Behind My Hindleys

Phyl Sheppard traces her family ancestry back along the male line from the earliest mention in 1692, to the death of her Grandfather in 1944. Liberally sprinkled with useful maps, genealogical trees and other illustrations, this book paints clear pictures of the lifestyles of poorer people through the past three hundred years, as it follows the movements and development of the Hindley family from their beginnings in Lancashire, Cheshire and Flintshire.

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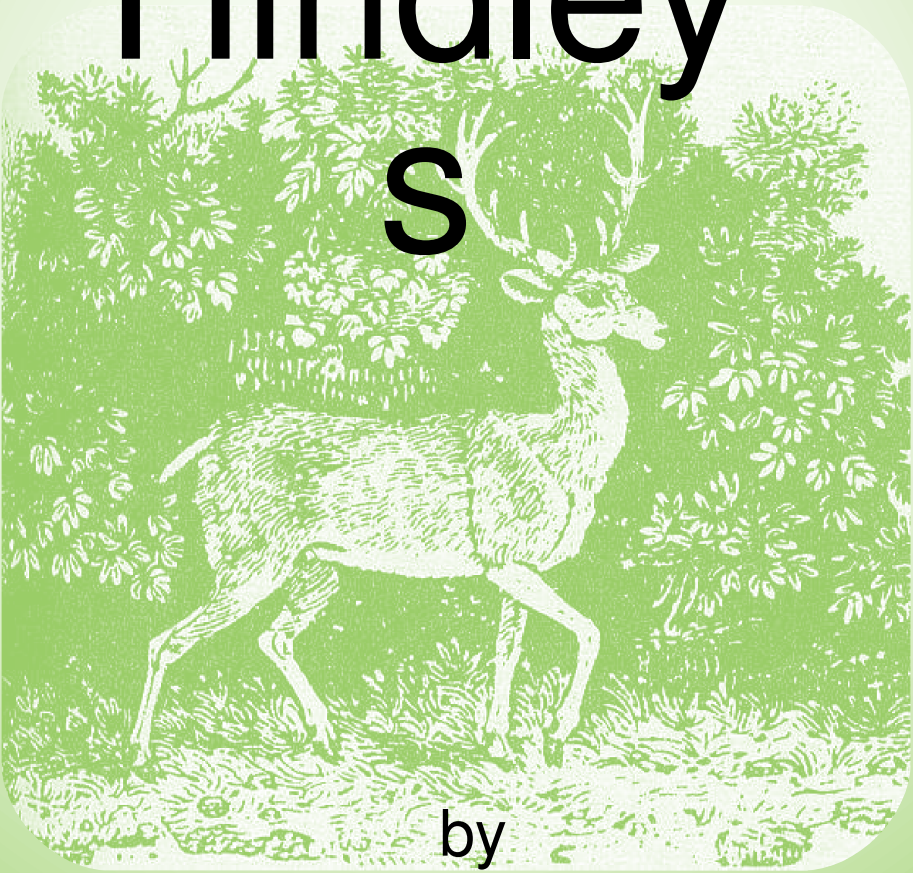
Behind My Hindley's



by
Phyl

Illustrated by Chris Hope

Behind My Hindleys

1692 - 1944

A Family Story

by

Phyl Sheppard

Illustrated by Chris Hope

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FRONT COVER

HINDLEY, (Greater Manchester)

This town southeast of WIGAN has a name that means "hinds' wood"; "wood where does are found". The two Old English components are *hind* (hind) and *leah*. The latter word can mean both "clearing" and "woodland", among other things, but here "woodland" seems right for the does, especially as Hindley is south of HORWICH Forest. A document of 1212 gives the name as *Hindele*.

This explanation is from "Dictionary of Place Names" by Adrian Room (Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1988).

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* These items kindly loaned by John Pentland

To Grand-dad Hindley (William Thomas) for all the happy memories of our childhood whilst living with him and Uncle Joe

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20. Birkenhead Park. Jean McInniss
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Thomas 1692 - 1754 and Ellis his son 1717 - 1753.

Both born, married and died in the parish of Winwick, Lancashire.

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Ellis (grandson of Thomas) born 1739, in Winwick.

Married in Ince 1761. No date of death.

Chapter 3 **Page 21**

William (son of Ellis) born Ince parish in Cheshire. 1769 - 1810.

Married and buried in parish of Eastham.

Chapter 4 **Page 27**

Ellis (son of William) born Eastham parish. 1804 - 1864.

Married in Parish Church of Wervin, Chester; lived in Chorlton by Backford, Cheshire and Shotton Township, Flintshire. He lived most of his life in the latter and died there.

Chapter 5 **Page 37**

James (son of Ellis) born in Chorlton by Backford. 1832 - 1868.

Married in Chester and died in Tranmere, Wirral.

Chapter 6 **Page 47**

William Thomas (son of James) born in Tranmere, Wirral. 1863 - 1944.

Married in Tranmere and died in Birkenhead.

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A day at the beach (circa 1932):

L to R: Roy; Grand-dad; Ted; May; Dad; Phyllis (me!); Uncle Joe

Same day at the beach (circa 1932):

L to R: Phyl (me, at front); May; Mother (Phyllis); Uncle Joe; Roy (on his lap)

and Mother) were married at Palm Grove Methodist church. The following year Grandma (Margaret Agnes) Hindley died on 11th March, aged 60, and was buried at Flaybrick Cemetery.

After their marriage Dad and Mother lived at 50 Aspinall Street with Grand-dad and Uncle Joe. Apart from a couple of years they remained there until 1938, during this time Dad and Mother had seven children.

In 1927 Edward Heaps Hindley (Uncle Ted) married Gwendoline Capper in the Parish Church of Wrexham on February 26th, Uncle Joe and Grand-dad were two of the Witnesses. In 1929 Grand-dad's brother James died in Lakefield House, Caergwle, Hawarden, aged 68. The coffin was brought to Birkenhead and buried in Flaybrick Cemetery in the same grave bought by Grand-dad.

In about March 1938 Dad and Mother moved from Aspinall Street to New Ferry, and on 18th June the same year, Uncle Joe married Ena Ablitt at Palm Grove Methodist Church. They both lived with Grand-dad in 50 Aspinall Street.

The Second World War started September 3rd 1939, and about 1942 during one of the heavy bombing raids Grand-dad's house was hit. The place was not fit to live in, so Grand-dad came to live with us in 40 Fairway North, New Ferry. There was room for him now because three of my brothers had been moved to North Wales as part of the 'Evacuation' (this was action taken by the Government to move young children to a place of safety in the country-side). Unfortunately Grand-dad had a stroke one Winter's day while he was in our back-garden. He recovered but the doctor said it would be best for Grand-dad to go and live with Uncle Joe and Auntie Ena in Harcourt Street, Birkenhead. He lived with them until he had another stroke and died on 5th February 1944 aged 81. He was buried in Flaybrick Cemetery in the family grave which he had bought all those years ago in 1911.

PREFACE

Our interest in Family History was triggered off by a request from Katy, one of our grandchildren. The 10 year olds at her school were in the process of forming their own Family Tree and she wanted information. As we had been put on the spot, so to speak, by the time we had supplied her with the necessary information our latent interest had been stimulated, and so began our research.

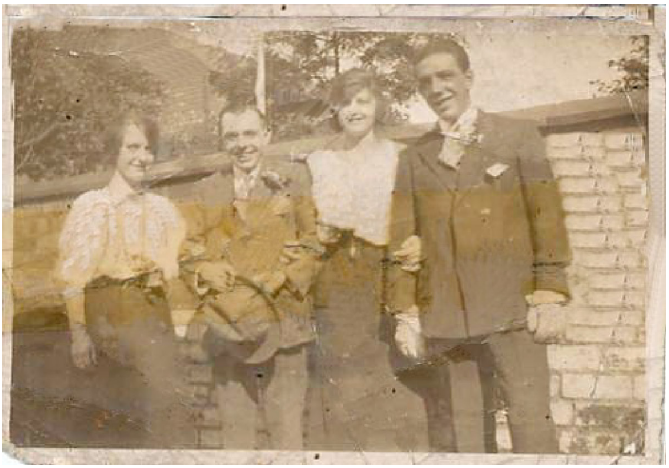
Where to start? I eventually recalled asking my Grand-dad when we lived with him in Birkenhead (the year was 1933, I was about 8 or 9 at the time) “where did the Hindleys come from?” I had heard of a place called Hindley in Lancashire, so surmised that we originated from there. My Grand-dad said, “We came from Newton-le-Willows”. I still remember being disappointed that I was wrong. Anyway when we started our research, this incident came to mind. We went to the Record Office in Leigh to look for Hindleys, only to find that there were hundreds of that name. We quickly realised that this wasn’t the right way to do things.

So starting from my Grand-dad’s birth and wedding, both of which we found took place in Tranmere, in Wirral, we pressed steadily on backwards up to 1761 in Ince. The family had moved during that time to various parts of Cheshire only leaving the county once when they lived in Shotton, Flintshire.

In Ince we were stuck for a long time, and it seemed that our research had come to a final stop. Then we were able to have a holiday in Salt Lake City, in the U.S.A. In the Mormon Library there we found a reference to the family at last, and this time they were in Winwick. Winwick had been part of Lancashire until 1974 when it was included in Cheshire and their Parish Records moved to the Chester Record Office, which is very handy for us. With this information we were able to find connections back to 1692. We realise how fortunate we are that so many of our ancestors were born, lived and died within the County of Cheshire.

church. The following year they had a daughter called Margaret Agnes (after Grandma): she was born at 50 Aspinall Street on 13th July and baptised at Lowe Street Methodist Chapel on October 28th.

These two uncles (Frank and Jim) were in the Army during the Great War which ended in 1918, but we have no details about them. During the war years Dad tried to enlist as a drummer-boy (he was in the local Boy Scout band). Aged 17, he was under age but went to Liverpool to enlist in the "Liverpool Scottish Regiment", where he had to give details of his place of work and the name of his boss. When he went to work the next day his boss, Mr. ("Fluffy") Davies, told him that as his work in the Railway Claims Dept. was a "Reserved Occupation", he was unable to enlist. Instead, Dad helped the War Effort by being part of a group of Scouts whose task it was to take the wounded to hospital when they arrived in the trains at Woodside Station in Birkenhead.



Wedding of William John & Phyllis Hindley

L to R: Phyllis; William John; Gwendoline Capper; Edward Heaps Hindley

In 1923 on September 22nd William John Hindley and Phyllis Jones (Father

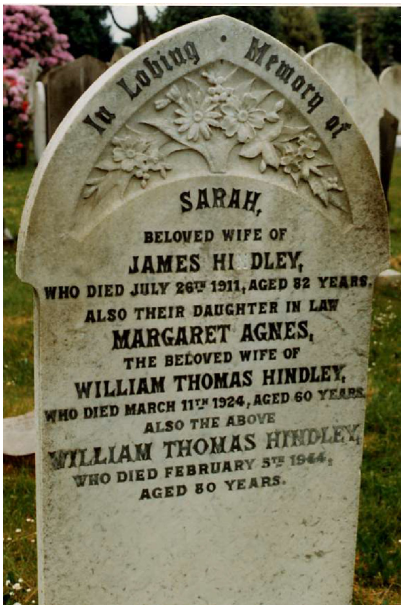
Joseph (Uncle Joe) Hindley was born in 50 Aspinall Street on 7th May 1907 and baptised at Lowe Street Methodist Chapel, Birkenhead, on August 4th - he was the youngest of all my uncles. Grand-dad was still a Dock Board Hydraulic-man.

George V

Ruled 1911 - 1936

In 1910 King Edward VII died; he was buried at Windsor and in 1911 King George V was crowned at Westminster Abbey on 22nd June.

William John (Dad) went to Cathcart Street school until the age of 14 years, he then went to the Laird School of Art in Park Road North - not far from the Grand Entrance of Birkenhead Park. Here he studied Woodwork and Type-writing; he also learnt Short-hand privately. He had to pass the exams in the latter two subjects in order to be accepted by the LMS Railway for a post in their Claims Dept.



Headstone of family grave plot

In 1911 Sarah Hindley (the mother of Grand-dad) died at 31 Marion Street, Birkenhead on 26th July aged 82. She was buried in Flaybrick Cemetery, in a grave plot bought by William Thomas. On the 7th August in the same year James Thomas Hindley (Uncle Jim) and Sarah Ellen Jones were married in Palm Grove Methodist Church.

The Great War began in 1914 and on 24th August Frank Hindley (our uncle) and Euphemia Jessie Kinghorn were married at the same

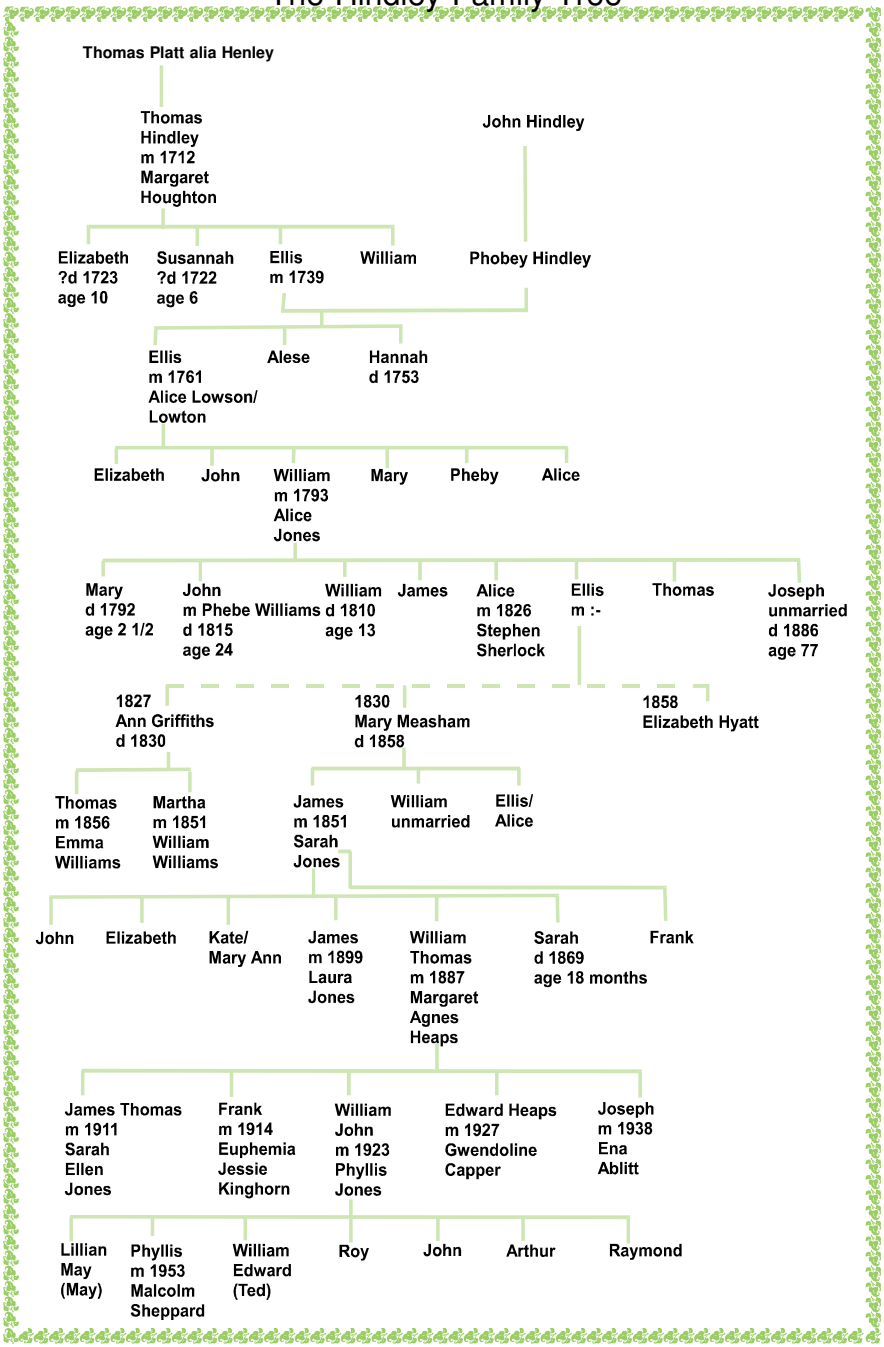
Acknowledgements

To my husband Malcolm for all his help during the years we spent collecting and recording the information regarding the Hindley Family Tree, and also our daughter Christine without whom my story would never have seen the "light of day". In fact, I see this story as a special cake, with Malcolm supplying the ingredients to make the cake; I did the mixing and baking; and Christine came along and put the icing and decorations on the top !

Thanks also go to the following "suppliers of ingredients":

Staff at Chester, Denbighshire and Flintshire Records Offices
Wirral Libraries
The owners of Ince Monastery & Grange
Shell UK
John Hess, Chorlton Hall
Birkenhead Council
St Catherine's Church, Tranmere

The Hindley Family Tree



It was about this time that Grand-dad used to walk with a very young William John (Dad) in the 'Bassinet' (a sort of pram) to show him to his Grandma Sarah, who was apparently a cook in the house of the Vyner family, according to Dad's reminiscences. In 1902 at 10 Bray Street, Edward Heaps Hindley (Uncle Ted) was born to Grand-dad and Grandma, he was baptised at Laird Street Methodist Chapel on September 24th.

A bassinet

50 Aspinall Street, Birkenhead, as it is now

About 1904 Grand-dad bought a house in the newly built row of houses in Aspinall Street, which started at Park Road North, not far from Birkenhead Park. The house was No. 50; it was a large house with one large and two medium bedrooms, plus a lavatory and bathroom, the latter having hot and cold water. Downstairs were the usual parlour, dining room and kitchen. Outside there was a lavatory, which was plumbed in, a small garden and a long paved area at the end of which were two large high wooden doors which opened onto a cobbled entry. This was certainly very different from the type of house which any of the family had lived in before. Grand-dad must have worked very hard to have saved enough money to buy such a house, especially in those days.

Typical wedding clothes circa 1900

Also in 1895, on 17th April, William Thomas was a Witness at the wedding of his brother Frank to Elizabeth Hewitt at St. Mark's Church, Flint.

William John (Dad) was born at 10 Bray Street, Birkenhead on 10th July, 1897; he was the third child of William Thomas and Margaret Agnes. Now they were living on their own, as a family, for the first time - they had lived with Great Grandma (Sarah Hindley) for the past 10 years. Grand-dad by now was a Hydraulic-man with the Dock Board. William John was baptised on September 1st 1897 at Laird Street Methodist Chapel. This was also the year when Queen Victoria celebrated her reign of '60 Glorious Years'. In 1899 James, the brother of Grand-dad, was married to Laura Jones at St. John's Church, Birkenhead on the 12th February; his brother Frank was a witness.

The new century opened with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 when her son the Prince of Wales became the new Sovereign, King Edward VII. In the same year, the horse-drawn trams, which had operated on the streets of Birkenhead for the past forty years, changed and on the 4th February the first electric tram service operated on the New Ferry route.

Edward VII

Ruled 1901 - 1910

INTRODUCTION

I have written my story as from the earliest date found and travelled steadily forward until 'modern times' - although this is the reverse of the way the research is done, it is easier for the reader to grasp. The only drawback to this method is that I feel so much of the tedium and excitement of our search may have been lost. With this in mind, I'll endeavour to retrace our journey. It was 10 years ago, and starting with a small amount of information, that we began our research for our Family Tree.

We were able to find the birth of Grand-dad William Thomas from the GRO Indexes, having a rough idea of the date of his birth - even so it still took a lot of searching. We discovered the names of his parents from their Gravestone in Flaybrick Cemetery, Birkenhead. After receiving the birth certificate of William Thomas, we were also able to see where he was born, the maiden name of his mother and the occupation of his father.

We went to the Greater Manchester Record Office to look at the Marriage Indexes. After two hours, at least, on this occasion, we were just about to give up and go home, feeling very frustrated. Then I thought "let's just look at another reel, even if this would make James a bit young for marriage". Almost at once I found the name of Sarah Jones (his mother's name), the District of marriage was an area I had only vaguely heard of. Holding my breath I looked for James Hindley (his father) even though, at this time, he would be only 19. Both Districts and numbers agreed! We had found their marriage at last - the feeling of elation is hard to describe, but I can still remember the occasion. Suddenly, gone was the feeling of exasperation and weariness, not to mention sore and tired eyes. This feeling of elation was to happen enough times during the following years of search to make it all worth-while. The next thing was to send for their Wedding Certificate. When we received this we had found who Grand-dad Hindley's Grandfather and Grandmother were. The exciting part was finding that the name of his Grandfather was Ellis. The name Ellis was to be a tremendous help in our search as was the fact that the family stayed in Cheshire so much of the time.

It hadn't been too difficult finding information regarding births, deaths and marriages as we worked backwards to 1837. We also had the censuses back to 1841, although more details appear in the subsequent ones. In the 1861 census the birth place of James was given as 'Wales, Chorlton'. In order to find where his father was married and he was born we must find this Chorlton. We spent a lot of time checking all the Chorltons we could think of, and we seemed to be stuck. Then one day, after we had been to Chester Records Office for yet another fruitless search, we were sitting in the 'Happy Eater' outside Chester, our usual lunch stop, when my husband Malcolm said "I'm sure there is a signpost just up the road pointing to Chorlton, in Backford". I'd noticed a sign but not registered it. Could this be the place? We couldn't do anything about it then, but we now knew which parish register we should 'scour' through on our next visit to Chester. Which we did and bingo, it was the right one, here we found the marriage of Ellis and the births of his children including James.

The real hard work lay ahead of us. We spent months going mainly to the Chester Record Office, looking at films of so many Cheshire Parishes. On each visit we would set out with high hopes, and lists of questions, which we felt would lead us on to the father of Ellis, his mother and any siblings. Time and time again we returned home empty-handed, as we searched parish after parish, and by now a lot of the parish records were getting difficult to read, not just because of the writing but because of the condition some were in. A further complication was that before 1752 there was a peculiar method of numbering the years. Then, as now, New Year's Day was January 1st, but the Church's Administration Year ran until the following Quarter Day, so that the days from January 1st to March 24th inclusive were then spoken of as belonging to the previous year, e.g. February 26th 1739 would actually refer to 1740. This state of affairs was altered when the New Style of Gregorian Calendar was introduced by an Act of Parliament passed in 1751 (during the reign of George II).

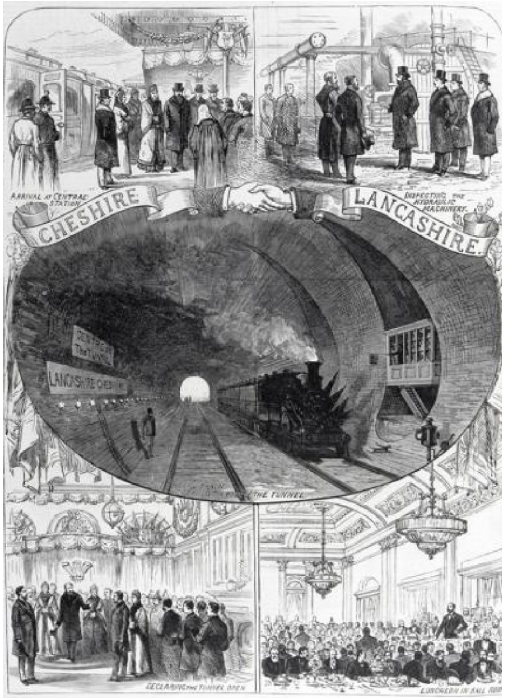
Slowly we found each family group as we worked our way through the parish of Eastham and into Ince. Here we were finally at an end, or so we believed,

St Catherine's Church
Tranmere

The most important event for our family that year was the wedding of William Thomas Hindley and Margaret Agnes Heaps on 10th April at St. Catherine's Church, Higher Tranmere. Margaret Agnes was the daughter of Thomas Heaps, who was a provision dealer, and the family, including his wife Susannah, lived at No 15 Mill Street, Tranmere.

James Thomas, the first child of William Thomas and Margaret Agnes was born on 29th January 1888 at 87 Greenway Road, Higher Tranmere. He was baptised on March 7th at Tranmere Wesley Chapel. William Thomas was now working as a labourer for the Mersey Dock Board. Two years later the second child Frank was born on 22nd December 1890 and baptised on 29th January 1891 in the same Chapel. At this time the family were living at 8 Church Terrace, Tranmere with Great Grandma (Sarah).

The Winter of 1895 was a very bitter one especially during the months of January and February. Ice floes were piled up on the shore at Rock Ferry and great hardship was caused by the extreme weather. Fires could not be lit in case boilers (behind the fire-grates) might blow up, and gas meters became frozen so the householders were without gas for heating and cooking. The Corporation gave out extra water-cans in order to help those who had to collect water in buckets. Soup kitchens were set up and Alderman Gamlin arranged for 5,000 lbs of bread to be distributed by the police to those in distress. During this time many who were not affected by this weather enjoyed themselves skating and merry-making around and on the frozen lakes in Birkenhead Park.



"Arrival at Central Station"

"Inspecting the Hydraulic machinery"

"Declaring the Tunnel open"

"Luncheon in Hall"

Illustration from the Illustrated London News, showing the opening of the Mersey Railway Tunnel by the Prince of Wales on 20th January 1886

The next information we have of William Thomas was in the census of 1881, when he was 18 and working as a railway labourer. Two years later his younger brother Frank was baptised at St. Catherine's, the parish church of Tranmere, although he was in his teens at the time. In 1886 there was great excitement in Birkenhead when the Prince of Wales (later to become Edward VII), came to perform the opening ceremony of the new Mersey Railway and Tunnel under the River. This railway ran between James Street station in Liverpool and Green Lane station in Birkenhead. During 1887 there were numerous important events. First there were the celebrations which marked the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria’s Reign, while in Birkenhead there was the official opening of the new Town Hall in Hamilton Square. This ceremony was performed by John Laird, the first M.P. for Birkenhead. The stone used in this building came from the Storeton Quarries in Higher Bebington.

Movements of the Hindley family

the year was 1761. So many years passed and despite going over the Ince information many times hoping for a breakthrough, we were ready to give up. Then we went to Salt Lake City with a party of like-minded individuals in 1998. Here, towards the end of our stay, we found what we had been looking for, a reference to the marriage of Ellis Hyndley and Phebe Hyndley May 8th 1739 in Winwick, Lancashire!! This was what we had hoped for. The best news was, since 1974 and the boundary changes, the parish of Winwick was now part of Cheshire, and the cherry on top of the cake, all the

information was at the Chester Record Office (our usual hunting ground).

We were now able to pick up the last branch of our Family Tree, so to speak. Our next visit to Chester was quite exciting. We recorded all the references found in the Winwick and Newchurch (Culcheth) parish registers. Later we were able to connect Ellis of Ince to the Hindleys in this new area of search, with the result that we had now traced the 'Line' back to 1692.

Another outcome of our trip to Salt Lake City was my desire to write a book about our line of the Hindley family. I had been inspired during a lecture given by John Titford on that subject. It look quite a while to get to grips with the actual decision to start, and following the excellent book "Writing and Publishing your Family History" by John Titford, I was able to face this mammoth undertaking.

The next two years were spent collecting information which would put flesh, so to speak, on the bones, and bring life to the Family Tree. We searched numerous sources and attended various lectures given by the Family History Society of Cheshire, the latter always inspired us to carry on and search in documents I hadn't known of. As most of our Ancestors were Agricultural Labourers there didn't seem much hope of finding any official document containing any of their names. Then we found Ellis Hindley of Shotton Township in Flintshire, in a Tithe Map Apportionment (this is a list of who owned or rented the numbered fields in the village), and also in an Estate map. This find seemed to confirm the existence of the whole family and give some idea about the livelihood of the people who make up this story. We found a rich vein of information about Ince in Denbighshire Record Office at Ruthin - a seemingly odd place to look as Ince is in Cheshire. but the family of the eventual owner of Ince finally ended up in Denbighshire, and all their papers were given to the local Record Office.

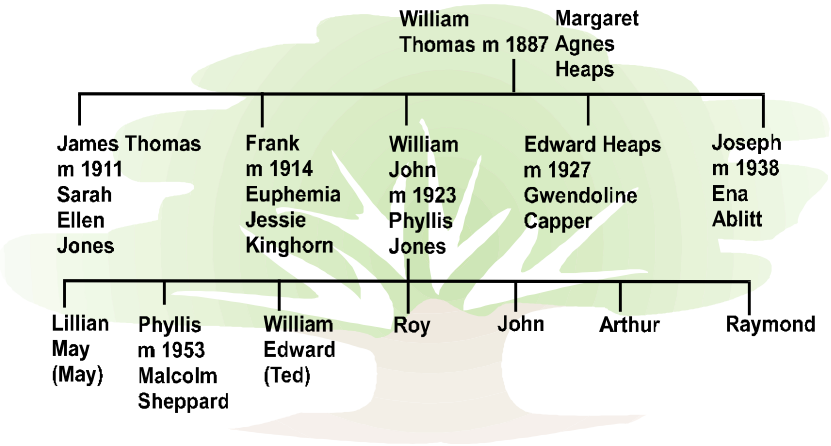
Apart from assembling, sorting out what was relevant, and filing all the fresh information which we gathered for my story, I was also beginning to build a

WILLIAM THOMAS 1863 - 1944.

William Thomas, our Grand-dad, was born in Back Lane (Greenway Road) Tranmere in 1863, his parents were James and Sarah Hindley. The family had recently moved from Higher Bebington as his father had found work as a Boiler-Maker's labourer, probably at the nearby Laird's shipyard (later to become Cammel Laird). By 1867 the family had moved to 11 Prenton Lane, Tranmere, and in 1868, when William Thomas was 5 years old, his father died in an accident, as described in the previous chapter.

In 1875, when William Thomas was 12 years old, he used to help a local farmer by working on a milk round, and afterwards he drove the cows back to the pastures which were some distance away. On weekdays this work sometimes made him late for school. One day, when he was 13, he was punished in front of his class for something he hadn't done, so he walked away from school and didn't go back. I expect he was happier working on the farm and he would also be earning some money for the family.

According to Grand-dad, there seems to have been some mystery about his eldest brother John: he is supposed to have left home and run away to go to sea. Then some years later, in the middle of the night, when all were in bed there was a knock at their front door. As Sarah (now a widow) was alone in the house with her young children, she wouldn't open it, even when the man who knocked claimed to be her son John. Then the caller said if the door wasn't opened, they would never see him again. As the area where they lived was a very lonely place, it is not surprising that the door remained closed. At the time this happened, apart from the absence of street lighting, there were also some who roamed the streets at night in order to rob the unwary, e.g. 'foot-pads' or someone called 'Spring-heel Jack' who was supposed to jump over hedges ! They never did see John again. We have only seen one definite reference to him and that was in the 1861 census when he was 8 years old and a scholar; the other possible reference was as a witness at a cousin's wedding in 1876 (when he would have been in his early 20s) - the signature was "J. Hindley".


William Thomas m 1887
Margaret Agnes Heaps
James Thomas m 1911 Sarah Ellen Jones
Frank m 1914 Euphemia Jessie Kinghorn
William John m 1923 Phyllis Jones
Edward Heaps m 1927 Gwendoline Capper
Joseph m 1938 Ena Ablitt
Lillian May (May)
Phyllis m 1953 Malcolm Sheppard
William Edward (Ted)
Roy
John
Arthur
Raymond

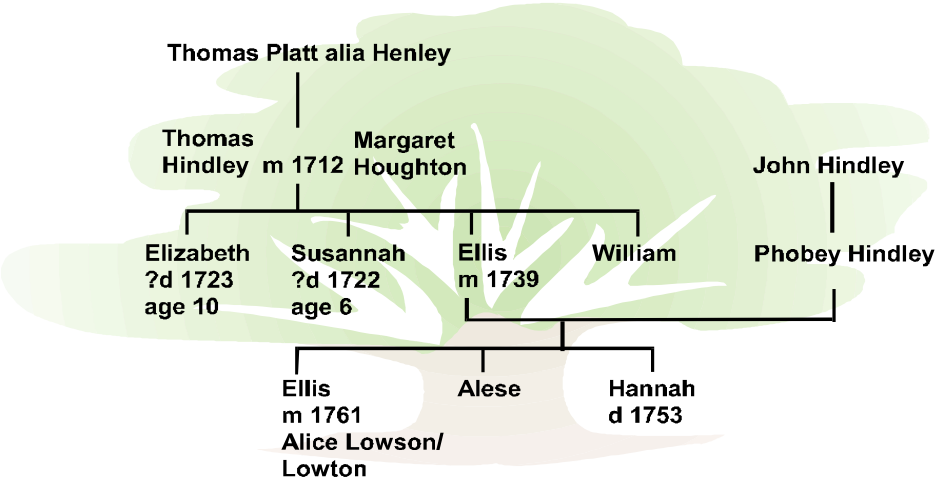
Wigan
Leigh
Pennington
Culcheth
Croft
Winwick
Liverpool
Birkenhead
Tranmere
Warrington
River Mersey
Bebington
Brimstage
Widnes
Thornton Hough
Bromborough
Runcorn
Eastham
Parkgate
Little Sutton
Ellesmere Port
Ince
Holywell
Flint
Chorlton by Backford
Wervin
Connah's Quay
Queensferry
Shotton
Chester
Hawarden
River Dee
Canal

picture in my mind of how they lived and worked etc. But most of all that these ancestors were more than just a name and date on sheets of paper. I can visualise them as people who had been born, married and had families, who had all helped to carry on our Hindley line.

September 1st 2001. P.S.

"When you have eliminated the impossible, what ever remains, however improbable, must be the truth".

The Sign of Four by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,


Thomas Platt alia Henley
Thomas Hindley m 1712 Margaret Houghton
John Hindley
Elizabeth ?d 1723 age 10
Susannah ?d 1722 age 6
Ellis m 1739
William
Phobey Hindley
Ellis m 1761 Alice Lowson/ Lowton
Alese
Hannah d 1753

Wigan
Leigh
Pennington
Culcheth
Croft
Winwick
Warrington
Liverpool
Birkenhead
Tranmere
Bebington
Brimstage
Widnes
River Mersey
Thornton Hough
Bromborough
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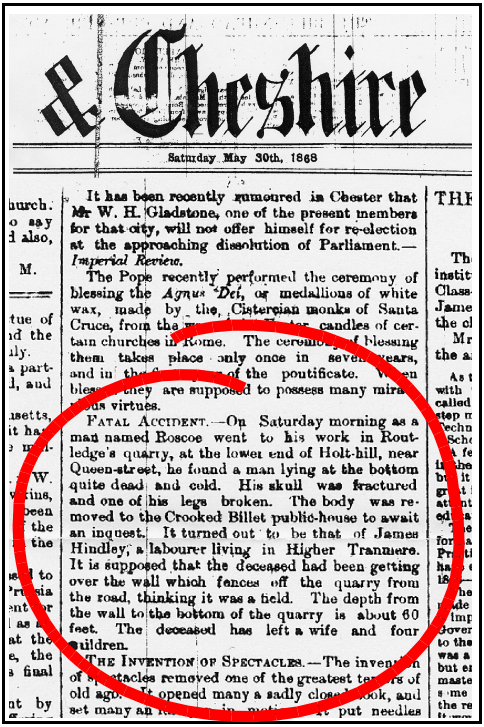
Wervin
Connah's Quay
Queensferry
Shotton
Chester
Hawarden
River Dee
Canal

The next year, tragedy was to befall the family again with the death of Sarah Jane who died aged 18 months. Sarah and the family continued to live at 11 Prenton Lane. On the Census of 1871, Sarah is described as a Laundress, and in 1881 as a charwoman, still at the same address - it is obvious that Sarah had to do this type of work in order to support herself and the family. By 1891 the family had moved to 8 Church Terrace, this house was close by St. Catherine's, the parish church of Tranmere. By now William Thomas, plus his wife Margaret Agnes and their children, were also living with Sarah. Sometime after 1900 Sarah was a cook. She lived until 1911, when she died aged 82 on July 26th, at 31 Marion Street, Birkenhead.

We found some further information concerning the children of James and Sarah. In 1876 witnesses at the wedding of Mary Emma Hindley (daughter of James' brother Thomas and his wife) and James Henry Broadfield, were J. Hindley and Mary A. Hindley. It is very probable they were John and Mary Ann (Kate), cousins of Mary Emma.

become Borough Road. The road was constructed between 1863 and 1870.

By 1867 the family of James and Sarah had moved to 11 Prenton Lane, where Sarah Jane was born on the 1st May. The following year on Friday 22nd of May, James failed to return home in the evening. We can't imagine how Sarah was feeling as she waited for his return. It was sometime on Saturday when she was to find out what had happened. A man named Roscoe was on his way to work in Routledge's Quarry, when he found a man lying at the bottom, quite dead. The body was moved to the 'Crooked Billet' public house to await an inquest which was held the next day. The man was James - he had fallen accidentally into the quarry; the whole incident was reported in the local paper. James was buried at St. Andrew's Church, Lower Bebington, on the 27th May, aged 35 years.



& Cheshire

Saturday May 30th, 1868

It has been recently rumoured in Chester that Mr W. H. Gladstone, one of the present members for that city, will not offer himself for re-election at the approaching dissolution of Parliament.—*Imperial Review.*

The Pope recently performed the ceremony of blessing the *Agnus Dei*, or medallions of white wax, made by the Cistercian monks of Santa Cruce, from the [illegible] candles of certain churches in Rome. The ceremony of blessing them takes place only once in seven years, and in the [illegible] of the pontificate. When blessed they are supposed to possess many miraculous virtues.

Fatal Accident.—On Saturday morning as a man named Roscoe went to his work in Routledge's quarry, at the lower end of Holt-hill, near Queen-street, he found a man lying at the bottom quite dead and cold. His skull was fractured and one of his legs broken. The body was removed to the Crooked Billet public-house to await an inquest. It turned out to be that of James Hindley, a labourer living in Higher Tranmere. It is supposed that the deceased had been getting over the wall which fences off the quarry from the road, thinking it was a field. The depth from the wall to the bottom of the quarry is about 60 feet. The deceased has left a wife and four children.

The Invention of Spectacles.—The invention of spectacles removed one of the greatest terrors of old age. It opened many a sadly closed book, and set many an [illegible] in motion. It put needles

From the "Birkenhead & Cheshire Advertiser" May 30th 1868

The Crooked Billet, Old Chester Road, Tranmere, as it is today

THOMAS 1692 - 1754,

ELLIS (1) 1717 -1753

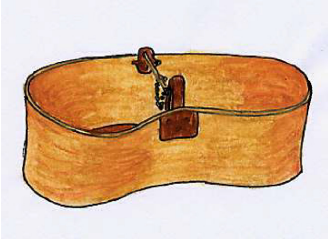
William III

Ruled 1689 - 1702

Our story begins in 1692, during the reign of William III, with the birth of Thomas Henly (throughout history, the spelling of sunames such as Hindley varied considerably !). Life in England had changed very little since the 13th century and it was still mainly an agricultural country. The population of the villages normally consisted of a Lord of the Manor and a number of Freeholders who held various properties in the village, some large, others quite small - this group were generally referred to as Yeomanry. Then came Copyholders (they held a lifetime title to their land, which reverted to the Manor on their death, although it was usually passed on to their heir who became the new Copyholder), Tenant Farmers and finally Cottagers. One other group were known as Settlers - they settled on commons or in the woods, at some distance from the village. A common rule in one part of the country was that their rights were established if the settler could build his cottage overnight and have smoke coming out of his chimney by morning. This would give them the right to stay and use the small area of land cleared around their hut.

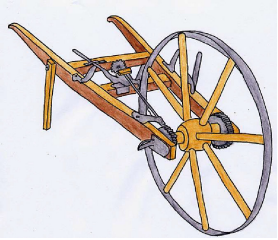
As all our early ancestors were Agricultural Labourers, we can presume that when Thomas was born, his family were living in a cottage. A cottager would have owned or rented a few strips of land and have certain rights, which generally included the right to graze a few animals on the common or wasteland, to cut turf and to collect wood for fuel. This was the practice in many areas.

The agricultural system used during this period was called 'Open Field', and consisted of three fields - two which were used for crops and the third which was allowed to lie fallow for a year. The fields were divided into strips of an

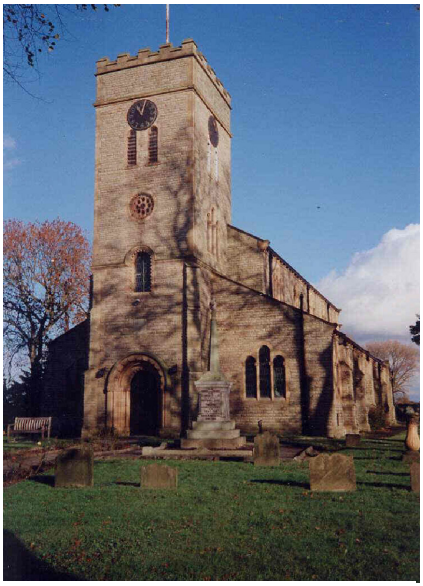


Left: A seedlip. used to hold seed for broadcasting

Right: a seed-drill, used to make a furrow for the seed



acre or half an acre, each strip was separated from the others by a grassy bank. The type of seed to be used, as well as the times for sowing and harvesting of the crop, were governed by the Jury of the Manor Court (later called, among various titles, the Court Leet). During the growing period the fields were fenced off until after the harvest, when the fences were removed. The herdsman would then drive his cattle onto the fields where they could feed on the stubble and weeds. The hay-meadows were fenced off between Lady Day and Midsummer Day, at which time the hay was cut and the fields also opened to cattle. When Thomas was born, the Henly family were living in the parish of Winwick, in South Lancashire. This was an ancient parish which stretched from Warrington in the south to Wigan in the north, and from Sankey Brook in the west to Glaze Brook in the east. This huge area was later subdivided into twelve parishes, one of these was the parish of Newchurch (Culcheth). In 1650 the Commonwealth Surveyors recommended that Newchurch should be made into a Civil parish - these were brought into being during the Commonwealth to oversee the matters that the Church didn't deal with, such as the Civil Laws.



Newchurch church

The parish church was probably built before 1528 and was originally a Chapel-of-Ease to St. Oswald's,

village also had 2 shops, 3 ale-houses and a small brewery. The stone cross, a relic of the ancient village cross of Tranmere (now in Victoria Park in the village), is believed to have been carved locally in the early 16th century.

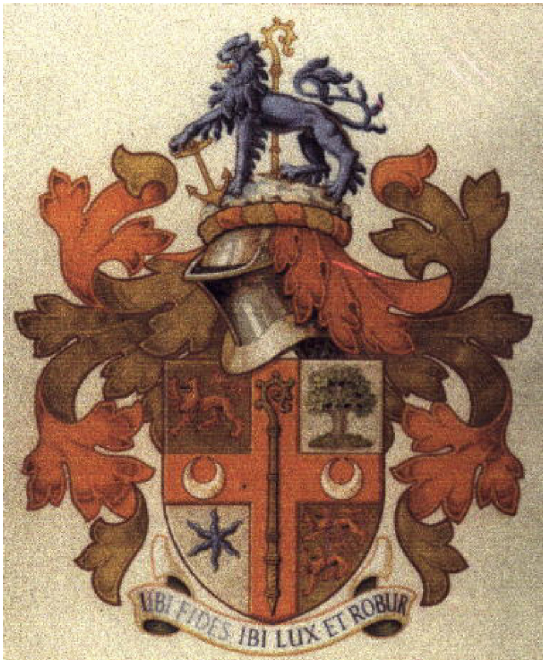
The township was beginning to grow rapidly by 1863 - new villas were being built on the high ground for many of the Liverpool Merchants and their families. This was a very desirable place in which to live and it was only a short journey across the River Mersey. There was plenty of countryside, and beaches where they could relax and refresh themselves, while the air was cleaner than in Liverpool.

The year William Thomas was born, 1863, was an eventful year. To begin with, the Prince of Wales and Princess Alexandra of Denmark were married in London with a lot of pomp and ceremony, while in Birkenhead John Laird (son of William Laird, one of the main founders of the town of Birkenhead), became their first MP. In Tranmere the Workhouse was opened. At that time the Board of Guardians appear to have been more humane than those in many other workhouses. Although diet sheets show that the food was very sparse, at Christmas each inmate received a supply of tobacco or snuff, and each child a toy.

John Laird

During the growth of the township, the name was changed to ‘Higher Tranmere’, and the area called ‘Hinderton’, where fishermen had always lived, became a small urban area known as Lower Tranmere’. The area known as Happy Valley (a very pleasant vale with wild flowers covering the banks of a stream which ran down the centre to Tranmere Pool) was to

labourer. His occupation seemed to change with each move of the family - perhaps he was trying to improve their living conditions.



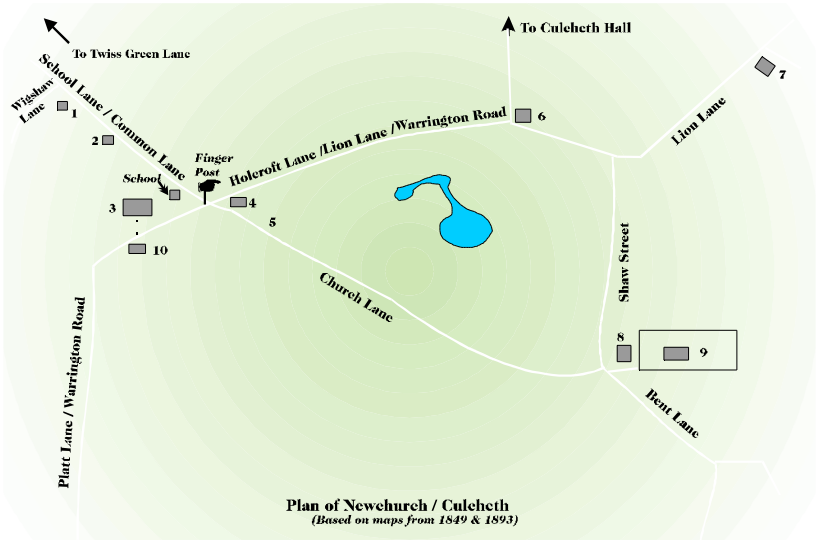
Birkenhead Coat of Arms, showing the Tranmere Oak Tree in the upper right hand quadrant

The old village of Tranmere stood on high rocky ground about a mile from the River Mersey. In 1845 the area was covered in gorse and brushwood. The main feature of the Tranmere Seal was an oak tree with stones at its root - the tree was incorporated into the Birkenhead Coat of Arms on August 28th 1878, when Tranmere became part of Birkenhead.

The village stood at a road junction, with fields all around, until well into the middle of the 19th century. In 1840 there were about six farms, a pinfold (an enclosure for cattle), and two quarries. The village also had several quite large private dwellings and about 50 cottages, the latter single-story, built of local stone and roofed with thatch. These were occupied by farm-workers, or those working in the local industries of Brewing, Quarrying and Milling. The

the Mother Church of Winwick. (A Chapel-of-Ease was a small chapel for the worshippers, at some distance from the main Parish church. It had limited powers in relation to the ceremonies it was allowed to hold.) During the time of Rev. Thomas Wilson (between 1686 and 1692), it became a Chapelry - the same as a Chapel of Ease, but it had the same powers as the Mother church. Between the Reformation in 1650, and 1749, with some exceptions, there was no curate specially appointed to Newchurch. A grant to pay for one was made from Queen Anne's Bounty. This was an English ecclesiastical fund which was founded in 1703 by Queen Anne, and the tithes etc., which were originally paid to the Pope and later to the Crown, were reserved for it. Its purposes were to augment small livings, to build parsonage houses and generally to make grants for ecclesiastical purposes, and it is now administered by the Church Commissioners.

Layout of village (see map) - the Warrington Road was made up of several smaller roads or lanes, including Platt Lane & Lion Lane (or Holcroft Lane).



Key to locations

1. Bricklayers Arms *(now* Cherry Tree Inn) **2. School *(from 1821)***
3. School *(from 1691, later* Sundial House, *later* Culcheth Workhouse)
4. Harrow Inn **5. Pump** **6. Lodge (*to* Culcheth Hall)**
7. Lion's Den **8. Platt Cottages (*now* Pack Horse Inn)**
9. Newchurch Church **10. Smithy**

In the triangle of Warrington Road, Church Lane and Shaw Street was the village green, and the church, as the centre of village life, was nearby in Church Lane, with the Pack Horse Inn next to it. This Inn was converted from two cottages called Platt Cottages. The Common Lands of Culcheth were originally known as “Higher Twist” and “Lower Twist”, or collectively called “Twiss Green”, even when they were about to be enclosed in 1751.

A tower was added to Newchurch in 1691, the year before our 6 times Great Grandfather Thomas (who will be referred as GGF for the rest of the story) was baptised there on 11th August. The curate in charge at the time was the Rev. Thomas Wilson who later became the Bishop of Sodor and Man. Could he have baptised our Thomas? An interesting entry in the Parish Register describes Thomas’s father - Thomas Platt alia Henly. At this point I had better explain the meaning of 'alia' in his father’s name. In 1653, during the Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell (the Protector of England) decreed that from that date all marriages were no longer to be performed in church, but in front of a Justice of the Peace. After the Restoration in 1660, when Charles II came to the throne of England, all marriages performed during this seven-year Commonwealth period were legalised ‘en bloc’. Some hard-line clergy refused to accept this, and forced a second marriage or branded the children illegitimate, which would account for some of the people named sneeringly - “Smith alias Jones.” This appears to suggest that the Thomas born in 1692 had a Grandfather who married during the years of Oliver Cromwell’s rule!

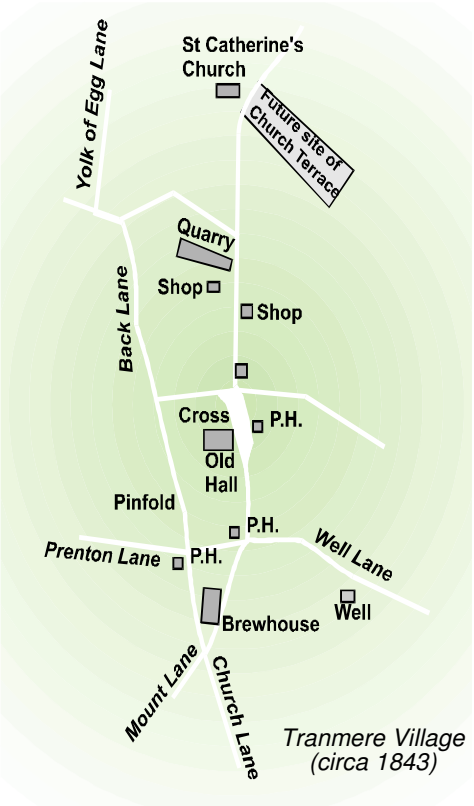
Oliver Cromwell
Ruled 1653 - 1660

Most Lancashire parishes were exceptionally large, with long stretches of main roads. A great many of these consisted of pavement causeways which were 2 or 3 feet wide, and made with pebbles or cobble stones. They were designed for pedestrians and horses, especially during the winter when it was very muddy underfoot. This surface was raised above a broader band of

In 1858 on 19th February James's mother Mary died. Kate, the third child of James and Sarah, was born on August 14th and baptised in St. Andrew's Church in Lower Bebington on 19th September in the same year. By the 1871 Census she was called Mary Ann - we're not sure why; it could be because she is referred to as a Domestic Servant, 13 years of age, in a house in Price Street, Birkenhead. We know that during this period the names of servants were often changed by the 'Lady of the house' if not considered suitable for one of this station. In this same Census we also found Elizabeth (her sister) aged 15, a General Domestic Servant, in Stanley Place in Birkenhead.

In 1860 a fourth child was born to James and Sarah on 26th July, he was called James. During the time the family lived in Higher Bebington i.e. 1858 -1861, this area was owned by Sir Thomas Brocklebank.

After the birth of James, the family moved to the Township of Tranmere. We think it could be as early as the end of 1861, because when William Thomas (our Grandfather) was born, in 1863 on September 6th, the address given as the birth place was Back Lane. By that time the lane had become Greenway Road, but perhaps they had become used to the old name, and when having the Birth Certificate made out they gave the name they were familiar with i.e. Back Lane. When William Thomas was born, his father's occupation was given as Boiler Maker's



Tranmere Village (circa 1843)

In the village there were many large farms and groups of small cottages. In 1840 George King (whose family owned various lands and properties in the area) moved from Birkenhead with his wife and children to the village of Higher Bebington. He then built Higher Bebington Hall with extensive grounds and gardens. It was quite a long way for the village children to walk to church in Lower Bebington, so his daughter Ellen King started a 'Saturday School'. This was to take the place of a 'Sunday school'. It was held in a

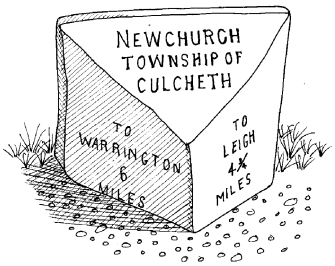
Higher Bebington School, built in 1845

room over the coach-house at the Hall. A day school was built in Higher Bebington in 1845, in School Lane. The village was still a separate area, as was Lower Bebington village, and each had their own windmill.

Mill Road, Higher Bebington, circa 1890s Looking south towards the windmill

earth running along each side which wagons and carriages used, if they could, although they often got bogged down.

Since the Highway Act of 1555 each parish was responsible for the upkeep of its roads and bridges. In order to do this, householders and labourers in the parish had to donate a certain number of hours of labour during the year. In 1691 parishes became entitled to use extra hired labour, which was paid for out of a Highway rate. As the villagers had to find the money themselves, this wasn't very popular, with the result that the roads fell into disrepair.



The parish boundary of Culcheth was between Carr Brook and the River Glaze, and at this time the village was almost surrounded by a moss. As a result the roads in the village were, for the most part, muddy tracks. A number of the villagers had hand-looms in their cottages and when the weaving was completed they had to walk to Leigh in order to exchange the finished cloth for new yarn. This was a distance of about 5 miles and not an easy journey for them. They set off along Twiss Green Lane, then across the fields to Hand Lane, through Pennington and on to Leigh. The track was strewn with boulders and had open ditches on either side. Even coaches or farm-carts using these tracks would have had a rough ride.

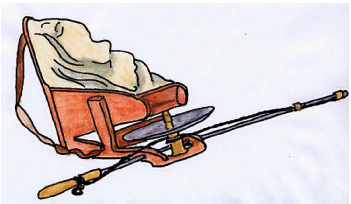
Later, pack-horses were used to take the cloth. An entry from the Culcheth Township Book, dated 14th January 1754, states that Samuel Clayton was *"asked to buy 20 tons of stone and lay them in lanes in Culcheth, Holcroft and Risley".* No doubt the people who would have benefited most would

have been the landed gentry, although the poorer people would have found their journeys to market greatly easier as well. Thomas unfortunately died before he could enjoy this improvement, but his surviving family would have seen the change for the better.

There were three wells in the village, two near the Harrow Inn and one near the church - someone would have the task of fetching the water for each dwelling. During this era the carriers would be using a wooden yoke over the shoulders with two pails attached (one on each side for balance). The Culcheth family lived in Culcheth Hall until 1747 and would have been Lords of the Manor during the time our ancestors lived in the village. There was also a well near Culcheth Hall, this was the deepest and the villagers were able to use it when their wells were dry.

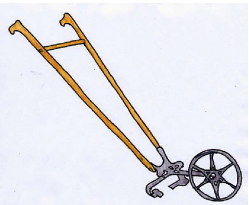
In this era, the most important people in a village were the squire and the parson, and despite various quarrels and complaints from different members of the village, the common-field system enabled the villagers to live their own lives and cultivate their crops on a basis of independence. This was of course before the coming of the Enclosures Act in 1751. Corn, hemp, flax and potatoes were grown in the village and a tithe had to be paid on the first three. The villagers took their corn to be ground to the mill on the banks of the River Glaze near the Raven Inn. This mill had been rebuilt in the 17th century.

Children of small-farmers and cottagers usually found work on the bigger farms, or in the Halls and big houses of the village. Most lived in the houses of their masters until they had saved enough money to marry and take a cottage of their own. Poorer ones would become Settlers and build their own



Left: A seedfiddle. used to spread seed "automatically"

Right: A push-hoe



Index

1. *Higher Bebington Hall*
2. *Christchurch*
3. *Windmill*
4. *St Andrew's Church*
5. *St Paul's Church*
6. *St Catherine's Church*

called 'Fir Bobs' because they lived close to Storeton Pine Woods.

Scots Pine

(Pinus

The Storeton quarries, which provided jobs for the villagers, transported the stone to Bromborough Pool docks via a tram track which ran round the outskirts of the parish of Bebington. The track was built in 1838. On the 1844 Tithe Map it is shown as Plot 250 R'way (Sir Wm. Stanley owner and occupier). The sandstone from these quarries was used in many famous buildings, as far away as the United States of America.

When James and Sarah moved here, most of the work in the village was connected with farming or quarrying. Perhaps there was a chance of work for James (hence the move), although we did find Thomas (his elder half brother) and his wife Emma living here in 1856 when their son Thomas was born.

Travellers Rest Inn

In order to cross the River Dee they would take the ferry from Flint to Parkgate. After leaving the boat they then walked along a series of footpaths from Parkgate, through Thornton Hough and Brimstage, which led to Rest Hill Road in Higher Bebington. Here they would stop for a rest and refreshments at the aptly named 'Travellers Rest Inn' and then continue via Rock Ferry to Birkenhead Priory, where they crossed the River Mersey from Monk's Ferry to Liverpool. Part of this journey, up to the Travellers Rest, could have been used by James and Sarah.

St Andrew's Church, Lower Bebington

Higher Bebington is a Township in the much larger parish of Bebington. The parish comprised Higher and Lower Bebington; Poulton-cum-Spital; Storeton and Tranmere. The Mother Church of St. Andrew's is in Lower Bebington.

It was sometime in the early 1700's that Higher Bebington was formed when some cottages were built for the workers of Storeton Quarries. It is said that the early quarrymen planted the tall Scots Pines which are still a landmark here today. The area was known as 'Prospect Hill', and at one time was a very important part of Higher Bebington. Inhabitants who were born here are

cottage. Parents would be able to find extra work at harvest-time, and other seasonal jobs, which would help to make ends meet. The villages were almost independent as a group, working together with all the tasks of daily life.

About 1691 a school was built in the village, it was called Twiss Green School. The school formed the basis of a much larger building which was double-fronted with three stories. It was called 'Sundial House', so-called because it has a sundial fixed on the front of the building, and it later became the village Workhouse - these buildings were in Warrington Road. Later, in 1821, a new school and master's house were built in Common Lane. The ancient school was supported by money given by many local people. The largest donation came in 1727 when Henry Johnson left in his will the sum of £826, the interest of which should be used to give free schooling at 'Twiss Green School', for as many as it could of the poorest Protestant children in Culcheth. It was for boys aged from 8 to 11 years of age, as girls at that time were not considered worth educating. Apart from the schooling and books, the boys were each provided with a new waistcoat and breeches, shoes and stockings and a bonnet. These were given to the scholars, by the trustees in Newchurch, each year on All Saint's Day. As the waistcoats were made from blue fabric (as this was the cheapest dye available), this became known as "Johnson's Bluecoat Charity", to distinguish it from other Bluecoat charities across the country.

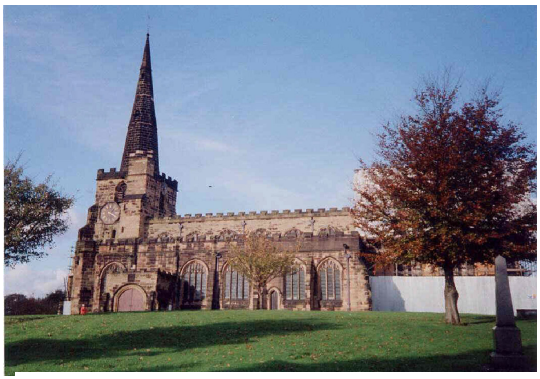
A Bluecoat scholar

In 1702, William III died and Queen Anne came to the Throne of England. In 1707, the Act of Union with Scotland was finalised and the two Parliaments were united. The island became "Great Britain", with its symbolic flag, commonly known as the "Union Jack".

We can imagine Thomas growing up with his family, maybe going to the school, and taking part in all the happenings in the village. At that time, we know that everyone would have had to help with the work in the fields as soon as they were old enough. In the dark evenings and the winter the time was spent making implements for use on the land, as well as necessary tools for use in the cottage e.g., bowls, shovels and so many things which we take for granted today. Wood, of course, was the primary medium for these tasks.

Anne
Ruled 1702 - 1714

And so life went on until Thomas was 20, when he married Margaret Houghton, also from Culcheth, on February 2nd 1712. The wedding took place at St. Oswald's, the parish church of Winwick, which was one of the largest, richest and most important in South Lancashire. We can imagine how the couple would get to the church, perhaps by a decorated cart and horse, or perhaps they would walk with others from the village, making this a special occasion for dressing up and merrymaking! The walk would have taken them through Croft, Southworth and Arbury to reach St. Oswald's.



St. Oswald's Church, Winwick

Thomas and Margaret continued to live in Culcheth and on 22nd November 1713 they had their first child, who was baptised Elizabeth in the parish church of Culcheth. The following year, Queen Anne died and George I, the first of the Hanoverian kings, came to the throne of Great Britain.

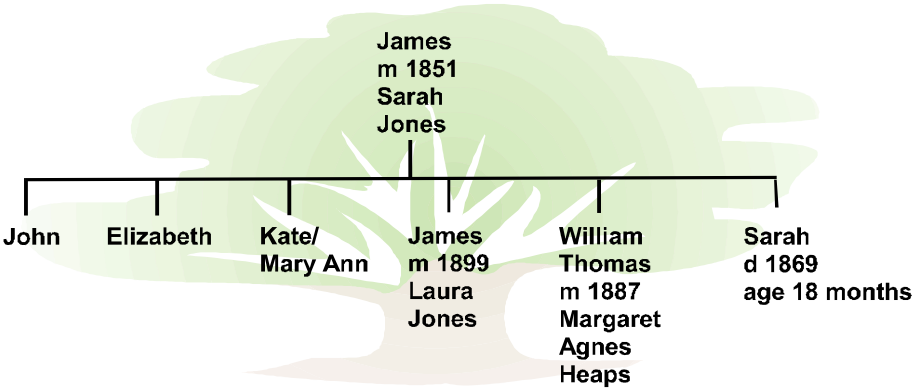
JAMES 1832 - 1868.

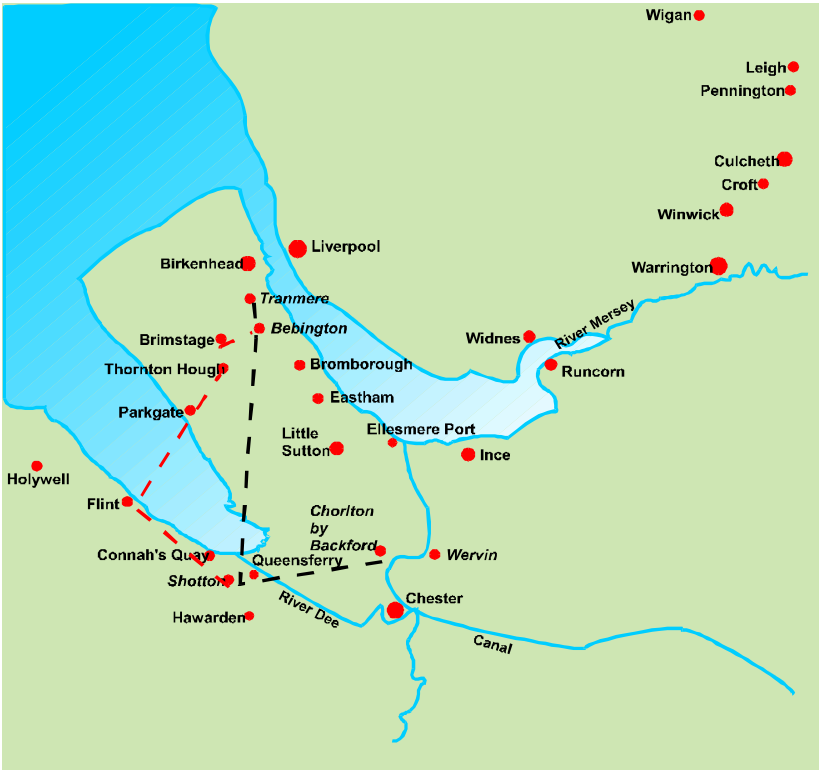
Now we come to our GGF James who was the son of Ellis and Mary Hindley. He was born in Chorlton by Backford in 1832 and baptised in the local parish church. When he was about 2 years old the family moved to Hawarden parish in the County of Flint.

James was 19 when he married Sarah Jones, age 22, of Killons farm in Shotton Lane. As both families lived in the same part of the Township of Shotton, it is most probable that they grew up together. At the time of their marriage James was a shoemaker and Sarah a servant. This is the first time that we had found so much information before the marriage of any of our ancestors.

They were married in Chester on November 26th 1851 at the same church as his father and mother - the church of St. Peter, an ancient Chester church at The Cross. Their first child, John, was born on 29th May 1853 in Shotton and baptised at St. Deinol's Church in Hawarden on 19th June. They continued to live in Shotton until after the birth of their second child Elizabeth, born on 24th February 1856 - at that time James was working as a labourer in a Patent Fuel works nearby. Here they made 'briquettes' by using up the small pieces of coal from the coal mines in the parish; mixing them with a binding material, such as pitch; and compressing into blocks to use in place of coal. James, Sarah and the two children appear to have moved to Higher Bebington, in Wirral, Cheshire, sometime before the birth of their next child.

It is interesting to wonder how the family made this journey from Flintshire. Of course there was a railway from Chester to Birkenhead by now, but what about the cost? Perhaps they walked with a horse and cart and followed the old path taken by the monks as they travelled from Flint to Liverpool. We won't ever know, but below is how the monks journeyed in the early 1800's (see dotted red line on map opposite).





Route taken by monks Movements of the Hindley family

George I

Ruled 1714 - 1727

Susannah, the second daughter of Thomas and Margaret, was born in 1715 on September 2nd and baptised on the 11th, in the same church as Elizabeth. Two years later, in 1717, a son was born, he was to be our 5 times GGF, and baptised Ellis at St. Oswald's, on 13th September. He is the first of three of our ancestors called Ellis, so we call him Ellis 1. In July of the same year a Great Event was held in London, on the Thames - this was to introduce the recently crowned George I to his people. A large barge was decorated which contained not only George & his Royal Party but also a group of musicians who played music, specially written for this occasion by Handel, and called the Water Music. The Pageant was held on the Thames, as none of the London streets were wide enough for a procession of this size, and the Thames enabled more of the people to see their new King during the passage of the flotilla of boats from Whitehall to Chelsea and back again, during which time the Royal Party held a picnic on the barge.

The last child of the family was called William, he was baptised at home on March 22nd 1721 and later received into the church ('R.I.C.') at Culcheth on April 6th. This was the procedure when a newly born child was very frail and not likely to survive; in that event either a parson or midwife could perform the baptism at home. Later, if the child survived, he or she would he christened again in church.

George II

Ruled 1727 - 1760

Meanwhile in London, George II was crowned on October 11th 1727 at Westminster, on the death of his father George I. In 1733, General Oglethorpe, who was chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on debtors' prisons, was in the process of forming the colony of Georgia in America. This action of his was as a protest against the treatment of the poor people in Great Britain who suffered the horrors

and privations of these prisons. The colony was to be a place of refuge for them. Later, John Wesley went out to see the colony; on his return home he began his life-work of evangelism.

By 1739 Ellis was 22 years old and as far as we know still living in Culcheth. Here he met Pheby, the daughter of John Hindley of Culcheth, (she was born on July 8th 1707, we are not sure whether there is any connection with our line). They were married on 8th May that year, in the same church as his parents - St. Oswald's, Winwick. Later in the 'same' year as they married (1739/40 - see Introduction for more explanation), Ellis and Phebey had a son who was born in February, and baptised on March 16th in Newchurch - he was named Ellis after his father. This child was to be our 4x GGF (Ellis 2). He was followed in 1743 by a daughter, Alese, who was born on October 9th, and baptised on October 30th, also at Newchurch.

In 1749 the Enclosures Act was passed for Culcheth and finally put into effect in 1751. These Acts would start the erosion of the livelihood of all the cottagers in the whole country, by restricting the space which they now would have in order to make a living. Their cottages would have less ground in which to grow their vegetables and fruit, they would also be unable to use the commons for grazing the few animals needed to help feed and clothe their families. On top of all this, the villagers affected had to put a fence around their small bit of ground where their cottage stood, at their own expense. This meant selling some of their land, which in turn reduced their income. Their children had to move away, when old enough, to seek work. This Act was to destroy the independence of the small farmers and cottagers.

As a result of the sale of their strips of land, other farmers, who had money, bought up many of them and turned the strips into larger compact areas without the separation. Jethro Tull had already worked out new methods of sowing seeds with less waste, and more accuracy, by planting in drills instead of broadcasting the seed in a hit and miss way. This invention made these larger plots of land easier to cultivate.

James and Sarah continued to live in Shotton Lane with his parents and in 1853 a son was born. He was baptised at St. Deinol's Church Hawarden on 19th June, they called him John (this may have been after his Grandfather Jones). In 1856 a second child was born, on 24th February - she was called Elizabeth (after Sarah's Mother). In the same year Thomas, the first child of Ellis from his first marriage, was married to Emma Williams on the 15th June at the Church of St. Nicholas, (The Sailors Church), Dock Road, Liverpool. The interesting thing was that the Witnesses were Martha and William Williams (his sister and brother-in-law?).

In February 1858 Mary, the second wife of Ellis, died in Denbigh aged 54, she had been ill for seven months. On March 15th the same year Ellis married (for the third time) Elizabeth Hyatt (nee Griffiths) at the parish church of St. Mary's in Chester. Both were aged 56.

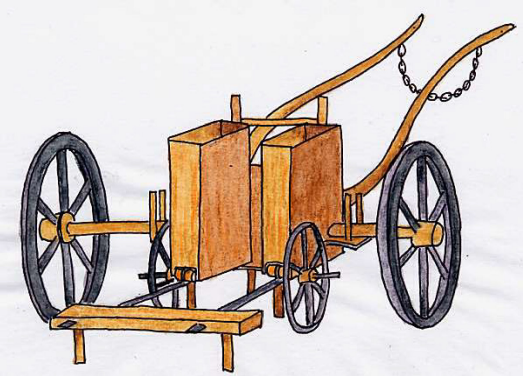
Ellis died on September 11th 1864, still living at Shotton Lane in Shotton. Elizabeth, his widow, then moved to the Chester Union Workhouse at Hoole, Cheshire, where she died in 1882.

Wervin as a house-servant on the farm of Mr Daniel Wright, Chapelhouse Farm. During the time there she met William Williams and they were married at St. Oswald's Church, Chester, on August 23rd. The second marriage was between James and Sarah Jones; she lived with her family in the same lane (i.e. Shotton Lane) as the Hindleys were living so there wasn't much problem working out how they met. They were married in Chester at St. Peter's Church on November 26th, this was the same church in which his father married Mary. At their wedding James was described as a shoemaker - a very necessary trade at a time when all travel was usually on foot.

St. Peter's. Chester

w e gladstone

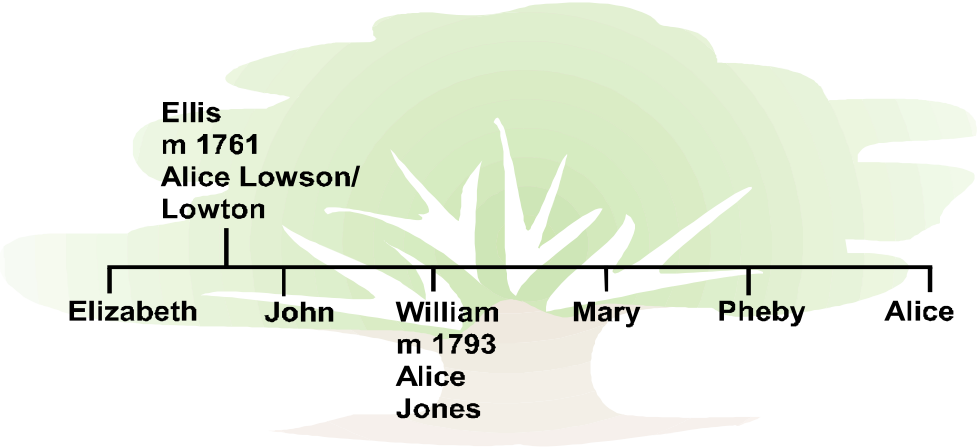
Hawarden became the home of the Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone when he married Catherine Glynne. There is a Gladstone Memorial Chapel and a Window in St. Deinol, the parish church. In 1890 the parishioners of Hawarden erected a fountain near the main entrance to the Park, as a Memorial to their Golden Wedding.



Tull's seed drill

In 1753 in the parish records of Newchurch, we found the death of Hannah, daughter of Ellis Hindley, who was buried on January 12th. We hadn't seen any baptism of this child. The next entry in the book was for her father (Ellis 1) who died the following month on February 21st - he would have been 35 years old. Phebey *(sic)* was now a widow, we haven't been able to find any more information about her. During the same year, the Nave of Newchurch was rebuilt - Col. John Holcroft, of Parliamentary Army fame, had bequeathed a gold chain towards the cost of rebuilding it.

A year later Thomas, the father of Ellis 1, died and was buried in Newchurch on 16th March. Three years passed and there was a death of Margaret Hindley on 15th June 1757. As we also found another Margret *(sic)* Hindley dying in Newchurch on September 14th 1768, we can't be sure which one could be the wife of Thomas.


Ellis
m 1761
Alice Lowson/
Lowton
Elizabeth
John
William
m 1793
Alice
Jones
Mary
Pheby
Alice

Wigan
Leigh
Pennington
Culcheth
Croft
Winwick
Warrington
Liverpool
Birkenhead
Tranmere
Bebington
Brimstage
Thornton Hough
Bromborough
Eastham
Parkgate
Little
Sutton
Ellesmere Port
Ince
Widnes
River Mersey
Runcorn
Holywell
Flint
Chorlton
by
Backford
Wervin
Connah's Quay
Shotton
Queensferry
Hawarden
River Dee
Chester
Canal

reconstructed in redbrick by Sir Stephen Glynne. In the 18th and 19th centuries Hawarden was a market town and the production of coal, iron and bricks flourished; this would provide work which was different from agricultural labour, which was the main work for most of the ordinary people.

Victoria

Ruled 1837 - 1901

In 1837 there were two momentous happenings; first the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of England; and secondly on July 1st, Civil Registration began. This meant that now all Births, Marriages and Deaths in England and Wales must be Registered officially in a designated Register Office. This was to be a great help to those setting out on the exciting journey of discovering their Family Tree, especially now this information has been indexed.

In 1837 a daughter was born on 5th June to Ellis and Mary, she was baptised Alice at St. Deinol's church in Hawarden on 2nd July.

During 1840 Queen Victoria was married to Prince Albert, and the Railway from Birkenhead to Chester was opened. In 1850 a Factory Act reduced the hours of work for adults, also there was to be no work at week-ends between Saturday noon and Monday am.

In the 1844 Census, we found Thomas, aged 13, the son of Ellis and Ann Griffiths, working as a male servant in Sealand. The rest of the family were still living in Shotton Lane.

The year of the Great Exhibition 1851 (which was held at the Crystal Palace in London) was also a year to remember for Ellis and Mary: in that year two of their children were married. First was Martha, who had been working in

SUMMARY of Shotton (continued)

LANDOWNERS	OCCUPIERS	TOTAL QUANTITIES			TOTAL RENT CHARGE		
	Brought Forwd	560	2	52	90	10	5
Glynne Sir Stephen Richard (contd)	Thomas Foulkes	5	2	18	1	1	1
	Ellis Hindley			12			
	John Jones	7	2	27	2	1	.
	Ann Jones	2	.	14		6	7
	Robert Jones	1	5	24		7	8
	Robert Foulkes			15			

Replica of Tithe Apportionments Entry from 1841

Tithe Map and Apportionments of the Township of Shotton, and also in the Hawarden Estate Rent Books. In (Crop Year) 1843/4 Ellis paid £3.00 per Annum; here he was called Hindley - other spellings were common. The Estate Map also showed that Ellis and his family were living at the eastern end of Shotton Lane - this was a long lane which curved in a semicircle with both ends reaching the main road.)

St. Deinol's, Hawarden

In 1834 they had another child, William, he was baptised in St. Deinol, the parish church of Hawarden on 5th October. This church stands in a commanding position overlooking the Estuary of the River Dee.

The village of Hawarden is about 6 miles west of Chester and had a single street with several well-stocked shops, also some Hostelries and Cocoa Rooms, ensuring comfortable rest and refreshments for the traveller. In this street, near a Lime tree which was planted in 1742, stood the Parish Stocks. About 1834 the Tinkersdale Toll House was built when the Abermorddu (now a small village north of Wrexham) to King's Ferry (later called Queensferry) turnpike road was constructed. In 1844 Hawarden Mill was

ELLIS (2) 1739 - UNKNOWN.

Our story now moves to the ancient parish of Ince in east Cheshire. As a result of the Enclosures Acts, cottagers and small farmers had less land on which to live, so that there was a need for sons to leave home and look for work outside their own villages. The family had been secure in Culcheth village for about 60 years, before it became necessary to cross the river Mersey in order to find work. It was to Ince that Ellis 2 came, this was to be the first of many moves for our ancestors.

Ince is an ancient village, built on a rocky outcrop surrounded by marshland, and it is this setting that gave it its name, which was first spelt Ynys - Welsh for island. A small parish, 8 miles east of Chester, it runs for some three miles alongside the River Mersey, between the River Gowy and a stream known as the Hoolpool Gutter, and extends about a mile inland. Because of the position of the village, on the neck of land, and almost surrounded by rivers, it was difficult to find suitable roads which connected with other townships in the area. The view from Ince to the south-west was large, but marshy and not very pleasant. To the north and east you could see the hills of Helsby and Overton, the Frodsham pastures and across the Mersey, the woods of Hale.

There were many buildings in the village, ranging from about 60 lowly stone & thatched cottages to more substantial farm houses built of brick & stone and mostly thatched; of which there were about 16. The bricks were made from clay taken from 'Marl pits' on the Estate, in Mill Meadow

Yew Tree Farmhouse

and part of New Field.

As in many villages, a square near the church was the central point. One of the lanes leading off the square is Kint's Lane (later known as Kinseys Lane), which goes down to the old village school. This later became a picturesque cottage called White Lodge. A new school was built next to the church in 1869, and was of stone from nearby quarries. Passing the right side of the White Lodge (the old school) the lane would have led us past Yew Tree Farm and a few smaller dwellings, straight on to the Hall.

Turning left at the White Lodge, the lane passes under a stone arch, which carries the main drive to Ince Hall; it passes a fish pond called the 'Rushpit'

Ince (1881)

Key to Locations

1. Ince lighthouse
2. Ince Hall
3. Old Hall & remains
4. Smithy
5. Duke of Wellington
6. Fishpond
7. St James's Church
8. School
9. Vicarage
10. Lodge
11. White Lodge
(site of old School)
12. Yew Tree Farm

Shotton (circa 1850)

Ellis and Mary now lived in a cottage with a garden on the Estate of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne in the Township of Shotton, which is also in the same parish. This time we have more positive details of how these ancestors of ours actually lived. The cottage would have been small with a thatched roof and a garden, just large enough to grow vegetables, which hopefully would keep them supplied for the year. Potatoes were usually available from elsewhere, there were also the gleanings from the wheat fields; the practice was to allow the peasantry to scour the fields after the crop had been gathered in. This often enabled families to collect enough grain for bread-making for a year. This practice was to end when mechanisation arrived. We discovered where the family lived from the 1841

William IV
Ruled 1830 - 1837

old. This must have been a very sad and worrying time for Ellis, when he was suddenly left with a new baby and little Thomas, now 3 years old. It wasn't surprising therefore to find that Ellis re-married. His new wife was Mary Measham, they were married on November 7th 1830 at St. Peter's church in Chester. This was also the year that King William IV came to the throne on the death of George IV, who had reigned since the death of George III in 1820.

In general, Cheshire was not an area of large farms, very few were as large as 500 acres, and many totalled only 10-30 acres - these were smallholdings practising a mixed economy. Farm service with board and lodgings was the usual form of agricultural labour in Cheshire. there were also many women employed as dairymaids. A great majority of village people continued to live in poor homes, all thatched and mainly one storied. Many labourers in Cheshire were able to supplement their income from the commons, moss-rooms and home-industry, e.g., making summer hats from straw which was 'platted', woven and stitched into shape, these were worn over the cloth covering which encased the head and ears of the peasants.

In 1832 Ellis and Mary had a little boy who was baptised James in the Backford parish church of St. Oswald's on 9th August - he was our Great Grandfather. Sometime before 1834 the family moved to the parish of Hawarden in the County of Flint - this may have been because Mary felt she needed to be near her family who lived in Aston, which is in that parish.

The Font
at St. Oswald's

and eventually leads to two farmhouses, Mill Farm and Grove Farm. In this direction are Thornton Brook and the River Gowy; between these two streams is Holme House. The village boasted four pubs / ale-houses; a smithy with the stocks outside; a windmill and two wells, and there was another well not far from Ince Hall.

There were large areas of marsh in and around the parish of Ince and bulls were kept in the marshes and paid for out of church funds. The business of buying and selling bulls had been carried on for many years and was a feature of life in the parish - the following was taken from the Overseers Book:

"April 12th 1773, it was recorded that William Jones and Thomas Whitby are chosen as Overseers of the Marsh and to buy Bulls for the next year, agreed by the Parishioners."

In 1749 one of the Wardens had spent, during one year of office, £14 16s 1d - out of this £10 1s 1d had been used in one way or another on these animals. The bulls were not expensive - in 1750 two bulls were bought for £3 10s from the Churchwarden.

St. James the Great, Ince

The parish church of St. James the Great stands on the highest point of the village. In 1796 it was restored and two aisles were added. The ground above the rock on which the church stands is very shallow, so there was only sufficient room for one coffin in each grave. Other coffins are nearby and noted on the Gravestone.

On Marsh Lane, north of the church, there are remains of the late Perpendicular manor-house, once owned by the Abbots of Chester. Close to the road can be seen parts of a refectory with four large windows, built in 1399 - other fragments are incorporated in the walls of nearby barns and houses.

Monastery remains, Ince

In the parish burial register we found the word 'Affidavit' (or 'Aff'). In 1666 and also in 1678 it was decreed that all corpses should be buried in "sheep's wool only" - this Act was introduced in order to increase the sale of wool. After the later date, a declaration had to be made to the clergyman, stating that the corpse was indeed buried "in woollen". It became the practice for the Parish Clerk to cry out while the cortege was still around the grave, "Who makes affidavit?". There was a penalty of £5 if this was not done (and found out !) which was paid into the Poor Fund. Later this money was divided between the Poor Fund and the person who told on the wrong-doer. Another entry found in the same Register, was F (or FUN'l or F'l) on the funeral entry, this meant that a Funeral Sermon had been preached over the grave. This practice was common during the 18th century, if required by the relatives, upon payment of the fee, which was 10s.

Out of the 50 or so families living in Ince around the end of the 18th century, the most influential were the Hinde family. Two of them, Thomas & John, were sub-landlords of various properties in the village, and were often called upon to witness important documents such as leases or wills. Thomas was the Parish Clerk, and John was a very religious man who also acted as the village doctor, bleeding & drawing teeth etc. when required. When

Chorlton Hall, circa 1811

(Copyright Bodleian Library, Arch. A.A.b/3 Vol.6. opp.202)

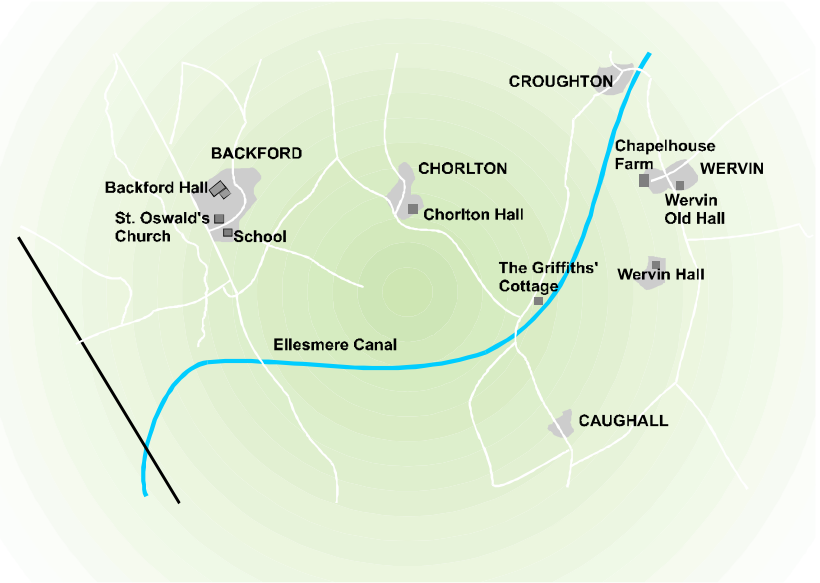
house were near the Canal which was a link for those wishing to travel from Chester to Liverpool via Ellesmere Port. There were a couple of well-built cottages with cow-houses between the Hall and the canal, these were occupied (on the 1849 Tithe Map and Apportionments), by a Thomas & a George Griffith - perhaps they were related to Ellis's wife Ann! The lands and one of the cottages were situated by the side of the canal at Caughall Bridge. A packet-boat stopped here daily to deliver goods and pick up passengers etc., which was very convenient for those living in this area. By 1835 the total number of inhabitants in the village was 89, most of whom were tenants of James Wicksted Swan - owner of the Swan Estate, who lived in Chorlton Hall - or servants in various households. According to the 1841 Census there were also more labourers' cottages in those days.

The Wickstead Swan coat of arms

In 1830 Ellis and Ann had a daughter who was baptised Martha in St. Oswald's Church in Backford on 31st January. Sadly Ann died a few months later and was buried in the same church on May 2nd, she was only 22 years

the Priory of Birkenhead, and the Vicar of Backford was usually one of their Priors. The Tower was built in the early 1500's, and in a church inventory there is a record that Backford Tower contains three bells. The church register begins in 1562 and it was in this church that Ellis and Ann had their first child baptised on December 30th 1827.

The baby was named Thomas; there had been a number of Thomases in the family before. We had noticed that Christian names were often repeated and this was a help when searching the Family Tree.



To reach Chorlton, Ellis and Ann would have had to cross the Canal, which was known by several names depending on the period - Ellesmere; Dee & Mersey; and Shropshire Union. They could either cross at Croughton Bridge - this was about half a mile to the north of Wervin village - or at Caughall Bridge about two miles to the south west, but nearer to Chorlton.

Chorlton was a typical small Cheshire village - there had been a farmhouse there in 1778 which was later enlarged into a Gentleman's Residence with fine gardens, and which eventually became Chorlton Hall. The lands and

The "Duke of Wellington", Ince

Methodism began to gather momentum John would attend the regular church service in the morning (to set a good example to the villagers!), and then hold Methodist meetings in his house in the evenings. His daughter Elizabeth devoted her life to good works and helping the poor of the village. Her cottage was next door to the main village Inn, known as the Duke of Wellington after 1815 and the Battle of Waterloo.

George III

Ruled 1760 - 1820

We don't know how long Ellis had been living in Ince, but he was obviously there in 1761, because in the parish registers of St. James we found the marriage of Ellis Hindley and Alice Lowson (or Lowton) on 24th August of that year. This was one year after George III was crowned at Westminster on 22nd September, following the death of his grandfather George II. We know that by 1800 Ellis and his family were living in one of the stone & thatch cottages. Ellis was working as an agricultural labourer - farming was the main occupation, although many of the poorer villagers were fishermen.

The Mersey provided a route for the produce of the farms to be conveyed to Liverpool. By 1800 sailings were well established from the little port below the village, with a regular ferry / market boat making the two hour trip, bringing coal and other goods on its return. There was a large Warehouse built at the pier, which was looked after by the landlord of the Boat House

Ince Pier and "Hopper" (before the Ship Canal was built)
(after a picture by James Hughes)

Inn, where visitors could also stay. There had been fishermen in Ince since the 17th century and at that time their catch would have been whales and sturgeon. Over the passing years, due to pollution of the river Mersey, these are no longer seen; but even well up to the 20th century the fishermen were able to make a living catching shrimps, white bait and silver eels. Twice a day, Winter and Summer, the men would walk from the village down the lanes, then plod through the mud flats to their work. Their nets were staked far out in the shallow estuary, then at low water, the catch, if any, would be gathered in. About 1810, the fishermen's cottages were pulled down. The area was then called New Row, but is still remembered as Fish Row.

In 1763 Ellis and Alice Hindley had a daughter, she was baptised Elizabeth on 13th February at St. James, the parish church of Ince. Their next child, John, was baptised in the same church on October 27th 1765. Four years later, in 1769, Ellis and Alice had their third child. This was William; he was to become our 3 times GGF. He was baptised on July 30th in the parish church.

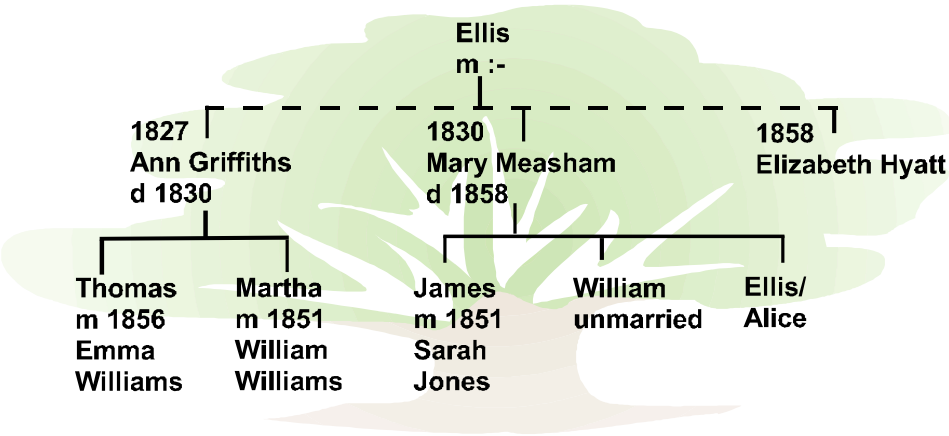
ELLIS (3) 1804 - 1864

England was still at war with Napoleon and King George III was still on the throne of England, but in the countryside of the Cheshire villages, life went on as usual. The families of our ancestors were more concerned with maintaining a livelihood, working as Ag. Labs., as they continued to move in order to find work and food for growing families.

When Ellis 3, our 2 times GGF, was 6 years old, his father and one of his brothers, both called William, died as previously mentioned in 1810. We next found Ellis in the township of Wervin, still in Cheshire. We don't know when he moved there, most probably in order to find work. Here he met Ann Griffiths, who lived in Wervin. They were married on the 23rd July 1827 in St Oswald's (the Parish Church of Wervin) in Queen Street, Chester.

They then moved a couple of miles to live in Chorlton by Backford, in the parish of Backford. This parish is situated three miles north of Chester and contains the Townships of Backford; Chorlton-by-Backford; Lea; Great Mollington and Caughall. The parish church is St. Oswald's in Church Lane, Backford - the earliest documents about the church date from 1291. The Patron of the church from 1305 until the Dissolution of the Monasteries was

St. Oswald's, Backford


Ellis
m :-
1827
Ann Griffiths
d 1830
1830
Mary Measham
d 1858
1858
Elizabeth Hyatt
Thomas
m 1856
Emma
Williams
Martha
m 1851
William
Williams
James
m 1851
Sarah
Jones
William
unmarried
Ellis/
Alice

Wigan
Leigh
Pennington
Culcheth
Croft
Winwick
Liverpool
Birkenhead
Warrington
Tranmere
Bebington
Brimstage
Widnes
River Mersey
Thornton Hough
Bromborough
Runcorn
Eastham
Parkgate
Little
Sutton
Ellesmere Port
Ince
Holywell
Flint
Chorlton
by
Backford
Connah's Quay
Queensferry
Wervin
Shotton
Chester
Hawarden
River Dee
Canal

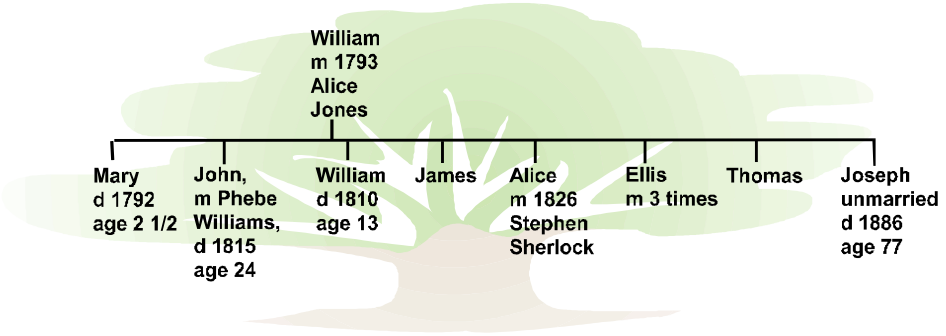
In the spring of 1770 came the news from across the world that Captain Cook had landed in Botany Bay, on the newly discovered east coast of Australia. This was to become the area where the first batch of convicts from Britain were sent in 1788.

A daughter was born to Ellis and Alice in March 1775 and she was baptised Mary in the parish church. On 4th of July 1776 in America, Congress issued the Declaration of Independence, by 1782 Britain had ceded all her territory south of Canada to the thirteen colonies. These were later formed into the United States of America, with George Washington as their first President.

Ellis and Alice had another daughter in 1778, who was called Pheby - this was the name of her Grandmother Hindley. She was baptised on 23rd June, but sadly she died 5 days later on 28th. In 1780 their last child was born, she was baptised Alice, after her mother, on March 24th in the Ince parish church. By 1789 William, by now aged 21, had left to get married in Eastham, leaving his family behind. His elder sister Elizabeth was 27, brother John was 25, and his two younger sisters, Mary and Alice, were aged 15 and 10 respectively.

I've noticed that when looking in the parish registers of Ince, from 1723 - 1833, the only Hindleys are the families of Ellis and John, apart from one mention of a Pierce Hindley. Another interesting point was that the name Phebe was only mentioned 8 times in the registers. John and Ellis each had a daughter born with this name. We don't know about the others as yet but we know that Ellis's mother was Phebe, and that her father was John Hindley. So far we haven't found any connection.

We know the dates of death of some of Ellis and Alice Hindley's children: Elizabeth died in 1833 on August 25th aged 71, and Mary died in 1831 on January 29th aged 56 - both were buried in Ince. Their son William, who moved to Eastham when he married, died there in 1810. We don't know about John and Alice; we have also been unable to find the deaths of either parent.


William
m 1793
Alice
Jones
Mary
d 1792
age 2 1/2
John,
m Phebe
Williams,
d 1815
age 24
William
d 1810
age 13
James
Alice
m 1826
Stephen
Sherlock
Ellis
m 3 times
Thomas
Joseph
unmarried
d 1886
age 77

Wigan
Leigh
Pennington
Culcheth
Croft
Winwick
Warrington
Liverpool
Birkenhead
Tranmere
Bebington
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Thornton Hough
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was a spinster - none of her family seemed to be there. The word ‘cordwainer’ comes from ‘cordovan’, a type of Spanish leather, and this leather was used to make shoes (but not boots !), and later other leather objects such as bottles.

The story of Ellis comes in the next chapter.

The only other brother we have found in later life is Joseph, he appeared in the 1851 Census as a farm-labourer in Landican Village, in Wirral. In the 1881 Census he was an Agricultural Labourer (Ag. Lab.) in Hooton, Cheshire. He died on 22nd November in 1886 age 77, a farm labourer of Brougham Street, Tranmere, Birkenhead.

businessmen and messengers to Chester, Holyhead, Shrewsbury and far beyond. Some of the villagers made money by hiring out their horses to people wishing to go to such places. The Hooton Arms, the Stanley Arms and the Glyder Hotel (which were all in the village) provided accommodation for these travellers. In 1846 a grand new hotel, called the Eastham Ferry Hotel, was built near the Ferry, to accomodate the increased level of travellers.

In 1797 a second son was born to William and Alice, he was baptised William on 15th January, in the parish church. Two years later, on the 14th July, their third son James was also baptised in the same church. In 1801 William and Alice had a second daughter who was baptised Alice on 10th October and, as they were still in Eastham, she was of course baptised also in St Mary's church. Ellis 3 (who was to be our 2 times GGF) was born on 2nd December 1804. There were two more sons born to William and Alice, namely Thomas in 1807 and Joseph in 1809.

During 1810 there was great sadness in the family when father and son, both called William, died (one by "Small Pox", and the other "killed by the falling of a tree") and were buried in Eastham. After this date, we know that in 1815 their son John died aged 24 and was buried in the same church.

1815 was also the year when peace was to come at last after twenty years of war between France and England. The final defeat came with the famous "Battle of Waterloo" won by Wellington and his troops.

George IV
Ruled 1820 - 1830

In 1826, Alice Hindley, who was by now living in the Woodchurch area on the Wirral, married Stephen Sherlock of Woodchurch on the 4th December, at the church of St Nicholas in Liverpool. Stephen was a cordwainer and Alice

WILLIAM 1769-1810

Our story now continues in the large parish of Eastham. This parish is in the Hundred of Wirral and is surrounded by Bromborough and Bebington in the north; Neston in the west; Backford and Stoke parishes in the south; and the River Mersey, which divides Cheshire from Lancashire, in the east. The parish was 2-3 miles wide and 3-4 miles long, and contained the hamlets of Little and Great Sutton, Childer Thornton, Hooton, Pooltown and Whitby, as well as the village of Eastham.

Eastham, which means 'Eastern Village', is 7 miles north of Chester. It was in the village of Eastham that we found William when his name appeared in the parish register on the baptism of "Mary, daughter of William Hindley and Alice Jones, of Great Sutton," on 20th September 1789.

The parish church of St. Mary's is a red sandstone building which stands in the centre of Eastham village and is surrounded by many fine trees. It has an unusual 'Broached Spire' (a Tower surmounted by a Spire). The church was originally built about 1150, when the parish was given to the Monks of St. Werburghs, Chester. The Spire and Tower are probably 14th century. In the churchyard is Eastham's famous ancient Yew Tree. Inside the church there is a large 16th century oak parish-chest and a 10th century circular Barrel Font. We can imagine that William and Alice have stood by this Font many times.

St. Mary's, Eastham

The great road which links Chester with Liverpool, via Eastham Ferry, passed through the centre of the village. There was a six mile journey across the Mersey to Liverpool and in 1795 it was said, that if the conditions were favourable, the time taken would be about 2 ½ hours.

William, our 3 times GGF, born in Ince in 1769, was the son of Ellis and Alice Hindley. This was about the time of one of the Enclosures Acts, which in Cheshire was mainly of ‘common land’. Now life became more difficult for cottagers and others who had relied on the commons for grazing their animals, growing some crops or digging peat for fuel. The former commoners however were given allotments; these typically had space for a small cottage with an acre or two of land sufficient to grow some crops, keep a cow, a couple of pigs and a few chickens. Each farm, where there was a peat moss in the township, had an area called a ‘moss room’ allotted to it, here they could still cut their peat.

William appears to have moved to the parish of Eastham to find work. A lot of events happened to the family during 1792 - first was the death of Mary (aged 2 1/2) in February, and then the baptism of their second child John in May the same year. Finally, in September, the Banns were called, for the marriage of William and Alice, in Holy Trinity church in Chester. They were actually married on September 1st 1793 as William Henley and Alice Jones.

Workers cottages, Eastham

The land in this part of Cheshire grew barley, wheat and oats, while the farms produced a lot of cheese. The chief manures used were marl (a limy clay) and lime. The only commons in the area were to be found on parts of Backford and Eastham Heaths. Although the inhabitants of Eastham were a robust, hardy race of people, many of the poorest lived mainly on barley bread and potatoes plus buttermilk. The buttermilk, which was given to the pigs or sold cheaply, was what was left after the cream had been skimmed off the freshly cooled and settled cows' milk.

The village had a water-mill and villagers were forbidden to grind their corn anywhere else, especially not outside the village. There was a windmill later on, which was finally dismantled in the 1930's. On the site of this mill a Transport Cafe was built and later a Little Chef cafe (we know it !).

Eastham Ferry Hotel

The ferry at Eastham is about a mile from the village. By the 1800's the ferry had enjoyed many generations of activity, with as many as 20 to 30 of the fastest coaches lining the road to the Ferry Pier. They were all waiting to take