

# LIVERPOOL FAMILY HISTORIAN



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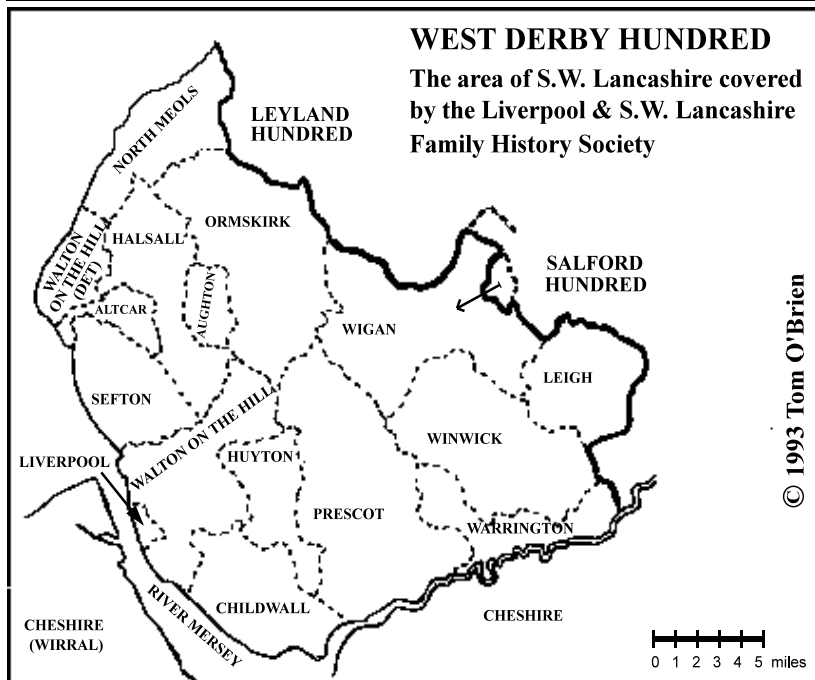
September 2025

# THE LIVERPOOL & S. W. LANCASHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Founded 27 May 1976

Covering

“the area of interest shall be that part of the ancient  
County of Lancashire known as the Hundred of West Derby.”



Website: [www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)



**Front cover: Liverpool Sailor's Home**—Victorian illustration of the Sailor's Home in Canning Place, Liverpool (**unknown c1851-1860**) **Public domain Liverpool Sailors Home.jpg** File:**Liverpool Sailors Home.jpg**[**Liverpool\_Sailors\_Home**] from Wikimedia Commons. Open for business between December 1850 to July 1969, it was unfortunately demolished in 1974.

# Liverpool Family Historian

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## Editorial

Hello everyone and welcome to another edition of The Liverpool Historian.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome all our new members to the Society and hope that if they need any help that they won't hesitate to ask, either through the website or at a help desk or maybe through our Facebook page. There is always someone on hand who can help.

We have a jam-packed edition for you this quarter as we received some fascinating articles and I did everything I could to squeeze as many in as possible. I have so enjoyed reading them and adding them to our Journal for you all to enjoy as well. My thanks to everyone who sent in an article to be published and to the various members of the Committee who have also submitted articles.

I was particularly interested in reading Sue Dobson's article as it referred to a resource, previously unknown to myself, in relation to WW1 and the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces. As one of my ancestors had emigrated to Canada and then served in WW1, I was interested to see if I could find more information and I did! 34 pages of his military history during his time spent fighting in France. So, thank you, Sue, for your article and the link to the website. (See article on page 142).

Leigh & District FHS have been very busy organising the One Day Conference and I, for one, am very much looking forward to a day out in October. It looks to be a very interesting and informative day. Please have a look at the centre insert and book your place as soon as you can.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Members Secretary, Geoff Bibby, who has taken over from Annette Urwin. I know you will all wish him well in his new role as well as wishing Annette best wishes on her retirement from the Committee at the next AGM.

It was with sadness that we learned of the recent death of long-standing member Pat Ballas—please read her obituary on page 117. Our sincere condolences go out to her family.

Best wishes

***Alison Anyon (Editor)***

## News Items

### Conference

My apologies to everyone, but the AGM will **NOT** be held at the Annual Conference as stated in the June Journal.

The conference this year will be held on **Saturday 11 October 2025**, hosted by the Leigh and District Family History Society.

The venue will be **St Mary's Community Hall, Lowton, WA3 1DQ**. The programme is available on the website and the booking form and further information is available on the centre yellow pages of this edition of the journal, so please save the date in your diaries and join us on the day.

It certainly looks like a very interesting day has been planned for us all!

### Journal Price Increases

Over recent years the cost of printing and distributing the Society Journal has been increasing steadily, with increased postal charges being a particular problem. The Committee feels that it must address this issue but at the same time wishes to minimise the impact of any rise in membership costs.

It is therefore proposed that the Society offers the option to supply members with a digital copy of the Journal as an alternative to the printed copy, which would remain available to those who would prefer that.

At the last AGM, those present voted that they would not be averse to a price increase from the membership year **2026**, with the additional proviso that should there be any further significant increase in costs during **2025**, the Committee may use its discretion to increase the proposed membership fees accordingly, with any further increase being ratified at the **2025 AGM**.

This decision has not been taken lightly, however, after further

discussion by the Pricing Sub-Committee, it has been agreed that this proposal needs to be discussed more fully at the **2025 AGM**.

To this end we hope that more members will attend the AGM via Zoom so that they can voice their opinions.

***Trustees and Officers of the Society***

## **ATTENTION!**

Through no fault of our own we have been informed by Santander that they have taken it upon themselves to close our bank account with them.

We have new bank details for those members who pay by standing order.

**To continue receiving copies of the Journal uninterrupted from January 2026, please check your bank account now and (if necessary) update the details to:**

Sort Code: 60-83-01; Account: 20466637

**Please quote your membership number as the Reference**

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause but this has been totally out of our control.

***Treasurer***

## **Disclaimer**

The Society does not sponsor any professional genealogist or service provider, whether members of the Society or not. It cannot be held responsible for the quality of service given by those who advertise in the Journal. Members intending to purchase goods or services from advertisers should make their own enquiries and arrangements regarding payment before agreeing to pay for services.

## Obituary — Pat Bellas

I am sorry to report that Pat passed away on 2 June 2025.

Pat was a long-term member of our society and from 2010 to 2021 she was the Projects Co-ordinator. In this role Pat was instrumental in setting up a team of volunteers to research female convicts who had been transported to Van Diemen's Land in conjunction with Colette McAlpine from the Female Convicts Research Centre Inc. in Hobart, Tasmania. Between them the team carried out extensive research into thousands of convicts and their complex, sometimes tragic and occasionally funny, lives. Pat always had a story to tell about one of them!

Pat had previously worked at Wigan and Leigh College teaching IT and these skills were instrumental in progressing the research and in assisting our local volunteers, whom Pat was always happy to help and kept motivated. Pat was still working on the project right up to her death and her family recognised its importance in her life by mentioning the project and LSWLFHS at her funeral which some members attended on behalf of the Society. There is also a tribute to her published on the Female Convicts Research Centre website.

Colette McAlpine says *"Through almost daily emails I came to know Pat well. She was clever, funny, skilled, determined and kind. We met in Liverpool twice with members of her team. She was even more fun in person. We became firm friends with a shared passion for convict research. And a friendship that transcended convict research."*

Pat attended Society meetings in various places, but Leigh and Liverpool primarily, where she is remembered by many people for her sense of humour and dedication, her infectious smile and positivity. Kath Graham, a member of Leigh Branch, and a volunteer on the project says *"I respected Pat's intellect, her skills and her ability to motivate and connect people. That smile and her positivity. I will really miss her."*

Pat was pre-deceased by her husband; she was exceptionally proud of

her two sons and their families and in particular her grandchildren. We are all saddened by her death. RIP Pat.



Pat Bellas (Left) and Colette McAlpine (Right) enjoying a gin and tonic in Liverpool

### ***Your Journal Needs You!***

Please send us your articles, pictures, help requests, website reviews etc. Our journal depends on your contributions if we are to maintain the high standards we have all enjoyed for so many years.

#### **DEADLINES**

The cut-off dates for material to reach the editor, for potential inclusion in the next issue are:



|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| MARCH     | Jan 25th  |
| JUNE      | Apr 25th  |
| SEPTEMBER | July 25th |
| DECEMBER  | Oct 25th  |

## Letters to the Editor

I was very interested to read about Stanley **Lucas**, who was awarded 5 medals as a merchant seaman for the work he did during the 2nd World War, because my father William Rattray was a chief radio officer in the merchant navy whose ship was requisitioned by the Admiralty for the Atlantic Convoys in 1939.

He made many crossings until the end of 1941, when he was transferred to a squad helping to repair merchant ships damaged by enemy fire. Like most people who served during the war he didn't say much about it and didn't have any medals. I had no idea that he would have qualified for the Star; Atlantic Star and War Medal and unfortunately he died 25 years ago so I'm unable to query why he didn't ask for them. I would have thought that the authorities would have sent out the medals, rather than expecting people to claim them.

I wonder if he refused or didn't want them.

## A Connection to the Butcher, the Bride and the Peach Thief

I find it fascinating when my family history coincides with someone else's even if it is only briefly. I was reading Eileen **O'Reilly's** article The Butcher, The Bride and the Peach Thief in the June magazine and found that Harry and Lily **Carter**, who became Eileen's mother's hosts when she was evacuated to Welshpool during World War two, had been living in the village of Cookley in Worcestershire in 1911.

At that time my great-grandfather James **Griffin** (1876-1969) was the third (and last) generation of the **Griffin** family to run the store with post office and bakery on Bridge St in the centre of Cookley. This photo is believed to have been taken about 1905 with my Great Grandfather

standing in the doorway. The sacks stacked to the side are labelled **GRIFFIN BROS COOKLEY**. I doubt that the store had changed significantly by 1911.



The next property to the left of the shop, out of the photo was a butchers shop run by Walter **Taylor**.

Harry **Carter**'s census entry for 1911 says he was a butcher employed in a shop. As far as I can tell Walter **Taylor**'s

was the only butcher's shop in Cookley at that time, although of course Harry could have been employed in a neighbouring village.

So Harry and Lily **Carter** must have known the shop, may well have known James **Griffin** as he was involved in many village affairs as well as running his business, and Harry may even have worked next door to him.

This story has a link with our region too. James's father, Thomas B P **Griffin** (1840-1911) although born in Kidderminster not far from Cookley, on the 1861 census was living in Liverpool, and working as a printer's apprentice.

In 1866 he married Hannah Dixon **Cunningham** (1844-1930) in St Clements Church, Toxteth and their first two children were born in Liverpool, but by 1871 the family were living in Cookley not far from the shop run at that time by Thomas's mother Louisa **Griffin** (1824-1897) now Mrs William **Smith**.

The shop premises were trading on the 1841 census and the butchers by the 1851 census. The grocery store, although closed for a short period around 2018-21, by 2023 was open as a convenience store and the butcher's shop had become a café.

**Sally Moss (1621)**

## Convoy Maniac – Part 2

In the March journal I wrote about the history of Convoy Maniac but didn't tell you about those involved and their words.

### The Ships

**Steamers - Boston, New York, New Bedford, Naushon, President Warfield, Yorktown, Southland and Northland**

**Escorts – HMS Vanoc, HMS Veteran**

**Rescue Ship – HMS Sardonyx**

### The men, the events and their stories



Tony **Slevin**., Radio Officer – **Southland**

*“What is your next ship?”* enquired a seaman.

*“Montreal Pool”* I replied feeling pleased with my luck.

*“Who are the agents?”* he asked.

*“Coast Lines Ltd.”* I replied.

*“My God, you had better get off that one, it’s a bloody suicide trip.”* He outlined the details

obtained from goodness knows where.

*“They are all bloody suicide trips these days.”* I replied sourly as dreams of Montreal faded. I didn’t exercise my option and duly reported to entrain for Gourock and Queen Mary for New York

More from Tony **Slevin** - *“St John’s was singularly unattractive, this town boasted a cinema of sorts and a liquor store, whose manager demanded to see our permit to purchase liquor, which we did eventually manage to obtain from some official. If there was anything else, I missed it.”*



Edward **Fullwood** was sent to America by the Royal Navy to train as a gunner – **Southland** was his first ship – he was 20 years old.

*“When they went to join **SS Southland**, the crew of a large ship with an overhanging stern where she was berthed beneath, all shouted “Desert, you will never make it across the Atlantic.”*

Tony **Slevin** – Radio Officer - **Southland**

*.....” There appeared to be some doubt as to the ability of the little fleet to make it all the way. Likewise, ship’s stores were just about sufficient to get us halfway across. It was a long stay in St John’s, what were we waiting for? It was suggested that if we did not get away soon, the approaching equinoctial gales would make the voyage too hazardous”*

*“Prior to departure from St. John’s, the escort commanders and ships’ captains attended a briefing at Naval HQ. At this meeting the official name of the convoy became R.B.1 .... the code name became convoy “Maniac.”*

Captain **Beckett** – Master – **Northland** - said that *“although the code word was very appropriate, he considered it should be in the plural.”*

Three U-boat commanders mistook the convoy for large troopships such as **Reina del Pacifico**, **Viceroy of India** and **Derbyshire**, and therefore a very important convoy indeed. So important that German High Command sent 17 U-boats to attack. Commander **Churchill** from the **Vanoc** sent signals that the convoy was being shadowed and requested air cover.

COMINCH sent a signal that a U-boat estimated to be in the vicinity of RB1 (Convoy Maniac) had made a sighting report of the convoy or important unit. All vessels would have then been at actions stations. Everyone had no doubt that the German U-Boat command was planning the total destruction of the convoy believing it to be a special troop transport.

**Vanoch** (one of the escort vessels) radio messaged “*Carried out 2 attacks on S/M, 53-52N 31-46W Contact lost – Returning to convoy*”. (According to German records three unsuccessful submarine attacks were made).

**Boston** was torpedoed and sank in about 4 minutes. Most of the survivors from **Boston** were picked up by **HMS Veteran**, (the other escort vessel) and apparently only two elected to be picked up by the designated rescue ship, the **New Bedford**. Three more were thought to have been picked up by **Vanoc**.

An un-named sailor from **Naushon** – appalled by the floating stores from **Boston** which were littering the sea was heard to declare “*Cor, look at all them good chickens going to waste!*”

Another statement from Tony **Slevin** – Radio Officer - ....” *I heard the sound of gunfire .....I decided to see for myself. ....I was not informed of what exactly was going on, so I returned to the radio office. I recall a loud but dull explosion. Boston had been torpedoed. I went on deck and saw that she was sinking stern first.*”

*“This was the point when I should have been manning the Radio Direction Finder, but I was ordered to switch it off. I asked why, but was told that the U Boats could pick us up”, (From radiations from our receivers) I disagreed, and in any event commented, ‘Pick us up, they just did, there is one over there, one over there and another over there’ as I pointed vaguely in the general direction of the fall of shot from the guns. I returned to the radio office, for several hours I remained below decks and therefore saw little of the subsequent action. New York, was the next to go, but I didn’t see her.”*

U-96, commanded by Hans Jurgen **Hellreigel**, attacked and damaged **New York** and the ship was abandoned, most of the crew being picked up by **Veteran**. She was sunk by a second attack sometime later.

**Southland** spotted a periscope off her starboard [right] quarter and opened fire with her twelve-pounder. About fourteen rounds were fired before the periscope disappeared. Another appeared immediately off

her port quarter, and it took eighteen rounds before this too disappeared.

**President Warfield** was attacked by torpedo, but by ordering an emergency turn, was able to watch this pass approximately 30 feet astern.

**Northland** saw a periscope and ordered an emergency turn, “*She turned on a buttercup*” says the first mate. Unfortunately, the steering engine jammed, and she kept going round in circles.

**President Warfield**, then saw the outline of a U Boat submerged on his port quarter, and he attacked it with his gun, whilst signalling to **Veteran**, who attacked with depth charges, after charging through the milling ships.

**Naushon**, made such a wild turn to avoid torpedoes that her helm jammed, and she started to race round in circles, firing at anything and everything that moved. After about an hour both **Northland's** and **Naushon's** steering gears were fixed and the convoy proceeded on its way. Some hours later a spread of three torpedoes was fired, of which two found their target. **Veteran** blew up and sank in seconds. There were no survivors from **Veteran's** 159 people or the 78 survivors from **Boston** and **New York**.

**Yorktown's** steering gear then fouled, and she stopped for repairs. No- one saw the torpedoes that hit them. 27-year-old Captain **Malowski**, the U-boat Captain thought he had hit **Derbyshire**.



WP **Boylan** – Captain – **Yorktown** - “---. about 9 p.m. there was an awful crash, and I found myself and the bunk falling through space with various kinds of debris on top of me”

“---pulling, pulling, crawling under and over debris ---finally arrived out at the ship's side, or at least where the ship's side had been.”

“I took to the water hoping for the best --- I came across a door, and half lying on it managed to get some of my wind back ---- [it] cracked in the

*middle and both parts hit me in the face --- striking out again I got hold of some more wreckage and held on.”*

*“I was hauled on board a raft by the chief engineer and a fireman. We then rowed here and there. Wherever we heard shouting or saw any sign of life, and finished up with 18 men on the raft. Captain **Boylan**’s words again “a very fine crowd of men they were, most helpful, cheerful and unselfish.”*

**HL Papworth** – Chief Officer – **Yorktown**



*“All the boats were swung out but only two eventually got away, one of which capsized.”*

*“All rafts got away. I was fished out of sea by [a] soldier, pulled on to top of Bridge House which was floating clear of ship and later pulled on to raft in charge of 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer”*

*-- another raft observed--found to contain 3 men. Ordered 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer to take charge of this and sent 4 men over to even up numbers.*

*Tied up to 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer’s raft. Plane came at say 1500 hours – delighted. Spread oil to give him some idea of our spread and drift. Sighted destroyer before he sighted us sometime on Sunday night. Eventually he came round and picked us up.”*

**Godfrey Griffith** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer – **Yorktown** - *“At about 2015/26/9/42 while on a raft with two others a Submarine, presumed to be a German from their accent, surfaced about 100 yards away and hailed us, asking the name of the ship to which someone (unknown) answered “**Yorktown**”. They then asked for the captain and were informed that the captain had been lost (this was not true). The submarine cruised around for a few minutes then submerged.”*

**James Beckett** – Captain – **Northland** - *“The first that I knew was that the Commodore ship – **Boston** –had been struck by two torpedoes, one on the port quarter and the other on the port bow, the explosions of*

*which threw up a huge column of water, and the vessel sank within 4 minutes of being hit”.*

Captain **Beckett** said that four boats got away from **Boston**, but only two members of the crew got on board the rescue ship, **New Bedford**, the rest of the crew electing to board the destroyer **Veteran**, presumably because it was easier to board. 19-year-old Signalman Ray **Freeman** was on board the destroyer **Vanoc** and remembered that they found 3 survivors from **Boston** and dragged them from the sea.

Allan **Budden** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Radio Officer – **Yorktown** - *“I was in the lifeboat under sail (red) and at 1500/27 were sighted by a Flying Fortress, a 4-engine bomber. He said the bomber stayed with them for about 2 hours and dropped Mae Wests and an airman’s emergency kit containing Horlicks, Horlick’s tablets, chocolate and matches. It also included a note that there were 3 crowded rafts about 10 miles astern, suggested they tried to get back to them, and dropped flares to guide them towards the rafts. Due to bad weather these rafts couldn’t be found”.*

The Commander in Chief, Western Approaches sent **HMS Sardonyx** to find and rescue the crew from **Yorktown**.

Lieutenant Commander **Grays** – **Sardonyx** - *“In accordance with Commander in Chiefs, Western Approaches signal timed 1506 A/27 “Sardonyx” sailed from Lough Foyle at 1700, A/27”*

*“At 1500 Vereys lights were seen and proved to come from the lifeboat (containing 11 men) of SS “Yorktown” in position 55° 07’N 17° 28’W (my 1531.A/28)”*

*“Further search found, at 1715, two rafts containing 8 and 9 men respectively both fitted with canvas weather screens, in position 55° 10’, N 17° 59’W. And at 2030 the third raft containing 16 men in position 55° 11.5’N 17° 59’W.5’. This raft was not fitted with weather screens (my 1727 and 2047 A/28).”*

Further on in the captains report he stated that *“the morals of the survivors were very high, particularly noticeable were the First Mate (Mr*

*L Papworth) the third Radio Officer (Mr A Budden) and the Master (Captain W P Boylan). The First Mate, who had lent his monkey jacket to a fireman, greatly assisted in the embarkation of the occupants of the rafts of which he was in charge.”*

\*\*\*\*\*

On the 3 October 1942 at 8.30pm a Capt. **Bauer** did a broadcast in English. A small portion of the transcript done by the Admiralty reads: -

**Capt. Bauer:** - ----“*That’s one thing, and the other logical consequence is that the performance and manoeuvrability (spelling on the document) of the single U-boat must have improved a lot. It’s no small achievement, really, to stick to a convoy in a U-boat which has to travel a large part of the way under water and has to manoeuvre a lot to get into the most favourable position”.*

**Announcer:** “Are you referring to that latest convoy, consisting of fast troop transporters, of which three were sunk? “

(In the margin alongside this was written RB1)

**Capt. Bauer:** “Yes, the one of which British authorities are so reluctant to admit that it fell a victim to our U-boats. It is marvellous that those fast-moving vessels, zigzagging along under heavy protection, would be pursued for days and, finally, three of them sunk and two more damaged. It must have been very hard to catch them. But let us acknowledge that it must also be very hard for the British Admiralty to admit these losses, for they show all too blatantly the emptiness of their claim to have mastered the U-boat danger, while the admission would throw a bad light on the difficulties of transporting large bodies of troops across the ocean.”

(In the margin was hand-written “Ships were empty.

**Veteran** not mentioned”)

\*\*\*\*\*

Once back on land, officers had to make reports to the War Office – on one report filled in by HL **Papworth** – First Mate – **Yorktown** –

**Q30** reads: -Was Master interrogated by submarine Officers? What questions were asked? Which Officer (or Officers) asked questions, and what knowledge of the English language had he?

**Answer** – S/M Officers interrogated members of crew on raft and asked name of ship, enquired for Master, Chief Engineer or Senior Officer. Interrogating Officer had excellent knowledge of English language.

**Q 48** reads ; General remarks by interviewing officer. Does he consider the master complied with Admiralty and local instructions and did all in his power to avoid capture.

This is left blank, the second part reads: - Masters reasons for abandoning ship (where this was done) should be carefully gone into and fully set forth.

**Answer.** Ship sank immediately after being torpedoed.

\*\*\*\*\*

The information here came from various sources. Interviews between the men involved with the authors of the books “Convoy Maniac – RB1” by James H **Reed**, “The Proudest of Her Line” by John **Lloyd**, the website “Ahoy” containing letters from survivors and relatives and Admiralty documents. Not everything has been written here. I knew nothing of this story until after my father’s death. I went to find the name of the ship that I knew had been torpedoed and found this.

**Shelagh Boardman (6456)**

---

## Upcoming Zoom Talks

Welcome to the listings for our Zoom talks coming up in the next few months.

### Upcoming Zoom Talks

|        |                                             |                           |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 17 Sep | A Tragedy in the Family                     | <b>Sue Evans</b>          |
| 22 Oct | War Brides                                  | <b>Ken Nisbet</b>         |
| 19 Nov | Chinook (RAF)                               | <b>Jess Boyden-Juckes</b> |
| 10 Dec | Curious Christmas Stories<br>and Traditions | <b>Ken Pye</b>            |

## How A Son of Liverpool, A Grandson of Irish Immigrants Became the First Bishop of Winona

In the early 1820s the **Cotters**, led by Laurence, left their home in Killarney and made their way to Liverpool. Laurence and his wife, Margaret, with their two surviving children, who bore the names of deceased siblings. Laurence, the eldest boy, and Mary, his sister, were joined by their brother, Joseph, who died in infancy. Mary was my grandmother's grandmother and Laurence her great uncle. Laurence's son, Joseph Bernard, became the first bishop of Winona. He was born in Liverpool and left as a small child. He chose his own pathway in life and, in so doing, became yet another "scouser" to make his mark, though his achievements remained hidden for many years.

Bishop **Cotter** is my fourth cousin.

Joseph Bernard **Cotter** was born in Liverpool on 19 November 1844. He was the son of Laurence Peter **Cotter** and Ann Mary **Cotter** nee **Perrin**, a native Liverpoolian and the daughter of William. The couple had married earlier in 1844 at St Nicholas' Church. Laurence Peter **Cotter** was born in Killarney in 1822, was baptised on 21 April of that year and spent his formative years in Ross Castle, Killarney before leaving Ireland with his family for Liverpool in the late 1820s.

Following their marriage, the family took up residence in Milk Street and soon after had their son, Joseph. Milk Street, actually called Upper and Lower Milk Street, lay just outside the city centre to the North near Leeds Street. By 1927 the street consisted of poor Victorian housing soon to be cleared to make way for new tenements. Only a remnant of Lower Milk Street still exists, located very near to Highfield Gardens.

Laurence worked as a tailor during the 1840s and the couple had three children to raise: Joseph Bernard, Laurence and Mary. A tough task, particularly in the turbulent, uncertain economic and political times of

the 1840s, considerably added to by threats of cholera and typhus outbreaks. In 1850 the family took the decision to emigrate to the USA and arrived at Ellis Island and settling for a short time in New York before moving to Cleveland, Ohio. Laurence was now working as a journalist and was able to send Joseph to private academies in Cleveland and Freemont to receive his elementary education. Sadly, Ann died in Cleveland and, following this, the family moved to St Paul, where his journalistic background helped to secure work as the city clerk and where Joseph continued his education at the cathedral school in St Paul's.

Following Ann's death, Laurence married again Mary Jacobina **Boedigheimer**, 1830-1917, from Germany, with whom he had two other children, Francis and Mary. Laurence died at St Paul's Minnesota in 1862 and is buried at Calvary Cemetery.

It was at this point; 1861-1862 that Joseph took the decision to train for the priesthood.

With encouragement from Bishop **Cretin** and Bishop **Grace** Joseph followed his calling and entered the St Francis Seminary in Millwaukee in September 1864. From there between 1865 and 1868, he continued his studies undertaking a classical course at St Vincent's College, Westmoreland, Pennsylvania. He returned to Minnesota to attend St John's Collegeville, in order to study theology and philosophy.

On 3 May he received minor orders from Bishop **Grace**, his sub-deaconship on 7 May, deaconate on 14 May and full ordination on 21 May. To 1890, Joseph was the pastor at St Thomas's Church in Winona. During the administration of Father **Cotter**, much progress was made. Debts were paid, the building of the church was finally completed, additional lots on which the old convent and rectory once stood were acquired in October 1873 and a new parochial school was built on Wabasha Street to the west of the church.

From his post as the pastor of the Church of St. Thomas in the city of Winona, Joseph was appointed the diocese's first bishop. On 27

December 1889, Fr. **Cotter** was consecrated Bishop of Winona in the Cathedral at St. Paul. Ten days later he was installed in the Pro-cathedral of St. Thomas, 5 January 1890.

Joseph also served three terms as President of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America, delivering lectures east of the Mississippi between 1886-1887. Under his stewardship, the diocese of Winona prospered and expanded considerably. At a time of great immigration, ethnic churches were established in the diocese -Irish, Polish, Czech, German and during his administration nearly three dozen schools were established in the parishes boasting 4,630 students, in addition to 72 churches with 85 resident priests.

Bishop **Cotter's** health, which had not been good since serious surgery several years earlier, began to fail. Physicians diagnosed a heart condition, but the bishop maintained his heavy schedule of confirmations, dedications, and other official ceremonies. In the spring of 1909, following his physicians' advice, he travelled to Atlantic City, New Jersey, to rest in a milder climate. His condition worsened, and realizing he was nearing death, he returned home to die among family and friends. Bishop **Cotter** lingered on in poor health for a few months during which he visited with old friends and associates. On Sunday, June 27, 1909, Bishop **Cotter** died at the age of 64.

Shortly after his death, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were invited to open the diocese's first high school, **Cotter** High School, in Winona. Bishop **Heffron** named it after his predecessor. The school was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day in 1911. Since then, Catholic Schools in Winona are called the **Cotter** Schools.

The History of Winona County, 1913, noted: *'For upwards of forty years he was proud to call Winona his home. He saw the humble beginnings of the city and in its growth and prosperity he had a leading part, and, with regard to the future he was ever optimistic. Bishop **Cotter** loved Winona and Winona loved him. On the morning of his funeral, business was suspended, and the citizens of Winona, irrespective of creed, united in paying a final tribute of respect to their noble father and friend.*

*His remains lie at rest in the cemetery of St. Mary. His name and his memory will ever linger with the people of Winona.'*

(A very extensive 20-page eulogy by John F **Sherman** can be found online in its original form. The material for that and the early history of the church in Winona was provided by Bishop **Cotter** himself and much is contained in the publication 'The History of Winona County'. There is also a biography on the **Cotter** Schools webpages, in addition to significant mentions in the Book of Minnesotans 1907 and in the 1913 History of Winona Volume 1.

**Tom White (9656)**

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### **Can we help you with your brick wall?**

Have you come across a stumbling block in your  
Liverpool research?

Although we do not host a forum anymore, you are welcome to ask  
questions relating to your research on our website at  
<https://www.lswlfhs.org.uk/no-crawl>

Alternatively, send your questions to the Editor at  
[editor@lswlfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@lswlfhs.org.uk)  
and we will do our best to include your query in the Journal

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## Locating the D'Aguilar Family Vault in Edge Hill

This is the story of how—thanks to the Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire Family History Society (LSWLFHS)—I discovered the graves of my sixth great-grandparents in a churchyard at Edge Hill. I've been researching my family history for around fifteen years and am well acquainted with the online tools offered by Ancestry, FindMyPast, the British Newspaper Archive, and Newspapers.com. I'm also a strong believer in the value of local family history societies such as the LSWLFHS. But sometimes, there really is no substitute for examining original records and walking the streets in person. This story is a case in point.

### The D'Aguilars of Liverpool

Over the past six months, I've been researching this family: Solomon **D'Aguilar** (c.1753–1817); his wife Margaret (c.1753–1829), née **Gilmer or Gilmour**; and their children: Emily **D'Aguilar** (c.1774–1829); Rose **D'Aguilar** (c.1781–1857); George Charles **D'Aguilar** (c.1784–1855); (Ann) Maria **D'Aguilar** (c.1784–1857); and Elizabeth Margaret **D'Aguilar** (1793–1816).

From online databases, I had already found out that Solomon and Margaret settled in Liverpool during the late 1780s, where Solomon established himself as a merchant importing commodities such as animal hides, sugar, coffee, timber, and rum from the Caribbean.

(Shamefully, the goods he imported would have been produced through the labour of enslaved people.) His business prospered, with offices on Brunswick Street and Water Street.

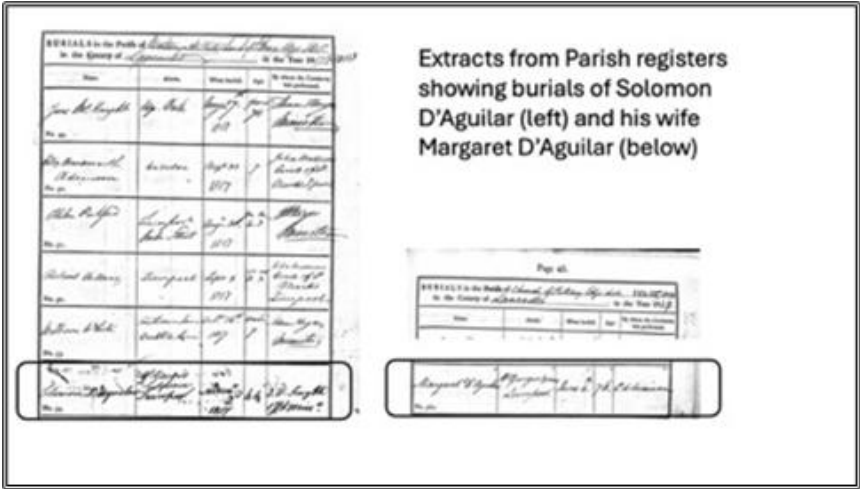
Between 1774 and 1793, Solomon and Margaret had six children. One daughter in particular, Rose, played a key role in this story. In 1800, she married Charles **Lawrence** (1776–1853); he was a prominent local businessman and later Mayor of Liverpool.

Charles served as executor of Solomon's will in 1818 and of Margaret's in 1829. Rose, as the eldest surviving **D'Aguilar** child in Liverpool when her mother died, she would almost certainly have been the principal mourner.

From around 1795, the **D'Aguilars** lived at 6 Great George Street. Ten years later, they moved to a newly built home at 11 Great George Square, where they remained for the rest of their lives. There, they entertained leading intellectuals of the time, including Dr James **Currie**, Dr William **Shepherd**, and William **Roscoe**.

**Search for the graves of Solomon and Margaret**

As for their final resting place, I knew that Solomon and Margaret were Anglicans. Church registers available online listed their burials as follows: for Solomon, "The Parish of Walton-on-the-Hill, Church of St Mary, Edge Hill"; and for Margaret, "St Mary's Church, Edge Hill, Walton."



The challenge was to identify the precise location of the churchyard so I could look for any surviving inscriptions. Helpfully, the LSWLFHS sells a PDF of James **Gibson's** *Liverpool Epitaphs and Monumental Inscriptions*, which, according to the website description, is:

*"... one of the most important sources for the family historian researching 19th-century Liverpool... containing an index of over 10,000 names taken from 56 graveyards and cemeteries—most of which no longer exist."*

This sounded promising. However, I discovered that the volume lists two different Anglican churches named St Mary's: one in Walton (Vol II, a.v.) and one in Edge Hill (Vol IV, a.xiv.). Using the advanced search function, I tried "**Aguilar**," "Solomon," and "Margaret," but nothing relevant appeared. I searched by year 1818 and 1829 and even browsed the entries manually. Still nothing.

I remain puzzled by this omission. Given Solomon's status, I'd expect a substantial memorial. It seems unlikely **Gibson** missed it; more likely, the relevant manuscript notes may not have survived.

By March 2025, I had exhausted online and secondary sources. It was time to 'walk the ground'. A six-hour journey lay ahead, so I planned a two-night stay in Liverpool, timing my visit for a Tuesday when LSWLFHS volunteers offer help desk support at the Central Library.

### **Research on the ground in Liverpool**

At the library, I met two exceptionally helpful volunteers whose names, regrettably, I did not note. They guided me to microfilms of the burial registers from 1817 and 1829, confirming that both Solomon and Margaret were buried in the same churchyard at Edge Hill. It was time to leave the library and go to the cemetery.

Google Maps listed St Mary's Church at 1 South Drive, Wavertree—which is not far from Edge Hill—so I headed there by taxi. But this was clearly the wrong place because it was a Methodist church, built in 1882, without a graveyard.

Outside the wrong church, I re-checked **Gibson's Epitaphs**. It mentioned that the correct St Mary's had opened in 1813 and was near Clare Terrace and Edge Hill railway—on one of Liverpool's highest points.

I took another taxi ride asking the driver for old churches near Edge Hill. He took me to All Saints Church which I found out, from their website, was formerly known as St Mary's, Edge Hill.

The name change occurred in 2011 when the parishes of St Cyprian's, St John the Divine, St Philip with St Davids, and St Mary's were merged into one. The website also confirmed the church building foundation stone had been laid in 1813.

### St Mary's, Edge Hill now All Saints, Liverpool



The church, on Irvine Street, is brick-built with a square tower and surrounded by a substantial graveyard

The graveyard was well maintained, with most headstones still legible. I began a counterclockwise survey, and on the north-western boundary, I found a heavily overgrown section.

After removing armfuls of ivy, I uncovered a headstone bearing the name **D'Aguilar**. Twenty minutes of clearing revealed the full inscription:



*"Sacred to the memory of  
Elizabeth Margaret, daughter  
of Solomon and Margaret  
**D'Aguilar**, who departed this  
life October the 14th 1816,  
aged 23 years.*

*Also Solomon **D'Aguilar**, who  
departed this life 29th of  
October 1817, aged 64 years.  
Also Margaret **D'Aguilar**, wife  
of the said S. D'Aguilar, who  
departed this life the 31st of  
May 1829, aged 76.*

*'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' —  
Saint Matthew 5:8"*

I was delighted to find the monument in such good condition, although it wobbled slightly, suggesting a void beneath.



### An unexpected find

There was more. Adjacent to this headstone lay a second, also originally enclosed by iron railings (now sawn off, likely during wartime salvage). Clearing it was harder, but I uncovered part of the inscription:



*(Sacred to the memory of  
Joseph **D'Aguilar**, eldest  
son of M. and S.*

***D'Aguilar**, who died  
October 20, 1829, aged  
52 years.*

*Also Margaret <sup>1</sup>**D'Aguilar**,  
his wife, who died  
November 15, 1838.  
paraphrasing):*

I hadn't expected Joseph to be buried beside his father. Press reports and court records show he was made bankrupt at least once and was imprisoned for debt in 1808. I do not know how long he served, if at all, but I imagine that Solomon, a successful merchant with a good reputation, would have been greatly displeased by his son's financial ineptitude.

Joseph died in October 1829, five months after his mother. His estate was modest, valued at under £600. It seems likely that his sister Rose arranged—and paid for—his burial in the family vault.

### Why Edge Hill?

The family lived just a 10-minute walk from St James's Cemetery which is where I would have expected them to be buried. Their son-in-law Charles **Lawrence**, his wife Rose and the **Lawrence** family were buried in St James's. But Solomon decided on the more distant St Mary's which was a mile and a half away from their home. Perhaps it was because St Mary's was on a hilltop with a good view over the Mersey and docks? Or because the principal benefactor of St Mary's was the timber merchant Edward **Masson**: perhaps **Masson** was a friend of Solomon's?

§§§§§

I count this trip to Liverpool as a great success. It was enormously satisfying to uncover these headstones and what appears to be the vaulted tomb of five family members. Without the help of LSWLFHS and by walking the ground, I would never have located their final resting place.

### Further research

My research into the **D'Aguilars** is ongoing, and I am particularly interested in:

1. **Margaret Gilmer/Gilmour (c.1753–1829)** I know little about her origins, but I speculate she may have been born in one of Britain's North American colonies, possibly marrying Solomon there around 1773–74.

2.

3.

## 2. **Solomon's trans-Atlantic trade**

I am seeking the identities of his trading partners in the Caribbean, North America or elsewhere. Records show that there were members of the **D'Aguilar** family in Jamaica. However, there is also evidence that Solomon (born Jewish but converted to Christianity) had fallen out with the Jewish side of his family.

I speculate that one of his Caribbean suppliers may have been the Fairfield Estate in Saint James's, Jamaica; this was owned by the **Lawrence** family.

## 3. **The daughters: Emily, Rose, and Maria**

Each of these three women led remarkable lives, briefly:

- As a teenager Emily travelled to Bengal around 1790 and lived with her uncle Benjamin **D'Aguilar**. In June 1792 she married in Benares before leaving her husband and returning to Liverpool (date unknown) where she became the intellectual muse of renowned sculptor John **Gibson** <sup>2</sup>;
- Rose married into the **Lawrence** family and as Mrs Rose **Lawrence** she became a noted author in her own right. And Rose supported her distant niece Grace **D'Aguilar** in her career as a writer of note.
- Maria also went to Bengal where she was married at the age of 15. She had three children in Calcutta before being widowed at the age of 19. She sailed back to England, with her three children in 1804 but after this I have no information.

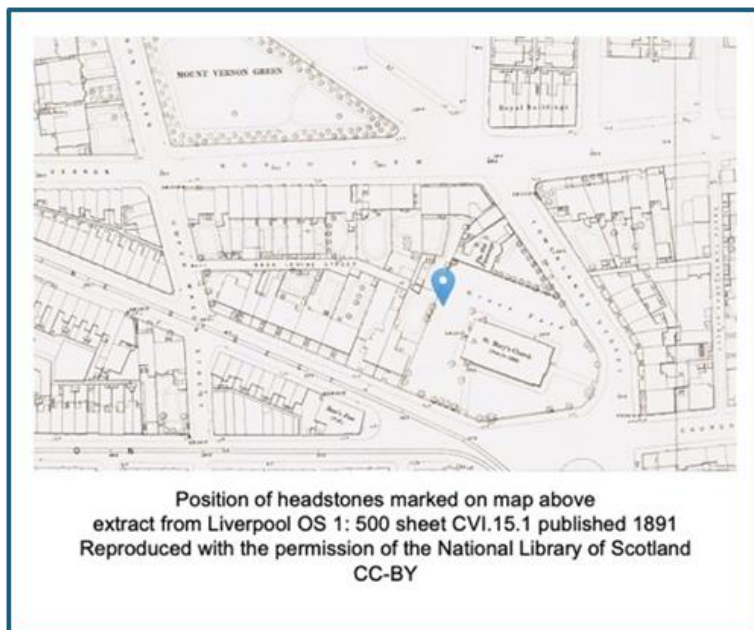
I warmly welcome any comments, corrections, or additional information from fellow researchers [charles@licomp.com](mailto:charles@licomp.com)

**See over for location of the Churchyard:**

## Location

The graves are located at (modern address);

All Saints Liverpool, Irvine Street, Edge Hill, Liverpool L7 8SY, at 53.40669° N, 2.95665° W.



## References:

- 1 Margaret nee **Renshaw** was the daughter of Rev. Samuel **Renshaw**, who was well known as Rector of Liverpool Parish.
- 2 After her death, **Gibson** made a metre high marble memorial inscribed:  
*"To the memory of Emily **Robinson**, wife of Gervas **Robinson** of Benares, who died on the 5 April 1829. Executed and erected by John **Gibson** as a slight tribute of gratitude to the memory of the deceased. Who by her generosity, friendship and love of the arts cherished his early studies."*  
This memorial was installed in the Oratory of St James's Cemetery; access to which (according to the notice on railings outside) is by appointment from Walker Art Gallery although I had no success in finding anyone at the Walker who knew anything about it.

**Charles Lovatt (9767)**

LIVERPOOL & SOUTH WEST  
LANCASHIRE  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

## **Annual One Day Conference**

HOSTED BY

**Leigh & District  
Family History Society**

AT

St Mary's Community Hall  
Newton Road  
Lowton  
WA3 1DQ

ON

**Saturday 11 October 2025**

(Including a free goodie pack for each delegate, a raffle for amazing prizes from some of the top genealogy suppliers and genealogy-related stalls)

A

## **PROGRAMME**

**Saturday 11 October 2025**

**10:00am** Registration, Tea, Coffee and Biscuits

**10:15am** Opening Address

**10.20am** Have you tried....? Using Lancashire Archives Collections to help you discover your Family History?

**Mr Alex Miller, Archives & Resources Manager, Lancashire Archives**

**11.15am** Tea, Coffee and Biscuits

**11.45am** Do you know your Divi number?

The History of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and how Co-operation affected ordinary people's lives in the Victorian era

**Prof. Tony Webster, Historian, Northumbria University**

**12.45pm** Buffet Lunch

**1.45pm** Not that Derby – this Derby! 100 ways to big up your district

A light-hearted, dramatic exploration of the history, mystery & magnificence of the West Derby Hundred.

**Ms Julie McKiernan & Mrs. Corrie Shelley of  
“Heritage with a twist”**

**2.45pm** Comfort break

(Please note no refreshments will be served during this break)

**3:00pm** Great Victorian Inventions (and disasters!)

**Mrs Louise Wade, Secretary of Leigh FHS**

**4:00pm** Closing address

## BOOKING FORM

**A booking form is required for all bookings irrespective of method of payment please – this can be posted or emailed (see below)**

Name: .....

Address:.....

.....

Postcode: .....Phone no: .....

Email address: .....

No. of places required:..... Any dietary requirements?.....

**Fee:** £16.00 includes refreshments and buffet lunch.

Payment either by cheque or by BACS transfer

**Cheques** should be made payable to **Leigh & District F.H.S.** and be included with your booking form

**BACS:** Name: Leigh & District Family History Society

Bank: Lloyds

Sort code: 30-98-97

Account no: 62272268

**Reference: Please quote your surname as the reference**

If you wish to have a paper receipt please include an SAE with your booking form, otherwise confirmation will be made by email

**Please return completed booking form to:**

Mrs Gwen Haslam, 1 Congresbury Road, Leigh, WN7 5DY

Or by email to [g-haslam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:g-haslam@hotmail.co.uk)

**Booking forms to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 please**

## **DIRECTIONS (by road)**

Postcode for the venue is **WA3 1DQ**

### **From Manchester**

Take East Lancashire Road, A580 heading towards Liverpool.

Turn **RIGHT** onto A572 Newton Road (signposted Lowton)

Progress straight through one set of traffic lights

After approx. 1 mile the church hall is on your right immediately after the entrance for Barford Drive and just before the pedestrian crossing

The car park has a sign saying “Lowton St Mary Primary School and Nursery” the hall shares this car-park

### **From Liverpool / Haydock**

Take East Lancashire Road, A580, heading towards Manchester

Progress straight across Golborne Island (2<sup>nd</sup> exit)

Straight through 2 sets of traffic lights which are extremely close together

Straight through a 3<sup>rd</sup> set of traffic lights

At 4<sup>th</sup> set of traffic lights turn **LEFT** onto A572 Newton Road (signposted Lowton and Moss Lane Industrial estate)

Straight through one set of traffic lights

After approx. 1 mile the church hall is on your right immediately after the entrance for Barford Drive and just before the pedestrian crossing

The car park has a sign saying “Lowton St Mary Primary School and Nursery” the hall shares this car-park

**What three words:** stapled.scramble.compelled

## **DIRECTIONS (by public Transport)**

The nearest railway station is Newton-le-Willows

Exit the station towards the car park and bus stops

From Bus stop A take the No. 34 bus towards Leigh Bus Station and get off at Sandy Lane. (13stops, approx. 15mins).

The hall is on the opposite side of the road when you get off at the Sandy Lane stop.

## LAURENCE HAROLD HART

### My Dad

**31 December 1910 – 18 April 2003**

Although he was called Laurence Harold after two of his Mum's brothers, for some reason he was always called Tom by his parents and siblings, when I asked why, nobody knew.

He was the third child of William Morris **Hart** (1877-1957) and Harriet Annie **Cousins** (1878-1923), they had married at St Annes Church, Overbury Street on 6 July 1903. William Joseph was born 30 April 1904 and died 23 August 1952, and Annie Lillian on 11 July 1906 and died 14 November 1930.

Three months before they were married Harriet had been christened into the Roman Catholic Church, she was previously a Methodist (I think). This is where family history gets mixed up, Dad always said that his Mum had gone to be church at St Annes after William was born and the priest told her to go away so she took offence and refused to have the baby christened there and she never went back. However, when I started looking into my family history, I found that both William Joseph and Annie Lillian had been christened there, and it was Dad's birth that seemed to have caused the problem, as I have not been able to find any christening for him at all.

The following children that were born after Dad, Hilda Kathleen (16 December 1912-7 May 1926), Helen Winifred (24 December 1914 – 28 November 2005), and Muriel Lucy (26 June 1922-24 November 1923) were all christened at St Dunstan's CofE in Earle Road. I don't think my dad ever knew that he had not been christened.

When they married, William and Harriet lived at Carlisle Street where the first 2 children were born. They then moved to Webster Road where they remained for a few years. The house in Webster Road is still

standing and Webster Road is just opposite Toxteth Park Cemetery.

In 1922 he took an entrance exam to be admitted to Quarry Bank School, they were a poor family, and the headmaster offered my grandfather a uniform for dad to which his dad replied, '*he didn't want charity*'!! Dad said he would have happily snatched his hand off for a second-hand uniform.

Granddad had been gassed in WW1 and my grandmother had to take washing in to make ends meet, Dad used to collect the dirty washing for her and deliver it back. Life must have been very hard for them all. My Grandmother was born in Sheffield and along with 2 of her brothers and her father she suffered from TB, they moved to Liverpool about 1885/1886, and her father became a fishmonger. He had been a clogger, so I have no idea why the change of city and occupation.

On 9 June 1923 Harriet Annie **Hart** died, Dad said it was the worst thing that happened to him ever, she was buried with her father Walter **Cousins** who had died in 1905 in Toxteth Park Cemetery, 5 months later Muriel Lucy died, they were still living at Webster Road.

On October 18 1924 Granddad married Gertrude Elizabeth **Bowie**, who on the marriage certificate stated that she was single. However, she had been born in 1891 in Wales but had gone to Canada about 1911 and then to the USA where she had married and divorced a Scottish gentleman called Alexander **Bowie**, she brought with her 2 sons and a daughter, my Uncles Arthur, and Oliver and Aunt Doris.

My Aunt Nell (Helen) said she was about 8 when she was playing out in the street and her father introduced her to her new Mum. The family by now was living in Walpole Street. There were to be many moves over the years until my Dad got married in 1940 and had his own home.

Unfortunately, William and Gertrude were both drinkers, so money was often short to pay the rent. To add to the family, they were joined by Laura Alice (22 May 1925-19 July 2019), Daniel Leslie (17 January 1927 – 10 April 2002), and finally Gertrude Rose (22 April 1933-5 November 2008).

Dad would very rarely talk about the past he always said '*I've been through it once I don't want to go through it again*'.

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Dad would very rarely talk about the past he always said ' *I've been through it once I don't want to go through it again*'.

I don't know where Dad went to work when he left school but around about 1933, he was working at Ayrton Saunders in Duke Street Liverpool, I think, the building is still there with the name on, but I think it has now been converted into apartments. It was around about this time that he met my Mum (Ethel **Novak** (2 October 1917-11 November 1982). It was also around about this time that he started to lose his hearing.

In 1939, in the England and Wales Register, he is down as a short story writer, he had had a number of pieces published in various places, and he and 7 others were living at Knocklaid Road. He did try to join the army, but he was rejected because of his hearing, so he made medicines and fire watched on the roof of Ayrton Saunders.

On 2 November 1940, he and my Mum were married at St Lawrence's Church, Kirkdale, and they moved into Bridge Lane, Netherton. The house was only about 12-months old and with an inside toilet it must have been heaven for them both. In 1944 Ruth was born and in 1948 I followed. In the early 1950's the nearest shops were about a mile away and we used to walk to the Co-op in Aintree with the order, and the groceries were delivered on a Friday evening by a young lad on a bike with a basket on the front; how he was never killed was a miracle but of course there was virtually no traffic then. The hall smelt of soap powder if we had ordered it that week, and of course bread and milk were delivered every day, the milk and post were even delivered on Christmas Day. Life was very different then.

Dad had 2 or 3 books published before I was born but I must have driven away his creative streak. Life moved on into the 50's and 60's and there were lots of house building and we even got shops and a mobile library! In 1975 Dad was coming up to retirement and he wrote a science fiction book called Alien Heathen and it was published, very exciting news. Dad had been a member of Liverpool Library since he was about 10. He used to observe who was borrowing books and noticed

there were a lot of female borrowers looking at the romance sections, so he set to and started to write romantic fiction. Thinking it might be better if the books appeared under a female name, he borrowed mine and he became successful. If he was asked to go to London to meet the publisher, he always declined thinking that it might be a shock if they were expecting a middle-aged woman and up popped a male OAP.

This was fine until the publisher sent a review of his latest book to either the Liverpool Echo or Bootle Times and it was picked up by Radio Merseyside and Granada TV. At the end of July 1990, he was interviewed by Linda **McDermott** for Radio Merseyside; he didn't tell anybody about this thinking people would be at work and being deaf he didn't really listen to the radio, so the family missed it.

Granada TV called on 1 August 1990 with a camera man and Shelley **Rohde** who interviewed him. I got the part of walking to his front door and opening it, and then it went to Dad typing. It was broadcast that night, so it gave me time to get in touch with a couple of his sisters who were still alive, unfortunately Mum had passed away in 1982, and my sister and her family live in Canada. After they had finished filming Dad and I went to British Home Stores for fish & chips, fame didn't go to his head! The next morning, he was standing waiting for the bus to go to the New Strand, and he was very touched when an elderly lady came up to him and asked if he was the chap off the TV. When he said he was she gave him a peck on the cheek.

Dad carried on writing until about 1998 and had about 20 romances published in the UK and most of them were reprinted in large print, and I also have some of them in French and German. Unfortunately, in April 1999 he developed Dementia and in April 2003 he passed away at the age of 92. He was a good Dad, the best.

My Grandfather William Morris **Hart** had a brother Joseph, who went to live in Birmingham and his Grandson, Nigel John **Taylor** is a member of Duran Duran, and he is my second cousin!

**Val Benson (Committee)**

## Quirks of Fate

Life can be full of unexpected twists and turns, and fate has a way of disrupting even the most determined of human plans. That was certainly the case for my paternal grandfather, Edgar Wallace **Richards**, who was born in overcrowded, industrial West Bromwich in 1893, but dreamt of a very different life.

When 18-year-old Edgar arrived in Liverpool in May 1912 to await the arrival of the Allan Line Steamship ***The Corsican***, he did not expect to see any of his family again and must have been feeling a mixture of excitement and apprehension at the future he had chosen for himself. In his pocket was a third-class ticket for the transatlantic crossing to Canada, where, like many young working-class men of his generation, he intended to start a new, permanent life as a farmer. Passenger records for ***The Corsican*** show that Edgar embarked on 3 May, describing himself as a ‘groom’ – he had actually worked as a grocer’s carter in West Bromwich since leaving school at the age of 13 and his role would have included care of the horse which drew the cart, so there was some truth in this descriptor. There was almost certainly less in his claim that he had a year’s farming experience, since he had lived in the heart of the overcrowded industrial town of West Bromwich all his life! Canada was, however, keen to attract fit young immigrants and Edgar’s credentials were probably not scrutinised with any great rigour. Financial incentives were offered to the steamship companies for every British agricultural labourer recruited and the passenger and immigration record states ‘British bonus allowed’ against Edgar’s name, confirming his eligibility for this.

Edgar’s timing was fortuitous. The previous month *The Corsican* had had a very near miss after finding itself in the middle of the night in a treacherous field of icebergs. The Chicago Daily News of 12 April 1912, included the eyewitness account of one of the Corsican’s passengers, Henry **Pratt** of Liverpool, who declared:

*“It was a terrible experience ... I am an old seaman myself, but never have I seen such an awe-inspiring sight as that which greeted us the*

*morning after we struck the berg. On all sides were enormous mountains of ice gleaming like jewels in the bright sunlight. Only then did we realize what we had escaped and all on board thanked the captain for his care in bringing us through safely.” According to Pratt: “in spite of the bitter cold, passengers lined the rails [all day] watching the immense icebergs rolling down with the Labrador stream.”*

Just 2 days later, on the night of 14 April 1912, the Liverpool-registered **Titanic** struck an iceberg in this same field, sinking on her maiden voyage in the early hours of the following morning, with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. News began to filter back to England on the 16 April and Edgar would surely have seen the reports of the tragedy as he prepared for his own transatlantic crossing a fortnight later.

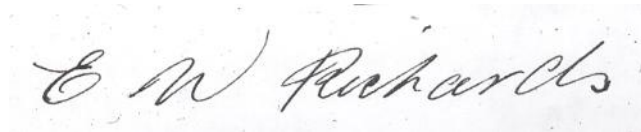
Whatever qualms he may have had for his own safety must have been firmly put aside, however, as Edgar completed the crossing, after a presumably less eventful 10-day voyage, and disembarked safely in Quebec on 13 May, nine days before his nineteenth birthday. His intention, according to the immigration record, was to travel inland on the Canadian Pacific Railway and to settle permanently in Canada. His destination is difficult to decipher on the handwritten form, but appears to have been ---- (possibly Star?) Lake, Saskatchewan. The next couple of years must have been strange and challenging for him as he adjusted to a new and very different climate, landscape and way of life, but his story might have followed very much the course he had planned had it not been for the events unfolding in Europe...

When Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia at the end of July 1914, it may have seemed of little relevance to the British emigrants in Canada, but just a week later, on 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany and requested a contingent of 25,000 soldiers from its Canadian dominion. On 21 August a proclamation was issued seeking volunteers and, as the casualty toll rose at an alarming rate over the following months, Canadian recruitment posters called ever more urgently for young volunteers to enlist to fight in support of the motherland. For men such as Edgar the call must have been particularly insistent.

Like many contemporary immigrants to Canada whose roots were back in the old world, he seems to have been unable to ignore the dark news

from Europe. As the first months of war passed, Edgar came to what must surely have been a difficult decision, to enlist as a Canadian soldier and return to Europe to fight as an ally of the country he had so recently left. On 7 May 1915, just 2 weeks before his 22nd birthday, and almost 3 years to the day since he had first arrived in Canada, he signed his enlistment papers at Roblin, Manitoba, declaring his willingness to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force and swearing to: *“be faithful and bear true allegiance to his Majesty King George the Fifth, his heirs and successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies”* as well as to *“observe and obey all orders of his Majesty, His Heirs and Successors and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God”*.

His signature, reproduced below, is preserved on the original papers held in the National Archives of Canada in Ontario:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "E W Richards". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Private **Richards** (Regimental Number 423338), having been certified fit by Dr **Burton** F.R.C.S., was then assigned to the 44<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles. As an unmarried, childless male aged between 20 and 34, he was what was classed, under the conscription later introduced, as a ‘Class 1 registrant’ and he now became one of the 620,000 men who served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the war, all but 108,000 of them, like himself, volunteers, and almost half, again like himself, born not in Canada, but in the British Isles.

On 4 September 1915, after a period of initial training, Edgar sailed from Montreal on the SS *Missanabie*, arriving in England, and transferring to Shorncliffe training camp in Kent on 13 September. He seems to have remained there, presumably for further training, until he was sent to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles “overseas” at the end of February 1916. There is no record of whether he managed to visit his family in West Bromwich during this winter at Shorncliffe, but it must have been strange for him to find himself back in the country he had left less than three and a half years before, not expecting ever to see it, or his immediate friends and relatives, ever again.

In terms of family research, it was extremely fortuitous that Edgar served in the Canadian rather than the British forces during the war. While the majority of the records of the latter were destroyed in September 1940 in a fire at the War Office Record Store caused by a German incendiary bomb, the Canadian records are extant and carefully preserved in The Canadian National Archives. I was able to obtain a 40-page copy of a range of documents covering Edgar's entire service some years ago, and a programme of digitalisation means that this record set is now freely available online and can be accessed via <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/fww-personnel.aspx>.

From the records I learnt in detail not just about Edgar's military service and medical treatment for the injury in action which ultimately led to his discharge, but also information about his physical appearance at enlistment, and about some of his early life experiences, recounted to the doctors who treated him and recorded by them as part of his case history.

Edgar arrived in France on 2 March 1916 and, having been 'taken on strength' by the 2<sup>nd</sup> CMR at Le Havre, left the Canadian Base Camp there on March 13 to join his unit in the field. He then went up to the trenches, although according to notes taken later at Ramsgate "*his feet were bad*" and "*he couldn't stand the marching*". Edgar had suffered from rickets in childhood and told medical staff he had had his legs broken and reset to try to address the consequent deformity. This, along with his flat feet, led to him struggling so significantly that he was detached from his unit and assigned to fatigue work at Ypres Asylum, which was used as a dressing station and subject to frequent German bombardment.

For the purposes of family research this was another fortuitous turn of events, since Edgar's time at Ypres Asylum coincided with that of Thomas Franklin **Townsend** of the 9<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance, who survived the war and later became a minister of the United Church of Canada in Ontario. **Townsend** kept a diary which was transcribed after his death by his grandson and published on the internet and which provides a vivid record of the day-to-day events and overall situation in which Edgar too was living, enabling me to fill in some of the detail of his

experiences during the 4 months he spent there. For anyone with connections to the Ypres area and particularly Ypres Asylum at this time, it is a fascinating, though poignant resource and can be accessed at <http://www.hellfirecorner.co.uk/tft.htm>

In July 1916, Edgar returned to his unit on the front line close to Ypres but his active service there was short lived. On 23 August he was '*wounded in action*' during shelling, lying unconscious for 18 hours before being taken first to Number 32 Stationary Hospital, Wimereux, then to Number 1 Convalescent Camp, Boulogne and then, on 9 September to Number 7 Canadian Station Hospital, Le Havre before being evacuated back to England on September 13, a year to the day since he had arrived there from Canada on the *Missanabie*.

Over the subsequent months Edgar was treated for his head injury and for shell shock, first finding himself back in Liverpool at the 1<sup>st</sup> West General Hospital, Venice Street, Fazakerley and then at the [King's Lancashire Military Hospital](#) at Clifton Park, Blackpool, where he spent the winter before transferring to the Canadian Convalescent Hospital at Woodcote Park, Epsom, in February 1917, then to Granville Canadian Special Hospital at Ramsgate, on to West Cliff Canadian Eye and Ear Hospital in Folkestone and finally to the Canadian Military Hospital at Eastbourne, where a medical board determined he could not be sent back to the front.

Edgar received his discharge on 10 September 1917, aged 24 years and 3 months at Number 2 Canadian Discharge Depot at 133 Oxford Street, London. He was, according to his discharge record, of "*very good military character*" but "*no longer fit for war services*". He had served two years and 137 days, seven months of which were in France. At discharge he was offered the opportunity of free transportation back to Canada to resume his life there, but fate had already introduced another unexpected twist in his story.

Whilst at the King's Lancashire Military Hospital in Blackpool, Edgar had met a young local woman, Lilian **Pollard**, at a camp dance and the two had fallen in love. Initially, Lilian had been happy to plan to return to

Canada with Edgar, who was keen to take her back with him as his wife, but she had changed her mind after her mother persuaded her not to leave her family behind and so, at Edgar's request, he was discharged in England and signed a declaration waiving all claim for transportation back to Canada.

Edgar and Lillian were married in St Annes-on-sea on 14 November 1917, settling in the town and raising their family there and Edgar never saw Canada again. The enterprising 18-year-old who had left everything behind as he sailed out of Liverpool in May 1912 to start a new life across the Atlantic could never have envisaged the way that fate would alter his plans and redirect his intended path.

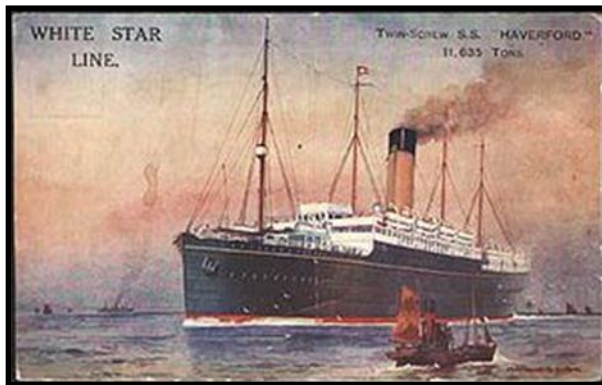


**Edgar Wallace Richards**  
**&**  
**Lillian Pollard**  
on their  
wedding day  
14 November 1917

***Sue Richards-Dobson (6795)***

## SS Haverford Explosion

The SS Haverford was a British steamship, a transatlantic liner with a tonnage of 11,635, built in 1901 for the American the American Line by John Brown & Company of Clydebank, Scotland. After briefly serving the Southampton to New York route, in 1903 the Haverford was transferred to the Liverpool to Philadelphia route when the American Line was absorbed into the International Navigation Company. The White Star Line had become part of the same company the previous year.



*SS Haverford of the White Star Line*



*Huskisson Dock, Liverpool*

The SS Haverford arrived in Liverpool from Philadelphia on 13 June 1906, disembarked its passengers and with eight hundred head of cattle, then proceeded to moor in berth three of Kirkdale's Huskisson Dock.

The following morning, Thursday, 14 June, at around 7am, a gang of 120 stevedores boarded the ship to unload its cargo. They were loosening the steamer's hatches when without warning there was a massive explosion, violent enough to blow off the hatches, tear into the fabric of the hull, and to hurl dead and wounded men in all directions. The explosion, which could be heard several miles away, was followed by fire in holds two and three as the cargo of highly inflammable linseed oil cake began to burn fiercely.

Incredibly brave stevedores, dockers, firemen and police officers risked their own lives by racing towards the ship, and despite the terrifyingly fierce inferno, rescued as many men as they could reach. It took over two hours to bring the fire under control, after which began a forlorn search through the carnage for further casualties and to recover the bodies of the dead. The task they faced was gruesome: bodies were dismembered and unrecognisable, and the deck, stanchions and quayside were strewn with body parts. Two steam fire engines and a chemical engine were involved in the fire and rescue operation.

Nineteen police horses pulled seven ambulances, three patrol wagons and a children's bus ferrying the injured to the three nearest hospitals, Bootle, Stanley, and the David Lewis Northern, and taking the dead to Prince's Dock Mortuary. The local press described this as a '*striking instance of the value of the mounted police*'.

One man had an amazing escape when the hydraulic crane he was operating on the quayside was blown to bits by the force of the explosion, flinging him clean through the box in which he had been seated and dropping him shocked but otherwise unhurt on the ground below. However, eight far less fortunate men were killed that day, four more died later in hospital, and a further forty were injured, some of whom suffered life-changing injuries.

The ship itself was extensively damaged; all the stanchions and girders near number two hold were either twisted or broken, the slings and hooks were mangled and interlocked, the chains were intertwined and the hull required significant repair. After making an initial examination of the hold, one manager said that it was impossible to state with any certainty what had caused the catastrophe, as no explosives of any kind

had been on board. However, a rumour began circulating that the disaster had been caused by anarchists detonating an ‘infernal machine’ (a bomb) in the hold. This conspiracy theory arose from the discovery of a small damaged wooden box in one of the holds. All that the box had actually contained was steel machine parts bound for an engineering company in Manchester.

The disaster, which was reported in newspapers around the world, was in all likelihood caused by ignition of an accumulation of explosive fumes produced by 45 tons of Fels-Naptha soap in the cargo hold. Fels-Naptha is an American brand of laundry soap, invented in 1893 by a Philadelphia-based company. The original formula contained naphtha, a colourless, flammable solvent which has a strong odour of the distilled petroleum it is derived from. The ship's owners attempted to sue the manufacturers of Fels-Naptha, causing that a build-up of the soap's combustible fumes were the cause of the disaster, but the case was rejected by the United States District Court who found the owners to have failed to provide adequate ventilation in the Haverford's cargo holds when they knew the danger posed by naphtha fumes. The owners also tried to blame the dead men (now where have the people of Liverpool heard *that* before?) claiming that one of the stevedores must have ignited the naphtha fumes by striking a match while in the hold. In fact, the spark could have been generated by the scraping of metal on metal as the cargo hatch was lifted, or from an iron boot nail on the rung of a metal ladder.



***Fels-Naptha Soap***

An inquest convened by the Liverpool coroner in the police buildings in Dale Street, examined the deaths of the eight men killed on the ship, plus the two who died in Stanley Hospital. The jury were required to view the bodies (a sight that may have haunted them until their dying day), and they also visited the Haverford to examine the steamer's hold. Many witnesses were called to give evidence including explosive experts and a public analyst. The analyst described experiments he had conducted disproving the Fels-Naphtha's legal team's claim that the soap did not give off an explosive vapour, and he expressed his expert opinion that a spark from an iron boot nail would have been sufficient to ignite it.

The Liverpool jury returned a verdict that the deaths were accidentally caused by an explosion of naphtha vapours, adding that there was no evidence to show what had caused the ignition. A second inquest was held in the Bootle Police Court into the deaths of the two men who died in Bootle Hospital. The South Lancashire coroner suggested the jury should adopt the Liverpool verdict without the need to have the evidence repeated, but the jury refused to commit themselves to a verdict for which they had neither heard nor read the evidence. The representative for Fels-Naphtha complained about the attitude of the jury stating that the company had already gone to great expense to present evidence at the Liverpool inquest, but the jurymen would not be swayed and returned a verdict that although the two men's deaths were due to an explosion on the Haverford, without evidence, they had no opinion as to how it was caused. They did, however, shout out in unison as the coroner entered their formal verdict into evidence, that naphtha vapour was the cause of the explosion.

The men who died on the ship were named in the press as William **WALL** (48) of 4 Emley Street, Matthew **TORRANCE** (32) of 4 Hodder Street, John **ALLEN** (28) of 32 Sherwood Street, Patrick **HENNESSEY** (37) of 34 Blackstone Street, James Henry **PERRY** (23) of 63 Prince Edwin Street, Joseph **MAGEE** (34) of 30 Beacon Street, Patrick **BENNETT** (29) of 5 Mann Street, and Robert **HUGHES** (30) of 68 Clare Road. The four men who died from their injuries were named as James **MAHER** (29) of 14 Warbreck Avenue, and William **SHEIL** (32) of 57 Lamberth Road, who died in Bootle Hospital, and Robert John **CLARKE** (49) of 4 Miranda Road, and John **SMITH** (38) of 28 Barlow Street, who died in Stanley Hospital. The names

of just four of the men recovering in David Lewis Northern Hospital appeared in the Liverpool Evening Express on 18 June. They were **KNEALE, LITTLE, SMITH**, and lastly, William Johannes **MINGE** (34) a Norwegian-born stevedore of Waterhouse Street, Everton.

Until very recently I had no knowledge of this disaster and had never heard of the SS Haverford, so I was surprised when I came across the name of this last casualty, as William Johannes was my maternal grandfather.



*William Johannes Minge*

*Elaine Meadows 2072*

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## Help Requests

### A Liverpool Dance Band

From childhood, I've been aware that my father, Harold Ivester **Lloyd** (1910-1960), sang with a local dance band when he was a young man. We have just one relevant photo in the family, which shows him at the microphone at a large dance. The venue looks like a function room in a town hall, or club premises, and there's a crest on the wall which I've been unable to identify.

The time period would be the 1930s. My father lived in Seaforth until 1938 when he married and moved to Great Crosby. So, the locality is probably somewhere between Bootle and Crosby. From the close-up of my father, it's clear that the band (or its leader) is connected to the letter "M". The name of the drummer was possibly Noel **Waugh**.

I'd be very grateful if any member could help in identifying the venue (maybe from the crest), or the occasion, and possibly even the dance band. Thank you!



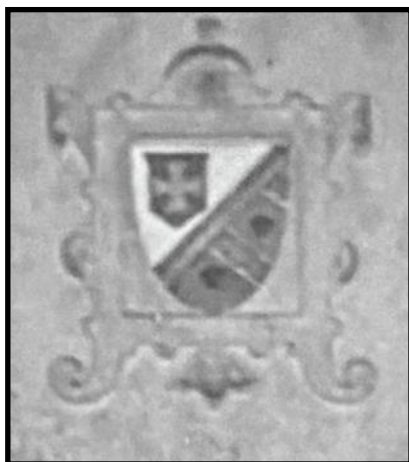
The  
Dance  
Band



**Harold Ivester Lloyd**

**(1910-1960)**

**Crest on Wall**



***Phil Lloyd (1915)***

## **A Few Reminiscences**

We all seem to concentrate on looking for our ancestors, but do you ever think that soon we will be the generation that our descendants will be investigating. Have you recorded details about yourself? Years ago, my daughter gave me a book "Dear Grandma from you to me" a journal of a lifetime. There were many questions e.g. your favourite toy, what age were you when you started work? I must admit that I haven't completed it yet.

Recently, at one of our Leigh Group meeting, after an interesting talk by our own Louise Wade about the history of Belle Vue Zoo, the audience started reminiscing about our earliest memories. This made me think that just writing brief answers to some of the questions wouldn't make much sense to our grandchildren.

One of my earliest memories was the day we had the school register taken in the schoolyard before walking up Wigan Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield to stand and wait for the newly crowned Queen to travel pass our house. The whole school lined the side of the road just near to where I lived and as our house was raised from the street level my Mum had put the dining room chairs out for the neighbours to wait. The Queen had been to open the new Technical College in Wigan and was on her way to some other function in the South Lancashire area. The main road was clear with no traffic and then a couple of large black cars drove slowly passed and we all cheered. Our teachers then told us that we could all go home as we had been given a special day's holiday. In the afternoon, Mum took me to Wigan to walk up the path outside the College where the Queen had walked.

Going on holiday was different in the 1950's. We would be going to Pen-sarn near Rhyl in a caravan. So, the day before my Mum would cook a chicken and let it go cold before wrapping it up in tinfoil. She would then put it into a cardboard box (no freezer bag) together with tea, sugar, tins of fruit and Carnation milk. Dad would carry a suitcase, and Mum would have her box of groceries, and we would walk to where we would pick up the local coach. Mum would be happy knowing that we had a cold chicken tea already for when we arrived in the little four berth caravan. Of course, I forgot to explain that Dad would be wearing his smart sports coat and best trousers, Mum in her best coat over a dress, me in my new shoes. No loose comfy clothes like jeans and tracksuits.

Another member explained that her twenty-year old children only vaguely remember the Woolworths Department Store. This really set me thinking that I should explain more clearly that my first job was as a Saturday girl on the hardware counter of Woolworths. This meant standing inside a counter surrounded by window blind fittings, hammers, screwdrivers, nuts and bolts, various sizes of screws etc. The screws were all loose, no packets with barcodes just a sign indicating 3 for 1d., or a different size would be 8 for 2d. There were no automatic

tills, instead one similar to that in the Arkwright's store on television. Everything had to be counted into a paper bag and the sums calculated in your head and then totalled up when the customer had decided on all the different items. All this was pre-decimal coinage. A day's wage was £1 although 3 pence was taken off for National Insurance. I would spend 1s 9d on the canteen lunch. I can't remember the main course, but I loved the red jelly and ice cream. My new pair of stockings were 1s 11d so after my bus fare to and from Wigan I probably had about 14s 0d. left. As £1 in 1964 was equivalent to £25.00 in 2025, I must have felt quite well off for a student.

I think I should also explain more clearly my next job as a Shorthand Typist as our present day teenagers would not understand how I used to practice drawing short lines at various angles and thickness to represent 'b, t, d ch, ja' then adding a little loop at the top of the 'b' to represent an 'l' and knowing that I'd written blue! They would also be surprised that to produce six copies of a letter would involve 5 sheets of carbon paper and hope that I didn't make a typing error meaning the use of a rubber on all the copies. No such thing as type once, including correcting on screen and then pressing the PRINT button. If we wanted more than six copies of something we were typing we could use a stencil which was three layers, the top would be cut by the typewriter and when put onto a duplicator machine with ink would reproduce the typing.

Times have certainly changed in our lifetime and we should all remember to record the events that stand out during our lifetime. Our descendants will be surprised at how we lived compared to the modern day.

**Glenys McClennan**  
**Leigh & District FHS**

## Maghull Military Hospital

Some time ago, I wrote an article about my grandfather **Walter Thompson**, his sister Alice and brother James Richard. That article was about my grandfather, Walter, who was **Churchill's** bodyguard throughout WW2, his sister Alice who emigrated to Canada and James Richard

who eventually emigrated to Canada, so I didn't think the article would be of interest to the Society, but the section on James Richard's time at the Maghull Hospital might be of interest to the group.

James Richard served in the army in the Boer War and in WW1. In a battle on the front line, James Richard was badly shell shocked and partially paralysed in his legs and feet. The army sent him to Maghull Military Hospital.

My son was in the RAF and served in Iraq and Afghanistan and is now a psychologist. He has had PTSD himself and has patients with this condition. Some in fact, going back to the Korean War. He was very interested in the information in the article.

Detailed below is the section of the article which I hope will be of interest to the readers.

..... James joined the Scots Guards for the second time on 12 October 1914. Soon he was on the front line in France, having left his wife, Florence, with four children to bring up. Poor Florence found the task of bringing up the children on her own and on limited money very difficult and resorted to fraud, by falsely obtaining £2-15s from an Army Service Charity, the S.F.F.A. Association. She was paid £1-8s-6d from the army and 4s and 6d from her husband's former employers, the Hornsey Gas Co, but 8s 6d was required for her rent. She was sentenced to 6 months in prison (reduced to 1 month) at the Middlesex Quarter Sessions; Florence was also in poor health. The three boys were taken into care by Dr Barnardo's whilst little Florence was cared for by family.

Meanwhile, James had fought in the battles at Mons and Ypres and was invalided home before Christmas time 1914 with frost-bitten feet, but after a few weeks was sent back to the front. In January 1916 he was invalided home again suffering from severe shell shock and a kind of paralysis of his feet and legs. Soldiers suffering from shell shock were first assessed near the front line and those who had mild symptoms were rested and then repatriated to the front line again, and the moderate to severe sufferers were shipped back to the UK. The moderately sick cases were sent to Army Hospitals and after some rest, were returned to the front line. The most severe cases were sent to one of two Mental Hospitals. James was sent to Moss Side Hospital in

Maghull, Lancashire, which was run by the Red Cross in 1916.

Notes below are from a lecture given by Dr John **Rowlands** to the Liverpool Medical History Society entitled: -

### **A Mental Hospital at War**

#### **“The story of Moss Side Military Hospital, Maghull during the First World War”**

*This lecture was very revealing as to the treatment of the men which was very poor, also they were badly fed. The worst aspect was the uncaring attitude of the “top brass” in the army echelons. The lecture notes revealed that the Generals’ disregard for shell shock victims was ignorant and callous, that the “shell shock condition didn’t exist and that they were either malingerers or were suffering from venereal disease”! Fortunately, there were three excellent gentlemen who were instrumental in developing treatments for shell shock victims; they were Prof Eliot **Smith**, Mr T H **Pear** and Dr W H R **Rivers**.*

In July 1916, three parallel situations occurred, the first being James, who was very ill but recovering slowly and just coming out of the hospital in Maghull. The second was Florence coming out of prison but with poor health needing an internal operation and hence couldn’t care for the children; and the whole family being assessed by Dr **Barnardo’s** as to whether the children went into care or not. It was not known who cared for the children during this period.

The Dr **Barnardo** report states that James had severe shell shock and was not expected to work again, whereas Florence was quite ill with internal problems, and that no members of the family were in a position to look after the boys. James agreed that the boys would go into Dr **Barnardo’s** only for the duration of the war, and that they were to be kept together. None of James’ wishes were adhered to; the boys were admitted to Dr **Barnardo’s** but were separated, although living near each other in Norfolk. The boys stayed on at **Barnardo’s** for many years until 1926! Little Florence was looked after by some relative so didn’t go into Dr **Barnardo’s**.

James was discharged from the army as unfit on 30 March 1916. He did manage to get himself together, but after the war ended in 1918, the

home situation for the nation was dire, prospects for employment were difficult, and so James decided to emigrate from the UK to New Zealand. Florence, the mother, in the meantime seems to have disappeared, whether she went to New Zealand with James or she died has not been established.

*[Later records show that James Richard actually went to Canada, moving to Vancouver. He married either Emma Margaret **Weatherell** or Emma Margaret **Shavers**. There is some confusion as to which lady is correct and to make matters worse both marriages were on the same day in Vancouver on 2 April 1921. James Richard at some time then moved to New Zealand, as there is a record from a Ships Passenger List showing him returning alone from New Zealand to Vancouver on 27 March 1930 giving his address in Vancouver where his wife E M **Thompson** lived. There is a death record for James Richard **Thompson** aged 85 in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada and for an Emma **Thompson** on 26 December 1966 in North Surrey, British Columbia.]*

By 1926, James wanted his boys to be with him in New Zealand and requested them to be released from Dr **Barnardo's**. But here a mystery occurred, as only the eldest two boys, Harold and Walter, were allowed to go, whilst the youngest, Horace, had to stay behind, as the paternal grandparents refused him permission to go to New Zealand, but no reason was given. Horace was traumatised by this decision and in fact he never saw his brothers again. Horace passed away on 5 April 2010.

Passenger Ship Lists have Harold and Walter sailing from Southampton on the SS Waimana on 4 February 1926 to Auckland. Harold was 16 and Walter 15 and their departure address was 21 Venner Road, Sydenham, London, the Thompson "staging post"!

The effects of the shell shock must have scarred James for life, and soon after the boys came to New Zealand he was off again, to Australia, leaving the boys behind, now in their late teens. He then went next to Vancouver, Canada. This information was given in army records which were a great help, stating that he worked as a policeman at the Vancouver Docks. I am indebted to the help from the Archivist at the Canadian Genealogical Centre website, who found, from the 1939 British Columbia Directory, Vancouver Section, a Jas (James) **Thompson**, a watchman with the National Harbour Board, and residing at 249 East

Hastings. What happened to James after that is still a work in progress.

Canada seems to be a magnet for this section of the family, as James' daughter, Florence Victoria, later emigrated from the UK to Canada marrying Horace Henry Graham **Randell** who came from Reigate in Surrey, England. They married in Vancouver on 19 June 1926, so it wasn't surprising that James ended up in Vancouver.

Canada seems to be a magnet for this section of the family, as James' daughter, Florence Victoria, later emigrated from the UK to Canada marrying Horace Henry Graham **Randell** who came from Reigate in Surrey, England. They married in Vancouver on 19 June 1926, so it wasn't surprising that James ended up in Vancouver. The **Thompson's** came from York and then moved to Liverpool, but the **Gores** were Lancashire people, but James Richard, Walter and Alice were all born in Lambeth, London.

***Peter Thompson (8705)***

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### **Lancashire Parish Register Society**

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New and old Members' Interests detailed below consist of the membership number and interest in terms of **SURNAME and INITIAL, LOCATION and DATE.**

**A maximum of only ten interests can be published for the sake of space. Anyone needing more than ten interests can see the extra numbers published on our website.**

Members reading this section who identify an interest they are looking for, should note the membership number of the contributing member and contact them through the **'Members Only'** area of our website:

[www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)

We welcome new members, **numbers 9775-9789** who have joined most recently and wish them every success with their research.

### New Members

|             |                     |             |                    |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <b>9775</b> | <b>K Kelly</b>      | <b>9776</b> | <b>E Franklin</b>  |
| <b>9777</b> | <b>S M McDonald</b> | <b>9778</b> | <b>E Bennet</b>    |
| <b>9779</b> | <b>A Lister</b>     | <b>9780</b> | <b>P Corrie</b>    |
| <b>9781</b> | <b>R Donnelly</b>   | <b>9782</b> | <b>C Wright</b>    |
| <b>9783</b> | <b>B Wheeler</b>    | <b>9784</b> | <b>C Yarwood</b>   |
| <b>9785</b> | <b>L Perry</b>      | <b>9786</b> | <b>J May</b>       |
| <b>9787</b> | <b>J Hartwell</b>   | <b>9788</b> | <b>M Dougherty</b> |
| <b>9789</b> | <b>K Hassell</b>    |             |                    |

## Members' Interests

|             |                 |           |               |           |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| <b>9739</b> | <b>FURNIVAL</b> | Samuel    | LAN/Liverpool | 1800-1823 |
| <b>9739</b> | <b>KNOWLES</b>  | Ann       | LAN/Liverpool | 1800-1823 |
| <b>9739</b> | <b>Hardman</b>  | William   | LAN/Bury      | 1700-1916 |
| <b>8860</b> | <b>WALKER</b>   | Elizabeth | Liverpool     | 1827-1903 |
| <b>8860</b> | <b>WILKIE</b>   | Margaret  | Liverpool     | 1832-1861 |

## Help Desks

Have you hit a brick wall with your research?  
Why not visit one of the Society's help desks?

### **Liverpool Group:**

The Liverpool group have volunteers who hold a weekly help desk each Tuesday, 1:00pm till 3:30pm, at the **Liverpool Central Library**, 3rd Floor, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EW.

### **Leigh Group:**

Leigh Group's Help Desk is now at the Archives, Wigan & Leigh, **Leigh Town Hall**.

Tuesday to Thursday 10:00am to 1:00pm by appointment.

Telephone: 01942 404430 for further details.

### **Southport Group:**

**Crosby Library** - First and Third Friday in month - 10am to 1pm. Please contact Crosby Library for an appointment.

**Maghull Library** - Thursday mornings depending on availability. Please contact Maghull Library for an appointment.

### **Warrington Group:**

The helpdesk is based at **Warrington Library**, Museum Street, Warrington on the following Saturdays between 10am and 12 noon:  
20 September, 25 October and 22 November 2025.

For further details please contact: [warrington@lswlfhs.org.uk](mailto:warrington@lswlfhs.org.uk)

**The Liverpool and South West Lancashire FHS Website:**  
**[www.lswlfhs.org.uk](http://www.lswlfhs.org.uk)**

## News from the Groups

### Leigh & District

**Chairman:** Margery Harrop

**Secretary:** Louise Wade

**Meetings** are held at **Leigh Town Hall** at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of each month.

- |        |                                                                                                                                           |                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 16 Sep | The Man who Shod Horses                                                                                                                   | <b>Martin Jones</b> |
|        | From documents found in a house clearance described by a WW1 historian & expert on the Antiques Roadshow as ' <i>Absolute Gold Dust</i> ' |                     |
| 21 Oct | Dr John Bodkin Adams, Serial Killer                                                                                                       | <b>Kath Graham</b>  |
| 18 Nov | A dog, a Duke and a Dowager                                                                                                               | <b>Jim Meehan</b>   |

### Liverpool

**Chairman:** Susan Atkins

**Secretary:** Joyce Culling

Meetings are held in **Room 2, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Liverpool Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EW** on the second Tuesday of each month, except July and August. Doors open 5:30pm for 5:45pm start and meetings finish no later than 7:45pm. £1 for refreshments.

9 Sep        Members Evening

14 Oct       TBC

**There are no meetings in November and December due to the disruption caused by the Liverpool Christmas Market**  
**Meetings resume on 13 January 2026**

### Skelmersdale & Upholland

**Chairman:** Bill Fairclough

**Secretary:** Caroline Fairclough

The Group meets at **Upholland Methodist Church, Alma Hill, Upholland, WN8 0NR** at 7:00pm for 7:30 pm on the first Tuesday of each month - unless stated otherwise.

|       |                                       |                |
|-------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 2 Sep | Welcome back, research and help night |                |
| 7 Oct | AGM                                   |                |
| 4 Nov | TBC                                   | Andrew Johnson |
| 2 Dec | Christmas bring & share tea           |                |

### **Southport**

**Chairman:** Ian Cooper

**Secretary:** Shelagh Boardman

Meetings are held at **Birkdale Station Master's House** on the second Friday of each month (unless stated otherwise). Meetings start at 7:30pm. Coffee/Tea and biscuits from 7.15pm.

### **Warrington**

**Chairman:** Peter Jolliffe

**Secretary:** Vacant

**Penketh (Meeting Lane) Community Centre, Meeting Lane, Penketh, Warrington WA5 2BG, UK.** Meetings start at 7:00pm (doors open at 6:30pm) on the fourth Monday of each month, except for December.

|        |                      |                  |
|--------|----------------------|------------------|
| 22 Sep | Final Journey        | Nicolas Wheatley |
| 27 Oct | A house through time | Peter Jolliffe   |
| 24 Nov | Members Evening      |                  |

### **Widnes**

Welcome to our group page from your committee members Claire, Gill and Sue.

Widnes Family History Group was formed in 1994 and is one of the six groups that form part of the Liverpool & Southwest Lancashire Family History Society.

We meet at 7pm on the last Wednesday of each month, except December, at **Upton Community Centre, Hough Green Road, Widnes, WA8 4PF**. Meetings currently consist of members research evenings, with our library available to browse. Help is offered from our committee members and members of the group.

# Officers of the Society

## General Committee Officers

**President: Joyce Culling    Vice President: David Guiver**

## Trustees

|                               |                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chairman:</b>              | <b>Susan Atkins</b><br>Email: chair@lswlfhs.org.uk                                                    |
| <b>Vice Chairman:</b>         | <b>Mary Allan</b><br>Email: liverpool@lswlfhs.org.uk                                                  |
| <b>Hon. Treasurer:</b>        | <b>Ann Croft</b><br>Email: treasurer@lswlfhs.org.uk                                                   |
| <b>General Secretary:</b>     | <b>Barry Peacock</b><br>Email: secretary@lswlfhs.org.uk                                               |
| <b>Publications Officer:</b>  | <b>Shelagh Boardman</b><br>Email: publications@lswlfhs.org.uk                                         |
| <b>Editor:</b>                | <b>Alison Anyon</b><br>19 High Meadows, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7RY<br>Email: editor@lswlfhs.org.uk |
| <b>Internet Co-ordinator:</b> | <b>Brian Whitehead</b><br>Email: webmaster@lswlfhs.org.uk                                             |
| <b>Minutes Secretary:</b>     | <b>Belinda Shaw</b><br>Email: minutessec@lswlfhs.org.uk                                               |

## Other Officers

|                                  |                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Media Administrator:</b>      | <b>Mary Allan</b><br>Email: zoom-admin@lswlfhs.org.uk                                                              |
| <b>Membership Secretary:</b>     | <b>Geoff Bibby</b><br>2 Chelford Close, Bidston, Birkenhead, CH43 7NJ<br>Email: membership@lswlfhs.org.uk          |
| <b>Strays Co-ordinator:</b>      | <b>Kathy Donaldson</b><br>Email: strays@lswlfhs.org.uk                                                             |
| <b>Members' Interests Sec:</b>   | <b>Sandra Roberts</b><br>Email: interests@lswlfhs.org.uk                                                           |
| <b>Donated Certificates Sec:</b> | <b>Val Benson</b><br>Ailsa Craig, Russet Road, Weaverham, Northwich, CW8 3HY<br>Email: certificates@lswlfhs.org.uk |

**Plus one representative elected by each Group of the Society**



[Albion House-White Star Building - August 2017 - geo-graph.org.uk-5509668.jpg](#)

Albion House/White Star Building - August 2017 [The Carlisle Kid CCA-Share Alike 2.0](#)

**Albion House** (also known as **30 James Street** or the **White Star Building** or colloquially **The Streaky Bacon Building**) is a [Grade II\\* listed](#) building located in [Liverpool](#), England. It was constructed between 1896 and 1898 and is located on the corner of James Street and The Strand across from the [Pier Head](#).

Designed by architects [Richard Norman Shaw](#) and [J. Francis Doyle](#), it was built for the Ismay, Imrie and Company shipping company, which later became the [White Star Line](#). After White Star merged with [Royal Mail Line](#), the headquarters remained at Albion House until 1934, at which time the British Government forced the merger of [Cunard Line](#) and the White Star Line. The facade is constructed from white Portland stone and red brick. In 1912 when news of the disaster of the [Titanic](#) reached the offices, the officials were too afraid to leave the building, and instead read the names of the deceased from the balcony. During the Second World War, the gable was damaged and was later rebuilt in the late 1940s. After many years being vacant, in 2014 the building was converted into a *Titanic*-themed hotel known as 30 James Street.

**Extract taken from Wikipedia**



[Custom House, Liverpool, c.1892.jpg](#)

Custom House, Liverpool, c.1892 Unknown author. Public domain.

[File:Custom House, Liverpool, c.1892.jpg| Custom\_House,\_Liverpool,\_c.1892]

The **Custom House** was a 19th-century Neo-classical building located in Liverpool, England. It housed a post office, dock office, and offices for Customs and Excise. It was built on the site of the historic [Old Dock](#) in 1839 and operated up to [World War II](#) when it was partly destroyed during the [Liverpool Blitz](#), then finally demolished in 1948. Today the area which formed the base of the building makes up part of the Liverpool One shopping complex. It is considered amongst Liverpool's most regrettable losses when it comes to landmark buildings. Following the closure of the [Old Dock](#) on 31 August 1826, plans were made for the construction of what was to be Liverpool's fifth Custom House on the site which was filled in with concrete prior to construction. The town's surveyor, [John Foster](#), was charged with designing the H-shaped building located parallel to the shoreline. On 12 August 1828, the first stone was laid by Liverpool's mayor, [Thomas Colley Porter](#), to mark the start of construction; this took 11 years, with the building opening in 1839. In 1941, during [World War II](#), the Custom House was hit with a bomb, partly destroying the building but ultimately leaving its structure intact. After the war had ended, the government (who owned the building) refused to repair the building despite protests, and it was subsequently demolished in 1948. Notably the building was a subject of a painting by [John Atkinson Grimshaw](#).

**Extract taken from Wikipedia**

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