

WILFRED OWEN

- Born 18 March 1893 at Oswestry
- Died 4 November 1918 at Ors in France
- Mother: Susan, devout Evangelical Anglican
- Father: Tom, railway clerk, later station master at Shrewsbury
- Wilfred, eldest son, had two brothers and one sister
- Close bond with his mother

- Grandfather Edward Shaw died 1897
- Plas Wilmot sold to pay off debts, Wilfred's family moved to Canon Street in Shrewsbury
- 1900 moved to Birkenhead where Tom became station master
- Wilfred attended Birkenhead Institute
- 1907 Tom became station master at Shrewsbury, family moved to Underdale Road
- Wilfred went to the Technical school at 1 Abbey Foregate – the Wakeman building

- Became pupil teacher, teaching at Wyle Cop, until 1911
- Learned to admire the Romantic poets, particularly Keats
- 1910 Family moved to Mahim, Monkmoor Road
- 1911-1913 under his mother's religious influence, he became a lay assistant at Dunsden near Reading
- But lost his vocation and had a nervous breakdown
- 1913-1915 at Berlitz school in Bordeaux

- Wilfred became fluent French speaker
- Probably happiest time of his life, although not earning much
- He was still in France when war broke out in August 1914
- Returned home to join up in Artists' Rifles in October 1915
- His class consciousness
- June 1916 joined Manchester Regiment as Second Lieutenant

- January- March 1917 in the front line “in seventh hell” at Beaumont Hamel
- Fell down a hole and suffered concussion
- April 1917 suffered shell shock
- Aug – Nov 1917 at Craiglockhart, Edinburgh
- Met Siegfried Sassoon, another war poet
- Returned to front line Sept 1918
- For his bravery at Joncourt on 1 October, Owen was awarded Military Cross
- Killed 4 Nov, trying to cross Oise-Sambre canal

- His poems emerged from his experiences in 1917 – 1918
- Only five published during his life-time
- Sassoon and Edith Sitwell collected and published selected poems by Owen in 1920
- A poet's poet, admired by Sassoon, Robert Graves, Harold Munro
- Admired by Edmund Blunden, W H Auden, Stephen Spender in 1930's
- W B Yeats – Passive suffering is not a theme for poetry – excluded Owen's works
- His innovations – harmony and pararhymes
- Benjamin Britten's War Requiem in 1963 incorporated Owen's poetry
- His early death helped to enshrine and memorialise his poetry and reputation.