del>4</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>1</del>	Charles Butcher	Head	M	44	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	Bispham Lancs
							Janet W. do	Wife	F	41	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	Hinderton Ches
							Jessie T. do	daughter	S	15	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	Wheelton Lancs
							Edith M. do	daughter	S	11	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	Bebington Ches
							James G. do	Son	S	9	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	Bebington Ches
							Margaret M. do	daughter	S	7	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	do do
							William G. do	Son	S	5	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	Neston do
							Irene M. do	daughter	S	2	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	1	do do

1901 census (extract) – 5, Hinderton Road, Neston

Charles Butcher	44	farm manager	born Bispham, Lancs.
Janet W.	41		born Hinderton
Jessie T.	15		born Wheelton, Lancs.
Edith M.	11		born Bebington
James G.	9		born Bebington
Margaret M.	7		born Bebington
William G.	5		born Neston
Irene M.	2		born Neston

# CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule, **333**  
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

*Before 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.*

*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, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.*

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (Last Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.						PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION of Person 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—		Personal Occupation.		Industry or Service with which worker is connected.		Whether Employed, Working on Own Account.						
1 Charles Francis Butcher	Head	53	Married	27	9	8	7	Traveller	494	Manure, Oil, & Wood			Bispham, Lancs	058	
2 Janet Butcher	Wife	51	Married	27	9	8	7						Hinderton, Lancs		
3 Jessie Butcher	Daughter	25	Single										Wheulton, Lancs	050	
4 Edith May Butcher	Daughter	21	Single					Milliner	895	own account			Bebington, Lancs	121	
5 James Gilfillan Butcher	Son	19	Single					Grocer's assistant	320				Bebington, Lancs		
6 Margaret Miller Butcher	Daughter	17	Single					Confectioner's assistant	926				Bebington, Lancs		
7 Irene Butcher	Daughter	12	School						390				Neston, Lancs		
8 Reginald Butcher	Son	8											Neston, Lancs		

**1911 census (condensed) – Pole [Poll] Hill Road, Heswall**

Charles Francis Butcher	53	traveller – manure & oils	born Bispham, Lancs.
Janet	51		born Hinderton
Jessie	25		born Wheulton, Lancs.
Edith May	21	milliner, own account	born Bebington
James Gilfillan	19	grocer's assistant	born Bebington
Margaret Miller	17	confectioner's assistant	born Bebington
Irene	12		born Neston
Reginald	8		born Neston

Charles and Janet had been married for 27 years and eight of their nine children had survived.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (Last Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.						PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION of Person 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—		Personal Occupation.		Industry or Service with which worker is connected.		Whether Employed, Working on Own Account.						
1 Mary Thomson	Head	81	Widow	2	2			Widow	570				Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire	516	
2 Mary Thomson	Daughter	45	Single										Neston, Lancs		
3 William George Ross Butcher	Grandson	15	Single					School	390				Neston, Lancs		

**1911 census – Neston (known to be Hinderton Road)**

Mary Thomson	81	widow, private means	born Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire
Mary	45	single	born Neston
William George Ross Butcher	15	school	born Neston

So, by the time of the 1911 census the family had moved to Poll Hill, Heswall, although William (George) - aged 15 and still at school (it is understood that he was a student at Cald Grammar School) - was living in Hinderton Road, Neston, with his widowed grandmother and aunt. Charles Butcher had now become a commercial traveller, dealing in manure and oils.

The booklet *Parkgate and Neston Presbyterian Church of England : The Centenary History (1857 – 1957)* notes that *In 1911, Mr Towert [the Minister] had the great joy of marking over 35 years' ministry with an unusually large number of young communicants. There were*

*eighteen... although...George Butcher was not destined to be a member for long, for he was killed in the First World War.*

As the Service Record for William George Ross Butcher does not seem to have survived we have no detailed record of his army career although it is known that he served with the 1/10<sup>th</sup> (Scottish) Battalion The King's (Liverpool Regiment) and that he enlisted in Liverpool, before the war, on 18 November 1912, when he would have been almost 17. His occupation then was as an insurance clerk (claims inspector).

That William joined a Scottish battalion is of no surprise as both his mother's parents - James & Mary Thomson - originated from Scotland. On enlistment William gave his address as Moss Side, Bushell Road, Neston. This is a large house close to the junction of Bushell Road and Hinderton Road.

The 1/10<sup>th</sup> (Scottish) Battalion, a battalion of the Territorial Forces, was formed in Liverpool in August 1914 as part of the South Lancashire Brigade, West Lancashire Division and it is understood that William qualified as an Assistant Instructor at the Grenade School, Freshfield (near Southport).

The troops later moved to Edinburgh and then to Tunbridge Wells. The units landed at Le Havre on 2 November 1914 where they transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and were engaged in various actions on the Western front including The First Battle of Ypres (19 October - 22 November 1914).

In early 1915 William, still a Private, wrote home - his address was given as Hinderton - and his letters were published in the *Cheshire Observer* on 6 February 1915:

*January 29th, 1915.*

*Many thanks for numerous letters received to-day. Very little to relate, except that we had five casualties this time, two being killed. You will be sorry to hear that Lieut. Kendall was killed the second day we were in. He was standing in the trench (about four paces from where I was), giving instructions to a corporal, when a bullet struck the hedge in front of the trench, and turned right on to him. He was conscious for a minute or two, but died very quickly. We were up against some fresh stuff, who were rather lively during the night. Our headquarters were shelled for two days, but our artillery managed to smash up a heavy battery. Another fortification (like we were in last time), was shelled, but nobody was hurt. There seems to be plenty of goods now the last few days. I got the hose-tops alright, and they are champion. The weather here is bitterly cold, frost for the last three days.*

*Later – The new draft arrived on the scene this morning, having had a much more enjoyable journey than we had. Our pipes were raised, and met them on the road. Mr S. has put me in charge of a young chap whose father is a great friend of his, so I've to look him up. We had a football match this afternoon, and won 4-1. To-night we are having a concert. So I'll cut this letter short, as I must not miss it. They are champion as a rule, under the circumstances, though music is minus. Have just been having a look at some of the new draft, and found a chap named Moy, who was at school with me. He lives at Bromboro'.*

War Office,  
4th October, 1916.  
**TERRITORIAL FORCE.**  
The undermentioned Cadets to be 2nd Lts.  
(on prob.). 28th Sept. 1916:—  
LIVERPOOL.  
Liverpool Regt.—Harry Sugden Haylock  
Dalby.  
Allan Ramsay Crosbie.  
John Thomson.  
Norman Rutherford Phillips.  
John Hodge.  
Alexander Lawson Weir.  
Joseph Smith.  
William George Ross Butcher. ←  
Thomas Curnes.  
Arnold Gledsdale.

Supplement to the London Gazette, 4 October 1916

As Lieutenant Percy Dale “Toggie” Kendall, referred to in William’s letter, was killed on 25 January 1915 while in the line in the Kemmel sector, it is clear that William had arrived at the front line the previous day, 24 January. Kendall, a renowned Cheshire Rugby player who played for the Birkenhead Park Club and who had played for England several times, was with F Company and it is possible that William Butcher was attached to the same unit.

William’s Service Number was initially 2580 and it was reported that he was appointed as an Acting Corporal on 20 December 1915 and an Acting Lance Sergeant on 23 June 1916. On 26 September 1916 he was made a Second Lieutenant; this was the same day that he arrived back at the front line after a prolonged leave (from 19 June 1915) in Britain where he was recovering from severe wounds to his cheek and left knee sustained on 16 June. In fact, following the injury, he had been admitted to the General Hospital at Le Treport <sup>1</sup>, 30km north-east of Dieppe, before being sent back to Britain. It is quite possible, on his return to France, that William may have been given an administrative role; The King’s (Liverpool Regiment) database holds a record of a Second Lieutenant W G R Butcher designated as ‘OFFICE’.

*The Story of the Presbyterian Church of England at Parkgate and Neston, 1858 – 1933*, written in 1933 by the incumbent, Charles Lundie, makes two references to *George Butcher*; the first notes that ‘*George Butcher joined the congregation in full membership*’ in June 1911 and the second alludes to his name on the church’s War Memorial.

The Absent Voters’ List for the Great Neston Polling District, compiled in Spring 1919, lists *Butcher, William Geo. Ross, Lieut 1/10th K.L.R.* living on *Bushell’s Road* and it is recorded that he left the army on 5 April of that year.

The civil records of deaths in England/Wales records that William G R Butcher died in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1921, aged 25, and that his death was registered at Christchurch, Hampshire. In fact it is known that he actually died on 24 May at the Home Sanatorium, West Southbourne, Bournemouth, where he was being treated for the injuries that he had received during the war. Whether William had left Neston to work in Hampshire is unknown but Home Sanatorium was a hospital founded in 1898, housed in an extended Georgian house, which cared for consumptives. It was later taken over by the United Services Fund as a Douglas House Hospital, a temporary sanctuary for tubercular cases from the RAF, in 1924, and later passed to the British Tubercular Association before being demolished for new housing in 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> During the First World War, Le Treport was an important hospital centre. No.3 General Hospital was established there in November 1914, No.16 General Hospital in February 1915, No.2 Canadian General Hospital in March 1915, No.3 Convalescent Depot in June 1915 and Lady Murray’s B.R.C.S. Hospital in July 1916. These hospitals contained nearly 10,000 beds. No.47 General Hospital arrived in March 1917 and later that year, a divisional rest camp and a tank training depot were established in the neighbourhood. By March 1919, the hospitals had been closed and Le Treport became the headquarters of the 68th Division, which re-formed there before going to the Rhine.  
[<https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11300/le-treport-military-cemetery/>]

Home Sanatorium (formerly Stourfield House, later Douglas House), Southbourne, Bournemouth

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/alwyn\\_ladell/sets/72157624477971103/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alwyn_ladell/sets/72157624477971103/)



It is unknown where William was buried; no family grave for the Butcher family is known in Neston.

The National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), records William's address as Memel, Poll Hill Road, Heswall and his occupation as insurance clerk. The Administration of the Will, dated 30 September 1921, records that William left an estate of £964 2s 8d (equivalent to over £40 000 in 2018) to his widowed mother, Janet Wingate Butcher:

**BUTCHER** William George Ross of Memel Poll Hill-road Heswall **Cheshire** insurance clerk died 24 May 1921 at the Home Sanatorium West Southbourne Hampshire Administration **Chester** 30 September to Janet Wingate Butcher widow. Effects £964 2s. 8d.

Held by an individual in the Corps in respect of which the rolls are submitted.		NAME	In sequence Units and Corps previously served with by each individual and Regt. 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	Clasps awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations			REMARKS
Regtl. No.	Rank					(a) Presented	(b) Despatched by Post	(c) Taken into Stock	
2580		BUTCHER William	1/10th K.L.R.					26/11/1925	Submitted under War Office
		George	2580						Circ. Memo. No. 68/121/928
		Ross	To Comm. in 10th K.L.R. 26-9-16.						(A.G.I.R.) dated 27-8-19.

UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920 British War Medal & Victory Medal

Charles Francis Butcher, William's father, died in mid-1918 aged 61 and Janet W Butcher, William's mother, died in early 1931 aged 71.

Reginald F Butcher, William's brother, died in late 1918 aged 16.

Edith May Butcher married Hector Noel Cosgrove (born 17 December 1891) at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in mid-1915 and it is believed that they had at least two children: George Francis Cosgrove (born in Neston in early 1920) and Jean (or Jane) Thomson Cosgrove (born in Birkenhead in July / September 1926).

At the time of the 1939 Register Hector was recorded at 10 Orchard Street, Northwich, with Frances D Cosgrove (born 27 October 1894) - perhaps a sister-in-law (no record of her birth has been found in England/Wales)? - and Hector was noted as being a

*foreman rigger chemical works* and a *Senior Warden ARP ICI Alkali Works*. It is possible that Hector and Edith had separated as Edith was recorded at "Moss-Side", Bushell Road, Little Neston:

Mary R Thomson	single	born 24 June 1865	private means
Georgina M Morrison	single	born 9 August 1881	incapacitated
Edith M Cosgrove	married	born 30 April 1889	unpaid domestic duties
Irene M Butcher	single	born 18 April 1898	railway clerical duties

Edith died on Wirral, aged 54, in late 1943 and Hector died in the Crewe area in July / September 1970.

Irene Mary Butcher married Harry Bloor at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in mid-1943 and she died, aged 56, on 2 July 1952 and is buried at Neston Cemetery.

Margaret Mellor Butcher (born 20 July 1893) married Andrew Carswell Brown (born 16 February 1898) at Heswall United Reformed Church on Telegraph Road in mid-1937. The 1939 Register records them living at 18, West Park, Crofton, Wigton, Cumbria (around 12 miles south-west of Carlisle), where Andrew was a *pig technical assistant*.

In the 1939 Register James Gilfillian Butcher (born in Eastham, 8 July 1891) was recorded as being married to Winifred (born 3 November 1887). No marriage has been found for James and Winifred but they were living at 'Wyngate', Fieldway (off Acre Lane), Heswall and James was recorded as a grocer. It is not known when James and Winifred died.