



## William Alfred Waller

1617 Private, 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Norfolk Regiment.

He was killed in action in Gallipoli on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1915, aged 22

William is buried at the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance Cemetery, Anzac, Gallipoli, Turkey.

1893. 28 <sup>th</sup> May Born 6 <sup>th</sup> Jan <sup>y</sup> 1893 No. 693	William Alfred	Jacob & Mary Ann	Waller	Redenhall	Labourer	J. J. Petrus Rector
---	-------------------	---------------------------	--------	-----------	----------	------------------------

William Alfred Waller was one of a large family. A very large family. A mind boggling 14 children, all of whom (in 1911) were still alive. I cannot emphasise enough what an extra-ordinary achievement this was for the parents, not just the number of children, effectively producing one every other year for the first 27 years of the parent's marriage, but (equally impressively) not losing any of them to illness or accident. This was a time when the only vaccination available was smallpox, a minor cut could kill you, with sepsis or lock jaw, and measles, mumps and diphtheria would come in waves through the town.

In 1911, William's parents were living out in Lush Bush; Jacob and Mary Ann headed a household of 8 living in a 5-room house, those rooms would have included the 'kitchen' which would have been a living room with a range in it – crowded. William was one of the middle children, a 30-year-old spinster sister and a 7 years old baby brother were also in the household with various other offspring between

1874. Marriage solemnized <i>at the Parish Church</i> in the Parish of <i>Needham</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.
85	Oct 9 <sup>th</sup>	Jacob Waller	22	Bachelor	Brickmaker	Needham	James Waller	Labourer
		Mary Ann Bindley	21	Spinster	—	Needham	George Bindley	Brickmaker
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <i>Anglican Church</i> by me, <i>F. G. H. Fildes</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Jacob Waller</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>George Bindley</i> <i>Mary Ann Waller</i>		

Jacob and Mary Ann Waller nee Bindley had married in Needham in October 1874; it looks like Jacob had married a workmate's daughter as both Jacob and George Bindley Snr were brickmakers.

As so often happened in rural Norfolk at the time, the young couple had slightly jumped the gun, George Bindley jnr (at least the third in a direct line of George Bindleys) was baptised in early 1872. Their relationship continued and in 1874 with young (H)annah on the way, they finally got married. In 1881, 3 years after they had moved from Needham to Lush Bush, Jacob's home area, young George Bindley, Jnr, was the oldest child in their household and was clearly described as Jacob's son. By the 1891 census, George Bindley had quietly become George B Waller!

This was quite standard at the time, come his marriage however and George would have had to revert to his name at Baptism, i.e George Bindley, and this is exactly what did happen. He married Ellen Prime from Alburgh and by 1901, living about a mile down the road from his parents, he had already three children including a 6 years old George Bindley, the fourth in the line we know of! By 1911, the Bindleys had spread their wings and settled in Brandiston with the four children that survived of the five they had.

In marked contrast to Jacob and Mary Ann's voluminous family, Mary Ann was one of only 2 children, how did she cope with the quantity she produced! Her father had originated from Norwich, as a 9-year-old in the 1841 census he was living in the midst of people working in Norwich's renowned textile trade. He however chose bricks, lodging with another bricklayer and his family in Needham in 1851. He married local lass Letitia Harper (or Letteshear as rendered in one census) and only seem to have had two daughters, including Mary Ann. By 1881, widowed George Snr had remarried and moved with his new wife to one of the Yards off Broad Street where they remained for another quarter of a century. In 1901 George Snr, at age 70, was still a brick layer's labourer with his 63 years old wife Eleanor nee Reeve supplementing the family income by taking in laundry – tough times! It wasn't until Eleanor's death in 1905 that George Snr moved in with his daughter and son in law out in Lush Bush.

Due to the size of his daughter's family, this ended in tragedy two years later. One of the sons was due to return to the family home, space was tight, and it was decided that it was time Grandpa George Bindley had to go to the workhouse to free up space. There may have been an element of dementia affecting George as one report coyly states that 'certain complaints' had been made against him and this had also contributed to the decision to send him to the workhouse. Such was the fear that the old boy had of this establishment that he chose to hang himself in the loft an outbuilding by his son in law's house. He had been determined to finish the job off as he had carefully locked the access door from the inside before hanging himself from a cord attached to a spar.

I said Lush Bush was Jacob's home area, unlike his wife he was the product of a largish family, at least 9 by 1871. His parents, James and Charlotte Waller Snr had started married life in this neck of the woods, way back in 1851, an area also knee deep with Whiskins, a Waller having married into the Wiskens family back in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Also, along the Bungay Road in 1851, was Jacob Waller Snr, one of James' brothers, another, William Waller Snr, was in place by 1861, James named his second child and oldest son after Uncle Jacob Snr and it was this Jacob who married Mary Ann Brindley.

Jacob Waller Jnr was one of a group of men sent to court following the Harleston Riots, more details given in Horace Webb's biography, but in essence:- the town took a strenuous dislike to an incomer, Mr Bunn, and made and burnt effigies of his family, 500 to 600 persons attacked his house, set fire to tar barrels in the street outside and bashed a desperately outnumbered policeman on the head – his headgear protected him. All got sentenced to several months hard labour, Jonathon Webb, Horace Webb's uncle, got extra time for being one of those who physically attacked P.C.Tuddenham. This all took place in November 1875, about a year after Jacob had married. He would have spent a few months in Norwich Castle awaiting trial; I can't imagine his wife was over impressed! I rather suspect that Jacob Jnr, a young man at the time, got swept away the enthusiasm of his much more wayward neighbours, the Webbs as the Wallers seem to have spent their time in

Harleston keeping a very low profile. There is a remote chance that family feelings may have influenced his actions, Jacob's wife's deceased mother had been a Harper and it was the Bunn's perceived mistreatment of an elderly Mr Harper that had provoked the riots in the first place.

Other than this brief foray into anarchy the Waller's carried on working and making babies, in fact I suspect if one could be bothered to pursue all the marriages of Jacobs own siblings, their children and his own children you would probably find that William Alfred Waller was related to half of Harleston! In 1912, along with so many of the other young men of Harleston, William enlisted in the Territorials. Yet another of his uncles, Jeremiah Waller, had already done so back in 1883, and doubtless shared tales with his nephews about the doings of the Battalion. There was a long tradition of militia units in the town based in various venues including behind the Cap. By 1901 they had a substantial purpose-built Drill Hall and some very big guns as well as the usual rifles etc. The unit would turn out on parades through the town in their full glory, have annual camps away, rifle practice, prize competitions for shooting and other martial skills as well as jolly good dinners. At the time William was 19 years old and working as a brick layer's labourer. William was literate and filled in the form himself, an ability that would not have been shared by all his fellow recruits. Having joined the territorials, he would have been one of the first wave of men expected to enlist at the outbreak of war, before conscription was introduced.

I don't know how many of Jacob's sons and nephews were called up, but he lost at least three nephews as well as his son, William Alfred Waller who died in Gallipoli. The fighting against the battle-hardened Turkish Army was particularly viscous and chaotic, with Norfolk men suffering disproportionately. By the time William died in September the Norfolk's had joined up with troops from Australia and New Zealand and it is amongst Anzac Troops that William was buried. Whilst one record states he was killed in action, the records from the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance Cemetery state he died of wounds which would make more sense. Sadly, William was one of the men whose bodies were known to have been buried there, but whose precise location was not known. This reflected on his headstone were the inscription 'Their Glory Shall Not be Blotted Out', is placed in tandem with 'Believed to be Buried in this Cemetery. A combination shared with many of his fallen compatriots.

Another of Jacob's sons, Charles Richard Waller, 42766 was wounded in mid-1918 when enlisted in the Lincolnshire Rgt.

Slightly less heroically yet another, nephew James, was done for poaching in 1928!

**THE LATE MR. J. WALLER.**  
The funeral took place at St. Mary's Church, Redenhall, on Tuesday, of the late Mr. Jacob Waller, aged 81 years, of Lush Bush, Redenhall Road, Harleston, who passed away after a short illness on Friday. He was born and had resided in the parish all his life, and for a large number of years he was employed on the Gawdy Hall estate. He was one of the oldest members of the Harleston Rational Society.  
The service was conducted by the Rev. W. P. Tippen, and the family mourners were Mr. and Mrs. Bindley, Mr. James Waller, Mr. Fitt, Mrs. Barber, Mrs. S. Reeve, Miss Waller, Mrs. Sadd, Mr. and Mrs. Staff, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Waller, Mrs. A. Buckingham, Mrs. C. Jolly, Mr. and Mrs. A. Saunders, Mr. F. Leaper, Mr. W. Brown and Miss Buckingham.  
There were several floral tributes.

The Wallers seem to be one of our 'steady' families who quietly got on with busy hard-working lives. They would have pitched in when needed but were not the sorts to push themselves forward. Jacob himself lived to a ripe old age, dying in 1933, at the age of 81 when it was revealed he had worked for the Gawdy Hall estate for many years and was one of the oldest members of the Harleston rational Society – and with all those children I suspect he had got his money's worth!