

St James Catholic Church



Roll of Honour - Part 2

1914 – 1918

1939 – 1945



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The following members of the Parish, who died in both World Wars, were found during research and have been included on the subsequent pages.

WW1

Name

S/Sgt Richard Halton

Private Thomas Speakman

Private James Speakman

Air Mechanic Thomas Clare

Private Thomas Simm

WW2

Captain John Unsworth

S/Observer Joseph A. Eckersley

Sergeant John Barton

Aircraftsman Leonard A Fieldhouse

Driver Frederick Arkwright

◆ Richard Halton ◆

Born: About 1888⁽²⁾

Address: 64 Ellesmere Road, Pemberton ⁽³⁾

Pre-war Occupation: Fitter in iron Foundry

Died 29th November 1915, Gallipoli Age: 28

Rank: Staff Sergeant **Service Number** T/758

Regiment: Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Remembered: Hill 10 Cemetery

Richard was the son of Richard and Alice Halton. He is remembered on the family grave in our cemetery. He was a member of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, 15th Battalion Royal Garrison Artillery and is recorded as having died of jaundice.

The inscription on the family grave reads.

Of Your Charity, Pray for the Soul of RICHARD, beloved husband of Alice HALTON, died 19th December 1920 age 62 yrs.

Also RICHARD, Son of the above, died Army Staff Sgt, A. O. C., at Sulva Bay, 29th November 1915 age 28 yrs.

also **ALICE, wife of above,** died 20th December 1933 age 82 yrs., "Jesus Mercy, Mary help", also MARY HALTON, died 31st March 1951 age 73 yrs., also ELIZABETH ALICE, daughter of the above Richard & Alice, died 19th October 1955 age 72 years.

Richard was married to Alice see above, and is recorded in the England and Wales Probate Calendar as leaving her £95 3s. 10p ⁽ⁱ⁾.



◆ James and Thomas Speakman◆

JAMES

Born: 23 February 1894 **Baptised:** St James, Orrell, 04th March 1894 ⁽¹⁾

Address: 53 Birkett Bank Wigan ⁽²⁾

Pre-war Occupation: AFS (assistant?) moulder in iron Foundry

Died 15th September 1917, Belgium Age: 23

Rank: Private **Service Number** 9161 ⁽³⁾

Regiment: Irish Guards

Remembered: Artillery Wood Cemetery

THOMAS

Born: About 1896 ⁽²⁾

Address: 53 Birkett Bank Wigan ⁽²⁾

Pre-war Occupation: Mill worker – twister in cotton mill

Died 10th April 1916, Belgium Age: 20

Rank: Private **Service Number** 20306 ⁽³⁾

Regiment: 4TH Battalion Grenadier Guards

Remembered: Potijze Burial Ground Cemetery

James and Thomas were the sons of Thomas and Annie Speakman and are remembered on the family grave in our cemetery.



The inscription reads
Of Your Charity, Pray for the Soul of
ANNIE, beloved wife of Thomas
SPEAKMAN, died 2nd October 1902
age 37 yrs., FRANCES
SPEAKMAN, died 8th June 1919 age
18 yrs., also the above THOMAS
SPEAKMAN, died 1st January 1927
age 70 yrs.

(left side) **THOMAS SPEAKMAN, K.I.A, 10TH April 1916 age 20 yrs., JAMES SPEAKMAN, K.I.A. 14TH September 1917 age 23 yrs.** (right side) also ELIZABETH SPEAKMAN, died 25th September 1910 age 24 yrs., WINNIE SPEAKMAN, died 23rd August 1913 age 15 years.

◆ Thomas Clare ◆

Born: No Information currently available

Address: No Information currently available

Pre-war Occupation: No Information currently available

Died 26th February 1918 Aldershot, England Age: 29⁽¹⁵⁾

Rank: Air Mechanic 3rd Class **Service Number**122497⁽³⁾

Regiment: Royal Flying Corps

Remembered: Orrell (St James) Roman Catholic Graveyard⁽³⁾

There are no census details that match the sparse information we have on Thomas. There is a 2 page RFC service record which simply records that he enlisted and was deceased.

Parish burial records⁽¹⁵⁾ indicate that he died in Aldershot on the 26th February but was buried at St James on 4th March 1918. The grave is marked with a traditional CWGC headstone and the inscription reads.

No 122497. 3rd Aircraft Mechanic, T CLARE,
Royal Flying Corp, died 26th February 1918 .



◆ Thomas Simm ◆

Born: About 1883

Address: Douglas House, Bottling Wood, Wigan

Pre-war Occupation: Insurance Agent

Died 21st or 25th April 1920 **in Wigan Age:** 37 or 42 see below

Rank: Private **Service Number** 5191⁽³⁾

Regiment: 1st/4th Battalion King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

Remembered: Orrell (St James) Roman Catholic Graveyard⁽³⁾

Thomas is remembered in our grave yard and has a CWGC headstone.

The inscription reads:

**No 5191. Pte T SIMM, R Lancs Regt, " Kings Own",
died 21st April 1920 age 37 yrs., " Sacred Memory of
one so dear, is oft recalled by a Silent Tear."**

Parish Burial records indicate that he died on 25 April 1920 and was **buried 29 April age 42.**

There is a service record for Thomas which gives us a lot of information some of which contradicts the age entry on the CWG site.

We now know that:

He had previously served for 6 years with the 1st Manchester Volunteers and was already 38 when he signed up in July 1916!

He married Theresa Barrow at St Mary's, Wigan on the 18th January 1902, and is recorded as having a son John Atkinson D.O.B. 2nd December 1907.

He was wounded, gassed, on 31st July 1917, was in hospital in Leicester and discharged from the army on 16 January 1919, as unfit for service and suffering from "myalgia", defined as chronic muscle pain from injury or viral infection.

In September 1920, after his death, his widow was awarded a pension, 26 shillings and 8 pence for his widow and 10 shillings for his son.



◆ John Unsworth ◆

Born: About 1897

Address: No Information currently available

Pre-war Occupation: No Information currently available

Died 2nd January 1941 England Age: 44⁽¹⁵⁾

Rank: Captain **Service Number** 114955⁽³⁾

Regiment: Pioneer Corps

Remembered: Orrell (St James) Roman Catholic Churchyard⁽³⁾

Parish Burial records show he died at the Military Hospital, York on 2nd January 1941 and was buried at St James on the 7th July 1941, age 44.



◆ Joseph A. Eckersley ◆

Born: 6th April 1920 **Baptised:** St James, Orrell, 11th April 1920 ⁽¹⁾

Address: 222 Orrell Road, Orrell **Attended St James School** ¹⁹ see Appendix 4.

Pre-war Occupation: Civil Service

Died 26th January 1942 **England Age:** 21

Rank: Sergeant Observer **Service Number** 998677⁽³⁾

Regiment: 82 Sqdn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Remembered: Watton (St Mary) Churchyard⁽³⁾

Son of James and Mary Eckersley (nee Smith)⁽¹⁾, the Baptismal records show he had an older brother James Douglas D.O.B. 08/05/1911

All the information about Joseph, as reproduced below, is taken directly from the Upholland Grammar School In Memoriam Book

“Killed in training, 26 January 1942 in the United Kingdom. Buried at Watton (St. Mary) Churchyard, Norfolk Row C. Grave 58.

Joseph Alban was born on 6 April 1920, the son of Joseph Eckersley, a Clerk of Works, and his wife Maria, of 222 Orrell Road, Orrell, Wigan. After beginning his education at St. James’s Roman Catholic School, Orrell, he was admitted as a pupil at Upholland Grammar School on 9 September 1931. On leaving school, he went to work in the Civil Service.

He joined the R.A.F.V.R. and was based at Bodney, Norfolk. On 26 January 1942, Blenheim IV V5769 had just taken off on a training flight - whilst gaining flying speed it flew into some trees on the edge of the airfield. In the darkness, it was unlikely that the pilot saw the trees until the last moment when it was too late.

Joseph, aged 21, and his pilot, 20 year old Alfred Cheadle from Bolton, were both killed - only the Wireless Operator/Air Gunner survived the crash but he was injured.

Joseph and Alfred are buried side-by-side in this churchyard at Watton, a village just a few miles away from the base.”

Joseph is also commemorated on the family grave in our graveyard, the inscription reads:

Joseph Alban Eckersley, grandson of the above, killed active service Jan 26th 1942, Aged 21 years. Interred at Watton, Norfolk.



St James Catholic Church, Orrell, Wigan – Revised November



on

ge 23

◆ John Barton ◆

Born: About 1922

Address: Withington Attended St James School¹⁹ see Appendix 4.

Pre-war Occupation: No Information currently available

Died 31st March 1943 England Age: 21

Rank: Sergeant Navigator Service Number 1434967⁽³⁾

Regiment: Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Remembered: Orrell (St James) Roman Catholic Churchyard⁽³⁾

John was the son of William and Elizabeth Barton, burial records show his residence as “Withington” although there is a Manchester district with this name, it could be Wrightington. The School Admission register gives his address as 7 Townshend’s Yard, an address that no longer exists but was opposite the School and Church.

There are no baptismal entries for John but there are other entries for children of a William and Elizabeth Barton (nee Horrocks) George Francis 1923, Cecilia Jane 1925.



◆ Leonard A. Fieldhouse ◆

Born: about 1910

Address: 90 Bell Lane ⁽¹⁵⁾

Pre-war Occupation: No Information currently available

Died 23 September 1943 England **Age:33**

Rank: Aircraftsman 2nd Class Service Number 1137454⁽³⁾

Regiment: Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Remembered: Orrell (St James) Roman Catholic Churchyard⁽³⁾

Leonard Anthony was the husband of Agnes and son of Samuel and Margaret Fieldhouse.

St James burial records gives his address as 90 Bell Lane and that he was buried on the 27th September in our graveyard



◆ Frederick Arkwright ◆

Born: about 1918

Address: Goose Green

Pre-war Occupation: ?

Died 01 February 1945 England **Age:27**

Rank: Driver **Number T/14695668⁽³⁾**

Regiment: 723 Gen. Transport Coy, Royal Army Service Corps.

Remembered: Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerp

Frederick is remembered in our graveyard, burial records show his mother lived at 255 Warrington Road, Pemberton. The stone has fallen.

The inscription reads:

“God Grant Eternal rest to the Souls of Alice Ann Arkwright, died 27th November 1950 age 68 yrs., also Pte FREDERICK ARKWRIGHT, R.A.S.C. Son of the above died of wounds, Western Europe, 1st February 1945 age 27 yrs.”



Appendix 1

The Memorial Chapel

No details about the construction of the chapel could be found in the Archdiocesan Archives, or parish records, but the Observer Report of the 23 September 1922 on the dedication gives the following details.

“Some time ago a movement was set afoot to erect a memorial; suggestions and designs were considered, and it was decided that it should take the form of a side-chapel and baptistry [sic] at a cost of £1,500.00. The design of Messrs. **Pugin and Pugin*** were accepted and these included the chapel building of Pemberton stone connecting with the nave of the church building by three arches; the altar is of Caen stone, and the whole is a very chaste and ornate addition to the church fabric. Oak benches and a pitch pine panelled ceiling are embodied. The lighting will be by several stained glass windows

Early Postcard, date unknown



Sacred Heart centre piece, now St Joseph.



There are 5 windows, running South to North, on the east wall. Each window shows a saint with a dedication below.

- 1] **Our Lady of Lourdes** – dedication reads “**Our Lady of Lourdes pray for thy children**”
- 2] **St Joseph** – dedication reads “**Pray for Judith Lowry**”
- 3] **St Agnes** – dedication reads “**Pray for the Priests of Orrell**”
- 4] **St John the Evangelist** – dedication reads “**Pray for John & Ester Laithwaite**”
- 5] **St James** – dedication reads “**Pray for Thomas & Sarah Lenegan**”

There are a further 3 windows in the North Wall, running west to east.

- 6] **Zacharia** - dedication “**Pray for John Dickinson**”
- 7] **John the Baptist** - dedicate ion “**Pray for Henry & Catherine Birchall**”
- 8] **St Elizabeth** - dedication “**Pray for Elizabeth Dickinson**”

Inflation since 1922 is thought to have been about 4000% which would make the cost of £1500 approximately £70,000 today.

The chapel was originally dedicated to the Sacred Heart which is reflected in the centre piece over the altar in the picture above. At some date this has been replaced with an illustration of St Joseph presumably when the chapel was renamed, see page 29.

5 windows on East Wall



8th Window on North Wall next to Porch



windows 6 & 7 are in porch entrance on the North Wall



*Pugin & Pugin was a London-based family firm of church architects, founded in the Westminster office of the famous Augustus Pugin (1812–1852). The firm produced many buildings, alterations and furnishings for the Catholic Church.

The Memorial Chapel in October 2014



ST JOSEPH'S MEMORIAL CHAPEL
BUILT IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

NAME	DIED	AGE	PLACE
PRIVATE JOSEPH WINSTANLEY	9th MAY 1915	29	FRANCE
PRIVATE ALBERT WEBSTER	12th JULY 1915	18	GALLIPOLI
PRIVATE HENRY B. WARD	2nd SEPTEMBER 1915	33	EGYPT
PRIVATE EDWARD GIBBONS	26th NOVEMBER 1915	18	GALLIPOLI
PRIVATE FREDERICK C. PUGH	4th JULY 1916	33	FRANCE
PRIVATE GEORGE JACKSON	5th AUGUST 1916	22	FRANCE
L.Col. FRED LATHAM (M.M.)	7th JUNE 1917	38	BELGIUM
PRIVATE JOHN McNAMARA	7th JUNE 1917	23	FRANCE
L.Sgt. BERNARD PUGH	23rd JUNE 1917	22	FRANCE
CAPTAIN SIDNEY H WRIGHT	10th FEBRUARY 1918	45	FRANCE

WE ALSO REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING WHO ARE COMMEMORATED IN OUR CEMETERY

WW1			
S/SGT RICHARD HALTON	20th NOVEMBER 1914	28	GALLIPOLI
PRIVATE THOMAS SPEAKMAN	10th APRIL 1916	20	BELGIUM
PRIVATE JAMES SPEAKMAN	15th SEPTEMBER 1917	23	BELGIUM
AIR MECHANIC THOMAS CLARE	26th FEBRUARY 1918	29	ENGLAND
PRIVATE THOMAS SIMM	21st APRIL 1920	37	ENGLAND
WW2			
CAPTAIN JOHN UNSWORTH	2nd JANUARY 1941	44	ENGLAND
S/OBSERVER JOSEPH A. ECKERSLEY	26th JANUARY 1942	21	ENGLAND
SERGEANT JOHN BARTON	31st MARCH 1943	21	ENGLAND
AIRCRAFTSMAN LEONARD A FIELDHOUSE	23rd SEPTEMBER 1943	33	ENGLAND
DRIVER FREDRICK ARKWRIGHT	1st FEBRUARY 1945	27	BELGIUM

Appendix 2

The Dedication Service 1922.

The Memorial Chapel was dedicated on the 17th September 1922 the list of those present, taken from the Observer Article 23 September 1922, includes:

“His Grace the Archbishop of Liverpool – **Dr Keating**

High Mass was sung by the **Rev. Father Thomas Walmesley** of Barrow, The Rector, the **Rev. Father W Parkinson**, was the Deacon, **Rev. Father Almond**, St Cuthbert’s, Pemberton was sub-deacon, **Rev. Father Wareing**, the Archbishops’s Secretary, was Master of Ceremonies, In the evening the preacher was the **Rev. Canon J Hughes** of Liverpool, formerly of St Patrick’s, Wigan”

Who else was there? Another Wigan Observer Article, 19th September 1922, on the dedication of the memorial Chapel, mentions that amongst the congregation where 47 others who had served in the Great War – we have no names. It is reasonable to speculate that the surviving siblings of those who lost their lives attended.

PUGH family, 3 brothers surviving, Austin, Percy, Victor + 1 son in law George Wilkinson.

Jackson family, had 3 surviving brothers Joseph, John and John Harold.

Latham family, had 3 or 4 brothers ‘serving’.

McNamara family, had 1 brother surviving.

Halton family, had 1 brother John surviving.

Speakman family, had a 1 surviving brother Joseph..

There are 5 further possibilities:

Tess Carroll has suggested names of survivors likely to have been present:

Her father **Thomas Ignatius Birchall** and his older brother **George Birchall**. Thomas Served with Liverpool Scottish Regt. He volunteered in 1914, was gassed in 1916 and discharged in 1917 – he died in 1982 age 87.

Interestingly in 1911 age 15, he lived at 30 St James Road with his Aunt **Miss Mary Ann Dickinson Lenegan** who was the **Head Mistress at St James School from 1916 to 1933.**

and

Thomas Arthur Roby – Machine Gun Corps, originally of Queen St Orrell, married to Emily and lived in Billinge Rd Pemberton, They had a son Thomas Arthur Roby who was in the RAF and was killed in WW2 -

An Observer Tribute of 20 October 1917 was found for **Joseph Horrocks** M.M. This confirms him as a parishioner of St James, he is mentioned in the Parish History as surviving the war and also in the School Log Bookⁱⁱ for 24th April 1918 – “During the interval at the School’s Annual Concert an interesting presentation was made to Private Joseph Horrocks, Military Medallist, of the Royal Army Medical Corp. an ex scholar of St James’ School.”

APPENDIX 3

Stations of the Cross - Memorial

On 3 walls of the nave of St James Church are hung the stations of the cross two of which, number 11 & 12, are dedicated to the memory of those who fought or lost their lives in WW1. All the stations have a small brass plaques giving their dedication.

West Wall

Station 11 Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

Dedication **“Pray for the brave soldiers of this Parish who fought for their country”**

Station 12 Jesus Is Raised Upon The Cross And Dies

Dedication **“Pray for the Soldiers of this Congregation who laid down their lives for their country”**



APPENDIX 4

War dead who attended St James School

St James School was an “all age elementary school” with pupils from 5 to 14 taught in various standards, the standards did not equal classes, so each classroom would have had mixed ages. Schooling was not free as the 1870 Education Act required parents to pay 2d (pence) per week per child. Children left school at about 12/13 years of age until 1918 when The Fisher Act made 14 the compulsory leaving age.

The following information was obtained from Volume 1 of the Admissions Registers of St James School covering the period 14 April 1875 to 24 May 1937.

? indicates no entry in register.

Joseph Winstanley

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
1011	14/4/92	5/5/97	?	James	1 Backbrow, Upholland

Henry B Ward

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
717	05/11/81	18/11/84	?	?	?

Edward Gibbons

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
1091	30/08/96	16/04/01	?	Thomas	121 Baldwins Terrace

Frederick Charles Pugh

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
883	13/11/82	1/3/92	23/5/95	Albert	115 Ormskirk Rd, Orrell

Philip Bernard Pugh

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
1068	10/7/94	13/8/00	?	Albert	115 Ormskirk Rd, Orrell

George Jackson

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
1051	11/12/93	14/8/99	31/10/01	Thomas	47 Alma Hill

John Barton

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
2625	10/11/21	11/1/26	10/9/33	William	7 Townshend's Yard

Reason for leaving noted as “To CGS St Helens”, possibly Cowley Grammar School.

Joseph Alban Eckersley

Admit. No.	D.O.B.	Admitted	Left	Father	Address
2602	6/4/20	30/3/25	24/7/31	James	162 Orrell Rd, Orrell Post

Reason for leaving noted as “To Upholland Grammar School”

See part 1 for endnote sources

Thanks to:

Carol Littler for initial information on our Parishioners who are named on the Upholland War Memorial, see uphollandwarmemorial.co.uk

Wigan Local Studies: Museum of Wigan Life, for access to copies of the Wigan Observer which provided unique photographs and information.

Headteacher of St James Catholic Primary School, Mr Gary Hayes, for access to old school records.

Tess Carroll for information and numerous old photographs which will be copied and form part of a Parish Archive.