

## Ernest Gibson (1896 – 1964)

Ernest Gibson, born in Bowling, Bradford, was the illegitimate son of Jabez Gibson and Sarah Ann Barlow.

The couple were never married and Ernest's mother subsequently married William Bulcock, from Eastburn. William had two children of his own and the new family settled in Farnhill.

Ernest seems to have been very much involved in village life and was a member of Kildwick and District Brass Band. He and his step-brother worked in a woollen mill.

During WW1 Ernest probably served in the army and after the war married and made a home in Silsden. He and his wife, who both worked in the textile trade, were very active in the Labour movement. They had two daughters.

Ernest Gibson died suddenly in 1964.

No Photo Available

### Pre-war life

Ernest Gibson was born on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1896 in Bowling, Bradford. His birth certificate recorded him as being the son of Jabez Gibson and Sarah Ann Gibson formerly Barlow, however there is no evidence that the couple were actually married.

REGISTRATION DISTRICT				BRADFORD						
1896	BIRTH in the Sub-district of Bowling			in the County of Bradford						
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
299	Twenty first July 1896. 65 Moody Street n. 2.	Ernest	Boy	Jabez Gibson	Sarah Ann Gibson formerly Barlow	Midnight (master)	S. A. Gibson Mother 65 Moody Street	Thirty first August 1896	Jonathan August Wilkinson	

Ernest Gibson's birth certificate  
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**Note:** In 1903 Jabez Gibson married Annie Emily Johnson at All Saints Church, Leeds. On the certificate he stated that he was a bachelor. Jabez and Annie are known to have had at least one child, a daughter called Gladys Helen, born 8<sup>th</sup> September 1904 in Hunslet, Leeds. She would have been Ernest's half-sister.

From 1920 onwards this family lived in Birmingham area. Jabez died there in 1942, and Gladys Helen in 2003.

By the time of the 1901 census the four year-old Ernest and his mother were living with his mother's parents and siblings, in Hunslet, Leeds. She was recorded as being 35 years old and single.

Administrative County			Leeds		The aforementioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the											
Civil Parish			Ecclesiastical Parish		County Borough, Municipal Borough or Urban District			Ward of Municipal Borough or Urban District			Parliamentary Borough or Urban District			Parliamentary Borough or Urban District		
Hunslet			St Mary's		Leeds			East Hunslet			Leeds			Leeds		
House No.	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	Uninhabited	Number of Inhabitants	Number of Persons	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employed, Worked, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN					
22A	48	1	-	-	Arthur Theo Barber	Head	35	Glass Bottle maker	Do		Leeds					
					Grace	Wife	48				Leeds					
					Sarah Ann	Daughter	35				Leeds					
					Thomas Ann	Son	30	Butcher Slaughterer	Do		Leeds					
					Amelia	Daughter	29				Leeds					
					Mary	Do	25	Domestic	Own acct at home		Leeds					
					Arthur Theo	Son	5	Butcher maker	Worker		Leeds					
					Herbert	Son	4				Leeds					
					Lidney	Son	4				Leeds					
					Ernest Gibson	Grandson	4				Bradford					

Extract from the 1901 census return for Joseph Street, Hunslet  
Used under licence from the National Archive

In 1909 Sarah Ann married the widower William Bulcock, a coal carter from Eastburn. William already had two children: a son, Harry (subsequently a Farnhill WW1 Volunteer), who was just a month younger than Ernest; and a four year-old daughter, Nellie.

The new family settled in Farnhill, where the 1911 census recorded them living at 5 Kirkgate. By this time both Harry and Ernest were 14 and had left school. They were both recorded as being bobbin setters in a woollen mill.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.									
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.									
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for other than the preparation of Statistical Tables.									
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.	BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATION of every person.			
1. William Bulcock	Head	44	married	Coal Merchant	Leeds	Yorkshire			
2. Sarah Ann Bulcock	Wife	45	married		Leeds	Yorkshire			
3. Harry Bulcock	Son	14		Bobbin setter in Woollen Mill	Farnhill	Yorkshire			
4. Nellie Bulcock	Daughter	6			Leeds	Yorkshire			
5. Ernest Gibson	Grandson	14		Bobbin setter in Woollen Mill	Bradford	Yorkshire			

Extract from the 1911 census return for 5 Kirkgate, Farnhill  
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At some point prior to WW1 Ernest became a member of Kildwick and District Brass Band.

## Ernest Gibson during WW1

Ernest Gibson's WW1 service records have not survived (70% of the records were destroyed during WW2, in the London blitz of 1940) and there is very little information about when, where, or how he served.

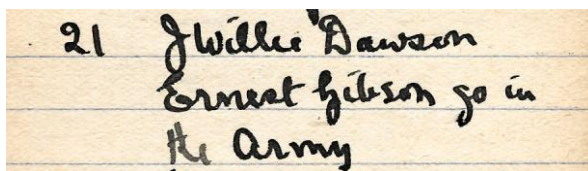
No newspaper reports of the period mentioned him as a member of the armed forces, or included his name in any list of the men who were serving.

Such reports as there are suggest Ernest was in the village perhaps until quite late in the war period:

- 26/2/1915 (West Yorkshire Pioneer) – Ernest Gibson was elected to the committee of Kildwick and District Brass Band. (Farnhill WW1 Volunteer Harry Walmsley was elected at the same meeting.)
- 11/8/1916 (West Yorkshire Pioneer) and 12/8/1916 (Keighley News) – Ernest Gibson was present when his friend Anthony Whiteoak, of Grange Farm, Kildwick, drowned in a swimming accident on the river Aire. At the inquest, the Coroner said that Ernest had done everything he possibly could to help save his friend. Read the [news report from the West Yorkshire Pioneer](#).
- 22/12/1916 (West Yorkshire Pioneer) – Ernest Gibson was one of the coffin bearers at Harry Walmsley's funeral.

There is no doubt that Ernest Gibson volunteered to serve in WW1 – otherwise his name would not have been included in the Farnhill Parish Council Roll of Honour. However, information about his service is slight:

- W.B. Whitham, who lived in Farnhill throughout WW1, recorded in his diary on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1917:



From W.B. Whitham's diary  
Courtesy of Pauline Pettit

- On both the 1918 and 1919 electoral rolls for Farnhill, Ernest Gibson of Kirkgate was listed as an absent voter, eligible on account of his military service.

## Post-war life

After the war Ernest returned to Farnhill, to live with his mother and step-family at 5 Kirkgate. This is confirmed by the 1921 census which shows him working as a cotton weaver for the Bingley Weaving Company at the "Industrial Shed" in Farnhill (the former Farnhill Mill).

He lived there until June 1927 when he married Edith Dawson of Silsden, in Silsden Methodist Chapel. Both of his step-siblings attended the ceremony and signed the register as witnesses.

Ernest and Edith made their home in Silsden, living at 8 Albert Square until 1937 before moving to 24 Hothfield Street and, finally, to 20 South View sometime during WW2.

On their marriage certificate both Ernest and Edith were recorded as being employed as cotton weavers. However by the time the 1939 register was compiled, at the start of WW2, when wartime ration cards were being issued, they had transferred their skills to the weaving of "Air Silk Rayon" – which was used in the production of parachutes and barrage balloons.

1	Gibson Ernest	+	M	July 9 1896	M	Weaver at Silk Rayon
2	Gibson Edith	+	F	Jan 31 1895	M	Weaver's Wife Domestic
3	Gibson Jean	+	F	May 12 1933	S	at School

1939 Register entry for 24 Hothfield Street, Silsden  
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**Note:** Ernest's birthdate is incorrect.

Ernest subsequently took work as an attendant at an electricity sub-station.

Both Ernest and Edith were active members of the Silsden branch of the Labour Party, with Ernest eventually becoming its vice-chairman. He was also a committee member of Silsden Co-operative Society, and a member of the Silsden Horticultural Society.

The couple had two daughters: Jean Margaret, born 12<sup>th</sup> May 1933, who died in 1940; and Betty, who was born on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1940.

Ernest's step-father, William, died in Farnhill in 1946 and it seems likely that his mother, Sarah Ann, moved to live with Ernest and Edith during the last year or so of her life. She died in 1951.

Ernest Gibson collapsed and died at home on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1964, and was buried in Silsden New Cemetery, in the same plot as his daughter Jean. He was aged 67.



The following obituary appeared in both the Craven Herald and Keighley News a few days later.

**FATAL COLLAPSE.** — Mr. Ernest Gibson, South View Terrace, Silsden, collapsed and died while having lunch at his home on Monday. Aged 67, he went to Silsden from Farnhill upon his marriage and was a weaver until during the last war when he became an electricity substation attendant. He continued this occupation with the Yorkshire Electricity Board until his retirement. Mr. Gibson was active in the Labour movement, being a vice-chairman of the Silsden Labour Party and a former delegate to the Keighley Constituency Labour Party. He was also a member of the Management Committee of the Silsden Co-operative Society and a committee member of the Silsden Horticultural Society. He leaves a widow and a daughter.

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## Postscript

Edith's active involvement with the Labour Party continued until at least the October 1974 general election, at which time she was included on a list of party members. She died on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1981 and was buried in Silsden New Cemetery, with her husband and daughter, Jean.



Gibson family grave, in Silsden New Graveyard

Betty Gibson, Ernest and Edith's second daughter, married Graham Gornier in 1965 – somewhere in the Skipton area. It is not known whether they had any children or whether they continued to live in the local area.

## Ernest Gibson – a life in summary

**Born:** 21/7/1896, Bowling, Bradford

**Died:** 9/3/1964 **Aged:** 67

**Home address:** 20 South View Terrace, Silsden

### Parents

**Father:** Jabez Gibson; b. 1859, Hunslet, Leeds;  
m. Annie Emily Johnson, 10/10/1903, All Saints Church, Leeds;  
d. 1942, Birmingham (Registration district)

**Mother:** Sarah Ann Barlow; b. 1867, Swinton;  
m. William Bulcock, 1909, Skipton (Registration district);  
d. May 1951, Silsden; buried 21/5/1951, Kildwick St. Andrew's

**Married:** Unmarried, although Sarah Ann used the surname Gibson on Ernest's birth certificate.

### Siblings

Harry Bulcock (step-brother); b. 13/8/1896, Farnhill; m. Annie Pickles, 18/8/1927, Keighley;  
d. 15/12/1963, Farnhill

Nellie Bulcock (step-sister); b. 10/1/1905, Eastburn ; m. Ernest Craven, 1933

Gladys Helen Gibson (half-sister); b. 8/9/1904, Hunslet, Leeds; d. February 2003, Birmingham

### Relationship to other volunteers

Thomas Bulcock – was Ernest's step-uncle (1909)

Harry Bulcock – step-brother (1909)

### WW1 service

Army service started 21<sup>st</sup> May 1917. No further details known.

### Marriage

**Wife:** Edith Dawson; b. 31/1/1900, Skipton; d. 19/4/1981, Silsden

**Date:** 4/6/1927, Silsden Methodist Chapel (witnessed by Harry and Nellie Bulcock)

### Children

Jean Margaret, b. 12/5/1933, Silsden; d. 1940, Keighley (Registration district)

Betty, b. 5/5/1940, Silsden; m. Graham L. Gornier, 1965, Staincliffe (Registration district)

