



Frederick Barber

611898 Lance Corporal, 1st/19th (County of London) Battalion (St Pancras)

He was killed in action on 21st March 1918 in France, aged 29

Frederick is commemorated at Arras memorial, Faubourg d'Amiens, France

When Frederick Barber enlisted, he gave his address as Walthamstow, but claimed birth in Redenhall. The London Battalions were originally territorial units, explaining why Frederick actually boasted two service numbers, the earlier, militia number, being 5338 as opposed to the 61198 that carried him through almost 4 years of warfare. Indeed, his Rgt being the 1/19th London would strongly indicate this was exactly the case. Harleston had long had very active Volunteer units, it would not be surprising if Barber had joined the unit local to his city workplace, becoming rapidly mobilised at the start of the war.

Originally described as Wounded, presumably from an eyewitness report, he was then described as wounded and missing before finally being listed as Killed in Action, on the 21st of March 1918. L.Cpl Barber 611898 was also separately listed as Entitled to wear a Wound Stripe, the timing of this award is a little vague, at one point the address of his next of kin was given as Harlesden – an easy mistake that could arise from mis-scribing or even mis-hearing in the original information gathering. The stripes purpose in the first place was for those, who had been furloughed due to injury, to be able to hold themselves with pride at home.

Having established which soldier F.Barber is, we still have the challenge of finding out about his activities in civilian life, there being a healthy number of Frederick Barbers born in and around Redenhall who fall within the right age group!

I was hugely excited to find a Harleston born Frederick Barber living in Wandsworth in the 1911 census. However, he was then aged 40 and crammed into his tiny 2 room house were his wife and 4 young children (a fifth, possibly their second child, had died in infancy). This combination of age and dependents would make him an unlikely candidate.

An alternative is the Frederick Barber living with his family in Denton in 1911. Then aged 17 he would have been firmly in the appropriate age bracket to be a, then aged 24, Lance Corporal in 1918. The same census reveals that his father, Thomas Barber had been born in London. Rather unusually father Thomas, then aged 54, was described in this census as being 'Mentally Afflicted'. Fredericks parents had been married 33 years and only lost one of the 10 children born to them.

Thomas may have been born in London, but by the 1871 census he was already living in Alburgh, in a sort of informal foster home. The head of the household and his wife shared their household with Thomas, a boarder, and two more children, aged 6 and 3, both described as 'nurse child', his being the Victorian equivalent of foster child.

Frederick's father Thomas stayed firmly in Norfolk, although in the 1881 and 1891 censuses he goes under the name of William Thomas! The family seem fairly unremarkable, although Thomas

slightly blotted his copy book when, in February 1904, he was caught travelling on the Railway at Harleston without paying his fare. This escapade cost him a total of 15s in fines and costs!

ALBURGH.

DEATH OF MR. T. W. BARBER.

One of the oldest life-long residents of the village. Mr. Thomas William Barber, aged 76 years, passed away on Tuesday, at his residence. Mr. Barber had been in failing health for some time. Although not taking any active part in the social welfare of his native village, he was widely known and held in the highest esteem and the surviving widow, seven sons and two daughters have been sincerely condoled with. The funeral takes place at Alburgh to-morrow (Saturday).

Unfortunately, Thomas's death notice in 1933, if it is to be believed, blows the candidacy of Denton Frederick Barber out of the water, clearly describing Thomas' seven sons and two daughters, the same number he had in the 1911 census. However, it is also possible that the reporter enquired how many children Barber had but not if they were still all living.

Diss Express
28 Jul 1933

An optimistic attitude proven to be completely mistaken as, when a later report listed all the mourners, including all 7 sons and two daughters – yes Frederick was there amongst them!

Back to the drawing board – I discovered a Harleston born Frederick Barber working for Alfred Tate at Downside, Leatherhead. This 28-room house returned 14 inhabitants on the night of the census; 7 servants, the two parents and two adult children plus 3 visitors. The surname may well seem familiar, Alfred was the son of Sir Henry Tate of sugar and gallery fame!

Frederick was then a 23 years old footman, and appears to have married Mabel Frances F. Adams, in the Ascot district during the last quarter of 1915. She had been baptised in Epsom in 1894. If she came from Walthamstow, or had family in Walthamstow with whom she had returned to live, this would have become Frederick's home address after he enlisted, explaining the address given in his military records.

Working backwards, Frederick (Frederick Arthur if we are going to be precise) appeared as an 11 year old in the 1911 census living with his parents, George and Hannah Barber, up at Jay's Green.

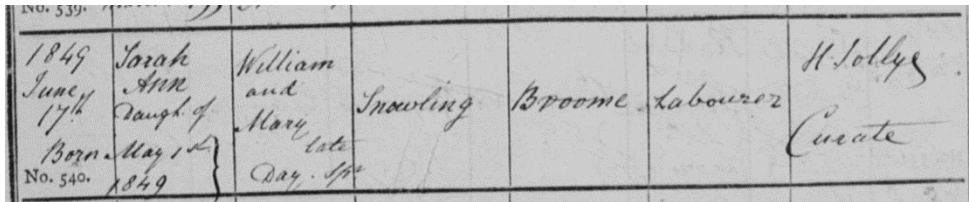
1890. 8 th May Born 23 rd Nov. 1889. No. 658.	Frederick Arthur	George & Hannah	Barber	Harleston Labourer		
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George and Hannah were obviously a steady pair, the couple appeared at Jays Green in the 1911, 1901 and 1891 censuses claiming, in 1911, a 25 year marriage producing 4 children, all of whom were still surviving. However, George's first experience of fatherhood, many years earlier, could only be described as tragically impacted by the terrible actions of the mother of his first child.

The sad tale follows below.

Up at Bakers Barn Cottages, since at least 1848 (when they finally got around to baptising their 2 years old son William) Lewis and Eliza Barber were raising their family whilst sharing a servant girl with their neighbours who were also raising a young family. The Barber's

children included 2-year-old George Barber who, when he was about nineteen or twenty, fathered an illegitimate child with Ann Snowling, a Dairy Maid. In contrast to the normal expectations of an unmarried father abandoning his woman and child, although George did not marry Ann, he seems to have been, in other respects a responsible parent. Mind you this might have been due to the active participation of his mother in making arrangements for the care of her grandchild. In a blood chilling twist, the mother of their child George Barber Snowling (aka George Barber Jnr), having failed to take care of it when young, before it was informally fostered by neighbours of George Barber, actually tried to kill the child when he was still a toddler.



Sarah Ann Snowling was one of the younger children of a largish family headed by William and Mary

who appeared out by the Ellingham Marshes in the 1841 census although by 1851, when 2 years old Sarah Ann Snowling made her first appearance the family were a few doors away from the Three Tuns in Pirnough St, Broome. By 1861, when the family had made it back to William and Mary's home town of Ellingham, William was no longer a labourer but a carter and Sarah Ann was the middle of about 9 children. Along with William's mother, there were 11 in the household.



In 1871 Sarah Ann Snowling was working as a 21-year-old Dairy Servant at the large Shelton Hall Estate - 300 Acres, 8 men and a boy. I suspect she would have been asked to leave when she became pregnant; by 1874, when she attempted to murder her 14-month-old son, Sarah Ann Snowling from Kirkley, was working as a servant out in Fressingfield whilst her older, and also illegitimate child, Lucy A Snowling was living with her grandparents, appearing along with an aunt and uncle in Ellingham in 1871.

Meanwhile, in 1874, her younger child, little George Barber Snowling was boarded out with Mrs Harriet Howlett, a shoemaker's wife in Harleston who appears to have cared well for the

little lad. To cover this service, a weekly charge of 3s, was paid equally by mother Sarah Ann Snowling and the acknowledged father George Barber Snr. The arrangement had been brokered by George Barber Snr's mother (Eliza, wife of Lewis) some 8 months earlier when little George Barber Snowling was but 6 months old. At the time he was handed over to Howlett he was 'but skin and bone' but at the time of his attempted murder George Barber Snowling was a 'strong and healthy boy'. Snowling resolved to rid herself of this child as her 'young man told me he would never have me'. This does leave me curious as to why George Barber did not marry Snowling who must have had some attractions, with one child already in tow when they got together and another young man with some sort of relationship going on with her a few years after the birth of young George Barber Snowling

Whilst fiction would have you believe that no man would marry 'damaged goods' this is far from the truth. Many ladies of Harleston and district managed to snag a chap with far more than just two illegitimate children to their names! Since at this period Norfolk had illegitimacy rates of about 10%, it behove none to be too judgemental and Snowling was being given support by both her own father and the father of her younger child; her subsequent behaviour leads credence to the possibility she was just not a very nice person!

With no thought of discretion or the consequences, Snowling sent a 13-year-old labourer from her farm to get 'meece' poison from the local vet, which she then baked into two currant cakes to be sent, along with an orange, via the local carrier to Howlett's house. When the carrier delivered the poisoned goodies, on the 3rd February 1874, baby George Barber Snowling and two of Howlett's youngest five children, daughters aged three and five, were sitting by the fire. Into this cosy domestic scene were delivered the toxic cakes to be divided between the children; fortunately, the Howlett children did not like the cakes and would not eat them. In contrast young George Barber Snowling devoured his; this greed actually saved him as he ate so fast, he made himself sick, vomiting the cake, his breakfast 'and a great deal of phlegm' - recovering rapidly after.

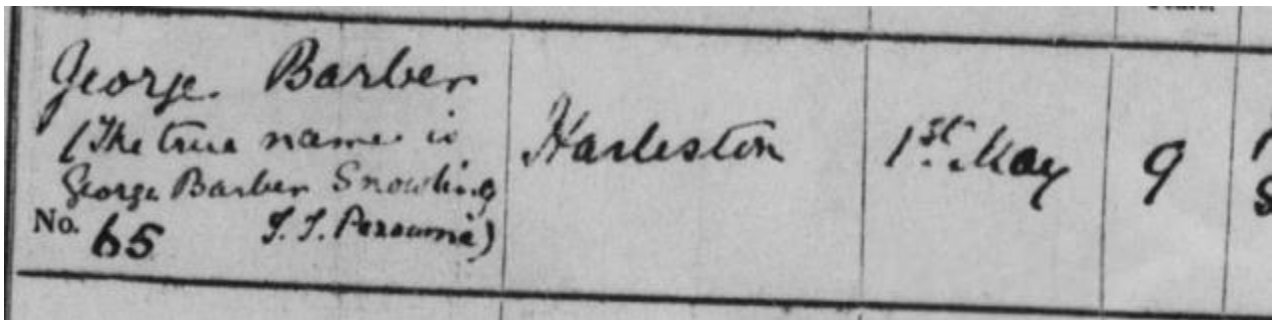
The opportunist dog who hoovered the crumbs up from the floor was less fortunate and promptly died; Howlett tried the cake herself and, finding it bitter and unpleasant, wrapped the cake and gave it to her husband to take to the police. On analysis, the cake was discovered to be heavily laced with a fatal amount of strychnine, Snowling was tried and

The jury almost at once found the prisoner guilty of trying to murder the child.

The learned Judge...addressed the prisoner as an unhappy girl and said she little knew how much it pained him to pass sentence upon her. Prisoner must know she was a wicked woman. Having this burden of a child upon her, she was tempted to take away its life. So cruel was she that she sent poisoned cakes to the person who had kindly taken charge of her child, knowing she had innocent children who, through her recklessness might have been poisoned also. It was terrible to think of what might have been the consequences. Prisoner must expect to be grievously punished. This murdering of children - for it was nothing less - had become a disgrace to the country. Only the other day he had to sentence an unhappy woman to 10 years penal servitude for the manslaughter of her child at the moment of its birth. Prisoner, who was younger than that woman, and seemed not to have been so immoral, had no doubt been tempted by some man from the path of propriety and in the hour of her pain, when she felt the burden of the child,

she made up her mind to poison it. Prisoner had done all she could to kill the child, and it was through no flinching on her part that the child was not poisoned. It was through the kindness of Providence the child was saved, under the circumstances he could not think of sentencing the prisoner to a lighter punishment the terrible sentence that she be kept in penal servitude for ten years.

If Snowling did serve her full 10 years, she would not have been able to re-unite with the son she so callously tried to kill - he died aged only 9 years old in 1882, by which time he was boarded with elderly William and Anna Nunn out on the Bungay Road. Although he was commonly known as George Barber, the Rector made very plain the true identity of this unfortunate lad.



Back in 1871, William Nunn was living next door but one to George Barber Snr, described as a pensioner, William Nunn's discharge papers of 1853 list how the Starston man, having joined up at the age of 18 had spent 8 ½ years of his 21 years' service in the Mediterranean and 5 1/3 in Mauritius. On his discharge from the 5th Fusiliers he was described as being unfit for further service. 1871 would have been shortly before the arrival of George's illegitimate son who was to cause his mother such inconvenience. All the families involved in the care of George Barber Snowling lived close as, only a few doors away, was the then 32-year-old George Barber Snr, labourer, who in turn was lodging with the Jackson family, and all were close to both the Howletts (caring for George Barber Snowling whose mother did her best to get rid of him, blithely ignoring any possible collateral damage to the other children) and the grandmother who had brokered the original care deal. Perhaps grandma Eliza Barber was making sure her son, George Barber maintained an interest in his son.

Just to show the confusion arising from the limited numbers of names circulating in this populous town, in 1881 another 3 Harleston born George Barbers were living in Yarmouth! Barber a (53) was living with his wife near the market, Barber b (41), working at the Naval Hospital, was living with his Irish wife and 4 children whilst his assumed son George Barber c (16) boarded out 9 doors down the road.

Back to the father of George Barber Snowling and former paramour of the boy's infanticidal mother. In early 1885 Maltster George Barber Snr married widowed Hannah Clarke, moving into the Jays Green home that she and her four orphaned children had been living in during 1881; by 1891 he and his wife were living in her home in Jays Green with the youngest of Hannah's children and their four mutual children, Harry, Agnes, Gertrude and Frederick, aged 5,4,3 and 1 - they had not let the grass grow under their feet! The family remained at Jay's Green, the children leaving over the years until by 1911 only (Ernest) Harry, the lad whose arrival probably precipitated the marriage, was still left!

1886. 3 rd Jan ^y	Ernest George v	Barber	Say's Green	Maltster	J. J. Pennington Rector
Born 17 th July 1885. No. 532.	Harry Hannah				

I am glad George's second attempt at fatherhood was happier than the first.

Frederick had joined up in 1914 and, judging by being awarded a wound stripe he may have been wounded, returned to England and convalesced there before returning to his unit. Wound strips were given to men on sick leave so they would not be heckled for their lack of participation in the war! As mentioned above, Frederick gave his address in 1914 as Walthamstow, he appears to have been promoted in 1918, it is possible that his 1915 marriage to Mabel Adams produced one child, Gladys E Barber, but without chasing up birth certificates I cannot confirm this and Mabel is more likely to be the daughter of the Gladys Barber nee Adams who married her husband in Lambeth in 1914.