

PRIVATE FREDERICK GEORGE GREEN

K/26, 22nd (Service) Battalion (Kensington), Royal Fusiliers Regiment

Died aged 34 on 11 June 1916

Buried with honour at *Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, near Arras*; 1 A 36

Not commemorated in Tewkesbury either at the Cross or in the Abbey



Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery



1914-15 Star Medal



Royal Fusiliers

FREDERICK GEORGE GREEN has only recently been identified as a Tewkesbury casualty of the Great War; he was never commemorated on any memorial in the town and consequently escaped earlier recognition. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records, Frederick George Green was the son of William and Sarah Green of Tewkesbury (although they misspelt his forename as Fridrick). However, his family background was unusually complex and little of that information is true. Frederick George's birth was not registered with the surname of Green, he was not the son of William and Sarah Green, and he did not originate from Tewkesbury. Nevertheless, as documented in this biography, there is ample evidence to prove that he had a strong connection to Tewkesbury, more than enough to justify recognising him as one of the town's early volunteers.

Frederick George was born in Rugby, Warwickshire, in 1880; his birth was registered in the June quarter under the name of Frederick George Griffiths. His mother was Emily Griffiths, a single woman, who had herself been born out of wedlock to Sarah Ann Griffiths in Stroud in March 1857. Emily also had an older child, Ellen Sophia Griffiths, who was born in Tewkesbury in 1878.

The connection between the Griffiths and the Green surname materialised prior to Frederick George's birth when Emily's mother, Sarah Ann Griffiths, married William Green in the June quarter of 1863 in Tewkesbury; they went on to have at least six children. In 1871 the Green family, other than William who was absent at the

time, was living in Cares Alley in the High Street. Five children were listed on the census return, including Alice M.M. Green and Emily Griffiths aged 14 (described as 'step-daughter' since William was still regarded as the head of the household, even though he was not at home).

By the time of the 1881 census, Emily Griffiths had left the Green family and was living in Double Alley, as head of the household, with the infant Frederick George and Ellen Sophia. For Frederick George, however, life changed significantly soon afterwards. At the end of 1882 his sister, Ellen Sophia Griffiths, died; this was followed in early 1885 by the death of his mother, Emily Griffiths, at the age of 28; both deaths were registered in Tewkesbury. It is reasonable to assume that, around this time, Emily's mother Sarah Green stepped into the breach and absorbed Frederick George into the mainstream of the Green family; he was after all her grandson (not her son as suggested by the CWGC records).

In 1891 Sarah, by now a widow, was living in North East Terrace with five children, including Frederick George Griffiths and Alice Maud Mary Green, her eldest daughter with William. On this census Frederick George was described, quite correctly, as Sarah's grandson. By 1901, Sarah was living at 48 Barton Street with only Alice Maud. Sarah Green died seven years later in Tewkesbury; her death was registered in the September quarter of 1908. In the March quarter of 1910, Alice Maud married Thomas Hardiman, a widower, in Winchcomb (as it was then known). On the 1911 census, Thomas and Alice were living in Hailes Street, Winchcombe, with

CWGC records use the spelling of Green, as found on earlier records such as census returns). His reason for using that surname instead of Griffiths is unclear but, given that he was raised within the wider Green family, it may have been a natural choice.

The casualty record also identified his birthplace as Tewkesbury, even though he was actually born in Rugby, and his place of residence as Winchcombe. It is quite feasible that Frederick George was unaware of his true place of birth; his mother died before he was five years old and he had lived in Tewkesbury since he was a baby with every reason to believe that the town was his 'home'. Since Frederick George gave his place of residence as Winchcombe, it is probable that he was living with Alice Hardiman and her husband Thomas sometime prior to volunteering for military service.

After enlistment, Frederick George Greene was posted to the 22nd (Service) Battalion (Kensington), Royal Fusiliers. The battalion was formed at the White City in London, on 11 September 1914, by the Mayor and Borough of Kensington. His regimental number (K/26) suggests that he must have been one of the earliest volunteers and may well have been working in the Kensington area at the time. Initially the battalion moved to Roffey Camp in Horsham, Sussex, for training before transferring to Clipstone Camp in Nottinghamshire, where it joined the 99th Infantry Brigade of the 33rd Division. The battalion was then mobilised for war and landed in Boulogne in November 1915. Frederick George's medal records show that he arrived in France on 15 November. Soon afterwards, the battalion was transferred with the 99th Infantry Brigade to the 2nd Division.

The battalion did not take part in any major actions in the relatively short time that Frederick George served in France. It spent time rotating between training, resting in billets and holding trench lines where casualties were occasionally

suffered. At the beginning of June 1916, the battalion was in billets at Estrée Cauchie in the Vimy Ridge sector, near Arras. The Battalion War Diary entry for 10 June 1916 reported that: '*The Battalion moved into front line trenches at Carency relieving the 1st King's Liverpool Regiment*'. The battalion remained in the front line trenches for four days before moving back into billets. During that time three men were killed, on 11 June, including **Private Frederick George Green(e)**. He was a casualty of trench warfare and accordingly his body was recovered and buried in *Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery*, Souchez, near Arras.

Frederick George was entitled to the '*1914-15 Star*' Medal, the *British War Medal* and the *Victory Medal* – although a note on his medal records suggests that they were not claimed by his family after the war.

In October 1919, a gratuity of £8 was awarded to Mrs. Alice Maud Mary Hardiman (formerly Green) who had been named by Frederick George, not only as his next-of-kin, but also as his sister. It is, perhaps, a reflection of the complexity of the family relationships that Frederick George referred to Alice as his sister when, in reality, she was his half-aunt! Having been raised together as children, it is of course quite possible that Frederick George genuinely thought Alice was his sister. It was undoubtedly Alice who provided the factually incorrect notation to the CWGC that Frederick George was the son of William and Sarah Green. Maybe she believed that to be the case but, if she was aware of the true situation, to have attempted to explain it to the CWGC would have caused a great deal of confusion! However, this particular item of information ultimately proved to be the key to unlocking the details of Frederick George's background and to accumulate the evidence that he had a significant connection to Tewkesbury – which entitles him to be commemorated in the town.