

**Private John Barker©**  
**Regimental number: 18009**  
**30th Company Labour Corps**

**born: April 1876 – died: 10 March 1918**

Private John Barker was baptized on 16 April 1876 at St. Mary's Church, Bleasby, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, England,<sup>1</sup> the only son of John and Louisa (Plowman<sup>2</sup>) Barker.<sup>3</sup> John had two older sisters, Annie and Louisa,<sup>4</sup> both born at Southwell.

John's paternal grandparents, John and Ann Barker, lived in Southwell, Nottinghamshire, farming on 53 acres, and they had seven children:<sup>5</sup> Charles, born about 1831; George, born about 1834; Mary, born about 1836; John (father to our soldier), baptized on 27 May 1838;<sup>6</sup> Harriott, born 1840; Hannah, born about 1842; and Samuel, born about 1845.

During this time, the Barkers' neighbours were Joseph and Mary Ann (Barker<sup>7</sup>) Plowman<sup>8</sup> and their children Louisa, born about 1844 (mother of our soldier); Joseph, born about 1846; Eliza, born about 1848; and Samuel, born 1851. Their daughter Louisa married John Barker and had our soldier, John. In fact, John and Mary Ann, (grandfather and grand-aunt to our soldier) were siblings, so Louisa Plowman and John Barker (parents to our soldier) were first cousins.<sup>9</sup> The Barkers (paternal grandparents) and the Plowmans (maternal grandparents) continued to be neighbours until at least 1871.<sup>10</sup>

John Barker and Louisa Plowman married between 1861 and 1863 when their first daughter Annie was born, and in 1871 also had living with them Louisa's brother, Samuel Plowman.<sup>11</sup> John's sister Louisa was born about 1873.<sup>12</sup> By 1881 John's grandfather had retired<sup>13</sup> and John's father had taken over his father's farm.<sup>14</sup>

John's father died in 1883 at age 46,<sup>15</sup> his paternal grandfather died in 1884<sup>16</sup> at age 84 (his paternal grandmother had died before 1881<sup>17</sup>), and his mother died in late 1888 at age 45.<sup>18</sup> John was then just 12 years old, and his sisters were 15 and 25. In 1891 John was living at Westhorpe, Southwell, with the John Fisher family as a boarder and errand boy.<sup>19</sup> His sister Louisa, then 18, was a housemaid for the John Kirkland family in Westgate, Southwell,<sup>20</sup> and his sister Annie was a cook for the Thomas Mason family in Basford, Nottinghamshire.<sup>21</sup>

John married Mabel Lamb in Halam, Southwell, in 1 August 1904.<sup>22</sup> Mabel had been born in the summer of 1880 in Halam,<sup>23</sup> so at their marriage John was 27 and Mabel was 24. The 1911 Census for Halam, Southwell<sup>24</sup> shows John and Mabel as having been married for six years, but they had not had any children. John was a grocer's porter. It appears that Mabel's mother, Charlotte Lamb,<sup>25</sup> was unmarried when Mabel was born, and, as an infant, was living with her grandparents, Charles and Evelyn Lamb in Halam, Southwell.<sup>26</sup> By the time she was 20, in 1901, Mabel was in service as a cook to the Henry Shaw family in Bingham, Nottinghamshire.<sup>27</sup>

John was a private, first in the York and Lancaster Regiment and then in the 30th Company Labour Corps.<sup>28</sup> In May 1917 the 17th Battalion York and Lancaster disbanded to form the 30th and 31st Labour Companies.<sup>29</sup> Typically, the men in these companies were rated medically below the "A1" condition needed for front line service. In that capacity, John would have served unarmed and within range of the enemy lines for weeks or even months at a time, undertaking labouring tasks.<sup>30</sup> Those tasks may have included building and maintaining roads, railways, canals, buildings, camps,

stores, dumps, telephone and telegraph systems, etc. and also moving stores.<sup>31</sup> The total number of men engaged in labour units in France and Flanders alone approximated 700,000 at the end of the war.<sup>32</sup>



Photo courtesy of Matthew Jarvis, great-grandnephew of Private John Barker

November 1917, Barlin began to be shelled and the hospital was moved back to Ruitz, but the extension was used again in March and April 1918 during the German advance on this front. The extension contains 1,095 Commonwealth burials of the Great War.<sup>36</sup>

John posthumously received the British War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal.<sup>37</sup> The British War Medal was issued to men of the British and Imperial Forces who entered a theatre of war between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918. It was a silver medal, the front of which depicts the head of George V. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit was impressed on the rim. The Allied Victory Medal is bronze, depicting a winged classical figure representing victory. It was similarly inscribed on the rim with the recipient's service number, rank, name and unit.<sup>38</sup>

John was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 10 March 1918 at the age of 42, and died the same day of shrapnel wounds to his legs and abdomen.<sup>33</sup> Just days after John died, No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station was evacuated and moved further behind the lines.<sup>34</sup> It is therefore likely that John was killed during a harsh attack of the advancing enemy during the "First Battles of the Somme."<sup>35</sup>

John is buried at the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Barlin, France, at Plot II, Row E, Grave 21. The extension was commenced by French troops in October 1914, but was taken over by Commonwealth forces in March 1916. In

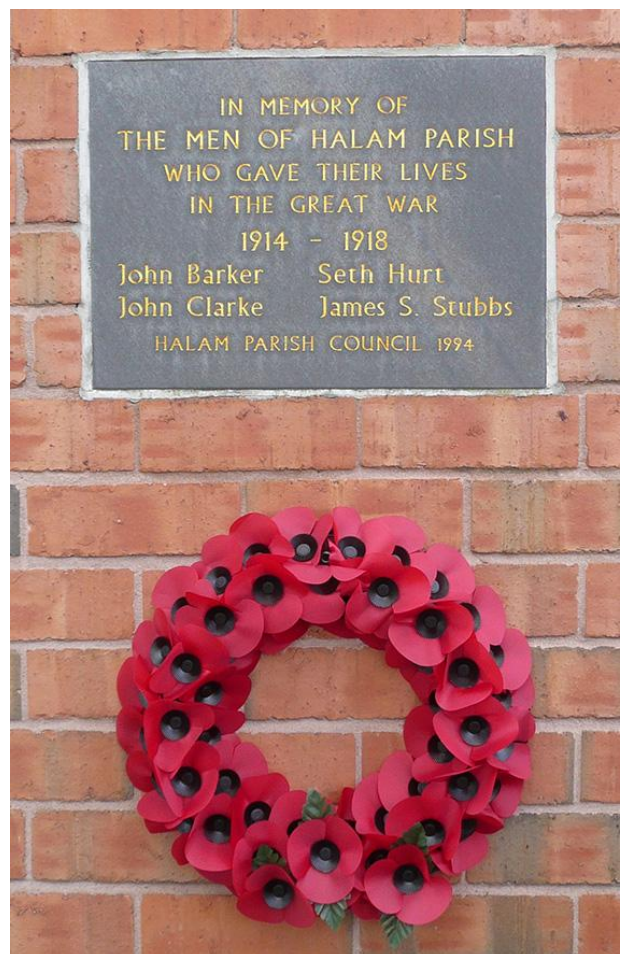


Photo courtesy of Village of Halam

There is a memorial in Halam, Southwell, commemorating four fallen soldiers of the First World War who had come from Halam. John is included in that memorial.<sup>39</sup>

In John's military records, Mabel was named as his next-of-kin and sole beneficiary, and received John's possessions. In June 1918 Mabel received from the UK Army 10 pounds, 2 shillings and 5 pence. Subsequently in November 1919, Mabel was also paid a War Gratuity of 6 pounds, 10 shillings.<sup>40</sup>

John's sister Louisa married Joseph Christopher Shelton in 1894<sup>41</sup> and by 1911 they had moved from Southwell, where they lived in 1901, to Bingham and had six children: Annie, born about 1895;<sup>42</sup> Christopher, born about 1897;<sup>43</sup> James, born about 1899; Laura, born about 1901; Olive, born about 1907; and John, born 1910.<sup>44</sup> It is likely she died in Hoby, Leicestershire, England, on 22 March 1955.<sup>45</sup>

John's sister Annie married Fred Lindley, a chauffeur, in 1891, and they had three children: Annie, born about 1900; Jack, born about 1901; and Percy, born about 1907.<sup>46</sup> Annie died on 30 December 1944 in Lincolnshire, England, as a widow, leaving her estate to her son Percy, a railway gateman.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "England and Wales Birth Registration Index, 1837–2008." *FamilySearch* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 13 December, 2016), entry for John Barker, 1876; Volume 7B, Page 392, Line 155. [Actual baptism date given by great-grandnephew Matthew Jarvis from his local research]

<sup>2</sup> *General Register Office* ([www.gro.gov.uk](http://www.gro.gov.uk): accessed 20 December 2016), entry for John Barker, 1876 M Quarter in Southwell Notts, Volume 07B, Page 392

<sup>3</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 11 December 2016), entry for Barker, John, Service No: 30551 and 18009

<sup>4</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, ED, institution, or vessel: 5; Piece: 3368, Folio: 78, Page: 11

<sup>5</sup> "1841 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 17 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Basford, Sub-registration district: Arnold, Piece: 865, Book: 8, Folio: 41, Page: 4; and "1851 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 17 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Sub-registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24b, Household schedule number: 7, Piece: 2134, Folio: 323, Page: 2

<sup>6</sup> "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975" *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 January 2016), entry for John Barker, Baptism place: Southwell, County: Nottingham, FHL Film Number 503816, 504076, 504535.

<sup>7</sup> "Jervis Main Tree," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Mary Ann Barker. Owner of the tree is John Barker's great-grandnephew, Matthew Jarvis; used with permission received 20 December 2016.

<sup>8</sup> "1851 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): 21 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Sub-registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24b, Household schedule number: 7, Piece: 2134, Folio: 323, Page: 2

<sup>9</sup> See Endnote 7. Also, "1841 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 17 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Basford; Sub-registration district: Arnold; Piece 865; Book 8; Folio 41; Page 4

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- <sup>10</sup> "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Sub-registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Household schedule number: 14, Piece: 3532, Folio: 46, Page: 2
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> See Endnote 4.
- <sup>13</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 22 December 2016), entry for John Baker, Registration district: Southwell, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 3368, Folio: 19, Page: 31
- <sup>14</sup> See Endnote 4.
- <sup>15</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 214
- <sup>16</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 229
- <sup>17</sup> See Endnote 13.
- <sup>18</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 January 2016), entry for Luisa [*sic*] Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 219
- <sup>19</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 2707, Folio: 60, Page: 1
- <sup>20</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Louisa A. Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 2707, Folio: 7, Page: 8
- <sup>21</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Annie Barker, Registration district: Basford, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 2669, Folio: 72, Page: 18
- <sup>22</sup> "England and Wales Marriage Registration Index, 1837–2005," *FamilySearch* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 13 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, County: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7B, Page: 743, Line number: 331
- <sup>23</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 December 2016), entry for Mabel Lamb, Registration district: Southwell, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 368
- <sup>24</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 12 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Registration district: Southwell, Registration district number: 431, Sub-registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 20678
- <sup>25</sup> Copy of marriage registration identifying only her mother, Charlotte Lamb.
- <sup>26</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 15 December 2016), entry for Mable [*sic*] Lamb, Registration district: Southwell, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 3368, Folio: 87, Page: 3
- <sup>27</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 15 December 2016), entry for Mabel Lamb, Registration district: Bingham, Sub-registration district: Bingham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 22, Household schedule number: 44, Piece: 3203, Folio: 136, Page: 24
- <sup>28</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 11 December 2016), entry for Barker, John, Service No: 30551 and 18009
- <sup>29</sup> From "The Wartime Memories Project – Labour Corps during the Great War," (<http://www.wartimemoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/regiment.php?pid=17677>: accessed 12 December 2016)
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> "The Labour Corps 1917–1918," *The Long, Long Trail* (<http://www.1914-1918.net/labour.htm>: accessed 12 December 2016).

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 12 December 2016), entry for Barker, J.

<sup>34</sup> "LAC War Diaries of the First World War, 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G): accessed 13 December 2016)

<sup>35</sup> "The First Battles of the Somme, 1918," *The Long, Long Trail, The British Army in the Great War of 1914–1918* (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battles/battles-of-the-western-front-in-france-and-flanders/the-first-battles-of-the-somme-1918/>: accessed 17 December 2016)

<sup>36</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, ([www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery](http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery): accessed 13 December 2016), entry for Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension

<sup>37</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920." *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 22 December 2016), for John Barker, Regiment or Corps: York and Lancaster Regiment, Labour Corps; Regimental number: 30551, 18009

<sup>38</sup> "A Guide to British Campaign Medals of WW1," *The Great War 1914–1918*, (<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm>: accessed 20 December 2016)

<sup>39</sup> Halam Village," home page (<http://www.halam.org.uk/home.htm>: accessed 20 December 2016). Photograph used with permission, received 3 January 2017

<sup>40</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for John Barker, Regimental Number 18009

<sup>41</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Louisa Shelton, Registration district: Peterborough, Registration district number: 170, Sub-registration district: Peterborough, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 39, Piece: 8705

<sup>42</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Louisa Shelton, Registration district: Southwell, Sub-registration district: Southwell, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Household schedule number: 119, Piece: 3192, Folio: 13, Page: 17

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> See Endnote 40.

<sup>45</sup> "Jarvis Main Tree," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Louisa Ann Barker. Owner of the tree is Louisa Ann Barker's great-grandson, Matthew Jarvis; used with permission received 20 December 2016.

<sup>46</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Annie Lindley, Registration district: Grantham, Registration district number: 417, Sub-registration district: Grantham North, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 19689

<sup>47</sup> "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966, 1973–1995." *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 21 December 2016), entry for Annie Lindley