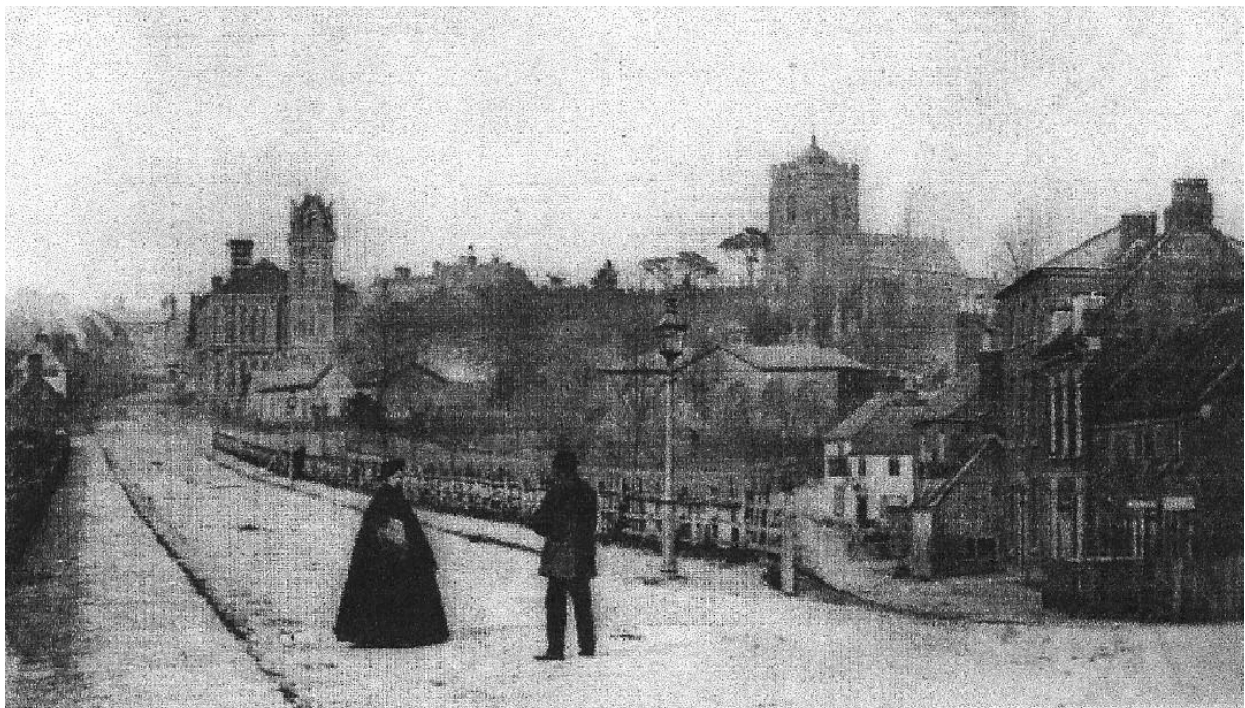


CLASS OF 1900
at
TOWN SCHOOL
SUTTON COLDFIELD



The Parade and Mill Street, c. 1870, showing the town hall with its clock tower. In front of the town hall are some almshouses and to the right of them, behind the brand new gas lamp, is the Town School. (*Norman Evans Collection*)

BY
DERYK WHITFIELD

CONTENTS

Page No

INTRODUCTION.....	3
THE CLASS.....	4
WALTER ERNEST ADAMS	5
JAMES ADCOCK	7
HERBERT TREVOR BASTABLE.....	9
WALTER JAMES BENTON	11
FRANK ARTHUR FALCONBRIDGE	13
ARTHUR GRIMLEY	15
EDWARD HAYWOOD	16
ARTHUR ERNEST FRANK HOLMES	18
THOMAS HENRY LAKIN	20
FREDERICK GEORGE INSLEY	22
CHARLES EDWARD PEARS.....	24
CHRISTOPHER SMITH	25
FRANK CHRISTOPHER SMITH	26
WILLIAM HENRY THOMPSON	28
ERNEST JOHN TWIGG.....	30

Introduction

It was an unprecedented time for a class of 15 boys at Sutton Coldfield Town School, they were not only leaving behind the Victorian era which had changed so many people's lives but they were also moving forward into the 20th century.

This paper has two objectives:

- To tell the boys' individual stories.
- To provide significant reference detail over the families as a whole which people may use for research

Each of the stories will look to cover at least two generations as background to the life of the boys' families, to determine if they were old established or newcomers to Sutton Coldfield. This will not be an attempt to create family trees but will provide an opportunity for others to extend family research should they so wish.

As one of the many shielded due to the virus it is not referenced but all information has been from the following sources:

- Ancestry.co.uk
- Find My Past
- Free BMD
- General Registry Office

My thanks to the following for rectifying my abysmally poor grammar, incomplete and meaningless sentences together with lack of clarity:

- My wife Brenda Whitfield
- My daughter Dawn Whitfield
- My very good friend Beverley Stanford

The Class

- Walter Ernest Adams
- James Adcock
- Herbert Trevor Bastable
- Walter James Benton
- Frank Arthur Falconbridge
- Arthur Grimley
- Edward Haywood
- Arthur Ernest Frank Holmes
- Thomas Henry Lakin
- Frederick George Insley
- Charles Edward Pears
- Christopher Smith
- Frank Christopher Smith
- William Henry Thompson
- Ernest John Twigg

Walter Ernest Adams

Walter Ernest's story begins with his grandparents, Samuel baptised in 1809 at Middleton-on-the-Hill and Elizabeth Lea born in 1817 at Whitbourne, both of these villages are in Herefordshire. Following their marriage, they had six children; Sophia in 1837, Mary Ann in 1838, Samuel in 1840, Sarah in 1846, Betsy in 1847 and Jane in 1851. Sadly, by the time of the 1861 census Elizabeth was listed as a widow, but I have been unable to trace the specific date of Samuel's death.

The death of Samuel inevitably led to the break-up of the family. Sophia obtained employment as a General Servant to the Davis family in Whitbourne; Mary Ann went to Corley in Shropshire as a Dairy Maid; Sarah had a daughter, Charlotte Alice, and was employed as a Glovess; Betsy married William Murphy in 1871; and Jane became a Housekeeper for her Aunt Sarah in Whitbourne.

The young Samuel, now aged 22, was still living with his mother, Elizabeth, when she died in 1863. A few years later, Samuel met Sarah Duddell and they married at Worcester in 1869 setting-up home in Hylton Street in the town.

Samuel and Sarah had eight children; Emma Louise in 1870, Sophie in 1871, Mary Elizabeth in 1874, Lucy Ann in 1876, Samuel Henry in 1879, Albert William in 1881, Alfred James in 1883 and the boy in the story, Walter Ernest Adams, in 1887.

In the 1881 census it is recorded that Samuel's occupation was that of Groom/Gardener and the family were now living in Merry Hill, Upper Penn. Prior to 1881, the family moved yet again, taking up residence at Farewell Place in Highbridge Road, Sutton Coldfield.

The children started to leave home for various destinations. Sophia married William Price in 1892; Emma Louise married John Shepherd in 1895; Lucy married Frederick Shilvock in 1898; Albert William married Violet Ketteridge in 1905; Alfred would marry Constance Archer in 1910; and Mary had moved out to an unknown location.

Walter attended Town for 5 years and like his peers left in 1900.

The 1901 census revealed that Samuel and Sarah were still living at Farewell Place with their young son, Walter. At that time Walter was working as a Milkman on a local farm.

Walter married Nellie Peach at St Peters Church Maney in 1910, At that time he was employed as a Horse Driver for a local haulier. They set up home at 95 Coles Lane, just down the road from Walter's parents, Samuel and Sarah, and brother Samuel Henry, at number 70.

World events were soon to affect every household with the outbreak of war in 1914, and mobilisation meant that Walter and countless thousands of other young men were drafted into the services.

Walter was to join the Royal Field Artillery Regiment, entering as a private but subsequently promoted to corporal, service number 836547. Walter was injured in an incident in 1916 and received confirmation in 1917 that he was entitled to wear a wound stripe. This came in the form of a gold stripe stitched perpendicularly on the left forearm sleeve of dress jacket or battle dress.

On demobilisation, he was awarded the Victory Medal, the 1914/15 Star and the British War Medal.

Walter and Nellie continued to live in Coles Lane, where they led what could be called a “homely life”, having no children, but no doubt participating in the life of the wider family.

By the mid/late 1930's, once again war appeared to be inevitable and a national census was undertaken to determine the skills and abilities of the population. The census would inform the government of those who could support the war directly and those who, through their professions, would provide the tools for the job. Another benefit was that the detail could be used to establish a fair system of rationing. This had been a failure during the Great War.

The 1939 Register, as this census was known, recorded that Walter was a Sewer-Man and still lived at 95 Coles Lane.

Walter took no part directly in the war but there is a high probability that he would have served in the Home Guard.

Walter Adams died, aged 65, in 1952 and Nellie died, aged 80, in 1968. Both of these events were in Sutton Coldfield.

James Adcock

James's grandfather, Robert Adcock, was born in 1800 at Moxhall near Wishaw, the son of Farmer William and his wife Ann at Brook House Farm. Robert grew up in Wishaw, no doubt working on his father's farm, where he met Anne Owen and they married in 1827 at Middleton.

They had nine children; William in 1830, Elizabeth 1831, Robert 1833, James 1834, Mary Ann 1836, Charles 1838, Martha 1840, Frederick 1844 and Henry in 1848. During this period, they lived and worked at Brook House Farm in Wishaw.

The census of 1861 records that Robert, by now 60, was helped by James, Charles and Martha who were also classed as Farmers. By this time all of the other children had left home. In the next decade the family's association with Brook House would come to an end.

By 1871, James had moved into Sutton Coldfield to begin his new career as a Hairdresser; Martha had married Thomas Greenaway and left to set up their own home; Charles had married Sarah Deville and was living in New John Street but would soon re-join his parents at Falcon Lodge, where they had the first of their three children, Charles in 1867, Joseph in 1868 and Frederick in 1870.

Charles and Sarah moved to a home of their own at Langley Pool Cottage on the Lindridge Road together with sons Charles and Frederick. Charles by now was employed as an Agricultural Labourer. More children followed; William in 1874, Jane in 1876, Sarah in 1878 and Lizzie in 1880.

By now, Charles and Sarah's son Charles Junior, now aged 14, had left school and was in employment as a Farm Boy.

The next decade started badly, with grandparents, Robert Adcock passing away in 1882 followed by Ann in 1884. They would both have enjoyed their later years in an alms house in Wishaw.

The census of 1891 records that Charles and family had moved from Langley Pool and now occupied a cottage on the Birmingham Road but would shortly return to Langley Pool. Charles Junior and William had left the family home but there were four new additions; Alfred in 1883, Bernard in 1889, Robert O in 1890 and James Adcock, the boy in the story, in 1885.

Charles married Sarah Parkinson in 1891; Joseph married Florence Leckeuby in Newton Massachusetts in 1892; Frederick stayed with his parents but died in 1896; William married Elizabeth in 1895; Jane never married and lived with Lizzie; Sarah married John Bloxham in 1900; Lizzie lived with sister Jane; Alfred married Annie Lucy Dodd in 1900; Bernard married Caroline Penn in 1914 and Robert Owen married Annie Louise Fellows in 1915.

The boy of the story, James Adcock, spent over 5 years at Town School and left in 1900. He gained employment as a Domestic Gardener, following his father who was now a Hedge Cutter and Fence Repairer.

The 1901 census records that Charles and Sarah were living at Langley Pool Cottage along with daughter Jane and sons James, Bernard and Robert. Charles

and James were the only ones in paid employment although it is likely that Jane helped her mother.

By 1911 Charles and Sarah were still at Langley Pool Cottage along with Jane and Robert Owen, now aged 21 and working as a Gardener.

James had met and married Florence Canning, who already had a two-year old daughter Florence. They were recorded in the 1911 census, along with seven-month old son James, living at Poplar Cottage in Erdington. At that time, James's occupation was that of Farm Labourer.

The world was an uncertain place with countries forming alliances and the assassination of Gabriel Princip triggered off a chain of events that ended in 1914 with formal declarations of war. Mobilisation followed and hundreds of thousands would be conscripted into the cause before hostilities ceased in 1918.

One of these men would be James Adcock who joined the Norfolk Regiment as a Private in the 1st and 4th Battalions, his service number was 31286. The Regiment was posted overseas to fight in the Egyptian Theatre of War, and James was one of the fallen, losing his life in September 1917.

James Adcock would probably have received posthumously the following medals; The Victory Medal, British War Medal and 1914/15 Star. His sacrifice is also recorded on the Walmley War Memorial.

James left behind his widow Florence and children Florence, James and Beatrice Annie. Florence raised the family alone until in 1923, when, at the age of 37, she married Frederick Stockbridge.

Son James married Mary L Baxter in 1934; daughter Florence married Thomas H Glover in 1928; and daughter Beatrice Annie married Charles Morgan in 1930.

Herbert Trevor Bastable

The Bastable family line goes back to the middle of the 18th century and probably beyond. William Bastable, who was Herbert's great-grandfather, was born in 1781 and worked as an Agricultural Labourer in Handsworth. He met Elizabeth and married her before the turn of the century (there are no marriage details).

By 1841, the family comprised of William and Elizabeth, and their children, Elizabeth born in 1816, Joseph in 1821, John in 1823, Jane in 1826, Charlotte in 1829 (baptism), William in 1838, and Grandson John in 1839. By the early 1850's both parents had died, William in 1844 and Elizabeth in 1852 and the family had already begun to disperse.

John died at Stourbridge in 1845; Elizabeth married John Hollyoak, a boatman from the Isle of Man, in 1847 and went to live in Booth Street, Handsworth, and she would soon be joined by nephew William who came to lodge with them; Joseph married Maria Amelia Cooke in 1848; Charlotte went into service in 1851 as Cook for Joseph Brookes, a Birmingham Grocer, who lived at 57 High Street, Sutton Coldfield; Jane married Thomas Morris in 1852; John (grandson) married Isabella Barton in 1859. Charlotte gave birth to a son, John, in 1851 and, despite our efforts, his whereabouts at this time are a mystery; she married James Broadhurst in 1858.

Joseph went to work as an Electro-Plater in Birmingham where he married local girl Maria Amelia Cooke in December 1848 and set up home in Mills Street, Birmingham. While living here, their first two children, Henry and John, were born. They were soon to move to George Street, Aston, and it was here that daughter, Rosa, was born.

John, Charlotte's son, was not living at home and was also missing on the censuses of 1861 and 1871. The next record we have of him is his marriage to Elizabeth Carter of Erdington in 1875, both aged 24. They were to have nine children; Louisa, Edith, Charlotte, Blanche, John, Harry, Herbert, Harriet and William.

In the 1881 census, the family were living in Sutton Coldfield, where John was an Engine Driver.

Louisa died in 1885; Edith was a Housekeeper in Chiswick; Charlotte was a servant at "The Lawns" on Bracebridge Road; Blanche was a Cook living at home; and John was a lodger with the Bunn family at Wellington.

In 1911, Harry was a Labourer, Harriet a Housemaid and William a Gardener and all three were living at home.

The story now moves forward to Herbert Trevor Bastable.

Herbert was born in 1886 and baptised at Holy Trinity Church on the 27th April of that year. From 1894, Herbert attended the Town School and after five years of study work beckoned. Herbert gained employment as a Domestic Gardener, still living at home with the family who were now at Reddicap Heath

As the century closed, so did the lives of his grandparents; Joseph died in 1893 and Maria, died in 1897.

At this time Canada were offering free passage to young men and families. Herbert took up the offer and arrived in Quebec on 10th May 1907 and eventually ended up in Brandon, Manitoba, where he would meet his wife to be.

Edith Clara Muzzelle was born at New Cross, Kent in 1880, the daughter of George Muzzelle and Claire Holman. Her mother died when she was aged 9 and she went to live with her uncle Owen Holman in Kingston, Surrey.

Edith went into service and in 1911 was employed as a Domestic at 24, Balfour Road, Norwood. She left Liverpool for Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1914 and then moved to Brandon, Manitoba where she married Herbert on 20th July 1916.

While they were living in Brandon, she learnt of the death of her father George Muzzelle who had died in 1925. Herbert's father John died in 1926 and his mother Elizabeth in 1933.

Some years later, Edith and Herbert moved to Burnaby, British Columbia. It was there that Edith Clara died in 1966 and I believe that Herbert also died there, but there are no details of the date.

Walter James Benton

Anne Watterson born in 1783 at Tamworth, married in around 1820. They had ten children; George in 1827, Harriet in 1830, Mary in 1833, Jane in 1835, Elizabeth in 1838, Richard in 1839, Fanny in 1842, William in 1845, Catherine in 1848 and Julia in 1850.

In 1841, William was working as an Agricultural Labourer and eldest son, George, by then 14, was probably employed but the details are not listed.

George married Sarah Day in 1852; Harriet married John Reeves in 1853; Mary married Thomas Bird Harvey in 1856; Jane married George Bird in 1856; Elizabeth married John Harvey in 1861; Richard not located after 1871; Fanny married William Turtes in 1860; William married Sarah Lakin in 1870; Catherine married Samuel Collet in 1865; and Julia married Charles Tooth in 1865.

Following their marriage in 1852, our boy's grandparents settled in Sutton Coldfield and they had five children; William in 1854, Mary Ann in 1856, Walter George in 1858, Sarah Ann in 1861 and John Thomas in 1866.

At the time of the 1861 census, records show that George was now employed as a Gate Keeper and he and his family were living at Turnpike House on the Birmingham Road. Walter's great-grandparents, William Benton born in 1786 at Curdworth and

George and Sarah were still at Turnpike House in the 1871 census, living together with Mary Ann, Walter George, Sarah Ann and new boy John. Richard William had left the family home and gone to work on a local farm.

Richard William married Elizabeth Thompson in 1872; Mary Ann married William Astbury in 1881; Sarah Ann married Abraham Wootton in 1880; and John Thomas married Ellen Weller in 1889.

The census of 1881 showed that George, although still living on the Birmingham Road was no longer at Turnpike House, he still lived with Sarah, Mary Ann and Walter George. George's occupation was recorded as Market Gardener, Mary Ann as a Laundress and Walter George as an Agricultural Labourer.

The story continues with Richard William.

Richard William and Elizabeth had nine children; Edith Eliza in 1872, Elizabeth Jane in 1879, William G in 1881, Ernest J in 1884, Walter James in 1886, Bertram in 1889, Herbert in 1889, Mary in 1893 and Elsie in 1898.

The family initially lived on Reddicap Hill before moving to 54, Riland Road and for the majority of this period, Richard worked as a Steam Roller Driver.

Edith Eliza married John Evans in 1915; Elizabeth Jane married George Grant in 1900; William G married Minnie Perrins in 1910; Mary married Albert Allcock in 1913; Ernest John married Winifred Clark in 1915, but lost his life in WW1; Bertram is not mentioned after 1901; Herbert married Dorothy Hazelwood in 1925; and Elsie married Robert Batey in 1946.

Walter's early years were spent at the Town school and on leaving in 1900, he secured an apprenticeship as a Plumber, a trade that he would follow for the rest of his working life.

The 1911 census showed Richard still working as a Steam Roller Driver and living with his wife Elizabeth and just two of their children, Walter James a Plumber, and Florence Mary, a Post Office Assistant, in the family home.

Walter James married Sarah Jane Collins on 22nd March 1913 in Sutton Coldfield at Holy Trinity Church. Walter and Sarah were soon to find their own house at 45, Riland Road close to Walter's parents, Richard and Elizabeth, who lived at number 54

In the next few years the marriage was blessed with five children, Emma W in 1914, who sadly died shortly after her birth, Evelyn N in 1915, Albert W in 1915, Colin E R in 1914, Albert W in 1918 and Walter G in 1921.

The family moved to 38 Rectory Road and then, in the 1930's to Douglas Road, off Coles Lane. This is where Walter and Sarah were living according to the Register of 1939 along with children Evelyn, Albert and Walter George. Walter is still working as a Plumber; Evelyn as a shorthand typist; Albert as a Plumber; and Walter G as a clerk.

Shortly after completion of the 1939 census, Sarah Jane was taken ill and died on the 20th December of that year and was buried in Sutton cemetery. Walter died in late 1942 and his resting place is with Sarah.

Colin Edwards R Benton married Frances Roberts in Sutton Coldfield in 1934 and died in Birmingham in 1989; Albert W Benton married Winnie Pee in Sutton Coldfield in 1941 and in 2004 was living at 78 Dower Road; Walter G Benton married Jocelyn Hill in Sutton Coldfield in 1940 and died in Truro in 1979; Evelyn N Benton remained unmarried and in 2010 was living at 37 Little Sutton Road.

Frank Arthur Falconbridge

Frank Faulconbridge's grandfather, Henry Faulconbridge, was born in Dublin in 1812 and as a young man left for England, settling in Sutton Coldfield around 1828, and working as a Tailor. Henry married Amelia Webb at Sutton Coldfield in 1830.

Their first child, Ann, was born in 1840, followed by a son Robert in 1844 and another daughter Amelia in 1850. By this time, the family were living, with many others, in Whitehouse Court on Sutton Coldfield High Street.

The family moved into a property in Duke Street, Maney. Henry was still plying his trade as a Tailor, Ann was a Dressmaker and Robert a Spade Maker. Sadly their youngest daughter Amelia had died in April 1854.

Ann married Daniel Bosworth and set up home in Coventry; Robert married Hannah Large from Coton-in-the-Elms and set up home in Duke Street, Sutton Coldfield; and Robert at this time was still working as a Spade Maker. This just left Robert's parents in the old house where Amelia died in 1875 followed by Robert in 1877.

Robert and Hannah had ten children; Henry in 1865, William in 1867, Amelia in 1871, Howard in 1874, Florence in 1876, Ellen in 1878, Ernest in 1881, Charles in 1883, Frank in 1887 and May in 1890.

Records show that by 1881 Henry had obtained employment as a Clerk; William had left home and was in service to the Riddell family at Shenstone Lodge; Amelia had secured a position as House Servant for Mrs Keeling, a School Mistress who lived in Anchorage Road; Florence went to work as Nurse to the Searle family on Sutton Coldfield High Street and Howard left to pursue a military career with the Royal Artillery.

They would all eventually marry.

Ernest married Amelia Parsons in 1899; Ellen married George Ludlow in 1908; May married Ernest Thompson in 1909 and Charles married May Renchen in 1919.

Robert & Hannah's 9th child, Frank, is the boy of the story.

Frank Faulconbridge was born in April 1886 and baptised the following month at Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield. Baptism records give the address as Duke Street and Robert's occupation as Park-keeper.

Like his peers, Frank attended Town School and left in 1900. The first record of Frank's occupation is in 1901 when he was employed as a Carpenter's Apprentice.

We can only assume that when he qualified Frank had to follow the work, because in the 1911 census he was lodging in the house of John Buks, a fellow Carpenter, and Charles Buks a Bricklayer at 23, Union Street, Hereford.

While in Hereford, Frank met Gertrude Annie Wood, the daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Wood who lived at 6 Holmer Road in the town. Frank & Gertrude decided to return to Sutton Coldfield and were married there in 1913.

Frank and Gertrude had four children and were living in Sutton Coldfield when the first two were born, Ernest John in 1913 and William in 1914, but he sadly died shortly after he was born.

As with many other families, their lives were disrupted by the outbreak of hostilities across Europe and the subsequent policy of conscription. When Frank was called up he joined the Royal Engineers and Gertrude and Ernest went back to live in Hereford.

Frank, service number 71883, joined as a Private but gained promotion to the rank of Corporal. Frank was probably one of the soldiers working on a system of underground tunnels in preparation for the Battle of Arras in 1917.

On discharge, his service entitled him to the Victory Medal, the 1914/15 Star and the British War Medal.

War ended and Frank returned home to his wife and son in Hereford. They had a further two children; Kenneth in 1918 and Anthony in 1923.

The 1939 Register recorded that Frank and Gertrude were still living at Holmer Road along with son Anthony and Gertrude's sister Elizabeth.

Gertrude died in 1955, aged of 64 and Frank died aged 73. At the time of their deaths they were still living in Holmer Road, Hereford.

Ernest John married Vera Brimfield in 1939 and died at Lichfield in 1959; Anthony Lionel married Yvonne Bottom in 1948 and died at Suffolk in 2000; RAF Sergeant Kenneth Richard never married, and was a fatal casualty in 1943.

Arthur Grimley

Arthur's grandfather, William Grimley, was born in Sutton Coldfield to Richard and Mary on 20th November 1817, and baptised in 1818. He probably started work at an early age alongside his father, Richard, who was an Agricultural Labourer.

William met Harriet Groutage from Stourbridge; the relationship blossomed and Banns were read. They married on April 27th 1843 in the parish church and rented a cottage on the Birmingham Road.

William was employed as a Spade Maker in Sutton Coldfield and Harriet was at home looking after their four young children; John born in 1846; Susan in 1848; Joseph Groutage in 1851; and Harriet in 1855.

By 1861, the family had moved and were now living in Albert Court on Sutton Coldfield High Street.

First to leave the family home was Susan who married local man Charles Barnes early in 1871. At the time, John was employed as a Gardener, Joseph as a Wheelwright and Harriet was still at school.

John married Mary Ann Lewis in 1881 and moved to Hatherton Street in Walsall. They had one child a daughter name Mary, who was born in 1881 and would grow-up to become a Schoolmistress.

William died in 1883 and in that same year, daughter, Harriet, married Arthur Wilkins from Walsall and moved into his home at 6 South Street, together with widowed mother Harriett and nephew, William Barnes, as lodgers.

Joseph met and married Elizabeth Harris from Boldmere in 1875 and went to live at his father-in-law's house at Langley Heath. Here they had the first four of their ten children; Agnes in 1877, Joseph G in 1879, William in 1882 and Susan M in 1881.

In 1883, Joseph and Elizabeth moved to Thimble End on Bulls Lane where six more children were born; George H in 1884, Edward J in 1886, Arthur in 1887, Albert in 1888, Maggie in 1891 and Alfred in 1897. The family by now had moved into Sutton Coldfield and were living at 9 Newhall Street.

Agnes went into service as a Domestic Nurse with George & Mary Dugard at Anchorage Road before marrying Francis Parsonage in 1907; Joseph G died in 1910; William had a Fishmonger's shop; George was a Firewood Dealer; Susan married Roger Pheasant in 1907; Edward died in 1886; Albert was a Fishmonger; Maggie a Mother's Help; and Alfred a Fishmonger. That left son Arthur, and this is his story.

Arthur Grimley was born in 1887 and attended Town School in Sutton Coldfield leaving with his classmates in 1900. His family home had been at Thimble End but they would shortly move to 9, Newhall Street. He had secured employment as a Fishmonger's Errand Boy, probably with elder brother William who had a Fishmonger shop.

Sadly, we know very little else about Arthur as he died of pneumonia in 1911. His death was registered at Aston, Reference No 5D 267.

Edward Haywood

Edward's grandfather, William Haywood, the son of Joseph from Coleshill and Martha, was born in 1805 and married Ann Oliver at Sutton Coldfield parish church in 1836.

They had four children; Charles in 1840, Elizabeth in 1844, Ann in 1847 and Maria in 1851. The family lived in Reddicap Lane, Sutton Coldfield and William was employed as an Agricultural Labourer.

The family suffered a devastating blow in 1856 when both William and Ann died and the children were homeless. Charles, the eldest son went into lodgings with the Woodward family and continued to work as an Agricultural Labourer; Elizabeth became a House Servant with the Lewis family in the Orleans Villa, Chester Road; I assume that Maria stayed with relatives and when old enough became a Cook at Woodfield House Edgbaston; and Ann died in 1858.

Charles Haywood married Ann Kent from Sutton Coldfield and they moved into a cottage on Red Hill. They had their first and only child, also named Charles, in 1865, but Ann died shortly after the birth.

Some years later, Charles, who was still a young man, met and married Mary Jane Bedford from Gravelly Way. They has six children; William in 1877, Jane in 1879, Annie in 1880, Maria in 1884, Edward in 1886 and Charles in 1889.

Charles died in 1883; Maria died in 1884; William married Lillian Cox in 1900; Jane married Charles Christie in 1904 and had a son, Harold, the following year; Charles Christie died shortly afterwards and Jane and her son returned to the family home; and Charles married Elsie Phillips in 1913.

Our boy in the story, Edward, the youngest son of Charles and Jane, attended Town School for over five years and on leaving in 1900, he obtained employment as a Plumber's Labourer.

Edward learned his trade and married Gertrude Kent at West Bromwich in 1908, initially living in Walmley Road before moving to 95 Reddicap Heath Road, where, in 1909 they had their only child, a son named Charles.

Family life was soon to be disrupted with the onset of war in 1914. Edward volunteered for military service joining the Royal Engineers. Edward's service was interrupted by a war wound. He had been allocated two service numbers, 388850 and 188875, and there is reference to a Silver Leaf. He received the British War Medal, Campaign Star and Victory Medal. Whilst serving, his father died with the death being recorded at Tamworth in 1915.

After the war, Edward returned home to Gertrude and Charles at Reddicap Heath Road and there is no evidence of further children or ill health. Edward's mother, Mary Jane, died at Tamworth in 1924.

Charles was employed as a Warehouseman and it was there that he met Doris Jennie Wagstaff who he married in 1932. The 1939 Register records Charles and Doris residing at 8 Coles Lane, with Charles employed as a Buyer for a Wholesale Grocer and Doris a Retail Shopkeeper.

The Register also records Edward and Gertrude still living at 95 Reddicap Heath with Edward employed as a Plumber.

Edward died in 1963, aged 77, and wife Gertrude Alice in 1970, aged 84.

Charles died in 1969, aged 61, and wife Doris in 1973, aged 65.

Arthur Ernest Frank Holmes

Arthur's story begins with his great-grandparents, Thomas Holmes who was born in Sutton Coldfield in 1790 and Elizabeth from Hagley who was born in 1792. They lived on Whitehouse Common and had three sons; Joseph born in 1826, Thomas in 1831 and Francis in 1836.

Joseph married Ann Hardman from Whittington in 1845 at Tamworth; Thomas married Elizabeth Lord in 1854; and Francis married Myra Sale Hollis in 1867; both events being in Sutton Coldfield.

The first reference to Joseph, other than his birth, was as a young man aged 15 working as a Labourer on the Oliver's farm in Wylde Green. He met Ann shortly afterwards and they were married in 1845.

Joseph and Ann had ten children; Joseph in 1845, Harriet in 1849, Thomas in 1851, Edwin in 1854, Henry in 1856, John in 1859, Frederick in 1861, William in 1863, Charles in 1866 and Ann Marie in 1871.

Thomas married Lucy Bolton in 1871; Joseph married Elizabeth Carless in 1873; Harriet had died at the age of 12; Edwin and Henry obtained Servant positions, Edwin with the Parkes family at Falcon Lodge and Henry with local Farmer and Shopkeeper Fanny Barnes; Ann Marie married George Hardman in 1888; John married Mary Hartland in 1891; Charles married Emily Hunt in 1895; and William was still living with his widowed mother, Ann, in 1901.

Arthur's story continues with Frederick Harry, Arthur's father, who was born in 1861 to Joseph and Ann in Withy Hill. There is an assumption that he would have been helping his father in the fields from the age of 10 but coming up to the age of 18, he had left home and was working for James Paget on Mill Street in Sutton Coldfield as a Butcher's Assistant.

It was time to make his own way in life and in 1883, now as a fully-fledged Butcher, he married Alice Lawrence and they made their home in Mill Street.

Their first child, Arthur Ernest Frank, was born in 1887; followed by Percy Gordon in 1889; Leonard in 1890; Frederick Howard in 1892; Mabel Winnifred in 1900; and Marjorie Alice in 1902.

On leaving Town School in 1900, Arthur became a Carpenter's Apprentice continuing to live in the family home at 11 Coles Lane. During the following 10 years the only changes were that the family moved to "Woodleigh" on the Coleshill Road and Arthur became a House Painter.

Arthur courted Ellen Louise Taylor and they married in Tamworth in 1920. Ernest Edward was born in the following year but died and worse was to follow. In 1925, both his mother, Alice, and wife, Ellen when only 34, died. The following year also saw the death of his father, Frederick.

Arthur married again in 1926 to Elizabeth May Archer and they had two children; James H in September 1928; and Greta M in 1930.

The 1939 Register records Arthur employed as a House Painter living with his wife Elizabeth, son James and daughter Greta, at 11, Lyndon Road.

Arthur died in Sutton Coldfield in 1954, aged 68, followed by Elizabeth in 1985, aged 84.

Daughter Greta married Ronald John Shuttleworth; and James married Edith Nagele at Sutton Coldfield in 1951.

Thomas Henry Lakin

The story begins with Thomas's grandparents Thomas and Mary.

Thomas was born in Curdworth in 1810, the son of Joseph and Mary. In his early years he would have accompanied his father who was an Agricultural Labourer into the fields. When old enough, he also would become an Agricultural Labourer.

Thomas married Mary Finney of Hints in Staffordshire in August 1835 at Mary's home village. They set up home in Bricklin, Sutton Coldfield where the first three of their ten children were born; Betsy in 1836, Charles in 1838 and Mary Ann in 1840.

Shortly afterwards, they moved out of Bricklin into a cottage near The Rectory at Whitehouse Common where seven further children were born; Sarah in 1842, Thomas in 1844, Henry in 1846, Ellen in 1849, Ann in 1852, Mary in 1855 and Frank in 1858.

Betsy married Ambrose Robinson in 1858; Charles married Elizabeth Genders in 1872; Mary died in 1853; and Thomas became a servant to the Vicar of Curdworth in 1861. The other children at this time were still in the family home near The Rectory.

The family then moved into Blabbs, an area of Sutton Coldfield. Here Sarah married Thomas Warner in 1870; Ellen married Charles Norgrove in 1875; Mary married Thomas Pheasant in 1873; Henry married Ann Harris in 1881 and William married Fanny Harmshaw in 1891.

Both grandparents died in Sutton Coldfield; Thomas, in 1882, aged 73, and Mary in 1891 aged 74.

Frank Lakin, the youngest child and father of Thomas Henry, married Elizabeth Pace in 1885. He was employed as a Gardener and they went to live on the Birmingham Road. Thomas and Elizabeth had six children; Thomas Henry in 1885, Willie C in 1888, Frank in 1891, Frederick in 1893, Arthur in 1895 and Bertram in 1898.

Thomas Henry, attended Town School in Sutton Coldfield and like his peers left in 1900. He started work almost straightaway as a Plumber's Apprentice, but it was a situation that was not to last. Some ten years later, Thomas Henry was a Footman and Gentleman's Valet, and his family, by this time, were living at 2, Rose Cottage, Doe Bank.

Thomas Henry married Sarah Ann Walker at the parish church on 28th April in 1915. Thomas was not called up for military service probably because he was an Agricultural Worker and food was in very short supply.

Thomas and Sarah had five children; Henry W in 1916, Freda M in 1918, Celia M in 1920, Frederick C in 1923 and Sidney T M in 1928.

The Register of 1939 recorded seven people living in the family home. These who would appear to be; Thomas Lakin, Sarah Lakin, Henry W L, Freda M, Frederick C, Sidney T M and Celia M, although some of the details have been redacted. At the same time, Thomas and Sarah were living at Corwen House, Jordan Road, Sutton Coldfield.

Celia M married Abro Smith in 1939; Henry William married Diana Bishop in 1943; Freda married Bernard Hill in 1948; all three events were at Sutton Coldfield. Frederick married Beryl A Barker at Leicester in 1957; and Sidney T M married Monica A Potter in 1959 at Sutton Coldfield.

Frederick George Insley

Frederick's story begins with his great-grandfather, George Insley, and great-grandmother, Sarah Hargrave. George was born at Kingsbury in 1806 and Sarah at Sutton Coldfield in 1805 and the couple were married at St Peter and St Paul Church, Aston in 1832.

They had six children; Joseph in 1834, James in 1836, George in 1839, and William in 1841, Mary in 1846 and Sarah in 1848.

Joseph died in 1853; James never married and died in a Birmingham institution in 1912; George never married and would later live in lodgings in Sutton Coldfield and he died in 1917; William married Maria Avins in 1863 at Meriden; and Mary married Lewis Bayliss at Sutton Coldfield Parish Church in 1871.

In 1862, at the age of 16, Sarah had a son, John (our Frederick's father) who was baptised without a father's name. John was raised by his grandparents but there is no further mention of Sarah after the baptism.

George died in 1863. This left Sarah at home, in Duke Street with George, James, Mary and grandson John.

In 1884, at the age of 22, John met and married Hephizabah Vickers of Gloucester and they married at Sutton Coldfield Parish Church. John and Hephizabah went to live in Duke Street, becoming a neighbour of his grandmother who was living at number 10.

John and Hephizabah had eight children; William in 1886, Frederick in 1886, Florence N in 1888, Ernest J in 1890, Edith A in 1891, Amy E in 1892, Herbert H in 1894 and Charles A in 1899.

William married Rose Baker at Tamworth 1918; Florence Nellie married Charles Harrison at Tamworth 1913; Ernest J married Ethel J Peace at Kings Norton in 1918; Edith A married Benjamin Burgess at Tamworth in 1916; Amy E married Arthur Thorneycroft Bucklow in 1925; Herbert H married Leah Cobbet at Tamworth in 1921; and Charles A died in 1908. The remaining son was the boy of this story, Frederick George Insley.

Frederick was born in July 1886 at Sutton Coldfield and was baptised at the parish church on 3rd October 1886.

When the time came, he would attend Town School leaving when he was 13/14 years old. It was the norm for pupils at that age to start work immediately, and when Frederick left in 1900 he obtained employment as an Errand Boy. At the age of 25 he was a House Painter, still living with his parents at Duke Street along with William and Amy.

Frederick met Alice Hykin, the daughter of Four Oaks Builder, William Hykin, and they married at Sutton Coldfield Parish Church in April 1913. Later that year, they had a son Frederick H.

War had broken out in 1914 and calls for volunteers were getting ever louder, Frederick responded and in 1915 he joined the South Lancashire Regiment becoming Private Insley, service number 43488.

Frederick was wounded during his period of service and was discharged in 1918 with a pension. He was awarded a Victory Medal, a British War Medal and a Silver Stripe, commonly called a wound stripe. This would be stitched perpendicularly on the left forearm of a dress jacket or battledress.

Back home and there were further family additions; Dorothy in 1919, Gwendoline Mary in 1921, Kathleen M in 1924 and Florence B in 1927.

The 1939 Register recorded a family of six with Frederick George Insley, House Painter & Decorator at its head, together with Frederick, Alice, Dorothy, Gwendoline, Kathleen and Florence all living at 31, Coles Lane.

Frederick H and his wife Doris were recorded on the Register as living at 39, George Street, New Oscott.

Dorothy married L.V. Payne in 1946; Kathleen married Alfred Dodd in 1951; and Florence married Ronald Ellis also in 1951. I believe that Gwendoline never married and her last known address from 2005 is 40, Berryfields Road, Sutton Coldfield.

Frederick's wife Alice died in 1959 but Frederick's date of death is unknown.

Charles Edward Pears

John's story begins with his great-grandparents, Edward Pears and Mary Dennis, who were both born in Great Dalby, Leicestershire in 1797 and married there in 1822.

They had six children; William in 1826, Daniel in 1829, Edward in 1831, John in 1833, James in 1838 and Jane in 1841.

William, (Charles Edward's grandfather) married Ann Dilks in 1852; Daniel married Ann Sharp in 1866; Edward married Elizabeth Caunt in 1855; John married Elizabeth Rimmington in 1857; James did not marry; and Jane married David Roberts in 1868.

William and Ann had eight children; James in 1855, Henry in 1858, John, (Charles Edward's father) in 1859, Emily J in 1861, Emma in 1861, William in 1863, Fanny in 1869 and Ernest in 1871,

Both Ernest and Henry died shortly after they were born; John married Emily Brockhurst in 1881; James married Annie Witchell in 1881; Emma married William Walker in 1881; William married Clara Hunt in 1883; Emily married George Hardy; and Fanny became a House Servant at the Bull's Head in Leicester.

Charles's grandmother, Ann, died in 1871, leaving William to marry again in 1873, taking Elizabeth Palmer from Barrow-on-Soar as his new wife.

After their marriage in 1881, John and Emily set up home in Duke Street, Sutton Coldfield with John working as a Gardener. They had their first child in 1886 and it was the boy of the story, Charles Edward Pears. There was a break of nine years before his young brother, Arthur C, arrived in 1895.

Charles attended Town School and on leaving in 1900, he obtained a position of Solicitors Clerk. By this time, the family had moved to 1 Holland Road. Charles met a young lady from Farthing Lane called Gertrude Stewart and they were married at St Peters Church, Maney in 1910. Shortly afterwards, the couple left for North Kensington where Charles had been offered a position of Assistant Accountant.

Charles's parents, John and Emily, and brother Arthur had also moved house and were now living at 73, Holland Road, where John was a Nurseryman and Arthur was working as an Accountant's Clerk.

Charles and Gertrude had two children, Gordon E in December 1914 and Marjorie G in September 1916; both births were registered in Tamworth.

Charles may have been conscripted for WW1 as there is a medical record of a Charles E Pears, service number 27924, being discharged in 1918 with Myalgia; however the record is inconclusive

Charles featured in the local directory in London in 1920 and reappeared in the 1939 Register, where he is listed as a Practising Accountant.

Gertrude died at Sutton Coldfield in 1957 and Charles died at Staincliffe, Yorkshire in 1972.

Their children; Gordon E Pears married Mary M Lerner at Wycombe in 1951; and Marjorie Pears married Eric G Lee at Brentford in 1946.

Christopher Smith

Christopher's story begins with his grandfather, Christopher Smith from Lapley, born in 1818 and his grandmother, Frances Oldham a Farmer's daughter from Greater Packington, born in 1820. The couple were married in Leamington Priors Parish Church in 1846.

In 1841 Christopher was an Edge Tool Maker, however, by the time of his marriage, he had become a Draper and then, within five years, a Paper Mercer.

Christopher and Frances had nine children; John C in 1848, Sarah Frances in 1849, Maria in 1851, Elijah in 1852, James Oldham in 1854, Alice in 1855, Arthur in 1856, Clara in 1857 and Sidney in 1859.

Christopher had prospered and was now a Paper Dealer and to support his growing family, he now employed a Governess, a Domestic Servant and a General Servant.

John Christopher married Alice Taylor at Shrewsbury in 1869; Sarah Frances married Charles G Smith in 1872; Maria married Alfred Smith in 1873; Elijah married Elizabeth Morris in 1882; James Oldham Smith, father of Christopher, married Alice Maude Mary Lockett in 1877; Alice married Thomas Prosser in 1884; Arthur married Annie Hawkesford in 1883; Clara married Thomas Prosser in 1884; and Sidney married Hannah Martin in 1879.

The story line now follows the family of James and Alice.

As a young boy, James lived with his family at New Cross Farm, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, and attended the local school. He and the family were still living in Wolverhampton when he left school but they were now at 14, Victoria Street.

James had secured an apprenticeship as a Factor; this was an old-fashioned name for someone who acted as an agent and their job was to attract business for Merchants.

James was a Commercial Clerk when he met Alice and they married in September 1877 setting up home in Salop Street, Sparkbrook. Their first child, Bernard, was born in 1879. He was followed by Sydney in 1881, Florence in 1883, Christopher in 1884 and Frank in 1885.

After Sparkbrook, the family moved to Sutton Parade, possibly at the same location as the Ironmonger shop that James was running. Later the family moved to a house called Ingleside on Coleshill Rd. This is where they were living when Christopher was attending Town School.

In 1900 things changed; James became unwell and he died later that year, leaving Bernard as head of the house.

The 1901 census showed the family still living at Ingleside but there was no record of mother Alice, or the youngest son, Frank. Christopher, by that time, had become a lodger at 6 Oxford Villas on the Chester Road and his occupation was recorded as that of a Lance Corporal in the 4th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Tragically in April 1907, Christopher was taken ill with tuberculosis which subsequently turned into pneumonia and he died on 17th August that year at the tender age of 23. His brother Sydney was present at his death.

Frank Christopher Smith

Frank Christopher Smith and Christopher Smith are brothers.

Frank's story begins with his grandfather, Christopher Smith from Lapley who was born in 1818 and his grandmother, Frances Oldham a farmer's daughter from Greater Packington who was born in 1820. The couple were married at Leamington Priors Parish Church in 1846.

In 1841 Christopher was recorded as being an Edge Tool Maker however, by the time of his marriage, he had become a Draper and then, within five years a Paper Mercer.

Christopher and Frances had nine children; John C born in 1848, Sarah Frances in 1849, Maria in 1851, Elijah in 1852, James Oldham in 1854, Alice in 1855, Arthur in 1856, Clara in 1857 and Sidney in 1859. Christopher had prospered and was now a Paper Dealer and to support his growing family, he now employed a Governess, a Domestic Servant and a General Servant.

John Christopher married Alice Taylor at Shrewsbury in 1869; Sarah Frances married Charles G Smith 1872; Maria married Alfred Smith in 1873; Elijah married Elizabeth Morris in 1882; James Oldham Smith, father of Frank, married Alice Maude Mary Lockett in 1877; Alice married Edward Moreton in 1890; Arthur married Annie Hawkesford in 1883; Clara married Thomas Prosser in 1884; and Sidney married Hannah Martin in 1879.

The story line now follows the family of James and Alice.

James as a young boy lived with his family at New Cross Farm, Wednesfield Wolverhampton and attended the local school. On leaving school, they were still living in Wolverhampton but they were now at 14, Victoria Street.

James had secured an apprenticeship as a Factor, this was an old-fashioned name for someone who acted as an agent, their job was to attract business for merchants.

James was a Commercial Clerk when he met Alice. They married in September 1877, setting up home in Salop Street, Sparkbrook. They had five children; Bernard born in 1879, Sydney in 1881, Florence in 1883, Christopher in 1883 and Frank in 1885.

After Sparkbrook, we find the family living on Sutton Parade, possibly at the same location as James's ironmonger shop. Later when the children were attending Town School, home was a house called Ingleside on the Coleshill Road.

The year 1900 changed things. James became unwell and died in 1900 leaving Bernard as head of the household.

The 1901 census recorded that family, with the exception of Alice and Frank, were still living at Ingleside. They must be somewhere in 1901 but I have failed to locate them.

Many of the Commonwealth countries had plenty of land but shortage of people. This resulted in many opportunities for a cost-free emigration and on the 5th of June 1907, Frank Smith left Liverpool for New York, then on to St Johns in Newfoundland, arriving later that year. His brother Christopher had been taken ill in the April and died in August of the same year.

The Canadian census of 1911 records Frank being a Private in the Canadian Army and was living in London Ontario. He was still there in 1913 when he and Ann Donn had son, Frank Christopher Oldham Prosser. The birth was registered with the surname "Prosser", Ann's family name instead of Smith.

They returned to England and were married at Freshwater on the Isle of Wight in 1915.

Frank and Ann returned to Ann's own town of Oban in Scotland where son, George Sydney Prosser was born, later that year. The family then moved to 5 Cross Street, Callender, where in 1920, son William Mair Prosser was born, but sadly his short life was to last only 14 days.

Frank and Ann had two more children; John Mair Prosser born in February 1924, and Jane in 1925.

The family remained at Cross Street, Callender for another five years before moving to 3, Menteith Crescent and sometime later number 10.

Frank's mother, Alice Maud Mary Smith, died at Wylde Green in 1931.

Frank died on 8th October 1936, aged 61 at the Stirling Royal Infirmary.

The date of death for Frank's wife Ann has not been established.

Frank Christopher Oldham Prosser Junior married Margaret Patterson Johnston in 1933; George Sydney Prosser married Mary Bridget McBride Skelton in 1939; Jane Prosser married Edward Ritz in 1945; and John Mair Prosser married Jane Elizabeth Rae in 1948.

William Henry Thompson

William's story begins with his grandfather, Thomas Thompson, who was born at Lea Marston in 1799 and his grandmother, Mary Adkins from Polesworth, who was born in 1801. The couple were married at Lea Marston on the 26th of June in 1821.

They had seven children; John in 1826, Jane in 1827, Joseph in 1830, Sarah in 1833, Ann in 1836, Charles in 1839, and Thomas in 1842. The family lived and worked at Blackgrove Farm until the 1850's when they moved to Whitacre Heath

John married Harriet Smith in 1850; Jane married Richard Cadman Johnson in 1851; Joseph married Maria Moore in 1852; Ann married John Harris in 1854; Charles married Fanny Blount in 1856; Thomas married Sarah Ann Thomas in 1866 and Sarah married Sampson Davis in 1855.

William's story continues with grandparents, Charles and Fanny Blount, who had married in 1856. They had ten children; sadly two of them, Hannah born in 1863, and George in 1866, never saw their first birthday and another child, William Arthur, died in 1884, when he was just 17. The surviving children were: Thomas born in 1857, Mary in 1860, Charles in 1863, Fanny Elizabeth in 1870, Alfred in 1871, Alice in 1875 and George in 1878.

Thomas married Louisa Kelly in 1882; Mary married John Bill in 1889; Charles married Elizabeth Gibbon in 1892; Fanny Elizabeth married James Underwood in 1892; Alfred married Charlotte Rex in 1894; Alice married Arthur Allday in 1906 and George married Fanny Pearce in 1900.

The boy in the story, William Henry Thompson, was born in 1885, the son of Mary Thompson, who was living at home and working as a Domestic Servant, and an unknown father.

William was brought up by his grandparents, Charles and Fanny, giving Mary an opportunity to make a new life for herself. She married John Bill in 1889 and gave birth to a daughter, Florence in 1890.

William lived with his grandparents on Duke Street and attended Town School. When he left in 1900 he started work as a Grocer's Errand Boy. He stayed within the trade and when he met his bride-to-be, Florence Jeromes, he was a Delivery Man for a local Baker. The couple married in the Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield on Christmas Day in 1905.

They had three children; Florence Vera in 1907, Elsie in 1910 and Winnifred Beatrice in 1915. At that time they were living at 107 Reddicap Heath Road.

William was called up quite late in WW1, only receiving his short service mobilisation order in August 1917. He was drafted into the Royal Garrison Artillery becoming Private, number 181892.

There were no further children and little information recorded about the family until 1934 when the death of William's wife, Florence, was recorded.

William married again in 1936 to Ada Helen Lea from Sutton Coldfield. The 1939 Register records William and Ada living at 7, Maple Road, Sutton Coldfield with William working for the local Drainage Board.

William died on the 8th of July 1967 and Ada died on 12th October of the same year. At the time of their deaths, they were living at 89 Lindridge Road, Sutton Coldfield.

Florence Vera married John Perks at Tamworth in 1931. The 1939 Register records them as living in Newhall Street, Sutton Coldfield together with a lodger, younger sister Winifred who was working as a Shop Assistant. John by this time is a Carpenter.

Elsie married Charles Henry Lea, a Carpenter & Joiner from Birmingham, in 1935 and in the 1939 Register, they are recorded as living 245, Highbridge Road.

In 1940 Winnifred married Claude Bernard Raybould from Aston.

Ernest John Twigg

Ernest's story begins with his great-grandfather, William Twigg, and his great-grandmother, Elizabeth Faulkner, both born in Marchington in 1783. They were married in Uttoxeter in January 1807.

They had four children; John in 1809 (Ernest's grandfather), Mary in 1812, Elizabeth in 1814 and Sarah in 1815. All of the children were born at Uttoxeter.

John married Jane Ford in Yoxall Church of St Peter in 1854; Mary married John Margeram Johnson in 1847; Elizabeth married Charles Pott in 1851; and Sarah married Joseph Phillips in 1839, in St Mary the Virgin Church in Uttoxeter.

Ernest's story continues with his grandparents John and his wife Jane. They had two children; James in 1855, and John in 1857, both of whom were baptised at St Mary's Church in Uttoxeter. Sadly, John died in August of 1857, just four months after the birth of their second son.

It was a difficult time for the family and baby John was sent to his aunt and uncle at West Bromwich who took over the responsibility of raising him with their own family. The census of 1861 shows that John, now aged 4, was living with his uncle and aunt, Joseph and Ellen Griffiths at Temple Street in West Bromwich.

John returned home to be with the rest of the family and at the age of 10 he had a new father. Jane had married Henry Wilson in 1867 and his mother was now Mrs Ann Wilson. Change for John was again just around the corner, as in 1874, Henry Wilson died, leaving his mother once again as Head of the household.

Jane Twigg-Wilson must have been a very strong woman because at the age of 63, she became landlady of the Dog Inn on Lichfield Street, in Burton-upon-Trent. From the census return of 1881, it was not just a pub but it also had at least 8 rooms, serviced by three staff. John was by now aged 24, still living with his mother in Burton-upon-Trent and working as a Carpenter.

A short time later, John met Annie Stevenson of Woolley and the couple were married in Burton-upon-Trent in 1882. They had two children; Mabel in 1887 and the boy in the story, Ernest John Twigg, who was baptised in 1885 at St Modwen Church, Burton-upon-Trent. The family were by now living in Queen Street, Sutton Coldfield.

As with all young boys at that time, school for Ernest was compulsory and on leaving Town School in 1900, Ernest secured an apprenticeship as a Gem Setter. He was still living at the family home which by then had become "Homedene" on Rectory Road, Sutton Coldfield along with his parents, John and Annie, and his grandmother, Alice Stevenson, the recently retired Publican.

Ernest left his apprenticeship and by 1911 was working alongside his father as a Builder.

There were rumblings of war at this time and hostilities broke out in 1914. When conscription became a reality in 1916, Ernest joined the Machine Gun Corps as Private Twigg, service number 152425. War ended and Ernest was demobilised taking with him the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ernest pursued his career as a Builder while living at 39, Broadway, Earlsdon in Coventry, as recorded in the Kelly's Directories over a six-year period ending in 1924. Here he met Edith Jenkins and the couple were married in December 1926 at Richmond, in Surrey. In the following year, Ernest's father, John, died at the age of 70.

The Register of 1939 was somewhat surprising as Ernest was listed as a Manufacturer of Ladies' Underwear and his wife Edith as a Manageress, either in the manufacturing or retailing of the garments. We don't know whether that work lasted through to retirement, but they continued to live at Coventry, now in Woodside Avenue, off the main Coventry Road to Birmingham Road.

Ernest's mother, Annie Marie Stephenson, died in 1955 and both Ernest and Edith died in 1968.