

After the Great War, Haverhill created a Peace Committee to decide how to celebrate peace and remember the men from the town who lost their lives.

Saturday February 22, 1919

Extract from South West Suffolk Echo

Credit: Haverhill & District Local History Group

Haverhill Peace Celebration Committee at Work.

A meeting of the Haverhill Peace Celebration Committee was held at the Town Hall on Monday evening, Mr. J. Gurteen presiding.

Messrs. J. Gurteen and T. Jarvis were unanimously chosen as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively, and Messrs. T. H. Reacher and W. V. Miller were appointed hon. Treasurers.

After a full discussion sub-Committees to deal with the various objects were appointed as follows:—Celebrations: Messrs. D. M. Gurteen, S. L. Bigmore, R. B. Smith, F. Backler, A. P. Burgon, F. W. Gurteen, J. S. Hill and F. Fitzgerald (hon. Secretary). Recognition and Roll of Honour: Revs. T. S. Jones and F. G. Tizzard, Messrs. T. Jarvis, F. Perry, W. Poole (Barton End), C. Boardman, H. F. Thake, and the Rev. W. G. Hodges (hon. Secretary). Permanent Memorial: Messrs. F. D. Unwin, J. Badcock, C. W. Spicer, C. S. Gurteen, W. Mason, F. W. Simmons, J. B. Coster, Dr. Geoghegan, and Mr. H. B. Thake (hon. Secretary). The Chairman and the General Secretary (Mr. W. N. Clayton) are ex-officio members of all the Committees.

After a very careful consideration it was resolved to divide the funds received into two sections, viz., (1) Celebrations; (2) recognition of the members of the Forces, permanent memorial, and Roll of Honour.

The Celebrations Sub-Committee was given authority to raise funds at once, but not to appeal for public subscriptions at present.

The Committee discussed various suggestions which were brought forward for the consideration of the Sub-Committees.

At his own request the resignation of Mr. J. Atterton was accepted, and the Rev. F. G. Tizzard was chosen to fill the vacancy thus created on the General Committee.

Mr. T. Jarvis reported that the Council had kindly granted free use of the Town Hall for Committee meetings.

This Committee formed two groups, one to consider celebrations and the other a permanent memorial and Roll of Honour.

The Permanent Memorial sub-committee considered various suggestions including:

- building a cottage hospital
- providing a motor ambulance
- endowing a bed at Addenbrooke's Hospital
- clock chimes
- memorial cottages
- clock tower
- swimming baths

Estimates were obtained and after careful deliberation, the provision of a covered tepid swimming bath with slipper and shower baths was recommended.

Estimates had been obtained in connection with each, and after careful deliberation the sub-Committee came to the decision that the provision of a covered tepid swimming bath, with slipper and shower baths, should be recommended. Having explained the reasons that influenced the Committee in their decision, Mr. Unwin moved that the recommendation be adopted, and this was carried.

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The estimate for the public baths was £2,500 to £3000 while the memorial would cost about £400.

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Holiday week. It was estimated that to carry out the scheme for the public baths a sum of about £2,500 to £3,000 would be required, and that the memorial would entail an expenditure of about £400. As events have turned out the sum received by way of subscriptions has not been sufficient to permit of the schemes adopted being carried out, and a meeting of subscribers was held at the Town Hall on Monday evening to consider the following recommendation from the Committee:—"That the proposed scheme for the erection of Baths, etc., as a memorial be abandoned, and that the funds (or the necessary part thereof) be utilised in setting up the Memorial Cross in the Cemetery."

HAVERHILL'S PEACE MEMORIAL.

BATH SCHEME ABANDONED.

MEMORIAL CROSS TO BE ERECTED.

The amount raised by subscriptions was insufficient so the plan for the swimming baths was abandoned. It was recommended that a memorial cross be erected instead. Not everyone agreed.

Mr. J. Atterton said that though he did not like to raise any objection to the erection of such a memorial to the dead he thought the money could be spent in a wiser way—in a manner that would not only serve to commemorate those who had been lost but also to be of help to those who were living. The idea in his mind was that there should be established a room for the young people of the town, where they, and the older ones, too, might come together to spend social evenings. He

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Credit: Haverhill & District Local History Group

John Atterton thought a room where the people of the town might 'come together to spend social evenings' was a better idea.

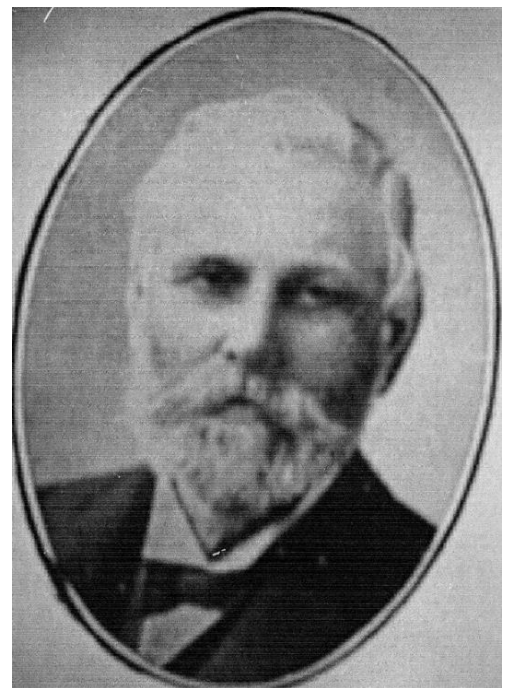


Photo credit H&DLHG John Atterton

The man contracted to build the Memorial Cross was Edward Coote Green, a stone mason whose business was at 59 High Street.



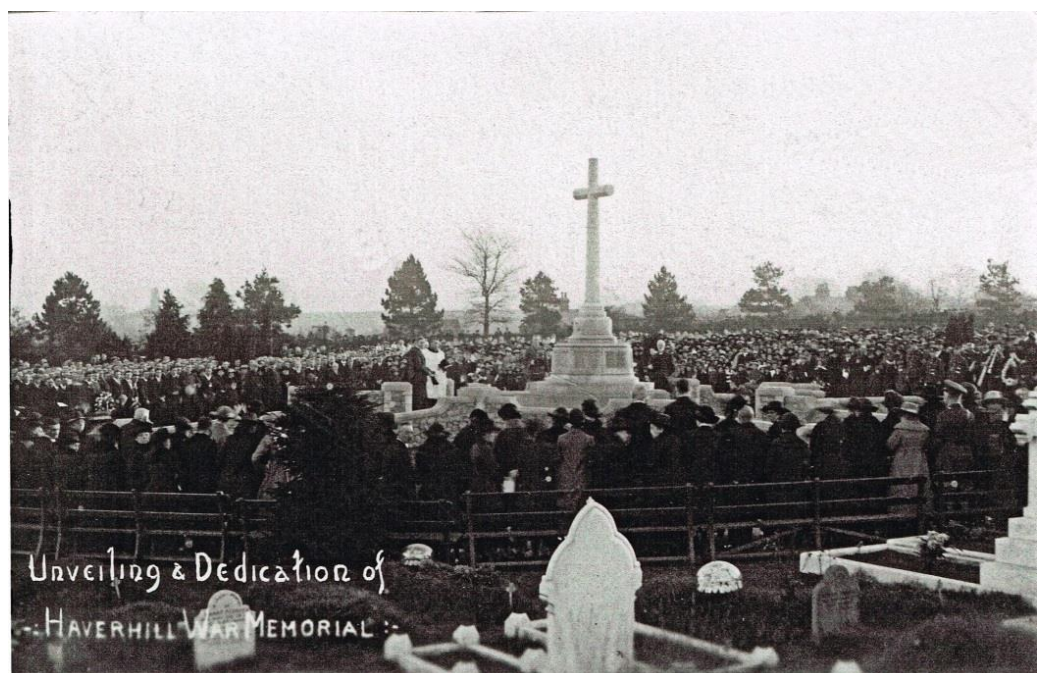
The Memorial Cross in Haverhill Cemetery is set upon an octagonal base where the names of the fallen are recorded.

With a population of around 4,000, Edward probably knew the families of the 144 men immortalised on the memorial. He saw his youngest son, Frank's, name appear in stone, along with the best friend of his older son. 2nd Lt Leslie Cummings, a local teacher led his men over the top on 1st July 1916. He lost his life as he paused to drag an injured man into a shell hole.

Photo credit H&DLHG Edward Coote Green



The permanent memorial was dedicated by Lieut-General Sir Charles Briggs during an impressive ceremony on 21st November 1920. The final cost was £1250.



Many wreaths were laid during the dedication. One was for William Kimmence. It read:

*'In loving memory of a dear husband and father Wm. Kimmence,
killed in action 27th August 1917
from his sorrowing Wife and Children'*



With no known grave, Pte William Kimmence, is commemorated at Tyne Cot. He enlisted at Bury St Edmunds in October, 1914 joining the Suffolk Regiment. At 5 feet 7 inches, he was taller than the average recruit and classed in 'good health' with 'good eyesight'. At 34 years he was older than the average volunteer.

He had married Eliza Basham, in 1900. They had 11 children of whom 5 survived, Horace, Elsie, Violet, William and Clifford.

Certificate of Marriage								
Marriage solemnized at <i>Church</i> in the <i>Parish</i> of <i>Withersfield</i> in the County of <i>Suffolk</i>								
No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the Time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
274	May 19 th 1900	William Kimmence	19	Barbolic	Wearer	Withersfield	Thomas Kimmence	Labourer
		Eliza Basham	18	Spinster		Withersfield	William Basham	Wearer
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <i>Church of England</i> after <i>Banns</i> by me, <i>N. G. Aspin</i>								
This marriage was solemnized between us,				<i>William Kimmence</i> <i>Eliza Basham</i>		In the presence of us, <i>Robert Kimmence</i> <i>Robert Basham</i>		
I, <i>William John Aspin</i> of <i>Withersfield</i> in the County of <i>Suffolk</i> do hereby certify that the above is a true copy of Entry No. <i>274</i> in one of the Marriage Registers of the aforesaid <i>Parish</i> Witness my hand this <i>26</i> day of <i>October</i> 19 <i>14</i>								

William left Folkestone for Boulogne in June 1917 with the 1st/4th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment. Within a month he joined the 1st/8th Royal Warwickshire Regiment in the field seeing action at the Battle of Langemarck. The regimental war diaries tell us that on the 26th August:

'The Coys moved into positions previously reconnoitred for them and.... dug themselves in as far as was possible under the appalling weather conditions. During the....night rain was falling and the ground became more and more difficult to traverse.'

On the day he died, 27th August, the diary notes:

'The morning gave promise of a fine day, but the ground was allowed no opportunity for drying, as several showers fell. The men remained concealed in their positions, apparently unobserved by the enemy until zero (1:55 pm.). The 5 Coys then attacked under cover of our artillery and M.G. barrage, but owing to the activity of the enemy's M.G.s....the final objectives....were not gained.'

The South West Suffolk Echo reported on 10th November 1917:

'Mrs. Kimmence.....has been officially notified that her husband, Pte. William Kimmence, of the Royal Warwickshire Regt., was killed in action....in France on August 27th. He had previously been reported missing. For twenty years he was employed as a mat maker at Messrs Gurteen and Sons Factory....He was 37 years of age and leaves a widow and five children.'

Eliza continued to live at 50 High Street. A weekly Widow's Pension of 31/3d was confirmed from 29th April 1918.

In 1919, Eliza married widower Albert Barber.



Albert Barber

Albert Barber's first wife Alice (Pask) died from Tuberculosis on 21st December 1918 leaving Albert with three children under seven to bring up, Dulcie, Albert Robert and Muriel.



Alice with Albert Robert
as a baby and Dulcie

In 1920 Albert and Eliza had a baby, Kitty. Living at 50 High Street, Albert and Eliza were now responsible for nine children.

The 1921 census tells us that Eliza's oldest son, Horace William Kimmence was employed as a Stone Mason's boy employed by Edward Coote Green. One wonders whether he worked there in 1920 and witnessed his father's name being added to the War Memorial.

Household members (11 people) Copy to clipboard

First name(s)	Last name	Relationship to head	Sex	Birth year	Age in years	Birth place	Occupation	Employer
Albert	Barber	Head	Male	1887	34	Suffolk, England	Night Watchman Haverhill U D C	Haverhill U D Council (Out Of Work)
Eliza	Barber	Wife	Female	1883	38	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	Home Duties	-
Horace William	Kimmince	Step-son	Male	1904	16	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	Stonemasons Boy	Mr E C Greens Stone Mason
Elise Maud	Kimmince	Step-daughter	Female	1906	15	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	Errand Girl Clothing Dept	Clothing Mfrs Gurteens & Sons
Violet Grace	Kimmince	Step-daughter	Female	1907	13	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	Nurse Maid Home Duties	-
William George	Kimmince	Step-son	Male	1910	10	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	-	-
Clifford	Barber	Step-son	Male	1913	8	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	-	-
Dalia Jane	Barber	Daughter	Female	1911	9	Suffolk, England	-	-
Albert Robert	Barber	Son	Male	1915	5	Suffolk, England	-	-
Muriel Elise	Barber	Daughter	Female	1916	4	Suffolk, England	-	-
Kitty May	Barker	Daughter	Female	1920	-	Haverhill, Suffolk, England	-	-

Life must have been hard. Albert was an out of work night watchman and Eliza was occupied with home duties. Horace Kimmence, who worked for the Stone Mason, and his sister, Elsie, an errand

girl at Chantry Mills seem to be the sources of income. Violet was listed as a Nurse Maid at home, perhaps helping with the two youngest children.

Transcript of Eliza's record	
First name(s)	Eliza
Last name	Barber
Gender	Female
Birth day	-
Birth month	-
Birth year	1883
Age	40
Death quarter	4
Death year	1923

Eliza passed away in 1923 aged 40. Now responsible for 9 children, Albert probably had considerable help from Eliza's daughter Violet.

Name:	Eliza Barber
Death Age:	40
Birth Date:	abt 1883
Registration Date:	Oct 1923 [Nov 1923] [Dec 1923]
Registration Quarter:	Oct-Nov-Dec
Registration District:	Risbridge
Inferred County:	Suffolk
Volume:	4a
Page:	850

In 1921, Albert's son from his first marriage, Albert Robert, was just 5 and recorded as being at school whole time. He and his siblings would have attended the Council Schools.



As a teenager growing up in Haverhill, Bob was member of the Scouts.





Bob moved to London where he met and married Olive Alice Piper from Acton in January 1940.

Bob enlisted in East Acton, joining the East Surrey Regiment (TA). In June 1943 he transferred to the Somerset Light Infantry before joining 2nd Battalion, Kings Shropshire Light Infantry in September.

Military records tell us he was 5ft 7ins tall with brown hair and brown eyes. He was a Congregationalist.

At the end of March 1944, the battalion assembled in readiness for D-Day, sailing from Newhaven at 2pm on 5th June and landing on Sword beach shortly after 10am on 6th June.

Bob survived the landing and the battalion distinguished themselves on that epic day. They planned to advance inland on the back of Staffordshire Yeomanry's Sherman tanks but they didn't arrive so they walked, following the D60 road, to take part in the capture of CAEN.

According to military diaries the battalion moved out of CAEN on 14th July, crossing the River Orne to woodlands near RANVILLE, from where a major attack was launched on German positions beyond CAEN.

Ordered to attack four villages - clearing each before moving on to the next....the attack on the first objective, LIROSE, began at 9.30 am on the 18th.

The battalion experienced heavy firing from the strongly defended village which was captured with some casualties.

As they advanced to the next objective they suffered very heavy casualties from enemy machine gun fire whilst trying to clear woodlands near MANNEVILLE. At least seventeen Other Ranks were killed, one of whom was Bob.



Olive gave birth to a daughter, Sandra, six months after Bob's death. He was probably unaware that he was to be a father when he lost his life.

An inscription was added to Bob's CWGC headstone in Ranville Cemetery that reads:

Personal Inscription

TO THE WORLD HE WAS ONE; TO US HE WAS THE WORLD. WIFE OLIVE AND DAUGHTER SANDRA

1055/L/T/9 A.M.15 81
6146152 Private
A.R. Barber
The King's
Shropshire Light Infantry
18th July 1944 Age 28
(Cross)
To the world he was one;
To us he was the world.
Wife Olive
And daughter Sandra



Sandra's son Daniel had provided information and cherished family photographs for a tribute to his grandfather when the Family History Group were writing their WW2 Roll of Honour.

Following Sandra's death in November 2017, Daniel found a letter in her personal effects expressing her wish that her ashes were scattered over the final resting place of the father she never knew. Her final wish was fulfilled.

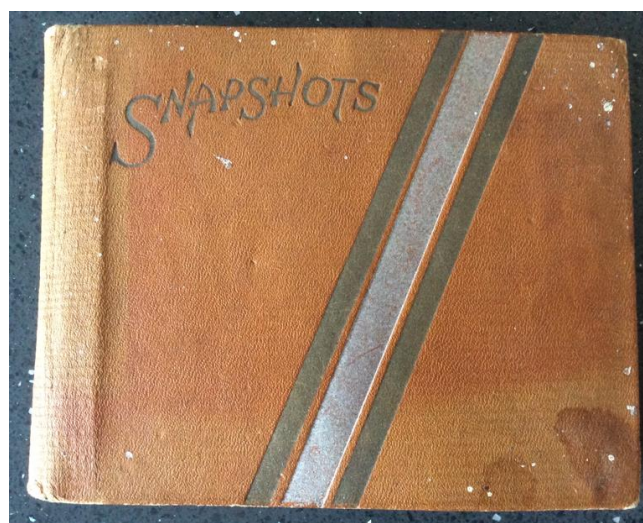
TOGETHER AT LAST!

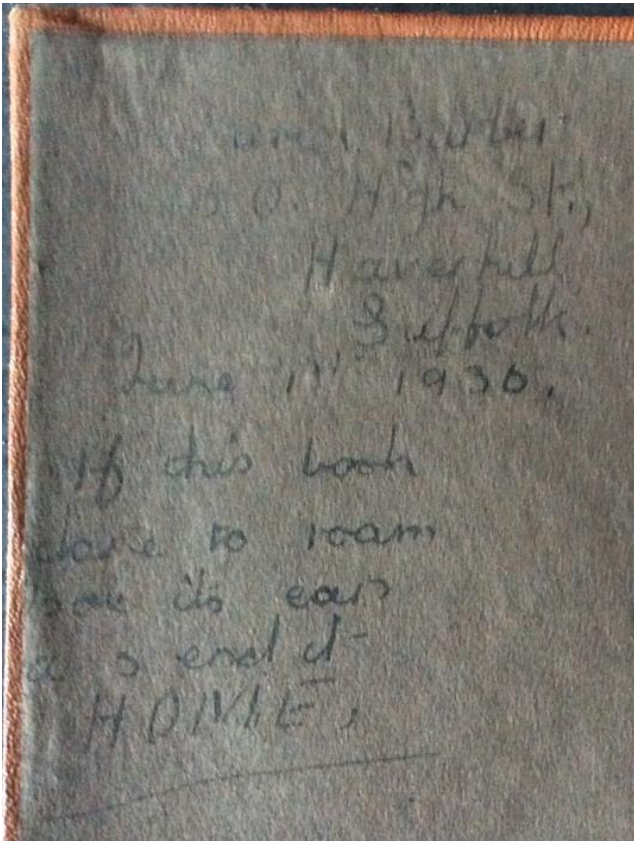
But this story does not end here.

It continues into 2022 when H&DLHG stalwart, Dennis, answered his door to a postman with a package addressed to 50 High Street which no longer exists. Fortunately, the Royal Mail staff decided to ask someone with Haverhill roots and local knowledge whether they knew the intended recipient named Muriel Barber.

Dennis and the postman opened the package to discover a family photograph album.

There was nothing else, no hint of who had sent it or how it had come into their possession.





The album bore a name, address, date and a short rhyme.....

Muriel Barber
50 High Street Haverhill
Suffolk
June 1st 1936
If this book
dare to roam
Box its ears
and send it
HOME



Here are two photos from the album.



It was these photos that were identified in the local history centre and linked to Bob Barber.

This photo of Bob's father, Albert, with a woman was one shared with the Family History Group by his grandson Daniel.

Clearly the same people, it is believed that the woman is Eliza's daughter, Violet Kimmence.

In the 1939 Register, Albert, a Disabled Pensioner, is still at 50 High Street. Living with him are his youngest daughter Kitty Barber and Eliza's daughter Violet who is listed as housekeeper.

50	"	"	20	1	Barber Albert	M	8 May 86	W	Disabled Pensioner
"	"	"	31	2	Barber Kitty M	F	2 July 20	S	Button hole maker
"	"	"		3	Kummuu Mabel	F	6 Nov 07	S	Housekeeper

Daniel and his siblings were delighted to hear about the photo album that once belonged to their grandfather's younger sister, Muriel, and it was our pleasure to repatriate it to family members.

Just to confirm that I received the photo album today, thank you for going out of your way to post it.

It really is beautiful, and I can't believe it is in such good condition given its age. Me and my family will treasure it.

Kind regards

Daniel Evans

Of course, the unanswered question is "Who found the album and tried to return it to Muriel Barber?"