

Thomas John Barnardo

Thomas John Barnardo was best known by the name Dr Barnardo. He founded the British charity, Barnardo's, to provide care for **vulnerable** children and young people.

Early Life

Thomas John Barnardo was born in Dublin, Ireland, on 4th July 1845. He was the fourth of five children born to John Michaelis Barnardo, a **furrier**, and his second wife, Abigail.



In 1866, Dr Barnardo left Ireland and moved to London as he wanted to become a doctor. He planned to study at London Hospital. However, when he arrived in London, Dr Barnardo was shocked by what he found. He saw children all over the city living in terrible conditions. A deadly disease called cholera was spreading throughout the East End of the city and many children became orphans. Lots of children did not make it to their fifth birthday. Dr Barnardo desperately wanted to do something to help.

Ragged Schools

Despite his name, Dr Barnardo stopped training to become a doctor and never achieved his qualifications. Instead, in 1867, he set up a ragged school, which is an independent school set up to give free education, food, clothes and homes to children who were too poor to pay.

One pupil at Dr Barnardo's first ragged school was called Jim Jarvis. One evening, Jim took Dr Barnardo for a walk around the East End of London. Jim showed him all of the children who slept on the street, often on roofs or in gutters. Dr Barnardo was so upset by what he saw that he gave up his dream of being a doctor and decided to give his life to helping poor children.

Stepney Causeway

In 1870, Dr Barnardo started his charity, which was known as Dr Barnardo's Homes, and opened his first orphanage for boys at 18 Stepney Causeway, London. At night, Dr Barnardo would walk the streets of London looking for boys who needed somewhere to stay. To begin with, only a certain number of boys could stay at the orphanage each night but Dr Barnardo was unhappy with this. He promised that no poor or needy child would ever be turned away.

Barkingside

In 1873, Dr Barnardo married Sara Louise Elmslie, who was known as Syrie. As a wedding present, Dr Barnardo and Syrie were given a piece of land to live on in Barkingside, East London. They used this land to open the Girls' Village Home. Within the 65 cottages on the land, Dr Barnardo and Syrie gave a home to over 1500 needy girls. They taught them skills, such as how to look after a home, and kept them safe.

Impact

During his lifetime, Dr Barnardo and his charity opened 96 homes to look after vulnerable children and young people. He also raised a lot of money to help children to stay with their families when times were difficult. Dr Barnardo's dream of giving every child the best possible future is continued by his charity to this day.

Glossary

furrier: Someone who makes clothes or items, such as rugs, from animal fur.

vulnerable: In need of special care or support.

Questions

1. At which number on Stepney Causeway did Dr Barnardo open his first orphanage for boys? Tick **one**.

- 4
- 18
- 65
- 70

2. Who took Dr Barnardo for a walk around the East End of London? Tick **one**.

- John
- Abigail
- Jim
- Syrie

3. List **two** facts about Thomas John Barnardo's family life as a child.

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4. Find and copy the place in which Dr Barnardo opened the Girls' Village Home.

5. What is the job of a furrier?

6. **Lots of children did not make it to their fifth birthday.**

Explain why this was the case.

7. Give a definition for the term **ragged school**.

8. Fully explain how Dr Barnardo impacted the lives of vulnerable children during his lifetime.
