

The Mason family, Yeomen farmers of Kirkby in Furness

1. Introduction

My father, John Robertson Mason, was born at Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria in 1911, the only son of a railway engineer. However, he told us that his forebears came originally from the village of Kirkby Ireleth, some 9 miles to the north on the shore of the Duddon estuary. This is indeed the case, going back to around 1700 at least, and this is the story of his family, as far as we have been able to discover. We made an assumption early on that Richard Mason, the long serving Locomotive Superintendent of the Furness Railway was probably also a member of our family, but this was very quickly seen not to be the case.

2. The parish of Kirkby Ireleth

Though the area is nowadays commonly known as Kirkby-in-Furness, the civil parish is still called Kirkby Ireleth. This is the source of some confusion, since there is no such village of that name within it; there is a village called simply “Ireleth” but that is some distance to the south, and actually situated in the parish of Dalton! The Domesday Book refers to the area as “Cherchebei”, which means “Village by the Church”, hence the Kirkby part, and was the seat of the **Kirkby** family, whose earliest recorded mention is in 1204. The Kirkby family was active in the persecution of Quakers, and attempted to seize the lands of Margaret Fell, a founder member of that movement, who was born at Marsh Grange. Both her surname and this property feature prominently in our family history.

The Kirkby’s mortgaged a major part of their local manorial holdings in 1689, and these eventually passed via several others to a Constantine Phipps, who became Lord **Mulgrave** in 1767. He in turn sold out for the sum of £16,000 in 1771 to Lord John **Cavendish**, son of the Duke of Devonshire. The latter’s descendants became successive **Earls of Burlington**, and documents relating to many of their land deals, tenancies etc in the area are held in the Chatsworth collection of papers. The Kirkby family did retain some local property however, such as the Ashlack estate, which passed directly from them to our Mason family in 1828.

Kirkby Ireleth parish is large, extending some sixteen miles from the Duddon Sands estuary in the south to the source of the River Duddon under Wry nose mountain in the north, and is on average 3 – 4 miles in breadth, a total of some 35,000 acres. It is bounded on the south by the



parish of Dalton, on the west and north by the River Duddon, and to the east by the parish of Ulverston. Until recently in Lancashire, the 1973 boundary changes placed it in the new county of Cumbria. Just across the River Duddon lay Cumberland, now also part of Cumbria.

The parish is made up of a number of small villages and hamlets. The former Kirkby family seat, Kirkby Hall is near Marshside, south of Chappels. It is well-hidden from the main road and the best view (right) is from the footpath leading up the old railway incline to the slate quarries.



The parish church of St. Cuthbert (pictured below) is in Beckside, the post office and railway station are in Sandside, just to its west. Grizebeck to the north and Soutergate



to their south comprise the remaining larger settlements, all of which are in the southern half of the parish. At the northern end are Heathwaite and Woodland, sparsely populated, which feature hardly at all in our story.

The principal occupations of the inhabitants around 1850 can be divided roughly into three; agriculture, slate quarrying and iron-ore mining. Nowadays, the first two of these are still dominant activities, but the latter died out many years ago, faced with competition from cheap imported ores. The slate quarries were extensively developed as a unified concern during the 1840's by the Earl of Burlington, and have carried his name ever since. Our family was almost exclusively concerned with farming, and this part of the community seems to keep itself to itself in general; most marriages were from within that group.

The 1881 census can be analysed to show the distribution of common surnames and employment within the parish. In that year there were a total of 362 separate dwelling units, of which 14 were empty, so 348 distinct households. These comprised a total of 1756 inhabitants, or almost exactly 5 per household on average, with a range from just 1 up to 14.

The most common surname by far was Postlethwaite, that of 15 heads of household; others were Johnson (12), Woodend (9), Wilson and Tyson (8 each), Shaw and Dixon (7), Atkinson, Barr, Coward, Fox, Parker and Rigg (6), and Brockbank, Carter, Jackson, Robinson and **Mason** (5 each). Together, these 18 surnames make up 37% of the total population. Some of these feature often in our family down the years, others not at all, a reflection of the close-knit occupational groups mentioned above. Of other names we encountered, the unusual but very influential Ashburner was down to just 3 families by 1881, and Dodgson, Wayles and Watters only one each.

Of the 348 heads, 187 (54%) were born in the parish of Kirkby Ireleth, and another 94 (27%) in the neighbouring areas, comprising Dalton (14), Broughton (12), Millom (8), Ulpha (7), Ulverston, Aldingham & Coniston (6 each), Subberthwaite & Egton (5), Pennington, Hawkshead & Kendal (4 each), Bootle, Osmotherly & Cartmel (3), Staveley, Colton, Urswick & Torver (2) and Walney Island (1). 11% were from elsewhere in Cumberland (23), Lancashire (7) and Westmorland (9). Of the remaining 8%, 16 were from elsewhere in England (including 6 from far-flung Cornwall, as quarrymen and miners), 3 from Scotland, 2 from Wales and 1 each from Ireland and the Isle of Man.

Of the same 348 heads, 22 were retired, and 5 either landowners, house proprietors or otherwise living on own means, with the remaining 321 in work. 132 (41%) were at the Slate Quarries, as quarrymen, slate rivers (splitters) or dressers. There were 55 farmers (17%) with specified acreages (see below), 3 other small farmers and 11 agricultural labourers (as head of a family; many others were of course family members or servants living in). 31 (10%) were employed at the Iron mines and works, most as underground miners, thus a total of 72% directly employed by the 3 main occupations.

To service these, there were 7 blacksmiths, 7 carpenter/joiner/millwrights, 4 wallers / builders / masons, 12 housekeepers, 4 domestic servants, 1 coachman and 5 general labourers. 5 heads were employed on the Furness Railway, 6 were Inn or beer house keepers and there were 2 Ministers of Religion.

Shops comprised 6 grocers, 4 each shoemakers and tailors and 1 butcher. There were 2 toffee shops, and 1 each were employed as Co-op stores manager, general agent / druggist, small ware dealer, sub-postmaster, agricultural implement maker, carrier, miller, gamekeeper, police constable, teacher, shipping agent, registrar of births marriages & deaths, clerk, “professional” (doctor?), a hawker, a shepherd and a market gardener.

4 men were coppice/charcoal woodmen, who probably lived in crude huts “on the job”, and 4 were engaged in “home crafts” (basket maker, dressmaker, stocking knitter and wood turner). It may be noted that these numbers add up to slightly more than the total, since 11 heads of family claimed to have 2 jobs, especially the innkeepers and grocers, who doubled up as a farmer, shoemaker, tailor etc, or worked in the quarries.

Of the 55 listed farm holdings, these comprised a total of 4482 acres (around 13% of the area of the parish, most of which was otherwise upland grazing or forestry), a median 66 acres per farmer, with range from 9 to 473 acres. The latter was Low Hall, held in 1881 by George Ashburner, who also had another 32 acres locally. Our Mason’s were the second largest farming family within Kirkby Ireleth parish, holding Ashlack and Crossbeck, totalling 315 acres, but they also had Marsh Grange (600 acres) just a few yards beyond the parish boundary to the south, and Outerthwaite (near Allithwaite; 212 acres) making 1127 acres altogether. Back in 1851, they had a recorded total of just 614 acres across 5 sites, Ashlack, Bell Hall, Headgate and Beckside all in Kirkby Ireleth plus a somewhat smaller Marsh Grange; others such as Crossbeck were owned but tenanted out.

In 1881, the other large farms were run by Phizaklea’s (2, total 281 acres), Postlethwaites (4, 255 acres), Garnett (1, 213 acres) and Gaitskill (1, 160 acres).

3. The Mason family – early days

Early parish registers for the Furness area provide only sketchy evidence of Mason families before around 1700. We found one group in that of Cartmel Priory from 1641 to 1720 (who actually resided in Grange, which did not then have its own church), another in Bardsea about 3 miles south of Ulverston (1695 – 1705), and several at Dalton in the period 1565 – 1590.

However, the earliest member of our Mason family in Kirkby that we know about with certainty was one **John Mason**, born about **1695**, who married **Sarah Garner** in about **1719**. Sarah was the daughter of Roger Garner, husbandman of Mosshouses, and his wife Frances, born about 1700. Until the arrival of their children from 1720 on, that is all we know about them. We might assume that John was born in Kirkby Ireleth, but the surviving parish registers for the church of St. Cuthbert there date back only to the year 1701 for baptisms, and to 1728 for marriages. There may well have been earlier ones, as the Act of Henry VIII requiring them to be kept was instituted in 1538, and many other parishes have records to at least before 1600, but in this case perhaps they were lost or destroyed many centuries ago?

John and Sarah had five known children, three of whose baptisms are recorded in the St Cuthbert register:-

John	christened	26 th December 1720
William	“	23 rd April 1734
Thomas	“	10 th December 1737

The other two, **Roger** and **Margaret** (as well as John) are mentioned in the will of Sarah’s father dated September 1731, but strangely no baptisms were found for these two. The Baptism itself could take place in the parent’s home rather than the parish church, a few days after the birth, or when the child was not expected to survive, even on the day of birth. We have come across instances of such home or “private” baptisms elsewhere, that the minister has completely forgotten to enter into the register back at his church, has done so only belatedly, or with obvious errors of date etc!

For the three recorded baptisms, the father John’s place of abode is given as Mosshouses, Kirkby Ireleth. These earlier register entries do not record the mother’s maiden surname or the father’s occupation, though Mosshouses was (and still is) a farm, and John is thus the earliest Mason (though probably by no means the first) we know of farming in that parish. From him onwards, the family line is clear and certain; if we call him “generation-1”, then I am of “generation-8”. Mosshouses today is one of several remote farms on Angerton Moss, just to the north of the main Kirkby community, reached only by a dirt track off the main road near



Dove Bank. It comprises a Victorian-era main farmhouse and several outbuildings, one of which, now a shippon, was reputedly converted from the old farmhouse which John Mason would have known.

By 1743 John & Sarah were living at Soutergate, and he wrote his will from there, dated 25th November that year, perhaps then already aware that he was not well. Less than a year later he was buried at St Cuthbert, on 9th September 1744; his age is not recorded in the register, but would have been around 49 years. His occupation is recorded merely as “Householder”. He named his wife Sarah and eldest son John as executors, and left the sum of 10 shillings each to his other sons “Willyain” and Thomas. On 12th September 1744 an inventory was taken of his property and chattels, and the will was proven in August the following year.

The widow Sarah continued to live at Soutergate for many more years, until she passed away at the good age of 82, in early February 1782. She was buried at St Cuthbert on the 8th of that month, presumably alongside her husband, although no headstone for them survives in the churchyard nowadays.

John & Sarah’s eldest son **John** Mason married in 1751, as described in **section 4** of this account following, and had two sons, who in turn married and had families. Their middle son **William** married in 1769 and had one son. It is convenient to look at the subsequent history of each of these three family groups separately from now onwards; though they were no doubt always closely-knit as fellow farmers in the same parish, there is just one inter-marriage recorded between them in subsequent generations, and that was destined to be childless. We will call the descendants of John Mason (junior)’s eldest son John “**Family A**”; they farmed at **Crossbeck** and also later at **Ashlack Hall**, as described in **section 5**. That of his younger son William, “**Family B**”, at **Bell Hall**, in **section 6**, and that of their Uncle William’s son (another John), “**Family C**” of **Headgate** Farm, Soutergate (and later at Marsh Grange) in **sections 7 & 8** (I am descended via the direct male line of Family C).

What, then of John & Sarah’s third son, **Thomas**? It is evident that he was alive when his father wrote his will in 1743, at just 6 years old, but we know very little as yet of what happened to him subsequently. In the will of a Betty Postlethwaite dated 1809, she appoints a Thomas Mason, husbandman of Marsh Grange, Dalton as one of her executors, jointly with Thomas Hartley. This is the earliest mention we have found of a Mason farming at Marsh Grange, the splendid old property just outside the southern boundary of Kirkby Ireleth parish which is well known as the birthplace (in 1610) of the Margaret Askew who married Judge Thomas Fell of Swarthmoor Hall, Ulverston in 1632 and became a founder member of the Quaker religious movement alongside George Fox. We will also find other members of our Mason family there in later years, but it appears they never owned the freehold, just occupying and working the farm as long-term tenants. So we can probably conclude that this Thomas Mason is our man, as there are no other obvious candidates for him locally. As Marsh Grange was just inside Dalton parish (though geographically and culturally much closer to Kirkby Ireleth), we might expect to find that Thomas married and baptised his children at St Mary’s church there, or the Ireleth Chapel, but no relevant entries were found.

However, the author of the history of Ashlack Hall claims (on page 125) that Thomas died in 1830, still “of Mosshouses”, but he would have been aged 92 then, and despite there being two Thomas Masons recorded as buried at St Cuthbert during that year, neither are him, and both can be accounted for as we will see later.

In the Chatsworth Estate papers there are lists of tenant farmers of the Lord of the Manor of Kirkby Ireleth, Lord Mulgrave, taken in 1767 and 1769, and there are indeed no Masons at all recorded as such in that period. The surnames James, Knight, Parker and Atkinson, all of which appear in connection with our family later, *are* recorded.

4. John Mason and Isabel Troughton

John & Sarah Mason's elder son John married **Isabel Troughton** on the 25th May 1751 at the parish church of **Muncaster**, Cumberland. He was then aged 30, and Isabel 29; her father was Henry Troughton and she was christened at Muncaster on 9th July 1721.

John and Isabel had two known children, both boys, both christened at St Cuthbert as follows:-

John	christened	11 th May 1754
William	“	18 th September 1756

Neither register entry shows the occupation of John senior, and the first does not show their abode either, but the second gives this as Soutergate, indicating that they had moved from Mosshouses by then, most probably at the time of their marriage. They continued to live there for the rest of their lives, so it is surprising to find “John Mayson of Mosshouses” mentioned in the will of George Parker in 1762, but perhaps he still owned Mosshouses also at that time, having inherited it from his father. This “George Parker the elder of Soutergate” left the sum of ten shillings to our John, and the same to a Roger Parker of nearby Cockfish Hall, maybe his brother? “John Mayson” also put his name to the inventory of the estate of George Parker taken after the latter's death.

In another will however, “John Mayson” is shown as occupation Husbandman, of Soutergate. In this, he is named as sole executor by his aunt, the widow Mary Hunter of Soutergate. She must then be a sister to either John's father John, or to his mother Sarah (nee Garner). This will was written on 6th May 1771 and proven after her death on 21st April 1777. A Roger Hunter of Soutergate who died around January 1767 appears to be the one who married Agnes Redhead in 1736 at St Cuthbert, so was not Mary's husband; in his will he does not mention a wife at all, only his children. He also leaves One Pound to a **Frances Maison**, but does not say who she is. Scope for some further investigation here!

John Mayson “of Soutergate” died in early October 1780, aged 59, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 8th of that month. His own will is dated 31st July 1780; he leaves the household goods and chattels to his wife Isabel and appoints his elder son John (a husbandman) as his executor. He left to his other son William, also a husbandman, a colt foal and four ewes. On 13th October an inventory was made of his estate and the will was proven on 8th December 1780.

John's widow Isabel continued to live at Soutergate, and passed away there in early May 1796, at the age of 74. She was buried alongside her husband at St Cuthbert on 8th May.

5. “Family A” (that of John Mason's eldest son John); at Crossbeck and Ashlack Hall

In the will of the widow Mary Hunter mentioned above, “John Mayson the younger of Kirkby Ireleth” was left “one fether bed and bolster” by his great aunt. At the time of her death in 1777, he was almost 23 years old, and the gift was presumably intended for his future family use; however in the event he did not marry for another 16 years. In the meantime, by 1791 he had become a Yeoman farmer in his own right, and also leased “two closes or parcels of land” with others, from John Borwick of Hawkshead. At this time, he was living at Soutergate.

John's eventual bride was **Agnes Atkinson**, and they were married by licence (though both were stated to be "of this parish") at St Cuthbert on 15th October 1793. John was now 39 years old, and it seems to be common in these farming families for the men folk to marry relatively late, having worked to establish their holdings first. In contrast, their wives were often considerably younger, in the hope of bearing a large family of potential helpers on the farm and in the family home, just as the head grew too old to manage on his own. Agnes was older than



most though, born in 1761 at Cockfish Hall, Sandside (pictured right) so she was around 32 years of age at marriage. Her father Isaac Atkinson (of Soutergate) was born 1735, and mother Agnes nee Postlethwaite, of Gargreave, Kirkby Ireleth (picture left above) in 1737, they were married at St Cuthbert on 27th November 1759, again by licence. Isaac was a master mariner, and moved into Cockfish Hall around early 1761. Agnes had a brother Isaac, but their mother Agnes died young, most probably in childbirth, on 14th July 1762 aged only 24, at her parents' house, Gargreave, where she was presumably living while her husband was away at sea. Isaac was also unlucky; a mariner like his father, he perished aboard the schooner "Fly" registered at Lancaster during a voyage to the West Indies, aged only 19 in 1782.

John and Agnes had a total of seven known children, all boys, born from 1794 to 1802 at Kirkby Ireleth, christened at St Cuthbert as follows.....

John	born at Soutergate	christened	24 th July 1794
Isaac	“ Newhouse, Soutergate	“	30 th May 1796
Joseph	(twin) born at Newhouse	“	3 rd September 1797
William	(twin) “	“	“
Thomas	born at Crossbeck	“	6 th December 1798
James	“	“	29 th August 1800
George	“	“	13 th July 1802

Unfortunately, and unusually even for those days, only one of the boys (the youngest, George) lived to a good age, married, and had a family of his own. The twins **Joseph** and **William** lived for only a day or two, and were both buried at St Cuthbert on 6th September 1797. **James** passed on in the spring of either 1807 or 1808 at Crossbeck, aged around seven; the inconsistency arises since the family headstone at St Cuthbert (AK2) gives the date of death as 6th May 1807, but the parish register records the burial on 4th May 1808.

Crossbeck farmhouse (just to the south of Soutergate hamlet) was "built in the late 18th century by the Mason family". They were freeholders of Crossbeck Farm, working about 70

acres there by 1798 (and remaining in their ownership until as recently as the 1970's); the house survives largely unaltered - see photos. From the above baptism records, the parents John and Agnes were certainly living there by late 1798, but perhaps the "New House" referred to from early 1796 is in fact also Crossbeck – before the name was chosen?



In around 1800, Agnes' father Isaac Atkinson retired from his long and at times no doubt perilous seafaring career apparently unscathed, and went to live with his daughter and her family at Crossbeck. He died there on 29th November 1815, aged 80, having been a widower for no less than 53 years. Shortly afterwards, Agnes commissioned a memorial in St Cuthbert's church to her parents and to her brother Isaac. During the following year, she inherited all of her father's estate in Soutergate until such time as her own demise, when it would pass on to her eldest son John and thence to "his heirs and assigns forever"

In another will dated 1816, John Mason of Crossbeck is described as "Yeoman", confirming him as a freeholder of the property who managed and worked his farm personally. However, in 1820 he branched out into another local sphere of activity, forming a partnership "Mason & Postlethwaite" to develop and work the small slate quarry at Winnow End, between Lawrence Ground and Toad Hall in the middle quarter of the parish of Kirkby Ireleth.

In the 1820's, two of his sons had developed promising careers, but were to die tragically young; **Isaac**, who passed away on 18th December 1825 at Ulverston, had set up in practise there as an Attorney-at-Law, was aged just 29. He was buried at St Cuthbert 5 days later. The Access to Archives (A2A) website lists around 20 surviving documents dated 1822-25 carrying his name. He died without leaving a will and his estate was administered by a John Mason, either his father or elder brother. **Thomas** gained an MA degree and became a don at Emmanuel College, Cambridge but died at Crossbeck on 5th August 1830 aged 31 and was interred at St Cuthbert on the 9th of the same month. Neither son was married.

In his later years, the old yeoman John Mason evidently became more active in his local parish affairs, but not always as the upright and stalwart pillar of the community we might expect; in the parish minutes of 1830 he was reported as "fined sixpence for drinking in a meeting without permission". He passed away on 3rd July 1831 at Crossbeck, aged 77, and was buried at St Cuthbert three days later, as shown on the family headstone. In his will, his wife Agnes inherited Crossbeck, her home and continued to live there after his death; it specified also that eventually all of his Crossbeck estate would pass to her eldest son John upon her demise, upon the normal assumption that he would outlive her. However, this was not to be as John died unmarried at the age of 45 on 4th August 1839. He was buried on 7th August in the family grave at St Cuthbert. He did not leave a will, but a Bond of Administration survives dated later in 1839. It is assumed that John the younger would have inherited the share of the slate quarry partnership "Mason & Postlethwaite" upon the death of his father, but this now went to his brother George; see below. John was also due to inherit one half of the Bankhouse estate in Kirkby Ireleth under the terms of the will of Isaac Hunter, yeoman, written in 1830

when both he and his father were still alive. However, the said Mr Hunter died in late 1839, after John (junior) in fact, so the whole of this property passed instead to the other executor William Tyson of Gawthwaite, Ulverston, a husbandman. John (“yeoman of Crossbeck”) was also named as sole executor in the will of one Betsey Briggs, spinster of Kirkby Ireleth, in 1833, but not as a beneficiary on this occasion.

In the first detailed census taken in June 1841, the widow Agnes Mason is shown living at Crossbeck attended by three servants; none of her family are with her. Indeed, George was by now her only surviving son; he had married some 15 years earlier and strongly pursued his own entrepreneurial activities elsewhere ever since. As the only continuation of our “Family A”, we look at his story in detail in section 5.1 of this account following.

The family matriarch Agnes Mason passed away on 18th April 1849 at Crossbeck, aged 87 years. She was buried at St Cuthbert on the 23rd of that month. The house and farm now passed to George, who tenanted it out. In 1851 a Jonathan Kellet of Heysham was living there and working 86 acres; another tenant was called Docket, who later emigrated to Canada. We will see what subsequently happened to the Crossbeck estate in the next section.....

5.1. And then there was one – George Mason at Ashlack Hall

We now pick up the story of George Mason, only surviving son of John and Agnes. At the age of just 26 he purchased the Ashlack estate, near the hamlet of Grizebeck in Kirkby Ireleth, with completion on 22nd August 1828. The purchase price was £6500 for 252 acres, or £26 per acre, including “a Capital Mansion House”. It is recorded that he took out a mortgage of £1800 from James Barton, solicitor of Ulverston, so had to find the balance of £4700 in ready cash. George’s occupation at the time is described as a Quarry Master, undoubtedly through an involvement with the local slate quarries of Kirkby Ireleth.

The house at Ashlack was built around 1600 by the Kirkby family, then Lords of the manor of Kirkby Ireleth, and subsequently greatly enlarged; the initials WK (William Kirkby) and the date 1667 on a plaque above a doorway could be seen until quite recent times, but this



has disappeared. On an old plan there is indicated a kitchen approx 20ft x 18ft, Hall 25 x 20, “withdrawing room” 18 x 18, a parlour 13 x 13 and a dairy 21 x 17ft. It was not however the main residence of the Kirkby’s (that was Kirkby Hall, once known as Cross House near the hamlet of Marshside), but the seat of a younger branch of the family. In a newspaper dated September 12th 1772 (just after the main part of their manorial estate had been purchased by Lord Cavendish) the property was offered for sale but was either not sold then or anyway

remained in the family, as it was William Kirkby of Guildford Street, London who eventually sold to George Mason in 1828. Both the house and the estate were known just as plain “Ashlack” up until then.

A few months later George married **Maria Doveton Atkinson** at the parish church of St Mary, Lancaster on 18th November 1828. The register shows his residence as Ashlack Hall; this is the first recorded use of the suffix “Hall” to the name, evidently a social “aggrandisement” by the young and ambitious new owner! Maria is shown as a resident of the town and parish of Lancaster; the witnesses were William Robinson, Jane Morley and M.A. Atkinson.

Maria was born in Lancaster on 18th May 1807, daughter of Ephraim Atkinson and his wife Mary, and christened in the same church on 6th August that year. A Pigot 1828 directory shows an Ephraim Atkinson, Attorney at Law, at Castle Hill, Lancaster which is probably him, but it is surprising that George does not appear to have availed himself of his services in the purchase of Ashlack, unless there was some undocumented “personal” financial arrangement, perhaps in the form of an advance dowry?

George and Maria Mason were to have a total of 13 known children at Ashlack in the period 1829 to 1848, all of whom survived beyond infancy, and all but one into adulthood, again unusual in those times and in complete contrast to the fortunes of his siblings. The names and dates are as follows, and it is interesting to note the status of father George recorded at the baptisms (all at St Cuthbert).....

Mary Agnes	christened	21 st November 1829	(Husbandman)
Isabella King	“	15 th December 1830	“
John	“	18 th March 1832	(Gentleman)
Ephraim John Atkinson	born 18 th October, christened	30/10/1833	“
William Isaac	christened as “Isaac”	20 th May 1835	“
John Frederick	christened	9 th January 1837	“
Thomas James Sigismund Smith	“	21 st May 1838	(Yeoman)
George	christened	30 th November 1839	“
Elizabeth Maria Robinson	“	25 th June 1841	“
Alexander McDonald	“	17 th June 1842	(Gentleman)
Rebecca Alice	born 3 rd April, christened	5/4/1844	“
Charles Joseph Postlethwaite	chr.	14 th February 1846	“
Alfred	born 1 st September, christened	12/9/1848	(Yeoman)

The names vary from the simplest and commonplace John, George, Alfred, through those including forebears’ first names and surnames, to the extreme flight of fancy with Thomas James appending those of an “obscure poet” whom it has been suggested was probably a favourite of his mother at the time of his birth. We shall encounter the surnames King and Robinson again later, but as yet do not know exactly how they fit in with the Mason family. The inspiration for McDonald is a total mystery.

As we shall see, George Mason became active in the public affairs of Kirkby Ireleth parish, and as early as July 1829, around a year after he purchased Ashlack, it is recorded in the minutes of Ulverston Workhouse that one John Tyson aged 10 had been “put off (as) apprentice, bound to George Mason”. In view of his reputation as something of a martinet however, it has been queried whether this constituted charity or merely exploitation?

In 1830, George inherited the two Kirkby Ireleth properties of Bailiff Ground (pictured) and Bellhaw (Bell Hall) upon the death of his father, “and (then for) his heirs”. He probably continued to tenant them both out, the latter certainly to our “Family B”.



By 1837, George is noted as Surveyor of Highways for the Heathwaite area of the parish, and also in that year was appointed a Parish Guardian of the Poor, “however he soon lost interest”. For the Ashlack estate, the newspapers record that he was awarded a Game Certificate in 1838, and probably thereafter annually until at least 1856. In 1839, George became master of Crossbeck also, upon the death of his elder brother John. By the same route he also acquired the partnership share of Mason & Postlethwaite, the slate quarry proprietors. In 1842, it is recorded that children of only 8 years + were worked for 12-13 hours a day in such quarries, hauling carts of slates underground, in appallingly wet conditions.

The June 1841 census shows the family at Ashlack, with George merely “Farmer”, Maria, and the nine children born up to that point (Elizabeth is shown as aged “2 months”, thus born in about April). This confirms that Isaac was still known as such, rather than the later William Isaac, and “Frederic” is spelt without the final “k”. There is a governess for the children, Margaret James “aged 20” (in reality, between 20-24), and seven other servants (3 male, 4 female) whose individual roles are not enumerated.

In 1842, George Mason re-mortgaged Ashlack to George Ellerton of Ulverston in the sum of £2500 at 4.5%; perhaps this money was used to finance his new slate quarry partnership with a George Sunderland about this time? In addition to his other properties, the Tythe Map of that year shows, for Soutergate hamlet, Mason is owning and using a barn there, a smithy, coal yard, orchard, as well as various houses and cottages that were let out.

Until 1843, the slate quarries of Kirkby Ireleth had been developed on a somewhat piecemeal basis by several lessees such as Mason & Postlethwaite. However, in that year the Earl of Burlington, Lord of the Manor and principal local landowner, rescinded most of the



leases and began to develop the quarries himself as a consolidated concern, becoming known

as the Burlington Slate Quarries (and which continue in production to the present day). The Mason partnership was one of the few that was allowed to continue independently for a while, and so must have been well-regarded. It was not finally dissolved until October 1849, when they sold out to Burlington.

By 1851, George Mason had reduced his worked farm at Ashlack to only 130 acres and let out the remainder. His children helped out on the farm and in the house, this convenient ready labour source enabling a cut in the number of servants; in the census that year he is shown as employing just one labourer and two house servants. Only one of the 13 children is absent, the eldest boy John at age 19 had just set off on an adventurous voyage to a new life in America (he must have been desperate!) as detailed in the section following. Mary, the eldest is a governess at age 21; this would be to the seven children aged from 14 (Frederick) down to 5 (Charles), as they are all recorded as “scholars at home”, that is, they were literally being educated there. Ephraim at 17 is a “writing clerk”, perhaps keeping the estate accounts? The other two eldest Isabella and Frederick are described as “farmer’s daughter/son” and no doubt kept fully employed by him, the former probably running the dairy.

George’s wife Maria Doveton Mason passed away on 14th December 1855, at the age of only 48, no doubt exhausted by bearing and looking after so many children. She was buried on the 19th December at St Cuthbert, and shortly afterwards George and the elder children erected a memorial to her within the church.



George & Maria’s daughter **Elizabeth** died in June 1860 at Ashlack Hall, aged only 19, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 28th of that month. She was the first of the 13 children to pass on. At around the same time, daughter **Isabella** married **George Ashburner** when she was 29

years old. She was the only one of the daughters allowed to marry whilst her father was alive and probably then only because this was into another wealthy and well-respected farming family.

In the 1861 census the widower George has somewhat surprisingly increased his directly-worked land at Ashlack back to 240 acres. There are now only 8 children with him; Ephraim has joined his elder brother John in the USA, and Frederick may have gone too as there are no obvious candidates for him elsewhere in England /Wales on census night. By now only Charles and Alfred are shown as scholars, probably attending formal school now. The other six are no doubt fully employed on the estate; there is still only one ag. lab. employed, together with a kitchen-maid and housemaid at the hall. Daughter Rebecca is now calling herself by her second name, Alice.

George Mason made his will on 26th June 1866, listing his property as 252 acres at Ashlack (also still his main residence), 70 acres at Crossbeck let to Mrs Stables, and the slate quarry partnership with George Sunderland remains in being then. We will detail the (somewhat unusual) way in which the estate was to be dealt with later, at the time of his death in 1874.

The 1871 census has George still a widower aged 68 – he never remarried – at Ashlack as “Landowner & Occupier” but with the acreage not stated. Four more sons have defected from

the hard labour regime; **Thomas, George and Alexander** have gone across to the New World to start up their own farms, and **Alfred** is studying as a doctor in Glasgow; we follow the fortunes of all these in the next section. That left just four children at home; the eldest Mary no doubt acting as unpaid housekeeper dedicated to looking after her father's every whim ever since her mother's death, the others (William, Rebecca – as she is again by now, and Charles) - still employed around the estate. Perforce there are now five servants, two each on the farm and in the house, plus a dairymaid. There is also a “boarder”, Samuel Harwood, a young single man of 20 from Liverpool who is “learning farming”, no doubt the hard and direct way!

In the 1873 Tithe Return for Kirkby Ireleth, George Mason is shown as owning a total of 461 acres with an annual rental value of £522-17s, comprising Ashlack, Crossbeck and a slate quarry. At last we get to know more details of the latter; this is the long-standing partnership with George Sunderland of Lund Hall, Ulverston, together they were lessees of the Water Wheel Quarry at Torver.

George Mason died on 8th March 1874 at Ashlack Hall aged 71 and was buried alongside Maria at St Cuthbert four days later. His children later added his name to his wife's memorial tablet, but the message seems tellingly curt, merely recording the date of his demise. Further evidence of his domineering and parsimonious nature towards his family is revealed in the contents of the will; the whole estate was left to his life-long friend Edward Coward, a slate merchant of Gill House, Kirkby Ireleth, as trustee. Son Ephraim had obviously seriously offended his father at some stage, he got nothing at all. Two other sons, George and Alexander had their share of inheritance docked by £300 apiece, their father estimating that he had supported their emigration and setting up as farmers in their own right in the New World to that precise sum! His sons (except Ephraim) were generously given the right to *buy* any part of the estate from Coward, at valuation, within one month of George Mason's death. Accordingly, Ashlack was valued at £9184, and Crossbeck at £5506, and we shall see that in fact Thomas James took up the former and William Isaac the latter, so that they both remained in the Mason family. What happened to the slate quarry share partnership is not recorded; presumably Coward either retained this or disposed of it himself?

5.2. The children of George & Maria Mason – subsequent history

We now look at the fortunes of the 12 remaining children, after the death of their sister Elizabeth at age 19, in their adult lives.

5.2.1 **John**, the eldest son, was the first to leave home; on around his nineteenth birthday he left the Port of Liverpool aboard the steamship “City of New York” and arrived in the USA on the 30th April 1851. The only really viable candidate for him in the 1860 US census is at Bennington, Marshal county, Illinois, an unmarried farmer “aged 25” living at the homestead of Jackson Parker aged 40, another farmer and presumably the owner of the holding, and his family. Bennington is on Route 51, about halfway between Bloomington and La Salle, south west of Chicago. John is thought never to have married, and to have been killed in the US Civil War circa 1863, aged around 31 years.

5.2.2 **Frederick** also went to America, in about 1857 at around 20 years old, perhaps making the voyage with Ephraim (below), but then joining his brother John. The only candidate for him in 1860 is again in Illinois, not with John but around 30 miles away at Willow Creek, Lee township, an unmarried farm labourer “aged 20” at the farm of Ira S. Darin

and his family. Lee is SE of Rochelle and SW of De Kalb, near the Route 51 and 30 intersection west of Chicago. He too is thought to have been killed in the Civil War; there survives an Ulverston solicitor's document of 1867 referring to "administration in probate re the goods of the late John Frederick Mason deceased" and the probate registry entry for 8th June 1867 cites date of death as 11th February 1863 in Connecticut, confirming him as a "bachelor, gentleman". Effects under £800 went to George Mason of Ashlack, father & next of kin.

In the Civil War 1861-65 a total of 3.5 million men served from across the whole US, of which 1 in 6 perished, around 620,000 souls. On the Union side (Northern States) the total of recorded casualties was about 360,000 but this comprised "only" 110,000 actually killed in battle, the remaining 250,000 dying from malnutrition, disease etc. The state of Illinois was one of the most fervent supporters of the war; out of a total population of about 1.7 million 100,000 signed up upon the initial call for volunteers in April 1861; this was 25,000 more than President Lincoln had requested from the *whole nation*! Eventually 260,000 men from Illinois were to serve, of which only around 3500 had to be drafted in the latter stages; this was one of the highest volunteer levels of all the states. In the lists of serving soldiers, there are about 100 named John Mason and 20 Fredericks. Several of each joined Illinois regiments, but no ages or origins are given in the index, so we are unlikely to be able to discover any more about their individual war service.

5.2.3 **Ephraim** also emigrated to the USA, sometime during 1857 at around 24 years old. The US census for 1860 shows him using his second name John and working as a farm labourer, living in at the homestead of farmer John Dodge and his family at North Hero, Grand Isle, Vermont. Dodge was born in Scotland around 1817 and his land holding was valued at \$7000. North Hero was colonised from 1779 by two of the famous Vermont "Green Mountain Boys", revolutionary heroes who modestly named the north and south islands after themselves. The population in 1850 was 730, decreasing to around 600 by 1880 due mainly to a drift of the farming colonists who went to open up the mid-west lands. By coincidence, 1860 saw the construction and opening of the ambitious Rutland Railroad, running from north to south through the Champlain islands, connecting them by bridges for the first time and so enabling easy movement through the whole district, for those who could afford it.

At some stage in the next two or three years Ephraim went to live and work in the town of Plattsburgh, upstate New York, which is in fact only about 12 miles from North Hero on the west bank of Lake Champlain, and the nearest large community to that settlement. There he met, and on the 13th December 1864 married **Helen Sarah Durkee**, when he was 31 and she exactly 20 years old on that day. According to her family Ancestral File Helen's father Henry Durkee was born at Plattsburgh on 6th August 1812 to Sheldon Durkee and his wife Sarah, nee Jones. He married Lovina Hodgkins on the Grand Isle on 18th February 1838, but they then went back to Plattsburgh to live; Helen being born there in December 1844. Henry Durkee went away to fight for the Unionist cause in the US civil war, and was killed at the battle of Gains Mills, Virginia on 27th May 1862, aged 49; he was brought back to Plattsburgh and buried in the Riverside cemetery there, where his headstone can still be found. Unfortunately the Durkee family could not be found in either of the 1850 or 1860 US censuses, probably due to illegible writing and/or gross mis-spelling of their surname. The Ancestral File does however indicate that a child was born to Ephraim and Helen in 1860, long before they were married and when Helen was only 15 years old; no name is given, and the infant probably died at birth or soon afterwards.

As we have seen, Ephraim had fallen out with his father by 1864 – we originally thought perhaps because he had left home against his will. However, the above if correct is another

potential reason, and there is yet another, since it seems that Ephraim, in the remote fastness of the rural north-eastern states and unlike his brothers and father-in-law, has somehow avoided the call to arms in the Civil War. All of this then unlikely to endear him to the staunch, upright gentleman we perceive as his father! In general, and in complete contrast to the situation in Illinois, the people of Vermont were opposed to the war; the state had been one of the first to abolish slavery, before 1800. It was also the least prepared for war; out of a total population of some 315,000 only 28,000 volunteered initially, plus 5000 enlisting in regiments of other states. Of these 1830 were killed in battle and 3360 succumbed to disease etc. So the draft was applied, from August 1862 in such states where the quota of volunteers had not been met. From August 1863 on the Union side, this meant all able-bodied men aged 20 to 45 being enlisted to serve for a 3-year term. The immigrant farmers were particularly vehement against the war and the draft; their distaste for battle being based on the European experience still fresh in their father's memories. It is said they could avoid the draft by either paying \$300 or "finding a suitable substitute person", but many "went to ground" and simply did not turn up.

A son **George Walter Mason** was born to Ephraim & Helen on 12th November 1865 at Cumberland Head, Plattsburgh, but unfortunately Helen was to die there soon afterwards; there is however uncertainty over the date, since the IGI says 26th January 1866 but her headstone at the Riverside cemetery records this as 7th June 1867, aged 22. The latter also clarifies that she was the wife of *Ephraim J.* (rather than *John*) Mason. Cumberland Head is in fact the nearest point on the western side of Lake Champlain to the island of North Hero, and the point at which the ferries docked.

Ephraim and his young son then moved back to North Hero. He was re-married there in the first half of 1870 to **Isabel Pettit**, perhaps an old friend who looked after his son while he was working in the fields. Isabel was born on the island and in the 1850 census there at the age of 13 is living with her mother Anne Pettit aged 42 and grandmother Anna Russell, 78. The value of the homestead is shown as \$1500 and next door there is a farmer William N. Russell aged 53 and his family; he is very likely to be Anne's brother. In 1860 (11th July) Anne 54 and Isabel 23 are on their own at North Hero, with Anne now confirmed as a widow. Anne Pettit nee Russell, the daughter of Oliver and Anna nee Henry died at North Hero on 30th June 1865 and was buried at the South cemetery there – the headstone survives.

On the census night of 26th July 1870 Ephraim (again using the name John), Isabel and his son George W. are shown at North Hero as expected; he is working as a farm labourer aged 37 and his wife is "keeping home".

Ten years later Ephraim J. (as he is once again) has by now graduated to a fully-fledged farmer at North Hero, owning 20 acres and renting a further 60, a fairly modest holding probably reflecting that he had started from nothing entirely on his own. Isabel is still keeping house. They have three children at home, George aged 14 is working on the farm, **Katie L.** was born about 1871 and **(Henry) William** in 1875, the latter two both at North Hero.

The US census for 1890 has not survived (it was destroyed in a major fire). In 1900 Ephraim and Isabel are at home in Ludden village, Dickey county, North Dakota; he is still farming at age 66. The entry correctly shows his birth as October 1833, and states that he was an immigrant to the US in 1858 who married Isabel in 1870. He owned his farm free of rent, but the acreage is not given. Isabel is shown as born 1836 in Vermont, mother of 3 children of which 2 were then still living. In the 1910 census of 19th April the couple are still at Ludden with similar details shown; it is also indicates that Ephraim was "not naturalised". Their unmarried son Henry W, now 34 and unmarried is staying with them; he is a "Steam Plowing Engineer".

After leaving home in 1857 Ephraim never again returned to England; he died at Ludden on 31st July 1910 aged 76. A comprehensive obituary appeared in the "Oakes Times" newspaper of

Oakes, North Dakota in its edition of August 4 1910; and fills in some more detail of his life story, including the major move from Vermont to North Dakota:

With his house in order and his labors ended Ephraim John Atkins Mason has been gathered to his fathers. The end came peacefully at his home in Ludden on Sunday morning, July 31st at 10 o'clock, and was mainly due to increasing infirmities and constitutional frailties that come with old age. Mr. Mason was born in Lancashire county, England, in 1834, and came to America when he was twenty-three years of age. The first period of twenty-nine years of his life was spent in Vermont, and the second period of twenty four years had been lived in Dickey and Sargent counties. He belonged to a family of thirteen and has one brother residing in Canada and two brothers and two sisters in England. Besides a wife Mr. Mason leaves two sons and one daughter: George of Eugene, Oregon; Henry, and Mrs. James Turnham of Ludden N.D. The deceased was a prominent member of the Masonic order and a devout Episcopalian. Mr. Mason was for many years a servant of the people of this county in the capacity of justice of the peace, clerk of the town board and of the school board and his honest, intelligent conduct of public affairs made him a valuable force in the community. Funeral services were conducted from the home by Rev. D. F. Thompson of Wahpeton and interment was made in the cemetery in the presence of many sympathizing old neighbors and friends.

So we see that in the course of time, the one-time “bad boy” certainly “came good”! By 1910, the one brother in Canada referred to is Alexander (see below); however the only sibling in England who survived him was Isabella Ashburner – evidently he and Isabel were not aware of the other’s passing. The son George by his first wife Helen Durkee had married Cora Almira Pitt on 1st January 1896 aged 30, at Watertown, Codington county, South Dakota. As we see from the above, they moved to Eugene, Oregon, and he died there on 9th May 1944 aged 78. Daughter Katie was the one who married James Turnham.

Seven years later in its edition of October 11 1917, we find the obituary for Isabel:

Mrs. Isabel Mason died Friday at 4 a.m. Isabel Pettit was born at North Hero, Grand Isle county, Vermont in 1837. She was the youngest of six children all of whom have preceded her to their eternal rest. She lived the early part of her life in the New England states. Was educated at Potsdam Normal Academy in Potsdam, N.Y. Was married in 1870 to E.J. Mason of Plattsburgh, N.Y. Three children were born to them, two of which are living, Mrs. James Turnham and Henry Mason. They moved to North Dakota in 1887 and have resided in Ludden since 1897. Mr. Mason died in 1910. Mrs. Mason passed her long illness in her own home cared for by her daughter who lived nearby and her son Henry. Mrs. Mason was a true Christian and Rev. Albert Martyr of Lisbon conducted the funeral service.

Ludden was settled from 1883 onwards, and especially around the station depot after the Milwaukee Railroad opened through the district in 1886; by 1890 the population was 400. Although it still exists today, there were only 29 inhabitants in 2000, one of the mid-west “Ghost Towns” due to changing farming methods and improved communications. It is about 30 miles SW of Fargo city and 45 miles SE of the state capital, Bismarck. Sargent County, in which Ephraim and his family lived from 1887 to 1897, abuts Dickey County on its eastern side.

We know nothing at all about Isabel’s third child with Ephraim, alluded to several times above but never named, he or she evidently died in infancy.

5.2.4 **George** emigrated to Canada in around 1862. As we have seen, his father paid for his passage and setting up as a farmer there, so the parting on this occasion would seem not to

have been acrimonious; perhaps George senior was by now seeing the success of his other sons in the new world, and accepted the growing trend as inevitable.

George settled in Halton County, Ontario, to the west of Toronto becoming a farmer there, and married **Mary Danvers-Ellis** about 1864. Mary was born in Liverpool, England on 23rd October 1836 and christened at St Peter's church there on 27th November, daughter of William and Mary Ellis. In the 1841 census the family are living at Oxton, Woodchurch on the Wirral peninsula; William born at Formby, Lancashire about 1807 having occupation house painter. His wife, around a year younger was born at Tranmere, Birkenhead, and they have four children at home, ranging from 9 years to 4 months, with Mary Danvers being the 2nd and the birthplaces indicating a move from Liverpool across the water in around 1838. Just a few weeks before the 1851 census of 30th March, they moved back to Liverpool, where we find them at Hadassa Grove, Toxteth Park. William is now shown as a painter employing 2 men, and the eldest son William now 18 is a civil engineer. There are now 8 children at home, right down to the youngest at 2 months old born at Oxton.

According to later censuses, the Ellis family emigrated to Canada either in 1856 or in 1860; certainly they are not in the 1861 UK census, but neither could they be found in the Canadian one for that year, so we do not know where they first settled; maybe they were still somewhat dispersed while father William was seeking out various opportunities? By 1871 however they were living at Ingersoll, South Oxford County in Ontario, with William, now aged 64 describing himself as "Gentleman". Mary and 4 of their children are with him; Richard Yeats Ellis at 29 is a merchant, as is Augustus, 21; Sarah 25 and Melina 18 no doubt ladies of leisure at home. Next door is son Alfred H, 25, yet another merchant, married to Victoria, 25 who was born in Ontario. All are recorded as of the Church of England faith, and we meet some of them again in Ingersoll later (below).

George and Mary Danvers Mason had six known children born in the 10 years following their marriage, as follows....

Maria Danvers	born in 1865-66, Ontario (township not specified)
George Frederick	born 20 th January 1867 at Omagh, Ontario
Charles William	born 26 th February 1869
Alfred	born 11 th January 1871 at Trafalgar, Halton County
Mary Louisa	born 10 th March 1873, ditto
Sarah Emmeline	born January 1875 ditto

The Ontario civil registration started in 1869, and the entry for Alfred records the exact location of the family holding – Lot 5, 4th Concession St. South at Trafalgar township. George, Mary and the 4 children are shown at Trafalgar in the April 1871 census, with George a farmer as expected. There is with them a William Mason, "other relative", also a farmer aged 25, married and born in England, who may be the son of Samuel & Agnes of Ireleth (see section 7.3). By 1873 and Mary's birth, George seems to have taken a new concession at Lot 3, 5th Con. St. S, Trafalgar.

George Mason was killed in the summer of 1875 in an accident with a grain wagon on his farm; the horses bolted and the wagon overturned, crushing him. He was interred at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Steels Avenue, Hornby, Ontario; the headstone reads "In memory of George Mason of Lancashire, departed this life 10th August 1875, in the 36th year of his age". All of the places mentioned in Halton county are close together, about 20-30 miles west and south west of Toronto, as indicated on the map detail.

By 1878 George's widow Mary and their six children have moved westward to Ingersoll, South Oxford county, to be near her Ellis family. Daughter **Sarah Emmeline** died there on the

20th December 1878, and was interred at Ingersoll Rural Cemetery. The 1881 census shows Mary and her family at home in the town, with all five children attending school.

Ten years later, her three sons had moved away leaving just Maria, at 25 a teacher in a public school, and Mary 18 a student (no wage) at home with their mother in Ingersoll. Five doors along the street we find Mary's brother **H. Alfred Ellis** with his wife Victoria and five children; Alfred's occupation is written somewhat illegibly, it looks like "Chartered non-soc Fur. Manuf." which is probably involving furniture rather than animal fur! **Maria** was married from home later that year, on 30th December 1891 to Mr James E. Meyer, as reported in the Ingersoll Chronicle. Meanwhile her brother **Charles** William Mason had died in Montreal of typhoid fever on 26th August previously, aged only 22 and unmarried. He was brought back to Ingersoll and buried next to his sister Sarah Emmeline at the Rural Cemetery.

The Ingersoll Directory of the Union Publishing Company dated 1894-5 gives us an exact address for Mary in the town for the first time; it is 116 Thames Street North.

Mary's youngest child **Mary Louisa** Mason married **Lambert Norman** B.A, a schoolteacher, on 13th January 1897 at London, Ontario when she was 24 years old. Initially Lambert & Mary lived at Ingersoll, and in the 1901 census we find her mother also staying with them. The Normans by then had three children, ranging from 3 years down to 1 month. By 1911 the family have moved to Berlin, Waterloo North county in Ontario, and Mary, by now 74 went with them. In the census they are shown at 143 Lancaster, one of the main thoroughfares right in the centre of town. The entry for Lambert Norman, aged 41 and now a high-school teacher tells us that his total earnings during 1910 had been \$1500! They now have 2 more children, aged 5 and 1.

Mary Danvers Ellis Mason died at her daughter's house on 21st January 1913, in her 76th year. The Ingersoll Chronicle edition of 30th January reported *"DIED AT BERLIN - Mr. A. H. Ellis, received the sad intelligence yesterday of the death at Berlin, of his sister, Mrs. George Mason, formerly of Ingersoll. The remains reached Ingersoll this morning on the Canadian Pacific train and the funeral was held from the (railroad) depot to the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery. The service was conducted by the Rev. R. J. M. Perkins"* Her headstone at IRC was inscribed "wife of George Mason of Lancashire, England", no less than 50 years after he had left there, and 35 since he had died; it survives to this day.

Ingersoll was at the centre of a lush dairy-farming district famous for cheese-making. The picture shows the "world's biggest cheese" being transported through the town streets about 1895. It is about 30 miles NE of the City of London, on the road to Toronto. The city of Berlin is now called Kitchener, renamed 1916 in response to Great War sensitivities; it is about 40 miles NE from Ingersoll.

It remains then to briefly note what happened to George & Mary's other two children, George Frederick and Alfred Mason. **George** seems to have returned to Halton county sometime after 1881 and was living at his birthplace Omagh when he married **Florence Ethel Meredith** at York, Toronto on 28th September 1905; he was 39 and a jeweller; she 25 and resident in Toronto. Her parents were William Eli Meredith and Maria, nee Reed. They later went to live at Galt near Hamilton, Ontario, and George passed away there on January 7th 1949, aged 81. He was interred at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Hornby alongside his father.

Alfred married **Ella Hargrave** at York, Toronto on 12th October 1904, when he was 33. He was at that time resident in Toronto, with occupation given as "Manager". Ella was born at Montreal in 1882 of George Rosedale Hargraft and his wife Rachael H, nee MacNachtson, and so 11 years younger than her husband. The Society Blue Book of Toronto 1904-5 shows that the Hargraft family were then living at 62 Glen Road in the city, and that her father was General Agent for the Commercial Union Insurance Co in Toronto, in which 3 of his sons were also in business. He is listed as President of the Ontario Lawn Bowling Association, also of the

Granite Lawn Bowling Club. By 1920 Alfred & Ella Mason were living at 62 Glen Road, having evidently inherited it from her father; Ella died there of pulmonary tuberculosis on 30th July that year, having been ill for 5 months. She was buried at Mount Pleasant cemetery on 2nd August.

Widower Alfred then married **Ethel Maud Booth**, on 7th November 1925 at Castle Memorial Hall, Toronto. He was then resident at 100 Park Road in the city, and like his brother was a jeweller, perhaps partners in the same business. Ethel aged 47 was resident at 82 Warren Road nearby, “daughter of George Booth born in England and Myrtilia C. Smith”.

5.2.5 Alexander also went to Canada, again supported by his father and probably voyaging there with his brother George in 1862, aged 19. He seems to have stayed either with or close to George for a few years at least, as he married **Mary Ann Bradigan** on the 11th July 1868 at Trafalgar township. Mary was born in Trafalgar on 4th June 1852 of Irish parents, Francis James and Rose Ann, so was only just turned 16 when she married, over 10 years younger than Alexander. The register entry has some rather amusing errors, no doubt related to the registrar’s limited knowledge of the British Isles and difficulties with the accents. Alexander’s mother is recorded as “Mary Elizabeth” and his birthplace as “Lanarkshire, England”. He was a resident of Trafalgar at marriage. His wife’s name is rendered as “Marion Bradgher”, though we know the above version to be correct from other sources.

About 1870, Alexander managed to secure a plot of land at Camden township, Bothwell in Kent county, Ontario, then being colonised, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. The map shows the division of the new lands into individual concessions; unfortunately it is undated, but very few are shown as already allocated, and the Masons are not yet there. Bothwell is around 30 miles SW of the City of London, just off the old highway to Chatham and Detroit.

Initially at least, Mary seems to have remained at Trafalgar; in the 1871 Canadian census at Camden Alexander is shown working on his own there, presumably in the throes of building a permanent home whilst developing the farm holding and staying in temporary shanty accommodation. Clearly she did join him soon afterwards, as their first child was born at Camden in July of the following year. They went on to have a total of seven there, as follows:

James Frederick	born 10 th July 1872 *
Mary Alice	born about 1875
Alexander	about 10 th May 1877
Susan Rebecca	born 10 th April 1881 *
Charles Joseph	born 2 nd January 1886 *
Laura Agnes	born 27 th August 1891 *
Mary H.	born 26 th September 1894

Only those with dates shown * appear to have been registered; in all these cases the mother’s name is shown as Mary Ann Bradigan, excepting that in the case of Charles it is spelt Braddigan. For the others, the information comes just from the 1901 census and may not be entirely accurate; see below. The register entry for Charles in 1886 is interesting; the homestead address is given as Phanesville, Camden and the informant was neither the father nor mother, but his elder brother James aged just 13. We can sense that the registrar was doubting the ability of one so young to be entrusted with such a responsible task, as James stated, and had it recorded for posterity, that he himself had arranged for a neighbour to wait with his mother “in her confinement” and had then ridden on horseback for six miles to find the doctor. One can sense his indignation about being questioned so thoroughly! This also shows

the difficulty of registering from these remote outposts, and perhaps goes some way to explain why no record at all exists for some of the births. Father Alexander was no doubt very proud of his son's actions, but we wonder where *he* was at the time; perhaps away for a few days at the markets, or more likely perhaps, celebrating with his pals down at the neighbourhood liquor saloon!

In the 1881 census at Camden, Alexander at 37 is shown as "A. McDonald Mason" Farmer, his wife is 9 years younger as expected and the three children to date are listed as James, Alice and Alexander. Ten years on, more information is starting to appear; we are told that both Alexander's parents were born in England, and both those of his wife Mary in Ireland. His religion is Church of England, whereas she is Roman Catholic. Alexander (as he is now shown) is a farmer employing one hand; Alice has become Mary, and the 2 new children are familiarly Susan & Charles. At the birth of Laura later in 1891, the family homestead at Camden is shown as "Lot 7 & 8, 4th con(cession)".

The 1901 census contains even more useful information: Alexander senior was.... born on 30th April 1843 in England, immigrant in 1862, a Canadian national, religion "English"... all of which seems precise enough except we know he was actually born in the spring of 1842 and christened on 17th June that year! The five youngest children are still living at home, and all have been raised in the catholic faith. The 1911 data verifies all the above, except that youngest daughter Mary's birth is now shown as August 1893 instead of September 1894, and Alexander's still shows as 1843! He is still farming at 68, and the family now has one house servant. The two boys are listed by their "familiar" names Alex and Charlie. Laura's occupation is shown as "Housework", quite exciting no doubt; Mary has "none"! This is also the first census to give us an exact address in Camden; it is North-East plot #7-4, tying in with the first part at least of the 1891 record, and which appears to be of 500 acres.

Alexander MacDonald Mason had a good long life in Ontario, and died in 1925 at the age of 83, at home in Camden, Kent County.

5.2.6 The last of the emigrees was **Thomas James**, in around 1870-71 aged 32; he also went to Ontario but did not stay long. There are two possible candidates for him in the immigrant indexes, which are however known to be incomplete; by coincidence both are in June 1870 from Liverpool via Londonderry to Quebec, and both are shown with occupation labourer. The first Thomas Mason "aged 27" arrived on Canadian soil on 6th June aboard SS "Austrian", the second on 27th aged 28 aboard the "Scandinavian"; it may well be that neither was our man. In the 1871 Canadian census there is but one candidate, "aged 36" on his own and working as a "lumberer" at Minden, Peterborough, Ontario, but this again is not convincing. Peterborough is NE from Toronto, about 1/3 of the way to Ottawa. What we do know for sure is that Thomas returned to England for good in mid-1874 after the death of his father, to negotiate the dispersal of the latter's estate with his brothers and the trustee Edward Coward. We look at his subsequent history in section 5.4 below.

5.2.7 As we noted previously, the only one of the four daughters allowed to marry in the lifetime of their father was **Isabella**, in the spring of 1860. Her husband William Ashburner was the second son of Robert William and Sarah, born in early 1836 at Dalton, who owned and worked Netherhouses Farm, three miles to the south-east of Ashlack (pictured); he was thus five years younger than Isabella. His family was an old-established



one in the area; as early as 1600 one George Ashburner was listed as a tenant of land at Woodland, in the north of Kirkby Ireleth parish. William and Isabella went initially to live at Netherhouses, but in 1861 her father George Mason let Crossbeck to them, and they farmed 90 acres there. By 1871 however they were back at Netherhouses, having presumably taken over his father's holding there upon the latter's retirement or decease. This was a much bigger undertaking, at 380 acres.

Ten years later, the census shows them by now at Conishead Grange, Urswick (about 2 miles south of Ulverston on the road to Bardsea; pictured below) with William aged 45 a farmer owning and working 400 acres. Isabella is 50, and there is one son living with them, 18 year old **Robert William Ashburner**, "born at Ulverston". Their only child, he is an articled clerk to a solicitor, most probably in that town, and later became a solicitor there himself.



In 1891 we were very surprised to find the Ashburner family now farming at Aston Hall, Lower Aston Road in the village of White Ladies Aston near Pershore in Worcestershire! Their son Robert has remained in Ulverston with his work (see below), but there is a

visitor William T. Ashburner, 23, of "unknown occupation" born at Pennington staying at Aston Hall on census night. By 1901 however, and whatever the reason for the Worcestershire interlude, they are back at Conishead Grange (minus their visitor) "living on own means" with an employed farmer Robert Phillipson living in and 3 house servants. The farmhouse at Conishead appears to have been missed by the 1891 census enumerator, so this offers no clues here either; it was probably simply unoccupied at the time rather than tenanted out. Perhaps William & Isabella were just helping out a friend or relative at Aston Hall on a temporary basis?

William Ashburner died in the later spring of 1901 aged 65; his widow Isabella and son Robert stayed on at Conishead Grange and are shown there in the 1911 census, with one female servant. A Barrow & District directory for that year shows that Robert had his solicitor's chambers above the former Mason (family C) chemist shop in Market Place, Ulverston. Isabella King Ashburner died in the late autumn of 1915, aged 85 years. Son Robert William Ashburner died unmarried in 1913, aged 50.

Back at Kirkby Ireleth, George Ashburner, William's younger brother born in the Summer of 1837 is listed as a churchwarden at St Cuthbert in 1879, and in the 1881 census is farming 473 acres at Low Hall, the largest single holding in that parish. The picture shows his commemorative plaque in St Cuthbert's church.



Confusingly, he also married an Isabella (this one nee Parker), in 1873. We come across them again later at Low Hall, in connection with our “Family C”, and William & Isabella’s son Robert the solicitor is staying there at the time of the 1891 census. George Ashburner built the row of eight cottages known as Herschell Terrace (pictured right) in 1884 on land he owned at Four Lane Ends, for or on behalf of the Kirkby Co-operative Society.



5.2.8 George & Maria Mason’s youngest son **Alfred** made his escape from the family farm around 1867 at the age of 18, on the perfectly commendable pretext of going to Glasgow to study medicine. However, in the 1871 census we find him staying for the Easter weekend as a visitor in the house of spinster sisters Mary Ann and Sarah Pearson at Highgate, Kendal, together with their



niece and Alfred’s future wife **Sarah Ann Rigby**. Sarah was born at Kendal in the autumn of 1846 and in the 1851 census is living with her mother Hannah (nee Pearson) and the aunts at Highgate, where Mary was running an agency business for the Yorkshire Insurance Company. All three sisters were born at Poolbank, Kendal in 1807-12, the children of Benjamin Pearson and Ann, nee Gaskell, and Hannah had married Thomas Rigby in early 1841. Her husband is shown as “away at sea” on census night. Ten years on Sarah is still with her two maiden aunts at Highgate but her mother is no longer there, she has probably died in the meantime. In 1871 Sarah’s father Thomas Rigby was again away at sea. Mary Pearson was running a registry for servants in Kendal at the time of the census, and Alfred is shown as a medical student. The house at Highgate was on the west side between New Inn and Sandy’s Hospital, 3 doors north of the former, in a building which survives today (the right hand tall house here).....



Alfred qualified as a doctor in Glasgow on 18th July 1872 and just a few weeks later he married Sarah at Holy Trinity, Kendal (right); he was 24 and she 25. One wonders whether this was with the blessing of his father, or whether he even knew about it at the time. While he no doubt supported his son through University, there is no evidence to suggest any such benevolence afterwards.



Later in 1872 or early the following year, Alfred and Sarah reportedly moved to Featherstone, east of Wakefield in the West Riding of Yorkshire and in the *Pontefract* registration district. He is recorded as “Fellow of the Faculty of Surgeons, Glasgow; Apothecary, and Graduate of Midwifery, London”. They had three children, all however registered in the *Dewsbury* registration district, as follows:-

George Alfred Theodore	Born Autumn 1873, christened 21 April 1874
Maria Cleopatra Roberta	“ Summer 1876, christened 25 January 1878
Claude Harold Eugene Eustace	“ 12 September 1878, “ 14 April 1879

all the baptisms being at St Michael & All Angels, the parish church of Thornhill.

Alfred’s wife Sarah died in the early weeks of 1880, aged only 33, possibly in childbirth (also registered at Dewsbury). Later that year, Alfred’s home and practice is recorded at Mountain House, Overthorpe, Thornhill, on the west side of Wakefield and which is in the Dewsbury registration district. In the 1881 census, he is shown there, described as “Physician Surgeon, Fellow of the Faculty of Surgeons, Glasgow”; his three children are all shown as born at Thornhill, so it appears Alfred & Sarah stayed at Featherstone for only a matter of a few months. There is just one domestic servant, Mary Lewis, aged 23 who was born in Herefordshire.

In the summer of 1881, the widower Alfred married **Louisa Clough** at Knaresborough. She was born in Bradford in the spring of 1849, and the census two years later shows her family at Globe Cottage, 179 White Abbey Road in the Manningham district of the town. Her father Hudson Clough was born at Kildwick, Yorkshire around 1806 and by now is a worsted spinner and manufacturer with two premises employing a total of 430 women, 350 men and 160 boys; we can imagine the archetypal bluff Yorkshireman here! His wife Elizabeth, the same age, was born in Stepney, London. There are 7 children at home, the eldest at 16 was born at Keighley and is an apprentice in the worsted mills; the second was born at Kildwick and all the others down to young Louisa in the Bradford area. Ten years on the situation at Globe Cottage is much the same, with six of the children including Louisa still at home. In 1881 however she is living at Slipper House, Mirfield, Yorkshire, as deputy principal of a boarding school there run by her elder sister Mary Ann Clough, whom we meet again very shortly. A daughter **Phyllis Alicia Marguerite Antoinette Mason** was born to Alfred and Louisa in the spring of 1884, registered at Dewsbury.

In 1890 Alfred moved his home and practice to 24 Devon Square, Newton Abbot, in the County of Devon; in the census the following year he is “Physician & Surgeon” at age 40, Louisa, also shown as 40, his elder son George (17, no occupation shown) and Phyllis, 7 are with him. Both children are shown as born at Thornhill, Yorks. His two younger children with Sarah, “Robbie” (as she now calls herself) and Claude were left behind in Mirfield, boarding with the above mentioned Mary Clough.

Around 1900, Alfred and Louisa moved again, to 1 Bexhill Road, St Leonard’s on Sea, Sussex, perhaps now retired, but apparently did not stay long. In the 1901 census they are found at a boarding house, 2 Besant Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire, with Alfred at 52 “living on own means”. Our Alfred Mason is presumably the one who died in that town in 1908, aged 60.

By 1901, Alfred’s son **George** is married, living at 87 Dinsdale Road, Jesmond, Newcastle, employed as a timber merchant’s clerk. His wife is denoted in the census merely by her initials “C.A.”; she says she was born at Teignmouth, Devon and is apparently some 7 years older than her husband. They have a daughter Florence Beatrice, born in Gateshead, County Durham in 1898. It took us a little while to discover that she is **Caroline Amelia Clarke**, born in early 1858, so is in reality 15 years older than George! She was the youngest of

six known children of Edward Dunn Clarke, merchant marine captain, and his wife Susannah Pitt Harris. In 1871 and 1881 she is with some of them at 31 Clifton Place, Plymouth, with her father away at sea on both occasions. George and Caroline were married on 6th November 1897 at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, Australia, at which time George was a commercial clerk living at 95 Bathurst Street in the city, and she at Kent Street. George was presumably there with his job; he possibly knew Caroline from his younger days in Newton Abbot. After Newcastle in 1901, they are off on their travels again, with daughter Florence, recorded aboard the Allan Line vessel "Numidian" out of Liverpool for Montreal, Canada on 4th September 1902. They next surface at 831 4th Avenue, Calgary in the 1911 Canadian census, where George is an auditor clerk with the Canadian Pacific Railway. His wife is shown as "Caro" and that they "immigrated" in 1907 so perhaps they returned to England between 1902 and that year. That is the last we know of them at present. If George later came back to England, he may be the one who died in the Newcastle area in early 1943 aged 68.

In 1901 at Jesmond, George's brother **Claude** is staying with them, unmarried, as an oil merchant's clerk. He married later that year in Durham, **Mary Clamp**, born in Newcastle on Tyne on 8th August 1879 of John Clamp and his wife Catharine, nee Biggins, who were both born in Durham City and married there. In 1881 however, they are at 8 Sandyford Square, Jesmond, where John Clamp is a cabinet maker and Mary is the youngest of six children. They were still there in 1891, and John is now a Banjo Manufacturer. 10 years later they have moved slightly eastwards to 22 Simpson Street, Jesmond, and one of Mary's sisters is a banjo teacher, no doubt good for her father's business! No occupation is shown for Mary, at 21 a lady of leisure. This whole area of Jesmond now lies under the Northumbria University site.

Like his brother George, Claude and Mary also ventured across the seas, as by 1904 we find them in Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa, where two sons were born, **John Harold** on 24th June 1904 and **Arthur George** on 27th May 1905. The family then sailed from Durban on 6th June 1907 back to Southampton, and the 1911 census records them all at Rose Cottage, Rose Brow, Woolton Road in Gateacre, Lancashire. Claude is now calling himself by his second name, Harold, and is a book-keeper to a motor garage; the two children are scholars. In 1939 Claude and Mary are still at Rose Cottage, he shown as a certified accountant. Son John is with them, working as a motor car electrician. Meanwhile, son Arthur George married Dorothy Edith Smith in the summer of 1932 at Toxteth Park, Liverpool. She was born there in 1906 but her mother was originally from Ulverston. In 1939 Arthur is recorded as a dress tool & jig maker at 43 Errol Street, Liverpool, and Dorothy's brother Archibald is staying with them; he is a GPO telephone & telegraphist. Claude Harold Eugene Eustace Mason died in the Liverpool area in early 1948 at 69.

No further record was found for **Maria/Robbie** after 1891, but there are several candidates for her marriage in the years following.

Phyllis in 1901 is a visitor at 1 West End Villas, Weyhill Road in Andover, Hampshire, the home of Alfred Elliott-Smith, a dentist born in Norwich and his family. She could not be found in 1911, but on 1st July 1929 she married Joseph Benjamin Keig at St Brendan Kirk, Braddan, Isle of Man as a spinster aged 45. Joseph was a widower; he was born on 14th October 1868 at Santon, IoM of Joseph Keig, labourer and his wife Jemima; by 1871 they are living at St German's Place, Peel. In the 1911 census Joseph, by now a miller & farmer at Lehn Mills, Andreas, IoM is with his wife Edith, aged 41. They have been married 19 years and had 10 children, but sadly nine of them died young. Joseph died 21st December 1942 in Northern Ireland, aged 74. Phyllis survived until 21st May 1956, passing away at Wembury, 5 Ridgway Road, Onchan, Isle of Man, aged 72.

5.2.9 Somewhat tellingly, no less than four of George Mason's children were to marry within a short period following their father's death in March 1874; they had probably been waiting years for the opportunity! First off the mark was the eldest, **Mary Agnes**, for a long time her father's housekeeper. She married the widower **Hartley Mason**, a distant cousin of our "Family C" on the 5th May 1874 at St. Cuthbert. She was by now 44; "it is easy to be left with the impression that it was her father's disapproval that prevented her marriage earlier. Whether this arose from some ancient family feud, or they were not sufficiently prosperous for her, or he did not want to lose his housekeeper, it is impossible to say". We chart her subsequent life with Hartley in section 7.6

5.2.10 **William Isaac** Mason married Annie Pullein in the spring of 1875. He was 40 and Annie (the daughter of a retired farmer of Broughton West) two years younger. William bought Crossbeck from his father's estate, their story is told in section 5.3 below.

5.2.11 **Thomas James** Mason married **Mary Fell** in the summer of 1875 at Holy Trinity, Colton (pictured). Mary was born at the nearby village of Sparkbridge in 1832, so was some 5 years older than Thomas. We continue their story at Ashlack in section 5.4 following.



5.2.12 Lastly in this group, also in the summer of 1875, **Charles Joseph** married **Dorothy Wilson** at West Derby, Liverpool. She was born in Toxteth Park, Liverpool around 1839, thus six years older than Charles. In the 1851 census, Dorothy is shown at home with her parents John and Mary at 33 St James Place, Toxteth Park. John is a tallow chandler employing 10 men and 2 apprentices; he was born at Drigg, Cumberland in around 1801. Mary was from Broughton-in-Furness and 9 years his junior. There are 4 children at home, Dorothy being the eldest; a shop man and 2 house servants are living in with the family. Ten years later, still at the same address, John is now employing 15 men and 3 boys, so business is evidently good. An elder son has by now returned home, and both he and a brother are also tallow chandlers, with the girls no doubt helping around the house.

By 1871 the family residence has moved to 12 Upper Stanhope Street, Toxteth Park. John at 69 is still working, again assisted by his two sons. The three daughters now aged from 32 down to 21 are all still unmarried and at home; by tradition in the more genteel families such as this, no occupations are shown for them.

Charles Mason used his inheritance from his father to set up as a farmer at Old Hall Farm, Old Turnpike Road, Aughton near Ormskirk. They had one child, Frederick Charles, born there in the spring of 1876, but Charles died on the 17th March 1880, aged only 34 at Harrogate, perhaps on a visit to see his recently-widowed brother Alfred? His death was reported in the "Liverpool Mercury" newspaper a few days later.

In the 1881 census, widow Dorothy continues to run Old Hall Farm, working 110 acres with 6 labourers and 1 boy employed, but ten years later has moved to “Sunnyside”, New Road, Aughton with her unmarried sister Eleanor; son Frederick is a scholar and there is 1 domestic servant. In 1901 Dorothy is fully retired and still living in Aughton, aged 62, with Eleanor and Frederick, now at 24 employed as a produce broker’s clerk. By the time of the 1911 census, she had moved to take the sea air at 4 Leicester Street, Southport and died in the early weeks of 1914 “aged 74”. Meanwhile **Frederic** married **Elsie Belle Brighthouse** in summer 1910 at Ormskirk; she was born locally in spring 1888. In the census they are living at “Sunnyside”, Swanpool Lane, Aughton, with Frederick shown as a salesman and they have one house servant. They are still there in 1921; he is a General Produce Broker (employer) based at 9 Rainford Street in Liverpool. There are 2 daughters, Dorothy Doveton aged 5 and Eleanor Brighthouse 2; with 1 servant. Likewise in 1939, with Frederic still so employed. They have a son with them, Samuel B. born 23 July 1921, working as an insurance clerk.

5.2.13 In the chronicles of George and Maria Mason’s 13 children, **Rebecca Alice** was thus the last to marry, aged 36 in the spring of 1880, to **James Parkinson** in the Fylde (Blackpool) registration district. In the 1881 census, they are shown at 6 Shear Row, Blackburn, with James aged 47 (thus 10 years older than Rebecca) a bank cashier; he was born in Blackburn. There were no known children, and Rebecca Parkinson died in the summer of 1887 at Conway, North Wales, aged 43. She had probably gone to stay there for the benefit of her health, but it has been suggested she died in childbirth. By 1891 James had become a bank manager, still in Blackburn, and had not re-married.

5.3 William Isaac Mason at Crossbeck, from 1874

We saw above that William bought the Crossbeck property from his father’s estate in 1874-5, at the valuation price of £5506, also that he married Annie Pullein in the spring of 1875, when he was 40 years old.

In the 1851 census we find Annie, a scholar aged 13 with her parents Henry and Dorothy at Baycliff, Aldingham where Henry was farming 170 acres with 5 labourers. He was born in Millom about 1802, and Dorothy at Broughton in Furness about 1809. Married around 1828, they lived in Broughton until about 1844. Annie is the middle of five children at home, all girls, ranging from 19 down to 3 years, and there is 1 house servant. By 1861 the Pullein family had moved back to Broughton, with Henry now farming at Hobkin Ground (pictured); the acreage is not stated, but there were now just 2 labourers, so he appears to have “downsized” with advancing years. Eldest daughter Eliza is now married, and is staying over with her baby Dora Jane Dale, born in Lancaster. Her younger siblings Catherine & Annie are still living at home.



Dorothy was widowed before 1871, when she is found living at The Square, Broughton (picture left below), an annuitant (pensioner) aged 62. Daughters Catherine, aged 37 and Annie at 33, both unmarried and with no occupation shown are still at home. In the 1881 census,

Dorothy is shown as “owner of house and land” at the King’s Head, Broughton (right), and Catherine is with her.



William and Annie Mason had just two known children, quite widely spaced in age, as follows....

William Isaac	born at Crossbeck, christened 28 th September 1878
John Henry	“ “ 1 st June 1884

The christenings were at St Cuthbert, and the father William Isaac is described as a Yeoman in both cases.

In the 1881 census, William is shown as “Owner & Occupier of 145 acres” at Crossbeck, with Annie and their two-year old son as expected. There are two farm servants and two in the house, one a girl of only 13. William was also a churchwarden at St Cuthbert during that year at least, and in October was arguing with his brother Thomas of Ashlack, a fellow warden, as to whether or not to proceed with an extensive renovation plan for the church (which did eventually go ahead).

Otherwise, life must have been fairly uneventful at Crossbeck (certainly compared to Ashlack!), as the next record of William’s activities found is not until 1890, when he was involved in a dispute with the new owner of Ashlack named Wakefield over grazing rights on Soutergate Marsh, which he successfully claimed as belonging to Crossbeck. The following year all the family are at home in the census; the two boys are attending school, there are 3 farm servants and 1 general servant at the house, all living in.

In the 1901 census, William Isaac Mason the elder is shown as “Living on own means (retired farmer)” at age 65, still at Crossbeck. Annie is with him but the two sons have left home by now; there is just one house servant and a horse man, shepherd and “cattle cowboy” working on the farm. William died just a few weeks later at Crossbeck and was buried at St Cuthbert on 8th June. His widow Annie went to live at Bolton-le-Sands, and died there in November 1920, aged 83. She was brought back to Kirkby Ireleth and buried alongside her husband on the 22nd November.

William & Annie’s elder son William Isaac became a mariner, and later a master of Trinity House, becoming well-known locally as “Captain Mason”. He married Clara Denney at Bromley, Kent in the spring of 1911, aged 32. Clara was born in Ulverston in the Autumn of 1882, but in the 1891 census is shown attending a private school, Carus Lodge, Halton near Lancaster, with 3 sisters and 1 brother, under governess Annie Ward, at age 8. The 1901 census finds her at Lewisham, Kent, as a scholar at a boarding school; she evidently settled in that area afterwards.

William & Clara's daughter Elizabeth Clara was born at Arnside, Westmorland in the spring of 1913. In 1918, Clara at least was recorded living at 6 Ashmeadow Terrace, Arnside, Westmorland, when she was left £5 in the will of a Sarah Ann Denney, perhaps an aunt. William was probably away at sea or on Trinity House business for long periods around this time. In the 1921 census, William & Clara are at Beaumont Cote, Slyne with him shown as Lieutenant Commander RNR, Master Mariner retired. There are now 4 children; in addition to Elizabeth, Mary aged 6, Margaret Ruth 4 and Catherine 1, all born at Arnside.

However by the 1939 ID card registration after the outbreak of war with Germany, William has returned to farming; he is recorded with Clara at Hobkinground, Broughton West, as a "Dairy C stock breeding farmer". Captain William Isaac Mason died in 1954 at Hobkinground, aged 75.

The younger son John Henry is recorded in 1901 at Grantham, Lincolnshire, as a "Juvenile" aged 16, presumably at boarding school there. He became an Anglican clergyman and in 1911 is boarding in the house of William Henderson at 5 Quay Walls, Berwick-upon-Tweed. He married Dorothy Foster in the spring of 1920 in the Tynemouth area; she was born 1889 at Backworth, Northumberland. In the 1921 census they are found at Bolsterstone, Stocksbridge in Yorkshire, where he is vicar of the parish of Bolsterstone with Deepcar; they have 2 servants. So who then ran Crossbeck after father William died in 1901? Presumably it was then let out; a Proctor family are recorded as becoming tenants there in 1927 and they eventually bought the property from the Masons in the 1970s.

4. The fate of Ashlack – Thomas James Mason after 1875

As we have seen, Thomas returned from Canada after his father's death in mid 1874, and negotiated with the trustee of his estate, Edward Coward, to buy the Ashlack property. This he eventually managed, taking possession on 10th May 1875 for the sum of £8960, slightly less than the valuation of £9184. What remained of his inheritance share amounted to only some £2000, so he had to take on a mortgage of £7000 to secure the property. A difficult enough situation, especially as he also got married a few months later, but within the next year two separate additional charges were made upon the estate (of which details are not known), so that he ended up with a 100% debt.

Thomas' bride Mary Fell was the daughter of John Fell (1789 – 1874), a Quaker landed proprietor and his London-born wife Ann. Born 1832 in the hamlet of Sparkbridge, she was "distantly related to Thomas by marriage" as her sister Sarah had married our Hartley Mason (of family C) in 1848 (see section 7.6). It would be interesting to investigate the connection, if any, between John Fell and Margaret Fell nee Askew, the co-founder of the Quaker movement born at Marsh Grange around 1610, though the surname is fairly common in these parts.

Our John Fell, born at Sparkbridge married Anna Barraclough at Thorley, Hampshire on 21st September 1814; she was born on 29th September 1793 at Tower Hill, London. They had eight known children, as follows:

John Barraclough	born 28 th July 1815 in London
William Noble	born 27 th July 1817 (but died in 1818)
Martha	christened 27 th January 1819 at St Mary, Lambeth
Anna Jemima	born 1 st July 1820 at Covent Garden, London
Sarah	christened on 13 th January 1822 at St Paul, Covent Garden
Jane	born 23 rd June 1825 at Covent Garden (but died in 1826)

Mary
Eleanor

born 14th August 1832, at Sparkbridge
born 29th July 1834 ditto

In the 1841 census the Fell family at Sparkbridge comprises head John, “independent”, his wife Ann and the 6 surviving children. Ten years on, still at Sparkbridge, John senior is described as “Landed Proprietor”, with 3 domestic servants. Only Mary and Eleanor are still at home, and the young Hartley F. Mason, son of Hartley of our family C who had married Sarah Fell in 1848 is staying over with them while his parents are away over the Easter weekend (see section 7.6). The 1861 census shows little change, except there are now only 2 domestic servants; this time they have a grandson Charles F. Lancaster, 15 and born in Liverpool staying. In 1871 John has “income from land and houses”; his daughters Mary and Eleanor remain as ladies of leisure at home.

Meanwhile son **John Barraclough Fell** has become a famous civil engineer, railway contractor and inventor; amongst many other activities worldwide at various times he was a director of the Windermere Steamship Company, owned shipping wharves and a sawmill at the port of Greenodd, played a part in the planning of what eventually materialised as the Ulverstone & Lancaster Railway, and patented the “Fell” mountain-railway system which was first used for the Mont Cenis Railway connecting Italy and Switzerland in 1868 and then extensively elsewhere in Europe, Brazil and New Zealand. He died at Southport on 18th October 1902, aged 87.

John Fell senior died in 1874 (see section 7.6), and in his will daughter **Mary** inherited one-half share of Knapperthaw Farm, Lowick (113 acres) which she then gave to her fiancé Thomas Mason as her marriage settlement, just before they were wed, on 6th September 1875. Mary was then aged 43, still living at Sparkbridge, and Thomas was 37. There were no children of this marriage.



Thomas James Mason made his first will in 1878 at Ashlack, calling himself “Gentleman” and leaving his real estate to his brother Charles. However this was revoked by a later will of 1882, as the latter had since died.

In 1879 Thomas purchased the Beanthwaite estate, adjacent to the Ashlack lands but considerably smaller, it is suggested by using the proceeds of the sale of his wife’s share of the farm at Lowick. William Irving was then installed as Thomas’s tenant at Beanthwaite; we hear more of him later.

The picture above is of Low Beanthwaite farmhouse, beside the main road

Meanwhile, things were not going well at Ashlack. There was at this time a general downturn in the fortunes of farming, due in part to a succession of bad summers and poor harvests, also to increasing competition from imported grain, much of which ironically came from the Canadian prairies Thomas had left behind so recently. However, it has also been suggested that Thomas severely neglected certain aspects of the estate such as coppicing of the woodland, and that his management in general was far below the high standards upheld over many years by his father George. Sensing impending financial problems, Thomas advertised the Ashlack property for sale, pure freehold, for the first time in the Liverpool Mercury in early September 1880, “the owner will show”. At this time, he farmed 170 acres and owned 90 more,

including Beanthwaite. The house also owned a pew in St Cuthbert's church. The whole was offered at auction on 16th September, but failed to sell; a contemporary commentator remarked "the estate was going to ruin".

The 1881 census shows Thomas and Mary in residence at Ashlack, "farmer 170 acres employing 1 man & boys". There are two female house servants and two farm servants living in, and two visitors Eleanor Fell and Elizabeth Hartley, both annuitants, are staying as visitors. The former aged 46 is Mary's younger sister.

A few weeks later in May 1881 Reynolds Newspaper reported that a gang of cock-fighters from outside the area had taken possession of a barn at Ashlack "without the knowledge or consent of the owner" for the pursuance of their "sport". The police attended, and two men were later fined at Millom petty sessions.

In Thomas's revised will of 1882 he describes himself as "Esquire"; he leaves his personal estate and effects to his wife, and other property to his distant cousin Robert Mason (of our "Family C") who was then farming at Marsh Grange. The residue was to go to the children of his brothers William Isaac and Alexander McDonald Mason. A separate statement says that half the residual real estate was to go to his friend, George Ashburner at Low Hall, whom, it may be recalled was his sister Isabella's brother-in-law.

However, all this advance planning sadly came to nought, as by late 1882 Thomas was in serious financial trouble. The UK farming industry was still in the doldrums, and the estate had failed to sell again at another auction. At this time also, the slate quarry profits were beginning to be eroded considerably. However, it is recorded that Thomas was "up to date on his debt repayments". After struggling on for three more years his creditors finally foreclosed on him in early 1886. Another auction was held on the 27th August, but again there was no sale. Thomas and Mary left Ashlack then and went to live in a small flat in Preston. After creditor negotiations, the estate (house plus 252 acres) passed to William Wakefield of Kendal in October 1887 for the sum of £5550, only around 60% of its value 12 years previously

There seems to be some confusion about what happened next. A Mr. Phizacklea is said to have been appointed tenant at Ashlack in late 1887, but there is also an entry in the London Gazette around then showing it as the address of a bankrupt, Henry Brackwell, who "had not kept proper books". This man is shown as a mere farm labourer in the 1881 census at Dalton; a possible explanation was that he had been brought in as a caretaker manager by Thomas's creditors for a few months after he left, but only added to their woes. In the Ashlack papers is a quit notice which was served on Brackwell, dated 4th February 1887. By the time of the 1891 census however, the estate was in the capable tenancy of William Irving, formerly Thomas's tenant at Beanthwaite. He had married Dorothy Casson in 1875, and they were to stay at Ashlack until after 1901 at least. By 1911, William's son Thomas Casson Irving aged 33 and his wife Catherine were in residence at the Hall, with their 3 young children.

Meanwhile in the 1891 census at Preston, Thomas and Mary are shown living at Hodder House, 64 Berry Lane, Dilworth, in the Longridge district, he was employed as an agent for the Prudential Insurance Company. Mary died there in the early weeks of 1893, aged 60, and Thomas likewise in 1898 at 58, a sad ending to a brave venture trying to continue the family farming tradition at Ashlack Hall. This fine house was extensively restored by the present owner, who also thoroughly researched its history in his recent book "Ashlack – a small Cumbrian Estate". This is thoroughly recommended reading, as is also a visit to the house, or even better a stay in its beautiful grounds – as several farm buildings have been converted and equipped for use as holiday lets.

6 “Family B” – William Mason at Bell Hall

As we saw in section 4 above, William was the second son of John Mason, husbandman of Soutergate and his wife Isabel (nee Troughton), christened at St Cuthbert on 18th September 1756. He married **Jane Wayles** on 15th March 1800 at St Cuthbert, by licence, when he was 43 years old. Jane was the daughter of William Wayles and his wife Betty (nee Elizabeth Newby), and was christened at St Cuthbert on Christmas day 1779, thus she was 23 years younger than William.

The Wayles family of Kirkby Ireleth

Jane’s great uncle, James Wayles died in 1741 and it is recorded that he lived at Dostholme (by Ashlack Meadow) in Grizebeck hamlet as his main property, but also owned Kellet Ground, Friars Ground and Dove Bank. This is somewhat at odds with the Chatsworth papers, which in 1745 show that Jane’s father William took over the tenancy of Kellet Ground (“owned by the Kirkby family”) upon the death of his father, also William, for a yearly rent of five shilling and ten pence ha’penny; his mother Isabell continued to live there. He married Miss Newby on 23rd May 1768 at St Cuthbert, and their first child, William (the third!), Jane’s elder brother, was born the following year. William Wayles (the second) was a husbandman, and bought Parrock Land, Craggyfield, from Agnes Kirkby in 1774; by 1782 he is shown as a Yeoman there. From later records, he evidently retained Kellet Ground as his main property though.

Jane’s brother, William (III) married Mary (“Malley”) Frearson at St Cuthbert on 20th October 1804, when he was 35. They went to live at Ellermire, their abode when son William (IV) was christened on 14th August 1805.

William Wayles (II) made his will in September 1809, leaving Kellet Ground to his son William (III) and £120 to his daughter Jane Mason among other bequests. This money was paid from his estate after his death in early 1812; he was buried at St Cuthbert on 3rd February. William Wayles (III), by then of Dove Ford, died there in December 1829, aged 60, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 16th of that month.

In 1835 Jane’s nephew William Wayles (IV), a Yeoman, was a beneficiary of the Gill Beck estate and other lands in the will of the late Thomas Bird, also a Yeoman. The Chatsworth papers record in 1845 that he sold Kellet Ground, as “reputed owner” to the Earl of Burlington for £1260, also the Cragg Gate estate, “for the new slate road”; this would be the tramway incline down from the quarries to the new Furness Railway line at Sandside which opened in August 1846. Around that time Kellet Ground was in the occupation of a Matthew Wayles, probably William’s brother. George Mason of Ashlack was a witness to the sale deed, and the papers contain a body of evidence for descent of ownership within the Wayles family after the death of William (I) in 1745, in justification of his lawful right to the property.

William and Jane Mason had a total of 11 known children in the period 1802 to 1822, as follows. All were christened at St Cuthbert; the family abode is shown, and also the father’s occupation for the later entries....

William	christened	27 th January 1802	(Soutergate)
John	“	17 th October 1803	“
Thomas	“	12 th October 1805	“
Joseph	“	16 th October 1807	(Belhall)
James	“	1 st September 1809	(Belhaw)
Isabella	“	25 th October 1811	“
Isaac	“	10 th December 1813	(Belhaw; Husbandman)

Matthew	“	13 th September 1815	(Belhaw, Farmer)
Betty	“	13 th November 1816	(Belhaw; Husbandman)
George	born 26 th Aug, christened 24 th Sept 1820		(Belhaw, Farmer)
Jacob	born 18 th Aug, christened 2 nd Sept 1822		“

Here, Bell Hall is spelled variously as the minister wrote down what he heard; they are all evidently the same place. In like manner, the surname is recorded as “Mayson” in many cases, in this family and others around this period. We saw above that George Mason inherited this property from his father John, squire of Crossbeck, upon the latter’s death in 1830, so presumably William is renting it from his elder brother, from around 1807 onwards.

Apart from the first, the children’s births occur with commendable regularity, evidently conceived in the quiet period on the farm during the winter months! Maybe an unrecorded child died at birth in the autumn of 1818? We know for sure that Jacob did not survive long; he was buried at St Cuthbert on 10th September, just 23 days after birth.



William Mason died intestate in late 1823 at Belhaw; he was 67 years old and was buried at St Cuthbert on 18th November that year, once more described as “Husbandman”. His estate evidently took some while to sort out, and it was not until 1830 that his second son **John** was appointed joint administrator with his mother Jane, and also a Joshua King of Queen’s College, Cambridge. The first two were still at Belhaw then; the latter would surely have been a friend of the family, and Isabella King Mason of family “A” was probably named after him that same year. John’s younger brother **Thomas** had died about the same time, at Belhaw, unmarried at age 24; he was buried at St Cuthbert on 29th June 1830.



Why then was **William**, the elder son not appointed as administrator? Maybe he also was not too well at that time, as he died unmarried at Belhaw under two years later, aged 30. He was buried at St Cuthbert on 9th May 1832. **Isabella** was the next to succumb, again at only 24, in November 1835 also at Bell Hall, as it was now being spelt. She was buried on 27th November. Assuming Jane retained the tenancy throughout, maybe the owner George Mason had built a new house there after he inherited in 1830, and, along the lines of his “Ashlack Hall” had given this one also its grand new name upon completion? The later censuses show that there are three

separate household units on the site called Belhaw; though they are never named as such, they may have been the main house, the old house and a cottage?

Only seven of William and Jane's eleven children thus survived to be recorded in the first detailed census of 1841. In the meantime, their son **James** had married **Mary Fleming** at the parish church of St Andrew, Coniston on 12th October 1833; his younger brother **Isaac** Mason was a witness. Mary was born at Egremont, Cumberland in 1812. James was the only one to have a substantial family of his own, and we chart his fortune separately in section 6.1 following. Daughter **Betty** married **Thomas Broom**, a labourer of Kirkby Ireleth and son of a Yeoman, also Thomas, on 19th May 1841 at St Cuthbert; she was 24 and he 23. Her elder brother John was a witness.

In the June **1841 census**, widow Jane is head of the main household at "Belhaw" (again!), still working as a Farmer at age 60. Her children John, Joseph, Isaac, Matthew and George are all with her as workers on the farm, assisted by 4 servants one of whom is the above Thomas Broom, with his new wife **Betty**; he may already have worked there for some time, that being how they met. Completing the family, son **James** and his wife Mary were next door (possibly the "old" house?) as we see below.

Matthew married **Elizabeth Postlethwaite** on 25th October 1845 at Ulverston St Mary. Elizabeth was the daughter of William and Eleanor (nee Mount), christened at Urswick on the last day of 1820. In the 1841 census at Dalton township however, Elizabeth is shown living with a Betty Postlethwaite aged around 57 who runs a grocery shop there, and a Thomas, 15; perhaps they are her aunt and brother respectively? The marriage register shows Matthew as a husbandman of Bell Hall with father William a farmer, and he "made his mark". Elizabeth was living at Lopper Garth, Pennington where father William was farming, and signed her name. The witnesses were a George Mason and Eleanor Postlethwaite.

Matthew & Elizabeth's first child **William** was born at Ulverston in early 1846, then shortly afterwards they moved across the Duddon estuary and settled in Whicham, Cumberland. Daughter **Eleanor Jane** was born there in autumn 1847, and a son **Matthew** in the summer of 1850. In the 1851 census they are living at the Plough Inn, Whicham, Matthew aged 36 shown as Innkeeper and Farmer of 40 acres of land. With them and their three children are his brother James' elder daughter **Jane**, aged 17, as house servant at the inn, and his younger brother **George**, 30 working for him as a servant on the farm. The picture shows the former inn, now a private house, beside the main road.



Matthew died at Whicham on 1st July 1852, aged 36. He was brought back to Kirkby Ireleth for burial, on 4th July at St Cuthbert. After a decent interval, his widow Elizabeth married **James Atkinson** locally in the spring of 1854, and they continued to run both the Plough Inn and the farm at Whicham. In 1861 James, born in Hipswell, Yorkshire about 1825 is shown occupied in both roles, and they have 3 more young children in addition to "Elen" and Matthew Mason who

are still at home; there are two servants living in. Elizabeth's eldest son **William** is by now staying in James Street, Ulverston at the home of an uncle, George Hayton, apprenticed to him as a plasterer. I am indebted to Sue Crilly, a descendant, for the following additional information about William:

He was *not* the one who died locally in 1863 aged 17; he married **Mary Dodgson** in the spring of 1866 in the Millom area, and they went on to have a total of 11 children, 9 of whom are listed in the ensuing censuses. Mary was born in nearby Thwaites in around 1843 and had an illegitimate son christened **Thomas** Dodgson at Thwaites in June 1865, presumably with William. By the 1871 census they had moved to the neighbouring hamlet of Whicham, where William is working as a plasterer and Thomas is joined by **Matthew**, 3 and twins **Elizabeth & Annie** aged 10 months. In 1881 they are at Mountain View, Whicham, now with sons **William** 9, **John Dodgson** 7, **Ernest** 5 and **George** 2. William's wife Mary died in the summer of 1889, and by 1891 he had moved to 2 Manor Cottages in Whicham, still working as a plasterer. Daughter Elizabeth has returned to the fold to look after the house, son George is still at home and there is also now a son **James** aged 6. By 1901 William is evidently having to move around to find work; he is lodging at 14 Mill Street, Accrington. Son James, now 16 is a servant at Troughton Hall, West Broughton. Ten years later James is a farm labourer and has married Mabel Perry, 5 years his junior, living at 13 Grecian Street, Seaforth, Liverpool, where we also find father William, still working as a plasterer at 65; he passed away in the area in early 1915, aged 69. Meanwhile his son Ernest married Jane Troughton in 1903 and 8 years later are at The Green, Kirksanton with daughters Annie, 7 and Catherine, 4. He is working as a brewery labourer.

James & Mabel are still at Grecian Street in 1921, he is by now working as a carter for Seaforth & Litherland Urban District Council; two sons and a baby daughter are with them, all born at Seaforth.

Elizabeth Atkinson was widowed again in the spring of 1864. Once again she carried on with both her activities, and in the 1871 census is shown farming no less than 64 acres; there is one more added to the Atkinson brood and her two Mason children are helping out, together with 3 servants. In **1881** aged 60 Elizabeth is still shown as Innkeeper & Farmer, now with just her son James and daughter Mary Atkinson at home. In 1875 her daughter Eleanor had married William Cranke, and their two young children Elisabeth and Isaac Mason Cranke are with their grandmother on census night, along with grandson Matthew Mason, son of her eldest child William. Even in **1891** aged 70, Elizabeth continues in the same two roles at the Plough Inn! Her grandsons William and Matthew Mason are farm servants, and grand-daughters Elizabeth Cranke and Fanny Atkinson are also staying with her on census night.

The other **Matthew** Mason, Elizabeth's younger son born in 1850, had moved to Liverpool by 1881; in the census that year he is a boarder in the house of widow Ann Slater at 126 Upper Warwick Street, Toxteth Park, with occupation general packer of bonded goods, presumably in the Liverpool docks. He could not be found in the 1891 census, so had perhaps ventured abroad for a while with his work. He married **Margaret Ann Walker**, the widow of Benjamin Walker in the summer of 1896 at St Mary's church, Walton, Liverpool. She was born in the summer of 1857 in West Derby as Margaret Clarke; the 1861 census shows her family at 3 Victoria Terrace, Everton. Her father Thomas is a mariner born in Leith, Scotland, and his wife Margaret was also from there. She also has a young brother Thomas aged 1. The young Margaret married Benjamin, a house painter, in the spring of 1879 and by 1881 they are living at 16 Penton Street in West Derby. Benjamin Walker died in late 1888 at Prescott, and Margaret could not be found in 1891 either; perhaps she is already Matthew's partner and has gone away with him?

By 1901, Matthew had progressed to become owner of a cotton warehouse at Walton on the Hill, Liverpool; he and Margaret are living at 48 Stewart Road there, accompanied by his mother

in law Elizabeth Walker, a widow of 67, and sister-in-law Lucy Ellen Walker, unmarried at 37. In the 1911 census Matthew and Margaret are shown at 7 Coningsby Road, Walton. Matthew died in late 1919 in that area aged 69, and in the 1921 census his widow Margaret Annie is Matron at a registered women's lodging house, 46 Everton Brow, Everton.

William's widow **Jane** Wayles Mason died at Bell Hall in October 1849, aged 69; she was buried at St Cuthbert on the 27th of that month

Isaac Mason married **Hannah Dodgson** at St Cuthbert on 4th August 1850, at the age of 36. At that time he was residing at Barrow Lane, Dalton-in-Furness; his occupation shown is none too legible in the register, but looks like "Station Man" (on the new railway through there). Hannah, born in 1815 and christened on 1st May was the daughter of James Dodgson, Yeoman of Cockfish Hall, Sandside, another surname to feature several times in our family history. We revisit them in more detail in "Family C" later. Tragically Hannah died only a few months after their wedding, possibly in childbirth. Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser reported: "Hannah, the beloved wife of Isaac Mason died on 13th February 1851 at Sandside....the deceased had enjoyed only three weeks of good health since her marriage about 6 months ago". She was buried on 16th February at St Cuthbert. In the 1851 census, the newly-widowed Isaac is staying with brother James and his family at Skelleycragg, Broughton West (see below). He is still employed on the railway, but his exact role shown is indistinct – could be a labourer?

In the **1851 census** at Bell Hall, Jane's surviving eldest sons **John** and **Joseph** are shown as "joint farmers of 20 acres", this possibly indicating that they had by now purchased this relatively small holding from George Mason, but they may still have been his tenants. They are by now aged 47 and 43 and both still unmarried. Their nephew **William Mason** aged 15 (brother James' son, see next section) is staying with them, employed as a farm servant, and they have a young female housekeeper. Still living next door, their sister **Betty** Broom is with her husband Thomas, now employed as a labourer at the slate works. They have a son William aged 9, a scholar. Ten years later the Broom family have moved to one of the Old Kiln cottages (pictured), where they were to stay for many years. Thomas is working as a highway labourer, and they have 4 children ranging from 19 down to 8 years, the eldest being a slate quarrier. By 1871 Thomas has also become a quarryman and their two daughters are shown as unemployed domestic servants. At Old Kiln in 1881, Thomas by now 68 is still working in the quarry. Elizabeth died there a few weeks later, aged 64, and Thomas in early 1890 aged 78.



Jane's son **George** never married. In 1851 as we see above he was staying with his elder brother Matthew at the Plough Inn, Whicham, Cumberland, but by 1861 he has moved on, to Knot End, Thwaites near Millom, as a farm servant to John Myers, who worked 70 acres there. However he was back at the family home Bell Hall by 1865, now working as a quarryman and died there on 21st February that year aged 44. He was buried at St Cuthbert on 26th February. Probate was granted 30th March to his brother Isaac, farmer of Bell Hall as sole executor, effects under £450.

By 1861, **John** and **Joseph** seem to have relinquished the Bell Hall farm operation to their younger brother **James**, who is now head in the census there in April that year, albeit now with

only 16 acres. They are still living at the Hall, but shown as “boarders” with no occupation. Full details of the household in the next section.

Joseph Mason was finally married on 23rd November 1864 at St Cuthbert, aged 56. His bride was **Elizabeth Richardson**, 40, daughter of George, a labourer, then also living at Bell Hall. Joseph is recorded as a labourer also there then. A son **William** was born to them in early 1865, so the reason for the marriage becomes clearly apparent! Checking back, already in 1861 George Richardson, a widowed retired slate quarrier aged 70, his daughter Elizabeth (Housekeeper), and his grand-daughter also Elizabeth aged 9 were living as a separate household at Bell Hall next door to the Masons. Ten years earlier, Elizabeth Richardson is found staying at Old Kiln with her widowed sister Isabella Crossley, shown as a domestic servant.

The apparently odd family employment situation at the farm was further turned about when firstly Mary, then her husband **James** himself died at Bell Hall in 1863 and 1867 respectively. It would be interesting to know what brotherly machinations went on both before and afterwards, since the **1871 census** shows **Joseph** now as one family head at Bell Hall, though his occupation is now slate quarrier rather than farmer. His wife Elizabeth is with him, also son William as expected, but there is a *stepson* (i.e. Joseph’s) **George M. Richardson**, aged 9, presumably born out of wedlock since Elizabeth is clearly shown as a spinster at her marriage. They have one house servant, **Elizabeth** Richardson, 19 and unmarried, who like all the others was born in Kirkby Ireleth. This is not just pure coincidence of course; she is another illegitimate step-child (see 1881 below).

Next door is now the widower **Isaac**, who has come back to run the farm still of 16 acres, assisted by the eldest brother **John**, living in but working for him as a mere Ag. Lab. Four of their late brother **James**’ children are working for Isaac as servants, the 2 boys on the farm and the 2 girls in the house. The third household unit at Bell Hall in 1871 is occupied by James Knight, widowed husband of another of James’ daughters, **Ellinor**. He also works in the slate quarries.

There is a further twist to the saga of Bell Hall in 1875, as Mark Keegan’s “Ashlack” history claims: “when William Isaac Mason (of our family A) married Annie (Pullein) and bought Crossbeck there was no room there for his old boss Uncle Joseph, who thus had to go to the poorhouse”. This confused us considerably, since this is the wrong William, the one with the Uncle Joseph was the latter’s brother James’ son (see above)! Nonetheless, poor **Joseph is** shown in the **1881 census** as a “farmer” living in the Ulverston workhouse at the Gill, as a married inmate by now aged 73. Even more surprising is that his wife is not with him; **Elizabeth** is still at Bell Hall, now head of one of the separate households there, shown as a housekeeper. Her children Elizabeth and George M. Richardson and William Mason are with her, the 2 boys as slate quarriers and the daughter as general domestic servant (presumably there, rather than at another house nearby). There is also now a Grand-daughter Elizabeth Richardson aged 6, presumably the unmarried daughter Elizabeth’s progeny! Seemingly no reason at all here then for Joseph’s banishment on the grounds of poverty or homelessness, until we see that the farmer at Bell Hall was by now **Thomas Phizacklea**, working 21 acres, and Elizabeth was no doubt housekeeper to him and his family at the main house. It will be recalled that George Mason of Ashlack owned Bell Hall for some time after 1830, that he died in 1874 and a Mr Phizacklea became tenant at Ashlack from 1887. If this is the same man, then perhaps he had taken over from Joseph as tenant farmer of creditors at Bell Hall because the latter had become insolvent? In the third household there then were living Thomas Lewis, a slate quarrier and his family, not connected in any way with our people.

In the **1891 census** Thomas Phizacklea is now “yeoman farmer” at 62, living in the main house with his wife Mary and 3 children including eldest son James. The Lewis’s are still there, and

Edward Townson a slate quarrier occupies the third dwelling. By **1901** Thomas has retired, though still living at “Bell Haw”; the farm is being worked by his son James.

Returning to the **1881** census, eldest brother **John** Mason is a retired farmer aged 77, living with his late brother James’ daughter Elizabeth Brockbank at Bankhouse, Kirkby Ireleth (pictured). He died there in October 1886 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 20th. His brother **Isaac** never re-married and is also by now retired, staying as a visitor over the Easter weekend of 1881 with his brother Matthew’s widow Elizabeth Atkinson at the Plough Inn, Whicham. Ten years later, he is lodging with his late niece’s husband William Rawes at Cop, Kirkby Ireleth (see below). Isaac, “gentleman” died at nearby Marsh Side on 22nd April 1893, aged 79, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 25th of that month. Probate was granted at Lancaster on 23rd May to his executors William Rawes, quarryman and William Newby the younger, architect, effects totalling £2021-10s-7d.



Whatever his misdeed, **Joseph** Mason was evidently condemned to spend a long time living in the Ulverston Union Workhouse; he died there on 18th November 1890 aged 82 and was buried in Ulverston cemetery. His widow Elizabeth is found at Friar’s Ground in the 1891 census described as “slate quarrier’s widow” aged 67; her daughter Elizabeth Richardson and sons George Mason Richardson and William Mason are with her. This finally reveals a clue as to George’s parentage; his father was also no doubt Joseph Mason and we can probably infer the same for the elder child Elizabeth. Grand-daughter Elizabeth Mary Richardson is also with them.

Elizabeth died at Bolton Ground, Kirkby Ireleth in early December 1897 aged 73, and was buried at St. Cuthbert on the 11th. In the 1901 census her three children Elizabeth & George Richardson and William Mason are all together at Bolton-le-Sands, where George, 39 is a farmer, his sister keeps house and William is a slate quarryman, perhaps unemployed at the time although it does not say so; there is not thought to be any such work in the vicinity, but maybe he was just visiting for a few days? Evidently though, this branch at least of the Mason family was able eventually to go back to Bell Hall, as in the 1911 census we find all three of them living there once again. In 1921 George Richardson and his sister Elizabeth are still at Bell Hall, and both Goerge and Williasm Mason are farming; there is 1 house servant, plus a horseman on the farm. William is recorded as having died there in August 1928, aged 63. He too was buried at St Cuthbert, on the 17th of that month. George passed away in early November 1937 and was buried with them on the 9th of that month.

6.1 James Mason (1809 – 1867) and his family

We noted above that William and Jane’s son **James** married **Mary Fleming** at Coniston St Andrew (pictured below) in October 1833. They had a total of 12 children as follows.....

Jane	born at Coniston soon after the marriage but christened 9 th March 1834 at St Cuthbert, her father being recorded then as a labourer at Bell Hall
William	christened at St Cuthbert 17 th May 1835, father a labourer at Herd House
Ellinor	“ 15 th January 1837 “
Mary	“ 5 th May 1839, father a farmer at Head Cragg

James Fleming	“	9 th November 1840, a labourer at Bell Hall	“
Thomas	“	3 rd October 1841	“
Isabella		born summer 1843, no baptism found	
Elizabeth		christened at St Cuthbert 17 th May 1846, father a labourer at Bell Hall	
Eve	“	27 th February 1848	“
Martha		born early 1850 at Broughton West	
Annie		born spring 1852	“
Matthew		born early 1854 at Foxfield	



James Fleming Mason died when only a few weeks old at Bell Hall. He was buried on 24th November 1840 at St Cuthbert.

In the **1841 census** at “Bellhaw” (next door to his mother Jane and his siblings), James is as expected an “Ag Lab” with his wife and the then four surviving children. Both mother Mary and youngest daughter Mary were indexed as “Nancy”, and the enumerator’s handwriting also clearly says “Nancy”. It appears that when he wrote up his notes on the census form, he could not read his own writing! The third Bell Hall household unit then was headed by one Thomas Walker, an agricultural labourer.

As already indicated by the children’s births, **1851** shows a complete change; James and his family are living at Skelleycragg, Broughton West, with his occupation “Railway ??”, the latter part being illegible; perhaps “Lab”? Seven of their then nine children are at home, and now the third, Elenor (as now spelt) is shown as born in Broughton also; the others are all as expected. James’ brother Isaac is staying with them, he also works on the railway at that time. The missing two children are **Jane** the eldest, as we have already seen a house servant to her uncle Matthew at the Plough Inn, Whicham, and **William** back at Bell Hall as farm servant to his uncles John and Joseph. Confusingly, William also gives his birthplace as Broughton this time! This may be explained by the fact that Herd House is out on the marshes to the north-west of Kirkby Ireleth, towards Broughton (and technically “extra-parochial”)

Several of James and Mary’s children married in the period 1857 to 1860, almost in their order of seniority.....

Jane wed **Richard Brackwell** on 13th June 1857 at St Cuthbert, aged 23. Her parents are then recorded as being back at Bell Hall with her father James described as farmer there, having evidently already taken over from his elder brothers John and Joseph in this role. Jane is a servant at the hall and Richard, also 23, is a husbandman from Whicham, obviously where they met. His father’s name looks like Chapson Brackwell, and he was a labourer. Their son James Fleming Brackwell was born a few weeks after the marriage, a daughter Mary Jane early in 1860 and in the 1861 census they are all living at Bell Hall (see below), with Richard by now shown as a slate quarrier. Ten years later the Brackwells have moved to nearby Head Cragg with Richard still working in the quarries, and have added 3 more children to their family.

Jane Brackwell died in the summer of 1875 “aged 41”. After a decent interval Richard then married Mary Ann King locally in late 1880. In the following census, he has become an Iron Ore miner at Newton, Dalton-in-Furness; his new wife is only 30 and was born at Hawcoat, Barrow in Furness. Richard Brackwell died in the summer of 1910 in Ulverston registration district, aged 76.

Eleanor was the next to marry, from Bell Hall on 9th July 1859 at St Cuthbert to **James Knight**, a husbandman from Millom (but born at Whitbeck). She was 22 and he 23. In 1861 they are

living at Lonning End, Waberthwaite near Ravenglass with James' widowed mother who owned 52 acres of land there. James and his elder brother Thomas were labourers on the farm. He and Eleanor have a daughter Mary Ann aged 1 who was born in Kirkby Ireleth, presumably at Bell Hall.

Eleanor Knight died in the autumn of 1865, aged just 28. In 1871 James, now a slate quarrier, is living at the Bell Hall cottage with his 4 children. He claims to be (re)married in later censuses, but there is no record of this locally so perhaps he and an Elizabeth born about 1836 at Millom are just living together? In the 1881 census James Knight is at Chapples, Whicham as a farm servant to George Fowler, and Elizabeth (with 4 children) is nearby. James' elder daughter Mary A. Knight is then at Bankhouse, Kirkby Ireleth, general servant to her uncle John Mason (qv above).

In 1891 James is recorded as a farmer at Borderiggs, Broughton Mills; Elizabeth and two children are with him. Ten years later, he is staying as a visitor with Eleanor's younger brother **Thomas** Mason at his farm, Hazel Hall in the parish of Torver Entire, and Elizabeth is at home, by now in Dalton.

William married **Ann Dodgson** at St Cuthbert on the 24th November 1859. He was 24, a labourer at Bell Hall working for his father James. Ann was five years older, of Friar's Ground where her late father John Dodgson had been a farmer. This is the second of three Mason - Dodgson marriages, and we look at her family in more detail in section 7 following. They had at least six known children, all christened at St Cuthbert as follows....

Margaret	christened	21 st Nov 1860	father a labourer at Friar's Ground
Ann	"	24 th Nov 1861	" at Head Cragg
William	"	31 st Dec 1862	father * an innkeeper at Stone Arthur
James Seadle Woodburn	"	24 th April 1864	" a labourer "
John	"	23 rd April 1865	" an Innkeeper "
Eve	"	25 th August 1867	" a labourer "

* the father is named as *Isaac* Mason in the register, but this is obviously an error here?

In the **1861 census**, William & Ann are living with Ann's widowed mother Ann Dodgson at Friar's Ground (pictured), where she was still farming 5 acres at the age of 66, and her three



brothers. Curiously, their daughter **Margaret** is not with them then; she is not registered as having died in the intervening months and we do not know what happened to her at all. There is however a daughter **Hannah Mason**, a scholar aged 5 born in Kirkby Ireleth who appears to be the illegitimate child of William and Ann, some 3 years before they were married. She was registered as Hannah Dodgson in early 1856, and baptised thus on the 26th January at St. Cuthbert, "daughter of Ann Dodgson, spinster of Friar's Ground".

In an 1864 trade directory there is a William Mason shown as Beer house Keeper at Four Lane Ends, Kirkby Ireleth (nowadays the Burlington Arms, pictured right) which is probably him. The innkeeper role shown for William in the baptism entries is probably a blatant exaggeration though; as we see below it looks like his wife Ann was really in charge of that activity!

Three of their children died in infancy and were buried at St Cuthbert: **Ann** on 24th November 1861 (sadly, the same day as her christening), **William** on the 26th February 1863 and **James** on 21st September 1865.

William Mason died on 1st April 1870 at Beckside, Kirkby Ireleth, aged 35 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 4th. In the 1871 census his widow Ann is now living in Beckside with occupation Innkeeper; her surviving three children Hannah, John and Eve are with her. It is recorded that Ann was granted the licence of the Punchbowl Inn beside the church at Beckside (right, now a private house) as tenant landlady in 1872, but that she was subsequently fined on several occasions for opening outside of the permitted hours, and for trading on a Sunday. The fines ranged from ten shillings up to £5 with costs extra on top of this, the latter amount somewhat greater than normal for the offence indicating that such “lax management” on her part was probably very frequent!



Ann was re-married on 23rd June 1875 at St Cuthbert to **Thomas Postlethwaite**, a butcher of Beckside. She was then 44 living at Moorside, and her late father John Dodgson’s status suffers a demotion from Farmer to Labourer in this register entry. Thomas was a bachelor “of full age” whose father Robert was a farmer. The unfortunate Ann was widowed again by mid 1880, and in the census the following year she has somehow managed to retain a licence as keeper of the Star Inn, Main Street, Millom, albeit with her changed surname and in a different county! Once again her children John and Eve Mason are with her, and Hannah at age 25 is now recorded using the surname Dodgson once more.

Ann Postlethwaite died on 21st September 1884 at Greenlane, Ulverston, aged 54. In 1891 her son **John** Mason is at 5 Empland Cottages, Lindal-in-Furness, boarding with a Hannah Hillies and her children and working as an iron miner. He died at Lindal on 5th June 1891 aged 26 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 8th of that month. Her daughter **Eve** was at 58 Regency Square, Brighton, Sussex, staying at the lodging house run by her “relative” Mary Dodgson who was born in Kirkby Ireleth around 1842. Eve passed on at Brighton on 26th March 1899 aged 32, was brought back to Kirkby commendably quickly and buried there on the 29th.

James & Mary’s daughter **Mary** was the last of this group of 4 to marry, from Bell Hall on 29th December 1860 at St Cuthbert, to **William Rawes**. She was 21, he 24 years old and a labourer at Head Cragg (pictured) where his father William was also a labourer. The 1861 census shows them still at Headcragg, next door to his parents, but both Williams are now



slate quarriers. Four children were born in the period 1862 – 68 but Mary died in September 1870 at Copp, aged 31 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 26th of that month. In 1871 - 91 the widower William Rawes was still living at Copp and working as a slate quarrier, for the first 10 years at least with his widowed sister Elizabeth Bennett as housekeeper. By 1901 he had moved to Marshside and was still working at 66, the house being looked after by his daughters Isabella and Eva; he died in the autumn of 1913 aged 79.

The **1861 census** shows, as expected, James Mason as the farmer at Bell Hall, working 16 acres. He and Mary have eight of their children with them, Thomas at 19 is working on the farm and Isabella 17 a servant in the house. Son Matthew and the four daughters Elizabeth, Eve, Martha and Ann are all scholars; Jane the eldest (now Brackwell) is there with her husband and family. We have already noted that James' brothers John and Joseph are boarders at the hall, and Joseph's partner Elizabeth Richardson as housekeeper living with her father George next door. The third household here in 1861 is headed by John Fielding, a slate quarrier as tenant unconnected with our family.

There is a spate of deaths to record in this family over the next few years. Daughter **Isabella** was perhaps the first to go, either in summer 1861 or the spring of 1864; we cannot easily tell which as the age is not recorded in the register and strangely she does not seem to have been buried at St Cuthbert or any of other the local parish churches. The Mother **Mary** passed away in January 1863 at Bell Hall aged 50, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 27th. **Eve** died in late April 1865 at Bell Hall, 17 years old, and was buried at St Cuthbert on 1st May. Finally, patriarch and farmer **James** Mason died at Bell Hall on 4th January 1867 aged 57, as reported the following week in the "Liverpool Mercury". He was buried on 7th January at St Cuthbert.

James and Mary's daughter **Elizabeth** aged 22 "of Bellhaw" married **Samuel Brockbank** on 5th December 1868 at St Cuthbert. Samuel was 21, a labourer born in Aldingham but then of Beckside whose father John was also a labourer. They went to live in the village of Ireleth, north of Dalton and in the 1871 census Samuel is an Iron ore miner there. They have two children, Joseph aged 1 and Mary Elizabeth, 1 month.

Samuel Brockbank died in early 1873 aged 25 and so never knew their third child Annie Margaret, born a few months later. The widow Elizabeth has by 1881 moved back to Kirkby Ireleth; in the census that year she is at Bankhouse as head and housekeeper to her uncle John Mason, retired farmer and her siblings Thomas and Annie, ag lab and house servant respectively. Her children Joseph, Mary and Annie are with her, all scholars, also Mary Ann Knight, the 21 year old daughter of her late sister Eleanor, as a house servant. By 1891 Elizabeth Brockbank is living with her surviving Mason brothers and sisters (see below), and remained with them for some years.



Three of the four remaining children, Thomas, Martha and Annie never married. They stayed on at Bell Hall after their death of their parents, and are all there in 1871 together with youngest brother Matthew, the boys as farm servants to their uncle Isaac, now running the farm there as we have seen, and the girls as house servants. In **1881**, also as noted already, **Thomas** and **Annie** are in the same roles at Bankhouse cottage with their sister Elizabeth and Uncle John. **Martha** at 31 is housekeeper to William Newby, a slate quarrier and his family at Copp, Kirkby Ireleth. However by 1891 Thomas, Annie and Martha are all back together at Woodbine, Dalton, where Thomas is by now working as a lime-burner. His widowed

sister Elizabeth Brockbank is his housekeeper with Martha as a general domestic servant and Annie is a dressmaker. In the 1901 census, all four are still together, but have moved to remote Hazel Hall, Torver (pictured below left). Thomas by some good fortune has become a farmer there, his sister Elizabeth is still his housekeeper, Martha and Annie are house servants, and his brother in law, the late Eleanor's husband James Knight is a visitor over the Easter weekend. There is also at the house a William Case born at Aldingham, a labourer on the farm, and his family; he is shown as Thomas Mason's nephew aged 30, and is in fact the husband of Elizabeth Brockbank's daughter Annie.

Sometime before 1907, Thomas, Martha and Annie moved to "Sunbreak" Farm, Aldingham (more usually spelled as Sunbrick, pictured below).



Martha died there in November that year, was brought back to Kirkby Ireleth and buried at St Cuthbert on 28th November; she was 57. The 1911 census shows Thomas and Annie there, together with Elizabeth Brockbank, her daughters Mary and Annie, the latter with her husband William Case and their five children.

Ten years later at Sunbrick we find Thomas, still farming at age 78, with his sisters Annie & Elizabeth, also Mary assisting in the house. The Case family are there too, with William as Farm Manager and assisting with farm work, and 4 sons all employed as farm servants. Joseph Brockbank, Thomas Mason's nephew also lived in, working

for the Millom Ironworks Company as a limestone quarryman.

Thomas Mason passed on at Sunbreak Farm on 25th April 1928, aged 86, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 28th of that month. Probate was granted at Lancaster on 24th August to Joseph Brockbank quarryman, Mary Eleanor Brockbank spinster and Annie Margaret Case wife of William Case farmer, effects totalling £970-9s-4d.

Annie Mason followed the others to the family grave from Aldingham on 3rd June 1929, she was 77. Lastly Elizabeth Brockbank died in the summer of 1937, aged 91 years.

Matthew in 1881 is at Waitham Hill farm, the northernmost of those on the Kirkby marshes (pictured right). He is a farm servant aged

26 to Samuel Whineray working 70 acres there. Samuel's niece **Sarah Ann Whineray** aged 23 born at Colton was his housekeeper then, and Matthew married Sarah seven years later, in early 1888 in Bootle registration district. In the 1861 census, Sarah is shown with her parents Robert & Elisabeth at Abbot Park, Colton, adjoining the Oxon Park estate, where Robert was farming 100 acres with 2 men. He was born at Ulpha, Cumberland around 1834 and Elisabeth, 4 years younger was from Bootle; she records her occupation as "household duties". Sarah at age 3 is the middle of 3 children, the eldest at 4 was born at Bootle.



By 1871 the Whinnerah family has returned to the Bootle area, via a spell in Kirkby Ireleth around 1865 for a year or two. The census shows them at the “John Bull” inn at Whicham, where Robert has traded his large farm for just 2 acres and become primarily a publican. His wife is now calling herself Isabella and they have 5 children at home, Sarah at 13 apparently having left school by now and no doubt helping around the house.

By the time of the 1891 census, Matthew Mason has also become a farmer in his own right at the Parsonage, Whicham, close to the Plough Inn. He and Sarah have no children; there are 2 male farm servants and one girl in the house. In 1901 they are at Duddon Bridge Farm, Thwaites, Millom, with a cattleman and horseman as servants and again one girl looking after the domestic side. They are still at Duddon Bridge Farm in 1911 & 1921.

Sarah died in the spring of 1924 aged 66, then by 1939 the widowed Matthew had retired and moved to Sunbreak, Ulverston, to join the above-mentioned William Case, now a dairy farmer there, and his family. He lived to a good age, passing away in late 1941 at 86.

7 “Family C” – William Mason of Soutergate & his descendants

This **William** Mason christened at St Cuthbert on 23rd April 1734 was the second son of John and Sarah of Mosshouses, Kirkby Ireleth. It is probably him who was a witness to the will of John Kitchen junior, slater of Belhaw in 1766. This document also mentions a “William Nutson” in the body of text; a very uncommon surname which is quite clear in the original and so not an error for “Mason”

William married **Anne Watters** at St Cuthbert on 22nd April 1769, aged 35. Anne was christened on 31st July 1748 at St Cuthbert, so a full 15 years younger than her husband; her parents were John Watters and his wife Elizabeth. We do not know much about them to date, except it is likely John was a brother of the William Watters, then of Bridge House, Kirkby, who in 1750 bought the house known as “Toad Hole” there for £170 from John Dodgson of Kendal. Watters and his son lived there until 1806, when they sold it – by then known as “Toad Hall” - to a Thomas Fisher, slate merchant of Dalton for £630 – inflation is nothing new! Eventually it passed to Lord John Cavendish in 1835 for incorporation into the latter’s expanding slate quarrying operations. All this is long before Kenneth Grahame’s famous “Wind in the Willows” – and this is **not** the one which inspired him!

William and Anne had only 2 known children as follows, both born at Soutergate and christened at St Cuthbert.....

John	christened	26 th June 1775
Mary	“	16 th November 1777

John forms the continuation of our main “family C” line, and his story is told in section 7.1 following. **Mary** married **John Whineray** at St Cuthbert on 11th June 1805, when she was 28. John was no doubt connected to the Whineray family later of Whicham and Millom, that we encountered several times in “Family B”. In the 1841 census John aged 66 is a yeoman farmer on the family holding of Whineray Ground, Dunnerdale; they have 3 children and 1 grandchild with them, and there are 2 servants at the farmhouse. Mary Whineray died there in the autumn of 1846, aged 69. In 1851 John is the “landed proprietor” but the farm – of 70 acres – is being run by his eldest son William, married to Hannah, with two young children. All of this family group were born in Dunnerdale.

In her will of 1771, William Mason's aunt Mary Hunter, a widow of Soutergate refers to him as a husbandman also of that hamlet then. When she died in 1777 he was left the considerable sum of £60 by her. Anne Mason in 1773 was left £5 by her aunt Mary Postlethwaite (nee Watters) of Lane Head, Kirkby Ireleth, who also made various bequests to other members of the Watters family.

William and Annie lived all of their very long lives at Soutergate; he died intestate there as a Yeoman on 1st August 1831, aged 97, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 4th August. Later that year the deed of administration reports that his widow Anne "had made diligent search and due enquiry; the whole of effects (of her late husband)... are under the value of £20". Joshua King, a fellow of Queens College Cambridge and evidently a close family friend or relative was joint administrator with Anne.

Annie Mason died aged 88 exactly five years to the day her husband was buried and was interred alongside him on 6th August 1836.

7.1 John Mason of Headgate, Soutergate

William and Annie's son **John** married **Elizabeth Hartley** at Dalton St Mary (pictured) on 7th April 1804 when he was 28 years old. The register shows him as "Husbandman, of the parish of Kirkby" and the witnesses were William Dickinson and Thomas Hartley, the latter possibly Elizabeth's brother. She is probably the one born at Beck Farm, Millom to father John, christened at the local parish church on 21st December 1782, thus some seven years younger than her husband.



John and Elizabeth (who was usually known as Betty) had a total of 10 known children born at Soutergate in the period 1805 to 1822, as follows; all were christened at St Cuthbert.....

John	christened	24 th January 1805
William	“	13 th June 1807
Anne	“	17 th December 1808
Thomas	“	18 th March 1811
Samuel	“	2 nd March 1813
James	“	27 th September 1815
Isaac	“	15 th October 1817
Elizabeth	born 19 th October, christened 1 st November 1819	
Hartley	twin, christened 29 th March 1822	
Margaret	“	“

Father's occupations are not generally shown in the parish registers until 1813; in that year John was a husbandman, by 1815 he was a farmer and from 1819 a Yeoman. A different source, the will of John Bowman of Soutergate in 1810 also shows John Mason as a husbandman; he inherited one-half of the former's estate at Soutergate "for his heirs and assigns forever".

Daughter **Anne** died in August 1829 at Soutergate, just 20 years old. She was buried at St Cuthbert on the 27th of that month. The other nine children all married in the period 1833 – 1856

and went on to pursue a much more diverse range of occupations than either of our Families A or B. Farming was still a major activity; the eldest son **John** went to Marsh Grange where he and his descendants worked the land until 1915. We continue his story in section 7.2 following. **Samuel** farmed at Ireleth (section 7.3), and **Isaac** carried on the family holding at Soutergate (see below). **Elizabeth** and **Margaret** married two brothers of the James family, also farmers (section 7.4). **William** and **James** became respected shopkeepers in Ulverston, in both the linen drapery and ironmongery trades (7.5); **Hartley** was a druggist, then a slate agent and general commission agent (7.6). Lastly **Thomas** was a butcher at Sandside, but his family (in my direct line) later held senior positions with the Furness Railway in Barrow (section 8).

In the **1841 census** at Soutergate, John Mason is a farmer “aged 65” (that is, 65-69 in this document; we know he was actually around 66). Betty is “55” (i.e. 55-60) and shown here rarely using her “formal” name of Elizabeth. Only three children Isaac, Elizabeth and Margaret are still living with them, but Thomas the butcher is next door with his wife and family. There are two male farm servants and one female house servant.

Elizabeth (Betty) Mason died at Soutergate on 29th April 1844, aged 61, and was interred at St Cuthbert on 3rd May.

The **1851 census** shows John, now 75 at Head Gate Farm (pictures below), where he worked



54 acres. This is at the western end of Soutergate hamlet, and perhaps he and his father before him had always been there, though the farm is not named as such in the older records. His by now widowed daughter-in-law Jane is next door with her family at Head Gate Cottage. Isaac is the only one of his children still with him then, aged 33. They had two farm servants and two house servants living in with them.

Isaac Mason married **Ann Kellet** at St Cuthbert on the 10th May 1856, when he was 38 and she only 21. We have come across her family already; her father Jonathan was farming Crossbeck at the time of the marriage, and she was married from there. Ann was christened at Dalton St Mary on 16th February 1834; at that time Jonathan was a labourer and he lived with his wife Elizabeth at Marton, Dalton. He was born at Heysham on 5th September 1800 of William & Ann Kellet and christened there on 12th October. He married Elizabeth Kendall on 8th July 1825 at Dalton, but their first child, Robert was born at Pennington the following year. By August 1829 and the birth of William, they were back at Dalton and already living at Marton then. The subsequent baptisms show that Jonathan became a farmer there about 1836. Five years later in the first detailed census, the family have 5 children at home ranging from 14 down to 1, Ann being the middle one. At least 2 more followed, in later 1841 and August 1847, and they were still at Marton until then. They had however moved to Crossbeck by April 1851, where Jonathan is shown in the census farming

86 acres with 1 labourer; the two eldest boys are also no doubt helping out, and maybe Ann also, at 17 perhaps as a dairymaid. There is one house servant.

Isaac and Ann Mason had 5 known children, as follows.....

William	born in the summer of 1857 at Kirkby Ireleth
Elizabeth	christened 14 th August 1859 at St Cuthbert, father a farmer at Headgate
John	“ 11 th June 1862 “ “ (Soutergate)
Isaac James	born spring 1864 at Kirkby Ireleth
Thomas Hartley	christened 6 th May 1866 at St Cuthbert, father a farmer at Soutergate

It is a bit of a mystery why baptisms for William and Isaac James do not appear in the St Cuthbert registers; perhaps the parents were undergoing some financial hardship at the time, or maybe ill-health? **Thomas** Hartley Mason was buried at St Cuthbert on 25th June 1867, aged 1.

By the time of the **1861 census**, John had of course retired and is rather curiously shown as a “boarder” in his own farmhouse, with occupation “Landed Proprietor”! He is 85 and recorded as being blind. Son Isaac is now head of the household, running the farm (of 56 acres). Ann, William and Elizabeth are shown as expected; there are 3 servants (2 carters and a dairymaid) but surprisingly no house-servants listed as such, perhaps girls came in from the neighbouring cottages to attend to this?

John Mason died a few weeks after this census, on the 4th July 1861 aged 86 at Headgate; he was buried at St Cuthbert on the 8th. Probate was granted at Lancaster on 12th September to son John Mason, farmer of Marsh Grange as sole executor, effects under £300. The register entry shows John’s residence rather quaintly as “Head of Gate, Soutergate”.

John’s son **Isaac** did not long outlast him; his passing on 18th May 1867 at Soutergate, probably also at Headgate, was reported in the “Liverpool Mercury”. He was just 49 and was buried with his parents in the family vault on the 22nd May. This was about the time that his son Thomas died, so possibly both succumbed to an infection passing around then?

Probate for Isaac, yeoman, was granted at Lancaster to his executors William Mason nephew of Marsh Grange and John Kellet farmer of Scales, Aldingham, effects under £600.

Isaac’s widow **Ann** carried on farming at Headgate, and is shown in the **1871 census** working 60 acres there. Her children William, John and Isaac are with her, all scholars; there are 3 male farm servants and an 18 year old girl general domestic living-in. Ann Mason died on 25th March 1875, aged 41, but her burial at St Cuthbert apparently did not take place until 27th May, perhaps delayed due to a post-mortem? (or is there an error in the records?). The Headgate holding passed out of our family soon afterwards; her children have dispersed widely by 1881 and the census shows the farm (by then 70 acres) being worked by Jonathan Tyson and his sister-in-law Hannah Tyson from Cumberland, as joint tenants.

In the autumn of 1879 Isaac and Ann’s son **William** married **Hannah Martin**, daughter of John born in Kirkby Ireleth, when he was 22 and she 24. In 1861 John Martin was a farm labourer living at a cottage in Beckside with his wife Margaret and four children ranging in age from 29 down to 3, of whom Hannah was the third. He was born at Dalton around 1807 and all of his family in Kirkby Ireleth. Ten years later Hannah has gone into domestic service at the house of William Satterthwaite, blacksmith, at Black Beck, Hawkshead.

A son **Isaac** was born to William and Hannah on 21st February 1880. In the **1881 census** they are living at Paradise, Dalton, a row of cottages on the east side of the main road a couple of miles south of Soutergate (picture right) with a marvellous view across the Duddon estuary. William is an Ag. Lab, and Hannah's retired and by now widowed father aged 72 is with them. A second son **John** was born on 26th December 1881, followed by **Margaret Ann** in summer 1883, **William** christened 22nd March



1885 at Dalton St Mary (but who died the following spring, aged 1) and **Elizabeth Hannah** on 4th July 1886, but Hannah passed on in early 1891 aged only 36, possibly in childbirth. In the 1891 census, William and the 4 surviving children have moved to 39 Lord Street in Dalton; he is now working as an iron miner, as is his younger unmarried brother Isaac James who is staying with him.

The widower William married **Emily Wilson** locally in the summer of 1893. Emily was born in the village of Tamerton Foliot near Plymouth, Devon around 1863; Wilson is her married surname (she was born Emily Down, daughter of Richard and Mary) and she was also widowed by 1891; in the census that year we find her at 3 Dalton Road, Askam staying with her in-laws, Thomas Wilson, still working as an iron miner at 71, and his wife Ann. Emily has a son William R. Wilson aged 1 with her.

On 17th January 1900 William & Hannah's son **Isaac** married **Elizabeth Ann Broom** at St Cuthbert; he was by then an Iron ore miner living at Lindal and his father William had become a mine overlooker. Elizabeth was aged 22, born at Kirkby Ireleth on 3rd April 1877 of William, a labourer there, and his wife Eleanor, nee Gaskell. In the 1881 census she is with her parents William, then a slate quarrier and his wife Eleanor at Old Kiln, next door to her grandparents Thomas and Betty Broom whom we have already met in section 6 (Family B) above. Ten years later aged 14 she is working as a domestic servant to Mary Jane Simpson at Grizebeck Row. By 1911 Isaac and Elizabeth were living at 1 Victoria Street, Dalton, with four sons, and ten years later they are at 38 Ulverston Road, Dalton; he is now a motor driver with the Dalton Co-op. Three sons are still at home; the eldest William 20 has no job shown, Harold, 18 is a metal dresser at the Vickers Shipyard in Barrow and John, 15 is an errand boy for Mr Birkett, draper of Ulverston Road.

In 1939 they are at 20 Chester Street in the town, with Isaac still working as a motor lorry driver. Elizabeth died in the spring of 1958, aged 81, and Isaac on 27th May 1972 aged 92, both in the Ulverston area.



In the 1901 census, William and Emily are at Lindal Cote Cottage near Dalton (pictured), and as expected from his son's marriage record, he is a Captain Iron Miner, now aged 42. They have 2 children

with them, Elizabeth by now 14 and a young Emily born in the autumn of 1893 at Dalton; we can

now see the reason for the hurried marriage a couple of months previously! William and Hannah's son **John**, now 19 was working as a cattleman on a farm at Milnthorpe, between Kendal and Carnforth.

The 1911 census shows William and Emily still at no. 5 Lindal Cote; children Elizabeth and Emily are still with them, there is another daughter Dorothy aged 8 and son John has by now returned to the family fold also, working as an iron ore miner. Emily senior died in early 1919, aged 56. In 1921 we find the widowed William still at Lindal Cote, now recorded as a Mine Captain, Iron Ore Mine, for the Pennington Mining Company. His daughter Dorothy is with him, looking after the house. William died locally in late 1937 aged 80.

William & Hannah's second son **John** married Mary Elizabeth Parker in the summer of 1915. She is a bit of a mystery, due to the very common name. According to the 1939 ID card index, she was born on 17th November 1875, but the 1921 census entry adds to the confusion; in this she calls herself Elizabeth and claims to be aged 41 years and 6 months, thus born around November 1879 in Cumberland, but there is no record of a birth there, in either year! We have definitely got the right entry, as John is quite specific about his birthplace as Paradise, Dalton and he is exactly the correct age; they are living at Little Chuck Hatch, Urswick, he employed as an Iron Ore Miner with the Pennington Mining Company, but temporarily out of work (probably due to a strike in the industry at the time). In 1939, they were at Sunny Bank, Ulverston, and John was employed by the local council public health department on "heavy work". John died in late 1947 in the area, aged 65, and Mary in summer 1951, recorded as age 75 years.

William & Hannah's daughter **Margaret** at age 19 was a servant in 1901 to Robert Odey, Butcher & his family at 31 Broughton Road, Dalton. Ten years later she is a servant (one of 3), housemaid to Robert McNab, Barrister and his family at St. Fillans, Penwortham Brow, Penwortham near Preston. She could not be definitely identified in the 1921 census; perhaps married or passed on by then?

William & Hannah's daughter **Elizabeth Hannah**, born on 4th July 1886 at Dalton and christened there on 25th July married Edward Eaves in the spring of 1912. Edward was born in Lytham St Anne's on 2nd July 1884, the son of John Robert Eaves and May, nee Andrew. In 1921 they are at 44 South Warton Street in Lytham, with Edward a decorator working for R. Morris based at 4 Windsoor Road, Ansdell. There are no children. By 1939 they had moved a short way to 48 Warton Street where Edward is listed as a painter & decorator. He died in the area on 31st August 1964 aged 80, but Elizabeth lived on to the incredible age of 101, passing on 23rd October 1987.

William & his 2nd wife Emily's daughter **Emily** was born in Dalton on 17th October 1893 and christened there on 26th November. She married William Christopher Wall in the Ulverston area in the summer of 1920. William was born in the West Derby district of Liverpool on 4th November 1892, son of William Richard Wall, a police constable & Florence Clara, nee Keeton. In the census a year later they are at 87 Macklin Street, Derby; he has followed in his father's footsteps and become a police constable with the Derbyshire force. In 1939 William (still a constable) and Emily are at 58 St Wystan's Road, Derby. They have a son William A. born 21st June 1925 with them; he is still at school. Emily Wall died on 10th August 1983 in the Wolverhampton area, aged 89.

In 1871 we find Isaac & Ann's daughter **Elizabeth** Mason at 11 staying at Startforth Vicarage, Bowes Road Startforth near Barnard Castle, North Yorkshire, the home of John Brockbank, vicar

of Startforth and landowner, born around 1839 at Westerwoodale, Cumberland and his wife Mary Agnes (nee James); she is recorded as John's cousin. Also at the house is a Hannah Mason, 31, born at Coniston, working as a general servant; we have no idea how if at all she fits into our family!

Ten years later Elizabeth is still at Startforth, and has become housemaid to Mary Brockbank who is by now widowed. The latter was born at Kirkby Ireleth in 1845 but all of her 6 children were born at Startforth from 1869 on, and Elizabeth had no doubt travelled with her from Kirkby at or before that time. We come across this place (and surname) again later, in section 7.4

By 1881 we find **John** Mason at 19 as one of 3 farm servants to William Higgin, working 251 acres at Broughton Beck, Osmotherley, just to the west of Ulverston (pictured). In 1891 he has moved on to Manor House farm, Bolton-le-Sands near Lancaster, working as a farm servant to John Hoggarth and his family and living in. While there he evidently met, and then married **Isabel Whiteside** on 14th November 1894, when he was 32. Isabel was born at Sandside nearby on 6th September 1870 to William Whiteside and his wife Agnes, nee Bhyrom. The 1871



census shows William as farming just 6 acres at Bolton; both he and Agnes were born at Lancaster. There are 7 children ranging in age from 13 down to 6 months (Isabel) of whom the two eldest are already supplementing the family income as fishermen. In 1881 the family home is confirmed as Sandside, Bolton-le-Sands; William Whiteside is now fishing as well as farming, as are his 3 eldest sons, Isabel at 11 is a scholar.

In the 1901 census, John is a horseman on a farm at Main Road (next to Ashton House), Slyne-with-Hest, the village adjacent to Bolton-le-Sands. He and Isabella (as she now calls herself) have 2 children, **John**, christened on 22nd October 1895 at Holy Trinity, Bolton-le-Sands, and **Norah Agnes**, born 20th November 1898 and christened at the same church on Christmas Day that year. They are still at Slyne in 1911, with son John by now working as an ironmonger's assistant.

Norah married John Ghorst in Lancaster in the spring of 1919. John was born 28th July 1898 in the Lancaster area.

In the 1921 census at Sea View, Slyne we find John & Isabel Mason, also Norah & John Ghorst now with 2 young sons. John is a shepherd employed by John Hoggart, farmer at Manor Farm, Slyne, and Norah's husband John is a platelayer on the London & North Western Railway at Bolton-le-Sands. There is also John Mason's nephew, Ben Jon Whiteside aged 13 staying with them on census night.

In 1939 John senior, retired farm labourer and Isabel were living at 2 Sea View, "Lancaster" (Slyne?). John is probably the one who passed away at Lancaster in the summer of 1941, aged 79, and Isabel in early 1957 at 86. By 1939 the Ghorsts were living at 5 Malt Kiln Cottages in Lancaster, with John employed in railway engineering maintenance & repair. Nora died in early 1968 aged 69, and John in early 1970 at 71, both in the Lancaster area.

Finally, **Isaac James** Mason in 1881 was at Beckside Farm House, Kirkby Ireleth, at 17 a farm servant to his widowed aunt, Elizabeth James who worked 70 acres there (see section 7.4 below). He married **Mary Hartley** on 16th January 1893 at Dalton St Mary aged 28. Mary was born Mary

Hudson, daughter of John Hudson & Eleanor, nee Postlethwaite, at Broughton West in late 1860 and christened there on 9th December. She married Roger Hartley in the Barrow area in early 1884, but he died in early 1889, aged just 29. The 1891 census shows the widow Mary at 6 Broughton Road, Dalton working as a laundress; she has two sons, John H. 4 born in Whitehaven and Roger, 2 at Dalton. By 1901 Isaac & Mary have moved along to no. 49 Broughton Road, with Isaac now 37 employed as an Iron miner below ground. Mary's son Roger is at home, also her two children with Isaac, Annie aged 7 (born 29th March 1894) and William James aged 2 (christened at Dalton, 13th November 1898; they also had a son Isaac born in early 1893, which sadly died at just a few days old). Ten years on, we find them at 36 Lancaster Street, Dalton. Isaac is still mining; of the children just Annie and William remain with them there.

Isaac James Mason died in early July 1912 aged 48 and was buried at Dalton St Mary on the 11th of that month. In 1921 his widow Mary is still at the Lancaster street house, with daughter Annie, 27 a shop assistant for D. J. Crellin, confectioner of 19 Tudoe Square, Dalton, and son William a Ship's temporary Lightman at Vickers Naval Construction Works, Barrow.

Mary died on 15th December 1927, aged 67. Daughter Annie never married; she was a confectionery shop assistant still living at the family home, 36 Lancaster Street in 1939, and died 7th July 1958 in Egremont, Cumberland, aged 64. Son William James died 28th June 1935 aged 36.

7.2 John Mason and his descendants at Marsh Grange

The eldest son **John** of John and Betty Mason born in 1805 married **Tamar Pickthall** at her home parish church of Bootle, Cumberland on 28th May 1835, when he was 30. Tamar was born at Bootle and christened there on 8th March 1805; her parents were Robert & Elizabeth, nee Thompson.

John and Tamar took on the tenancy of the farm and house of Marsh Grange (right), just a few yards over the border from Kirkby Ireleth in the parish of Dalton, around 1838. This fine house was mainly built in the late 17th century, but has a rear wing dating from some 80 years earlier. It was somewhat modernised during the 19th century and is now a listed building. An article on the English Heritage website gives a fuller description of the property and its impressive surviving original entrance gateway. It was owned by around 1887 at



least by the same Wakefield family that bought Ashlack Hall in that year, so the Masons would have been their tenants, albeit very long term ones. Four known children, all boys, were born to John and Tamar, as follows.....

John	born in spring of 1836, baptised at Whicham, Cumberland on 18 th June
Robert	born 7 th December 1839, baptized 4 th January 1840 at Dalton St Mary
Thomas	born in April 1841, baptized 1 st May at Dalton St Mary
William	baptized 21 st December 1843 at Ireleth Chapel, by the minister of St Mary.

In a break from family tradition these were *not* baptised at St Cuthbert; though there would seem to be no reason why they could not have been, the parents have adhered rigidly to the parish boundary demarcation. In the last three of the above records, father John is shown as a farmer, and the residence as Marsh Grange.

The **1841 census** shows John, Tamar and the first three children at Marsh Grange Farm. Thomas Hartley, 60 “of independent means” is with them. There are seven farm servants and three house servants living-in.

Son **John** died at St. Bees near Whitehaven, Cumberland at the home of his uncle John Whinnerah (who married Tamar’s sister Hannah Pickthall) on 16th March 1844, he was just seven years old. The family headstone at St Cuthbert records that he was interred at St Bees.

In **1851** John is by now working 350 acres at Marsh Grange, with eight labourers. John and Tamar are now 46, their three children are at home but unusually not shown as scholars in the census entry. Of the 8 farm servants only four are now living in the main house, and there are two female domestic servants.

About a year later John Mason, farmer at Marsh Grange, inherited one half share of the Rectory Farm, Beckside property of his late sister Margaret James (see section 7.4) but presumably then tenanted it out.

There is a rather odd entry in the “Manchester Times” of 15th November 1854 announcing that **Robert** Mason of Marsh Grange had been awarded a game certificate; he was only 14 years old at the time!

John and Tamar lost another of their sons, **Thomas**, who died on Christmas Eve 1857 at Marsh Grange, aged 16. He was interred at St Cuthbert on 28th December.

The **1861** census shows that John is now working 490 acres at Marsh Grange with 2 labourers, but the two sons Robert and William are also both shown as “farm assistants”. The family has 2 servants in the house. Ten years on the situation is little changed with John at 66 still farming, but the sons are now shown as full farmers there also. John’s niece Ann Mason, daughter of late brother Thomas (see section 8 following) was their housekeeper, assisted by one young female servant. Very shortly afterwards John retired and went to live at “Little Croft”, Beckside (pictures right & below left).



He also evidently owned the nearby “Mill Cottage” (right), which was let out to the Lancashire Police for £10 per annum in that year, for use as the village police station and living quarters. Ten years on, John and Tamar are still at Little Croft in the **1881 census**, and his niece Ann is still their housekeeper, again assisted by one junior domestic.

John Mason “late of Marsh Grange” died at Little Croft on 7th March 1882, aged 77, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 10th. Probate was granted at Lancaster to sons Robert farmer at



Marsh Grange and William farmer at Outerthwaite as executors, effects total £1582-8s-5d.

Tamar survived him by just over four years, passing away on 27th March 1886 at Cartmel, aged 81. She was interred alongside John on 31st March.

John's eldest surviving son **Robert** took over running the Marsh Grange holding upon his father's retirement about 1870. He married **Ann ("Annie") Grice** at Bootle in the spring of 1873, aged 33; Ann was born there on the 15th April 1843. The 1851 census shows that her father William was then farming 90 acres at Old Hyton, Bootle (right) with 3 labourers, two of whom lived in at the farmhouse. He was also born at Bootle, around 1800, as was his wife Ann, nee Parker around 7 years later. They have 5 children ranging from 14 down to 1, the first 4 all scholars, Ann being the third. There are two house servants. 1861 shows little change; there are now only 2 farm labourers, the eldest son Thomas, 24 now surely doing his share of the work. Of the others, only Ann and the youngest, Richard, 11 are still at home and there is just 1 house servant. Ten years later we find Ann at 27 now housekeeper to her elder brother William, as yet unmarried, who is farming 76 acres at Langley, Corney near Bootle with 1 labourer and one junior house servant.

Back at Old Hyton, Ann's father William died in early 1869, aged 68. His widow Ann and son Thomas, yeoman, continued to work the farm and by 1881 had expanded the holding to 130 acres, with 3 labourers including younger son Richard. Her grandson John Mason aged 7 (see below) is staying over on census night, and there are two house servants.

Robert and Ann had five known children, all born at Marsh Grange. However as a reversion to normal family tradition, all were christened at St Cuthbert as follows

John	born on 2 nd March, christened 28 th March 1874
William Grice	christened 9 th April 1875
Annie	born on 2 nd November, christened 29 th November 1876
Robert	born on 5 th April, christened 1 st May 1878
Elizabeth	born on 4 th July, christened 30 th July 1879

with father Robert's occupation shown as Farmer throughout, the older fine distinctions of Husbandman, Farmer, Yeoman having largely died out by then.

By **1881**, Robert Mason was working 600 acres at Marsh Grange, presumably having been able to extend his tenancy into some surrounding fields. He and Annie have only their four youngest children with them on census night; son **John** aged 7 was staying with Ann's brothers Thomas and

Richard Grice and their widowed mother also Ann at Old Hyton, Bootle, where Thomas was a Yeoman Farmer of 130 acres. At Marsh Grange there are also 4 farm servants and 3 domestics living in the main house.

In the 1882 will of Thomas James Mason of Ashlack (see Family A, section 5.4 above), Robert was to be left one half of his residual estate, as a “friend” (in reality a very distant cousin, though with their common surname they may not have known that). In view of what subsequently happened to him and that estate, this benevolence was unlikely to have been worth very much at all, when Thomas eventually passed away in 1898!

The 1891 census shows Robert and Annie at Marsh Grange with the four youngest children at home, all scholars. The daughters are shown as Annie and Lizzie. The acreage worked is not specified, and neither is it 10 years later; just the three youngest children are still with them then, Robert junior no doubt helping out on the farm. There are two male farm servants and 3 girls in the house; Kitchen maid, Housemaid and Charwoman. Probably around 1904, Robert retired from farming and moved with his wife Ann to Little Croft, following in his father’s footsteps (the house had been let out for around 15 years after the death of his mother; in 1891 to a John Morton, retired civil engineer. He may still have been there in 1901, but that census shows the tenants as “away from home; enumerated elsewhere”). In the 1911 census at Little Croft, Robert and Anne have just their daughter Annie aged 34 still with them at home.

Robert Mason died on 21st March 1921 at Little Croft, aged 81 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 24th. Probate was granted in London 1/6/1921 to Ann his widow and sons John bank clerk & Robert gentleman, effects totalling £7674-4s-5d

In the census taken just a short time after in June 1921 the widow Ann is still at Little Croft, with daughters Annie & Elizabeth helping out in the house, and son Robert a poultry farmer based at home. A Harriet Jane Grice, widow aged 75 is staying with them on census night. Ann passed on at Little Croft on 9th June 1926 at 83 and was interred alongside husband Robert on 12th June.

All of Robert & Ann’s five children seem to have enjoyed long lives. In 1891 we find **John** boarding at 6 West Road, Lancaster, working as a banker’s clerk at 17. He could not be found in the 1901 census but in 1911 he is found staying with his brother Robert at Marsh Grange, again shown as a bank clerk. Ten years later he is boarding at Moss House, Stockton Heath, Cheshire, employed as a bank accountant with the Manchester & Liverpool District Bank Co. at Stanley Street, Warrington. It seems he never married, and by 1939 he is a retired bank manager living with a Clayton family at 17a Whitefield Road, Runcorn in Cheshire. John died on 10th February 1947 back at Little Croft, Kirkby Ireleth aged 72 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 13th.

William Grice Mason “of Marsh Grange, Furness” is recorded in the Aberdeen Weekly Journal edition of 28th March 1891 as having passed his agricultural exams in Edinburgh, at the age of 16. He went to live and farm at Swellendam, South Africa, and married Henrietta Frances White in Kimberley, Cape Colony on 13th January 1904. William & Henrietta had just one known child, **Robert** Grice Mason born on 6th July 1906. This Robert later married **Irene Parker Mason**, a cousin descended from Thomas Mason (see section 8 following) and carried on the family farm as a cattle rancher in South Africa for many years. William Grice Mason died in Cape Town on 13th November 1948, aged 73, and Henrietta there in 1954 at 71 years of age.

Robert probably carried on after his father at Marsh Grange for some years, but the Masons are said to have finally relinquished the tenancy there in 1915. He then went to live at Little Croft for the rest of his life; he died in Lancaster Moor Hospital on 19th September 1952 aged 74 but was

buried at St Cuthbert four days later. His sisters **Annie** and **Elizabeth** never married; both also continued to live at Little Croft and eventually died there, Elizabeth on 5th February 1953 aged 73 and Annie on 30th March 1962 aged 85; both were buried at St Cuthbert.

John & Tamar Mason's second surviving son **William** lived and worked with his father and then his elder brother at Marsh Grange until his marriage to **Eleanor Parker** on 11th June 1872 at St Cuthbert, when he was 28. Eleanor was born in the summer of 1845 at Osmotherley, west of Ulverston, but by the time of her marriage was living at Chappels, Kirkby Ireleth. She was the third daughter of Henry Parker, who farmed at Bridge End, Kirkby until his death; we look at this family in more detail later.

By **1881** William and Eleanor had moved to Lower Allithwaite, a couple of miles west of Grange-over-Sands, and farmed 212 acres at Outerthwaite, between the main road and the railway just beyond the western fringe of the village (picture below). They had no known children. In the 1881 census, there is a young male farm pupil, two male farm servants, a dairymaid and a girl domestic living in. The situation is very similar in 1891, except there are now 4 farm servants and 2 in the house. A house guest is with them, Hannah M. Selkirk aged 34 with no occupation is described as William's cousin, though the connection is not known (she was born at Beckermet, Cumberland). Ten years later Hannah is still with William & Eleanor at the farm.



In 1905 it is recorded that William, still at Outerthwaite, bought a parcel of meadowland at Soutergate from Joseph Parker of Bridge End (probably Eleanor's brother, still working their father's farm there) for the sum of £17. By 1911 William had retired and the census shows them living at Cartmel Grange, Lower Allithwaite. Hannah Selkirk is still with them, and there is one house servant. William died at Greenfield House, Cartmel on 8th February 1917 aged 73. He was brought back to Kirkby Ireleth and interred at St Cuthbert on the 13th February. Probate was granted 17/5/1917 in London to brother Robert Mason, farmer, effects totalling £1531-13s.

Eleanor then returned to live at Soutergate, and in the 1921 census is at Bridge End House, with her widowed sister Isabella Ashburner and unmarried siblings Jane & Joseph Parker. She passed on there on 24th July 1922 aged 77 and was buried alongside her husband on the 27th of that month.

7.3 Samuel Mason (1813 – 1892), Yeoman at Ireleth

Samuel, the 4th son of John and Betty, married **Agnes Kitchen** on 7th February 1837 at the parish church of St Mary, Dalton in Furness when he was 23 years old. Agnes was christened on 19th March 1815 at the same church, thus two years younger than Samuel; her parents were John, a husbandman and Margaret (nee Newby) living in Ireleth village. The marriage was by licence rather than banns, and the witnesses were James Hartley and Elizabeth Mason, the latter presumably his mother Betty as his sister Elizabeth was only 17 at the time.

Samuel and Agnes had seven known children, as follows. The birthplaces are given variously in the later censuses as Ireleth, Dalton (mainly) or Kirkby Ireleth, though all of the following records

show this as Ireleth village, midway between Soutergate and Dalton, with father Samuel as a farmer throughout.....

Margaret	born in spring 1838, baptized on 5 th May at Dalton St Mary
John	“ early 1840, baptized on 6 th February, ditto
William	“ early 1842, baptized on 27 th March, ditto
Elizabeth	baptised 25 th May 1845 at Ireleth Chapel by the minister of St Mary
Thomas Hartley	“ 13 th April 1848, ditto
Agnes Ann	“ as Agnes, 24 th August 1850 (ditto)
Isaac Samuel	“ 5 th March 1857 (ditto); (but buried at Dalton St Mary on 31 st May)

The picture below left shows Ireleth Chapel, nowadays St Peter’s church.



In all of the censuses **1841 to 1871** inclusive Samuel and Agnes are listed at Ireleth, but with no individual household addresses shown. Samuel is variously shown as a farmer or landowner, the 1851 entry indicating that he then worked 60 acres with 2 labourers. 1841 shows that they were quite close to Elliscalles Farm, then run by a branch of the Ashburner family, on the road running north out of Dalton and we can probably assume our family stayed at the same anonymous property throughout the period, maybe one of those now known as St Helens or Thwaites Flat. It may be possible using

contemporary maps and a knowledge of the enumerator’s route for each census to work out exactly which property this was, and whether it still survives today. By 1871 just two of their children are with them, John at 31 is a merchant’s clerk and Agnes Ann 20, a general servant.

Daughter **Margaret** had married **Solomon Armer Troughton** at St George, Liverpool on 31st January 1864, when she was 25, as recorded in the “Liverpool Mercury” the following week. Solomon was born in 1824 at Whicham, Cumberland and since at least 1861 had been Master of the Union Workhouse at The Gill, Ulverston, so presumably it was Margaret who was resident in Liverpool then. However by 1871 they were living in Dalton, and Solomon’s occupation is now shown as “traveller” (what we would now call a sales rep). They have two children, William M, 4 born in Ireleth village and Amy A, 8 months at the time of the census, born at Dalton. Ten years on they have moved back to Ulverston, living at 41 Sun Street (right), behind the workhouse, with Solomon now recorded as “Commercial Traveller”. They have a further child Elizabeth 7, born at Ulverston.



In 1891 they are shown at 19 Queen Street in the town (picture below right); Solomon is further clarified as a spirit merchant’s traveller and his wife Margaret is a “Fancy



Repository” shop keeper; the two daughters are still at home, Amy working as a milliner and Elizabeth assisting in the shop.

Solomon Troughton died on 13th May 1892 at Kirkby Ireleth, aged 67. In 1901, the widow Margaret aged 63 is still running the fancy repository shop but by 1911 was retired and lodging at 32 Queen Street in the town; she died on 17th April 1915 aged 77.



We found no further record of Samuel & Agnes’s daughter **Elizabeth** after the 1861 census, where she is shown at home with her parents. She apparently did not marry or die locally before 1871, and could not be identified in the census of that year or 1881. She probably moved to a large city to work in service, and died young there. Son **William** could be the one shown in 1861 living in and working as an ag. lab. at Lane House, West End, Ulverston, the 220 acre farm of Robert Atkinson and his family; as we saw earlier (section 5.2.4) he possibly went to Canada sometime in the next ten years, alternatively he is perhaps the one who died in early 1863, aged 20 in the Ulverston area.

John married **Elizabeth Robinson** on 25th September 1872 at Ulverston, when he was 32. Elizabeth was born in Ulverston in 1842, daughter of Robert Robinson a master brewer born in Lyth, Westmorland about 1804 and his wife Margaret the same age from Overton near Lancaster. In the 1851 census the family home and brewery are in the western part of the Gill in Ulverston town (right). Robert employed 8 men there, and there are nine children at home, Elizabeth being the 7th in age. By 1861 Robert had died but his widow and 3 youngest children including Elizabeth are still living at the Gill. Ten years on just Elizabeth remains at home with her mother, and the family business is evidently still running as the latter is listed as “partner in brewery”; they have one house servant.



John and his new wife had three children all born at Ireleth village, Margaret Agnes on 17th July 1873, Robert Samuel on 7th March 1875 and Elizabeth Helen on 15th March 1877. Around 1879 however, they moved lock, stock & barrel to the village of Hillhampton, Worcestershire; in the 1881 census John is a farmer at Hillhampton Farm working 204 acres with 4 labourers and 2 boys. They have 5 domestic servants living in, so appear to be doing well despite the depressed state of the markets around that time as we have already seen. This was to be short-lived however, as John passed away on 29th September 1885 at Hillhampton, aged only 45. Probate was granted to his widow Elizabeth in the sum of £1610-9s.

Elizabeth then moved into town at Kings Norton, and in the 1891 census is living at 127 Upper Mary Street, Balsall Heath. Her three children are with her, son Robert employed as a carpenter’s apprentice. Staying with them is Elizabeth’s nephew Robert Postlethwaite, 28, a farm manager born at Ulverston. In 1901, Elizabeth and the 3 children are at 17 Medcroft Road, Yardley Wood with Margaret now working as a Photographer’s assistant and Elizabeth junior a photographic retoucher; Robert is a fully-fledged carpenter. In late 1906 daughter (Elizabeth) Helen married Harry Hitchinson and in 1911 we find them together with Elizabeth senior & junior and Margaret at 196 Station Road, King’s Heath; Harry was working as a jeweller’s clerk. Ten years later at 24 Heathfield Road, King’s Heath in Smethwick Harry is an electro-plate manufacturer (employer) at

3 Legge Lane, Birmingham, with Helen & her mother Elizabeth at home, and Margaret a Photographer at Highbury Studio, 48 Bristol Street in the city.

Elizabeth senior died in early 1924, aged 82.

Son **Robert** had by 1911 moved to Arthur Smith's commercial lodging house at 87-91 Grosvenor Street, Chorlton on Medlock, Manchester, one of no less than 72 "inmates" there, listed as a joiner, claiming to be married six years and with 3 children, though no record of them can be found. Things become clearer ten years later: he is at 26 Pollard Street, Ancoats in East Manchester with wife Annie born late 1876 at Peel, Isle of Man and two daughters Blanche 19 and Annie 14 born in Peel and Douglas, IoM respectively. Robert is a joiner employed by W. Smith, builder of 25 Piggott Street nearby. Blanche is a waitress at Jones & Co's cafe in Piccadilly, and Annie junior a "ruler" at Brighthouse & Co, printers & bookbinders in Withy Grove.

The 1939 ID card index clarifies yet further; Robert is shown at 69 Hyde Grove, Chorlton, still working as a joiner, "married", with an Annie F. Caley born 1876, also "married", so this is his mystery long-term partner! Robert died in January 1941 at Chorlton aged 65.

Daughter **Margaret** never married; in 1939 she was a ladies companion help at 49 Valentine Road, Birmingham, still living with her sister **Elizabeth Helen** & her Husband Harry, working as an electroplate salesman. She died in Birmingham on 26th January 1955, aged 81. Elizabeth died there in summer 1964, aged 87.

Thomas Hartley Mason married **Elizabeth Duke** at St John, Liverpool on 21st May 1876 when he was 28. As reported in the local paper, Elizabeth was the only daughter of Richard Duke of Roanhead, Dalton in Furness and his wife Alice, nee Crellen, born in the summer of 1848, and presumably both she and Thomas were living in Liverpool at that time; he was a master mariner.

Thomas and Elizabeth had three known children, as follows:

Richard Norman	born 24 th November 1880 in the West Derby district of Liverpool
Ernest	born 27 th August, christened 23 rd October 1882 in Everton
Samuel Harold	born 9 th July, christened 10 th August 1884 at Everton

Thomas was away at sea on census night, 1881; Elizabeth and son Richard were living at 13 Louisa Street, Everton. Thomas died at sea on 4th September 1885, aged 37, recorded as "suicide by drowning"; he was a steward aboard the vessel "Magdala", a Royal Navy Cerberus Class coastal defence ship based in Bombay, India.

In 1891 his widow Elizabeth was at 18 Lake Street, Everton, with her 2 younger sons. She married Richard William Price in the West Derby area of Liverpool in late 1899 and in the 1901 census is shown at 11 Dinorwic Road, Walton on the Hill. She died in that area in early 1909, aged 60. Her elder son **Richard Norman** was an inmate at the Seaman's Orphan Mission, Liverpool in 1891; presumably his mother could not afford to keep him, or did not have room at home? Happily by 1901 he was back at home with his mother & step-father, working as a clerk to an insurance company, and in 1911 was boarding at 7 Butt Road, Colchester, Essex, similarly employed. He married Margaret Jean Murray back in Liverpool on 10th February 1913. Margaret was born in New Abbey, Dumfries, Scotland on 7th February 1883, but by 1911 was a restaurant manageress in Anfield, Liverpool. Richard & Margaret had the following 5 children, all born in the West Derby area of Liverpool:

Agnes Mabel	born 30 th July 1913; she married Charles N. Steele in spring 1940
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Frances Ann	“ 23 rd May 1915 – <i>then a gap presumed due to Richard’s war service</i>
Norma Margaret	“ late 1920; she married Frederick Keen in spring 1943
Catherine J. M	“ 29 th December 1923; she married William F. E. Legg in early 1946
Phyllis Audrey	“ 9 th October 1926; she married James Sloane in early 1954

In the 1921 census we find Richard, Margaret and the then 3 girls at 58 September Road, West Derby, he as a clerk with the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board in Liverpool.

Richard Norman was still working as a time & wages clerk for the MD&HB in 1939; he and Margaret are living at 23, Belmont Drive, Liverpool and daughters Agnes, Catherine & Phyllis are with them there. Agnes is an unemployed pools checker at Littlewoods & Co; Phyllis is still at school.

In 1901 Thomas & Elizabeth’s son **Ernest** was working as a clerk to a cotton broker, but by 1904 was serving aboard the screw cargo steamer “Menes” operated by J. Moss & Co, Liverpool; in 1911 he was a Royal Navy ship’s stoker/engineer operating in the Indo-China Seas. **Samuel** was a clerk to a farmer in 1901; he married Margaret Welsh in late 1910; she was born in Edinburgh in 1876, so 9 years his senior. He was working as a barman in 1911, and ten years later just the two of them are at 3 Rupert Grove, Everton, he working as Assistant Factory Foreman with the British American Tobacco Company at 60 Commercial Road, Liverpool. He is still there, as a “tobacco manufacturer” in 1939.

Lastly, **Agnes Ann** Mason married **John Jenkins** in the autumn of 1873 at Ulverston. He was born in Usk, Monmouthshire in 1840, but could not be found in the 1851 or 1861 censuses. By 1871 he was a boarder in the house of Henry Wildman, an Iron Miner & his family at Ireleth Village, he is a schoolteacher and shown as a widower.

In the 1881 census John and Agnes are living at 7 Daltongate in the centre of Ulverston with John an Elementary School teacher. They have 5 sons ranging from 14 years (by his first wife) then 6 years down to 8 months, the first two shown as born at Askam and the rest at Ulverston. John Jenkins died on 21st July 1885 aged 45, and by 1891 his widow Agnes has moved to 16 Hartley Street in the town, where she is running a lodging house. Three sons are there with her, the eldest Herbert at 16 is a coal merchant’s clerk. Just one lodger is shown on census night, spinster Eliza Clarke, master music seller aged 59 who was born at Startforth in Yorkshire so presumably came on recommendation of our people there. In 1901 Agnes is at 11 Town Street, Ulverston with her widowed mother Agnes Mason now aged 86, and again 3 of her sons; Harry, 22 is a grocer’s shop man, Wilfred, 18 a corn seedsman’s shop man and Samuel, 16 an iron ore proprietor’s clerk. Ten years on, Agnes and her three sons have moved to 25 Fountain Street, Ulverston, where they have one house servant. Agnes Ann Jenkins died on 25th April 1918 at Ulverston, aged 67.

Meanwhile, back to the parents, Samuel & Agnes Mason. In 1881 they are still at Ireleth, with Samuel shown as a Yeoman Farmer, aged 68. They are on their own in the house, with no children by now as expected, but more surprisingly no servants either. Samuel retired soon afterwards, and ten years later they are shown living at 1 Ireleth Road in the village; their grandson Harry Jenkins is staying with them on census night. Samuel died on 23rd October 1892 aged 79, his wife Agnes then moved to Ulverston to stay with her daughter Agnes as we saw above; she passed on there in early 1903 at 87 years old.

7.4 The Mason sisters marry the James brothers

We saw that John and Betty Mason's two youngest daughters Elizabeth and Margaret were both at home with them at Soutergate in the 1841 census; however they were both to be married shortly afterwards, to two brothers from another wealthy Kirkby Ireleth farming family. The younger sister **Margaret** was the first; she married **Roger Kellet James** on 9th September 1842 at St Cuthbert, aged just 19. Her father John is shown as a Yeoman, likewise both Roger (aged 25) and his father Isaac James. A witness was Elizabeth Mason, which could be either her mother or her elder sister. The latter **Elizabeth** married **James James** on 22nd November 1843, also at St Cuthbert; she was then 24 and he just 25 but had already been married and widowed. In this register entry both the father Isaac James and son James are described as farmers, but John Mason retains his exalted status of Yeoman at Headgate Farm, Soutergate. James was then farming at Low Hall nearby. The mother of both the James brothers was Ann, nee Kellet.

This James family is recorded as early as 1737 at Soutergate, when a William James married Elizabeth Hunter of Cart House. By 1759 they were themselves living at Cart House when their daughter Margaret married Richard Dickinson, but by 1802 a James James had become the miller at Beckside Mill; his wife Elizabeth died there in 1832, and Isaac was probably their son?

Roger and Margaret James were destined to have a very short time together, as Roger passed away in the autumn of 1850, aged just 34. They do not appear to have had any children, and in the **1851 census** the widow Margaret is continuing to farm 60 acres at the family holding in Beckside with the assistance of 3 male labourers. Staying with her is a niece Ann, a scholar aged 13 the daughter of Thomas and Jane Mason whom we meet in section 8 below. Margaret herself then died at Beckside on the 12th July 1852 aged 30 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 15th. Her will mentions her brothers John and James Mason, and her sister Elizabeth James.

In 1851 James James is working his main family farm at Low Hall (picture right), by then far the largest in Kirkby Ireleth parish at 432 acres. He and Elizabeth have five children, all girls, the eldest at 10 evidently being that of his first wife and the rest aged from 5 down to 10 months. In the census they have 3 house servants and several farm labourers all living in.



After the death of her sister Margaret in 1852, Elizabeth inherited "dividends and the produce of the Beckside estate... for the duration of her natural life", also one half of the property itself from her (their brother James Mason had the other half; see below). James James is now described as a yeoman. It seems that soon afterwards they gave up Low Hall (where George Ashburner and his family were in residence by 1861) and went to this much smaller Beckside holding. Perhaps the reason was that James was not well, as he died there in October 1853 aged 35. He was interred at St Cuthbert on the 14th of that month.

So Elizabeth James was to be the sole survivor of these two brother-sister couples. She never remarried, and in the **1861 census** is still farming at Beckside assisted by 3 labourers; her four own daughters are with her. The property is shown as being next door to the Parsonage House at

Beckside, and is that variously known as “Rectory Farm” or “Beckside Farm” (right) though not explicitly named here. Forward to **1871**, and the redoubtable Elizabeth is still working 70 acres at Beckside, aged 51. Her daughters Margaret and Ann Kellet James are helping out; brother **Hartley** Mason, then a “commission agent” (section 7.6) is staying with them on census night. There is also a John C. S. Brockbank aged 2, now clearly defined as Elizabeth’s grandson born at Startforth, North Yorkshire, a place (and surname) already



mentioned, so this is a family “exchange visit” arrangement, by now made somewhat easier using the new-fangled railways, but still an interesting cross-country journey no doubt taking all day.

In **1881** the property is finally identified as “Beckside Farm House”, with the widow Elizabeth still farming the 70 acres. Her by now widowed eldest daughter Elizabeth Postlethwaite aged 35 is housekeeper, nephew Isaac Mason (son of Isaac and Ann nee Kellet from Headgate Farm) is a farm servant, and there are now two Brockbank nieces in residence. Also there is one **Thomas Abbotson**, Elizabeth’s farm manager (Bailiff), who was to marry Anne, the daughter of her brother Thomas and his wife Jane (nee Dodgson) the following year (see section 8). What a tangled web this family weaves!

Elizabeth James died at Beckside Farm on 23rd July 1882 aged 62, and was buried alongside her husband at St Cuthbert on the 25th.

7.5 William and James Mason – shopkeepers of Ulverston

In the very centre of Ulverston, on the north-east corner of Market Place there survives today a very old-established Chemist’s shop, the large board above the doorway proclaiming the current owners, J.N. Murray established 1924. However in numerous old photographs dating back to around 1870 and up until at least 1915 the name reads “**Mackereth late Mason**”. So who was this Mason, obviously held in such great esteem in the town as to be still remembered at least two generations after his demise?



We found very little information, just one reference in an “A2A” indexed document that there was a chemist named **H. Mason** on the site as early as 1724. The traditional Pestle & Mortar symbol of his trade survives above the doorway and carries the date “Estd. 1750”; these were then commonly displayed to help the many who were illiterate to recognise the nature of the business. It is possible that the shop changed hands many times over the intervening years, but that the original name was kept for continuity; this was also common practice in the period, so we might deduce that this man has no connection with our Kirkby Ireleth family (but see section 7.6 following).



As for Mr. Mackereth, he was Henry Whitaker Mackereth of Grange over Sands, who had various business interests in that place and Ulverston by 1891, and published his “Furness Year Book” in Ulverston from at least 1896 to 1902. From the evidence of contemporary photographs, he gradually took over several businesses around the Market Place.

In both the old and present day photos, the Mason’s Ironmongery shop, mentioned below, is the building on the right; the ground-floor windows have been modified over the years.

We also found early on the numerous references to an **Isaac Mason** practising as a solicitor in Ulverston from around 1822 to 1825, and imagined him to be an elderly gent in an upstairs office surrounded by his dusty files, before realising that he is of course the young Isaac of our “Family A” (section 5) who died tragically at the age of only 29 in that latter year.

Just after this, the first member of our “Family C” to set up shop in Ulverston was **William Mason**, second son of John and Betty at Soutergate. At the age of only 20 in the year 1827 he took out a lease from James Coward on a shop and house in the Market Place for 6 years at £35 per annum and quickly established a successful Linen Drapery business there.

William married **Ann Kitchin** on 5th October 1833 at the parish church of St Mary, Ulverston, when he was 26; he is described in the register as a Mercer and the marriage was by licence rather than banns. Ann was born on 26th May 1812 and christened at the same church on 21st June following, her parents were James, yeoman and Mary Kitchin, of another well-regarded and wealthy Ulverston family. Since the wedding was conveniently around the same time as his original lease was due to expire, perhaps William was able to purchase the freehold then from Coward using his bride’s dowry? A son **John** was born to William and Ann a few months later and christened on 18th September 1834, not this time at St Mary’s, but at the recently built Holy

Trinity across town. William is described here as Mercer & Draper. Unfortunately he died shortly afterwards, aged only 27 on 16th May 1835 and was buried at St Mary on the 19th. He did not leave a will, and an administration bond for his estate dated later that year is listed on the A2A index.

In the **1841 census** the widow Ann Mason is living with a Mary Kitchin aged 70, presumably her mother at Rotten Row Ulverston; both are described as “of independent means”, and Ann has her son John with her, by now aged 6. There are two other Mason families shown nearby in Rotten Row, but these folk are from Westmorland and not connected with our family. It is likely that Ann still owns the drapery business but has entrusted it to a manager. However by 1843 William’s younger brother **James** has come from Kirkby Ireleth to take over the running of the shop when he was 27 years old; he is recorded as a “Draper and Tea Dealer” there then, an odd combination! Tragedy was soon to strike again, as Ann was buried at Ulverston St Mary on 4th September 1844, aged just 32. Another administration bond is recorded for her.

James Mason married **Mary Fell** at Ulverston in the spring of 1846. Mary was born in the then-small village of Barrow-in-Furness but since this place did not yet have its own church was christened on 12th December 1824 at St Mary, Dalton; her parents were George and Eleanor Fell

James and Mary had three known children, as follows, all born at Ulverston:

George Hartley	born in the summer of 1847
John	christened at Ulverston Holy Trinity on 3 rd August 1851
Thomas Walton	born at Ulverston in early 1855

An **1851 trade directory** shows “James Mason, Linen & Woollen Drapers” at Market Street, Ulverston, but in the **census** that year we find **James** staying at Alfred Barlow’s public house in Calender Street off Market Street in Manchester, occupation Draper, presumably on business there though strangely he is recorded as being unmarried. Back home at Ulverston, **Mary** is living at the family home in Cavendish Street, “Draper’s Wife”, with her son George H. aged 3; they are staying with her mother Eleanor Fell, Yeoman’s widow aged 58, shown as born in Dalton parish. Also with them is Ann’s nephew, **John** Mason, the orphaned only child of James’ late brother William and his wife Ann, now aged 16 and an Ironmonger’s apprentice. The Ironmonger himself would perhaps be David Booth, aged 30 from Macclesfield, Cheshire, who was then living next door but one in Cavendish Street with his family. Mary and Eleanor employed one house servant, Agness Martin aged 19 from Kirkby Ireleth.

In 1852 James Mason “linen draper of Ulverston” inherited the other half of his late sister **Margaret** James’ estate at Beckside, as mentioned above, but continued developing his drapery business in Ulverston. From around 1855 onwards and for the next twenty years or so there are numerous references in the A2A archives to James’ dealings with for example suppliers who had sold him shoddy or short-weight goods and customers with various complaints.



By the time of the **1861 census** James, Mary and their family are living at Benson Street, Ulverston (pictured above) with James described as “Linen & Woollen Draper employing 1 man and 3 boys”, and a contemporary trade directory confirms that his shop was the one originally run by William at no. 1 Market Place nearby, with James still as “Draper & tea Dealer”. Their 3 sons are by now all shown as scholars, and Mary’s mother Eleanor Fell is still with them, her birthplace now given as the Isle of Walney, opposite Barrow. They have one house servant. Next door are two more Linen Drapers, the Rosser sisters who may have also



worked with James, or maybe in competition with him! Curiously there is a John Mason, a linen draper aged 21 born at Ireleth staying at the Sun Hotel, Market Street (above) on census night; he is Samuel and Agnes’s son (section 7.3) still evidently in the process of exploring his future career options!

On the other side of Market Place, James’ nephew **John** is by now a fully-fledged Master Ironmonger employing a staff of two, living “over the shop”. He had married **Sarah Jane Greenwood** a few months previously, on 4th December 1860 at Dalton in Furness, aged 26. Sarah was born in 1836 on the Isle of Walney and christened on 24th April of that year in Dalton. She was the daughter of Thomas Greenwood and Mary nee Boulton. They have one house servant shown in the census, the shop staff no doubt coming in from elsewhere in town. His premises is listed as the second one along the north side of Market Street from the King Street junction, that is, next door to the chemist’s shop on the NE corner of Market Place.

Several interesting old photographs of Market Place have survived from this period, one of which claims to be in 1850, though this seems a little early considering its relatively fine quality; it is looking westwards across the square from Market Street, and the right-hand building on the southern corner of Daltongate carries the name J.



Mason. From the window displays it looks much more like the Tea Dealer than the Drapers, and there is also a board on the upper storey “Phoenix Fire Office” which activity would perhaps be very slightly more appropriate for the former. This picture was published as a postcard, “H. Kitchin’s series”, probably a later business of William’s wife Ann’s family.



Another similar viewpoint of about 1870 (and after the Lancaster Bank premises had been built on the southwest corner of the square) also shows the Mason name, but the window blinds are down; a Sunday in summer perhaps and the “Phoenix” sign has now gone.

Yet another of around 1869 looks to the north-west, with the Phoenix sign still intact then. On the corner of Daltongate and King Street another building, brand-new then, carries the name “Seattle”, coincidentally the middle name of a child in our “Family B” (section 6.1). Drapery competitor John Barrow’s shop is behind and to the left of the water pump....



The former drapery shop survives today largely unaltered (right):



John Mason the ironmonger died at Ulverston on the 16th of November 1869 aged just 35; he was buried at St Cuthbert, Kirkby Ireleth on the 22nd November and the family headstone there for his parents William and Ann also mentions him. John and Sarah do not appear to have had any children; in the 1871 census the widow Sarah is living in Soutergate, Ulverston (the northward continuation of King Street, above right), with occupation shown as Boarding House Keeper; she has just one lodger on census night, a 90 year old female annuitant!

It is convenient now to complete Sarah’s story, then return to James and Mary below. In the **1881 census** Sarah Jane Mason is living in a smart house in the fashionable area of Ulverston behind St Mary’s church, Beechbank (right). The head of household is her elder spinster sister “Miss Greenwood” with “income

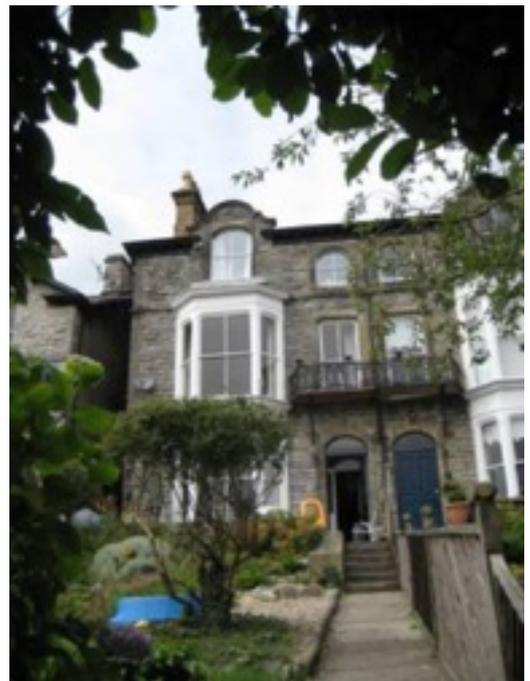


from land”; Sarah is an annuitant, “retired” at the age of just 45. They have one domestic servant, a young girl. Ten years later they are still at Beechbank and the sister’s name is clarified as Elizabeth; both are “living on own means”. Sarah passed away on the 2nd October 1894 aged 58 at Ulverston; she was buried at St Cuthbert on the 5th and is also commemorated on the family headstone there.

Shortly after his nephew John’s death **James Mason** seems to have considerably enlarged his drapery business at 1 Market Place by extending it backwards to include nos. 1 & 3 Daltongate also. Healthy competition came from another draper, John Harrison Barrow at 2 & 4 Daltongate just across the road, from 1861 to 1889 at least. In the **1871 census** however, James and his family are still living at Benson Street. This too clearly shows that he has expanded his business; now “General Draper employing 3 men and 2 boys”. Only one of their children is still at home, unmarried George H., draper’s assistant. Mary’s mother Eleanor Fell is also still going strong at 78, “retired farmers widow”. They seem to have just one general servant, again a young girl living in, but others may perhaps come in from neighbouring houses as needed.



James Mason died on 21st May 1873 at Benson Street and was buried at Holy Trinity church on 24th May, he was 57. Probate was granted at Lancaster 16/8/1873 to Mary “widow & relict” and son George Hartley Mason, draper, effects totalling under £12,000. However his wife Mary followed just a few months later, buried alongside him there on 24th January 1874; the headstone survives in the grounds, but the church (above right) has been converted into flats in recent years. The drapery business was then taken over by their eldest son **George** Hartley Mason, then 27 years old.



In the 1881 census George is listed at 7 Greenbank, Ulverston (right), a smart large house, and only the redoubtable grandmother Eleanor Fell is with him, now 88 years old! They have one female servant. His business has grown significantly by now: “Draper employing 5 males, 13 females”. Eleanor Fell passed away in the spring of 1886, aged 93.

George was married on 2nd September 1885, to **Emily Tyson** at Dalton in Furness when he was 38. Emily was the 12th of 15 known children of James and Mary Elizabeth nee Patterson, born on 6th June 1858 so 11 years younger than George; she was baptised at Dalton St Mary on 11th June. Father James was a publican at the Ship Inn, Barrow from 1842 on, and having sold land to the new railway company was able to finance a fine new family home, the Manor House at



Furness Abbey (picture above right) ; the 1861 census shows the family there, where Father James was working 480 acres and is also listed as a master brewer. He was born in Torver about 1808, his wife 12 years his junior was from Northumberland; her name is incorrectly recorded as Dorothy here! Emily is the youngest of 8 children at home. James' brother William is also with them, working as a labourer on the farm. Ten years on, James' wife is now correctly shown as Mary Elizabeth. Four of the original children are still at home, including Emily, and there are two younger ones. In the 1881 census Emily is at home at Manor Farm with her by now widowed mother Mary E. and three older brothers; Mary is running the huge family holding now listed as 500 acres.

George & Emily had five children, as follows.....

Eleanor Constance	born in Ulverston on 29 th September 1887
Dorothy Patterson	“ “ in early 1890
Mary	“ “ 30 th December 1891
George Douglas	“ “ 5 th November 1893
Emily Gertrude	“ “ 23 rd July 1896

In 1891, George Mason and his family are still at no. 7 Greenbank, now with their two children. George is now merely described as “Draper” and they have two live-in domestic servants.

Meanwhile, what has become of George's two younger brothers? **John** Mason died at home on 27th September 1870, aged 19, as recorded on the family headstone at Holy Trinity.

Thomas Walton Mason in 1871 was away at boarding school, Croft House at Brampton in Cumberland. He married **Elizabeth Whinnerah Butler** on 8th June 1880 at Ulverston, when he was 25. Elizabeth was born on 28th August 1856 at Cartmel, thus 18 months or so younger. She was the daughter of John Butler, who in 1861 was farming 245 acres at Winder Hall, Flookburgh, and his wife Margret, nee Rawlinson. Both John and Margret were born in Cartmel, in around 1811 and 1826 respectively.

The **1881** census shows us that Thomas had also by then become a draper, and it appears that he has been taken into partnership by his brother George to operate the business in Ulverston Market Place. This probably occurred when Thomas came of age in early 1876. However, in the census both he and Elizabeth (here called Eliza) are in London, presumably on business there; both he and she are shown as drapers. They are staying at Aaron Armfield's Hotel, 1-2 South Place, Finsbury Circus; as guests the relationship between them is not indicated, and curiously Eliza is shown as unmarried and born at Holborn, London but this is probably just the enumerator's error. There is a girl of 18, Mary Butler with them who is Elizabeth's sister; she is also shown as born at Holborn.

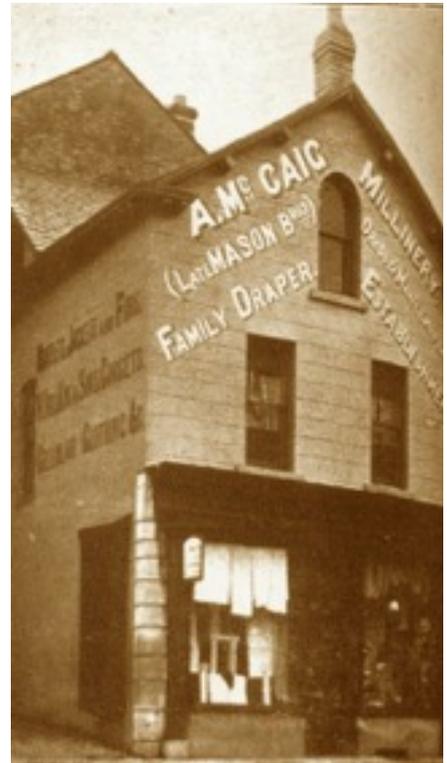
Thomas & Elizabeth had four children, as follows:

James	born in Ulverston 9 th August 1881
Mary Winifred	“ “ in the autumn of 1883
John Norman	“ “ 9 th March 1886
Margaret	“ “ 13 th April 1888

In the **1891 census** Thomas and Elizabeth are at home in Ulverston, at a smart residence “The Gardens” set back from the west side of Queen Street, a couple of hundred yards from the Market Place and right opposite Holy Trinity church. Three children are with them, Mary Winifred having



died in late 1887 aged just 4, and there are two house servants. This fine house survives (left), but no longer has its extensive gardens as it is in the middle of a modern housing estate!



Around 1899 George Hartley and Thomas Walton Mason sold their drapery business and retired, aged only 51 and 44 respectively! The 1900-dated image (right) shows the Market Place shop with the frontage carrying in large letters “A. McCaig (Late Mason Bros.) Family Draper, Millinery, Dress & Mantlemaking Establishment”, so this was another former Mason business which continued to be held in high regard.

The address of the premises is shown as “1 & 3 Market Place and 1 & 3 Daltongate”. The **1901 census** tells us that the new proprietor Andrew McCaig was then 47 and came from Scotland (there were no McCaigs in Ulverston in 1891; Andrew was at that time a draper at 32 Bicknell Street, Blackburn). He lived on the premises, and his father John McCaig aged 71, a retired Tailor is staying there too. Andrew presumably retired in about 1920, and photographs of a few years afterwards show that the Mackereth family then took over these premises as well.

The same census shows the Mason brothers comfortably ensconced in their family homes, no. 7 Greenbank and The Gardens, Queen Street respectively, both the same as ten years previously. George and Emily now have their five children with them, but surprisingly there are now no servants living in. Thomas and Elizabeth have just their two youngest with them, and one servant. Their son James, 19 by now, is an apprentice fitter boarding at 40 Harrison Street in Barrow.

In 1911, George and Emily are still at 7 Greenbank; their children Eleanor, George and Emily are with them, and there are still no servants. Their daughter Dorothy at 21 is a student, boarding at 256 Alfreton Road, Nottingham and presumably attending the University there. Meanwhile, Thomas and Elizabeth have moved out of town, a couple of miles westwards to Fell Side House, Pennington, and their two youngest are with them there in the census.

Thomas Walton Mason, Gentleman, died at Marl Park, Ulverston on 18th October 1918 aged 63, with effects £2149-14s-10d to his wife Elizabeth Whinnerah. His elder brother George Hartley Mason died almost one year later, on 19th September 1919 aged 72, as a result of injuries sustained when he was knocked down by a car in the town.

In the 1921 census, the widow Emily is still at Greenbank, with all her children except Dorothy. The eldest, Eleanor (known in the family as Connie) is looking after the house, Mary is Domestic Science Mistress at Victoria Grammar School in Ulverston, George is an analytical chemist with the North Lonsdasle Iron & Steel Co. in the town and Emily is a Maternity Nurse working on her own account. Meanwhile Dorothy is a boarder in staff accommodation at Witney Grammar School in Oxfordshire, where she is an assistant schoolmistress. Thomas’s widow Elizabeth is

found visiting a Butler family at Churchill Farm, Churchill near Kidderminster, Worcestershire on census night.

Emily outlived her husband George by 29 years, passing away on 9th September 1948 in Ulverston, aged 90. Elizabeth Whinnerah Mason was living with the Roach family at Church House, Oldbury, Bridgnorth, Shropshire in 1939, and passed away there on 23rd October 1946, also aged 90, with effects totalling £7621-7s-10d to her son James Mason, retired engineer, and Frank Decimus Roach, auctioneer husband of her daughter Margaret (see below).

Of George & Emily's children, **Eleanor Constance (Connie)** never married, she is with her mother Emily, sister Mary and cousin Fanny Tyson, a confectioner at No. 7 Greenbank in 1939, "of private means". She died on 22nd February 1966 at Ulverston, aged 78.

Dorothy Patterson married Henry Gillies Hird, a marine engineer from Barrow in Furness in the spring of 1925 when she was 35 and he 44; lately living at 4 King Street, Ulverston, she passed away on 15th July 1939 at Eden Mount nursing home, Stanwix, Carlisle aged 49; with effects £1173-5s-10d to her husband Henry, now recorded as a jeweller.

Mary also never married; in 1911 she was a cookery student boarding at the YWCA hostel in Toxteth Park, Liverpool, and by 1939 was a domestic science teacher in Ulverston, living with her mother and sister Eleanor at Greenbank; she passed away there on 11th July 1966, aged 74. Alan Fender, a Tyson descendant recalls compulsory visits to Greenbank for afternoon tea in the 1950s, when the house was dark and gloomy, over-cluttered with Victoriana, and the elderly aunts were equally formidable!

George Douglas married Edith Moralee in the Ulverston area in late 1928; Edith was born in Ulverston on 6th August 1906, the daughter of George Matthew Moralee and his wife Rosanna Jane, nee Nicholson. In 1911 the Moralees are at 17 Fountain Street, Ulverston, where George senior was a draper; his wife "Rose" assisted in the shop. George Douglas Mason worked as an analytical chemist in Ulverston, in 1939 living at St Mary's Mount, Greenbank, close to his mother and sisters. He and Edith died in Ulverston within a few days of each other in late 1968.

Emily Gertrude married Charles Thomas Roberts, also of Barrow, in summer 1922 when she was 26 and he 30. Emily died 2nd January 1973 in the Ulverston area, aged 76.

Thomas & Elizabeth's son **James** married Agnes Gertrude Blackburn in the spring of 1929 in the Hull area of East Yorkshire. She was the daughter of Frederick William Blackburn & his wife Annie Watson, nee Hird, born in Hull on 16th December 1898. James was a marine engineer, and they had moved back to the Ulverston area by 1939, living at 2 The Ridgeway, Allithwaite with James by now retired, but also acting as Head Air Warden at his local wartime ARP post, where his wife also volunteered.

John Norman was a bank clerk, emigrating to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia in 1912, working in the Standard Bank there. Upon the outbreak of war he joined the 1st Rhodesian Regiment in October 1914, transferring to the Yorkshire Regiment in October 1915 as a 2nd Lieutenant. He married Euphemia Mary ("Effie") Armstrong back in London on 3rd February 1917. Euphemia was the daughter of Arthur Edward Armstrong & his wife Eva Charlotte, nee Malcolmson, born in Balham, South London on 15th June 1895, but later of 11 Leinster Square, Rathmines, Dublin. John was then promoted to 1st Lt in March 1917, serving in Ireland then Palestine. He was wounded in December 1917 at Jerusalem and again in the Jordan Valley 6 months later. By then serving with the Reserve Regiment of Cavalry, attached to 1/1st Dorset (Queens Own) Yeomanry, he was fatally wounded at Er Reinte on 27th September 1918, transferred to Ras El Tin Hospital, Alexandria and died there on 13th October, aged 32. He is interred at Hadra Military Cemetery, plot B89, and was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry & devotion to duty. The

above information is a summary of that contained in his citation in De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1919, which also includes his picture, reproduced right.....

John Norman Mason's widow Euphemia married Leslie Humphreys in Barnet, Middlesex, in late 1938 and died in the Dacorum district of Hertfordshire, 20th March 1975, aged 79.

Margaret married Frank Decimus Roach in Ulverston in the summer of 1915. Frank was born 19th June 1874 at Quatt, Shropshire, son of Lewis Roach and his wife Susannah Caroline, nee Garland. He was a widower, having married in 1901 but whose wife died in 1912, and was an auctioneer, valuer & estate agent in Bridgnorth, Shropshire. In the 1921 census, they are at 17 Salop Street, Bridgnorth, with Frank an Auctioneer working from 59 High Street in the town. They have 2 daughters and 1 servant.

He died in Bridgnorth in 1951, and Margaret passed away in the Wolverhampton area on 20th June 1973, aged 85.



John Norman Mason.

7.6 Hartley Mason – “the Man for All Seasons”

was described thus in Mark Keegan's book on the Ashlack Estate. As the youngest of seven brothers born to John and Betty Mason at Soutergate he was never going to come close to inheriting the pick of either the family farms or the Ulverston shop businesses, so had to make his way in life as best he could. He outlived two wives and two children so had no heirs, thus his story is short but varied.

In the **1841 census** at the age of 19 (though recorded as 18) Hartley has also gone to work in Ulverston, we find him as an apprentice druggist living in with his boss John Roper at his shop in Market Street. Roper died in the spring of 1844 and it appears that Hartley then took over the running of the shop. He married **Sarah Fell** on 6th June 1848 at the parish church of Holy Trinity, Colton when he was 26. Sarah was born in London on 13th January 1822 and christened 24th June 1829 at St Paul Covent Garden, London, her parents recorded as John and Ann Fell, whom we have encountered already as her sister Mary married Thomas James Mason of Ashlack in 1876 (sections 5.2, 5.4). Hartley is described as a chemist, resident Ulverstone with father John a farmer in the register and Sarah of Sparke Bridge, father John a Gentleman. The witnesses were John Fell, Anna Barraclough, Jno Walkden and what looks like Marianne Lile; the marriage was by licence rather than banns.

Hartley and Sarah had just two children as follows, both of whom were to die young:-

Hartley William Fell	born 28 th September 1849, christened at Ulverston St Mary on 24 th October, father shown as “Chemist & Druggist”
John Harris	born 23 rd February 1852, christened at Ulverston St Mary on 7 th May 1852

An **1851 trade directory** shows Hartley Mason, druggist at Market Street, Ulverston so it seems that this is indeed the shop in the later photographs of Market Place showing “Mackereth late Mason”. However in the **1851 census**; they are away and the premises have been left in the hands of druggist's assistant James Cooper aged 20 and one house servant. We find Hartley and

Sarah staying as house guests of William and Sarah Barraclough at Spring Hale, Skircoat, Halifax in Yorkshire. These Barracloughs are both aged 66, born in Halifax, where William is a woollen manufacturer, and are no doubt related to Sarah Mason's mother Anna Fell (nee Barraclough). Hartley is shown with occupation "Cheymist" and birthplace "Kirby Settle, Lancashire", and they have been indexed with surname "Maton" though the original is clearly "Mason"; this made them somewhat challenging to find! Sarah is shown with birthplace "Middlesex London". Their young son Hartley is staying over with his grandparents at Sparkbridge, where John Fell aged 63 is shown as "landed proprietor" born at Colton and his wife Anna 56 born at Tower Hill, London. Sarah's sisters Mary aged 18 and Eleanor 16 both born at Colton are at home on census night.

Hartley William Fell Mason died at Little Croft, Kirkby Ireleth on 4th August 1856 aged 6, and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 6th. The **1861 census** confirms that Hartley and Sarah have moved to what we have already seen later became the "Mason Family C retired farmers home" at Little Croft, with him described as a Slate Agent. Son John is a scholar and they have one house servant. In the same census, also trade directories for that year, the chemist at Hartley's former shop in Ulverston is shown as John Downward. From 1862 to 1867 it is recorded that Hartley was working as surveyor of highways for the Low Quarter part of the parish of Kirkby Ireleth, probably in addition to his slate sales business.

Hartley's wife **Sarah** died on May 21st 1867 aged 45; they were by now living with the Fell family back at Sparkbridge, two miles west of Haverthwaite. She was buried at St Cuthbert alongside son Hartley on 24th May. As we have already noted, in the 1871 census **Hartley** is staying with his widowed sister Elizabeth James and her family at Beckside Farm on census night; his occupation is now shown as "commission agent" at age 49. His son **John** could not be found in this census.

In early 1874 John Fell, father of Hartley's late wife Sarah died at Sparkbridge, aged 86. Hartley was the executor of his will. A few weeks later on 5th May 1874 he was re-married, to his distant cousin **Mary Agnes Mason**, spinster eldest daughter of the recently-deceased George Mason of Ashlack Hall (our family A). He was 52, an agent of Beckside (so probably still living with his sister Elizabeth then) and Mary was 43, finally relieved from her housekeeping duties at Ashlack. They went to live at Prospect, Sandside (pictured above right & right), where Hartley's second son **John** passed away in the late spring of 1875 aged 23, and was buried at St Cuthbert on 4th June; he was unmarried and no occupation is shown for him in the register.

In 1878 Hartley was a witness to Mary's younger brother Thomas James Mason's first will made at Ashlack after he had taken over there, and during 1880 he served as a churchwarden at St Cuthbert for that year at least.



In the **1881 census** Hartley and Mary are shown living at a cottage in Soutergate, Kirkby Ireleth, he with occupation “General Agent formerly a Druggist”. They have no servants living in. Later that year Hartley was proposed by Robert Mason (of our family B at Marsh Grange) and appointed as Assistant Overseer for the Poor of the parish of Kirkby Ireleth, with a remuneration of £35 per annum. This shows both Hartley’s versatility and that the three main branches of our family all remained in close contact in village affairs some 130 years or more after their common parentage. In yet another community role, Hartley was serving on the committee of the Village Hearse Fund during 1882.

Mary Agnes Mason passed away on 10th May 1883 at Soutergate aged 53 and was buried at St Cuthbert on the 14th. Hartley, recorded as still Assistant Overseer of the Poor followed on 13th July 1889 aged 67; he was by then living back at Prospect Cottage, Sandside but died at Beckside. He was interred alongside Mary on 15th July. Probate was granted at Lancaster to his executor and niece Betsy Thompson wife of John Thompson of Ravenglass in the sum of just £22-6s-10d.

8. Thomas Mason 1811 – 1846 and his descendants

And so, finally, to my branch of the family. My great-great-grandfather Thomas Mason born in March 1811 at Soutergate was the third son (fourth child) of John Mason, Yeoman of that place and his wife Betty. He married **Jane Dodgson** by licence rather than banns on 25th June 1836 at St Cuthbert, aged 25; they were “both of this parish” and Thomas’ younger brother Samuel was a witness. Jane was born in early 1812 at Cockfish Hall, Sandside, the youngest daughter of James Dodgson, yeoman and his wife Hannah (nee Tyndal). This is the third marriage we have encountered between the Mason and Dodgson families; for further detail of the latter see Appendix A).

Thomas and Jane Mason had four known children, all christened at St Cuthbert as follows....

Anne	baptized 22 nd April 1837	father a butcher	of Sandside
James	“ 8 th December 1839	“ “	of Soutergate
Mary Dodgson	born 17 th Dec 1842, baptized 15 th Jan 1843	“ “	“
John	baptized 17 th May 1844	“ “	“

In the 1841 census they are living next door to his parents John and Betty with Thomas shown as expected as a butcher. Though the dwellings are not individually identified, we can deduce that since John and Betty were at Headgate Farmhouse, this was probably what is now known as Headgate Cottage. They have one servant, a boy of 15.

On June 13th 1846, while out on bail, Thomas was convicted of assaulting the local police officer, John Martland but just a few weeks later he died at Headgate on 26th September 1846, aged just 35. He was buried at St Cuthbert on the 30th.

In the **1851 census** the widow Jane is still living next to her father-in-law John Mason at Headgate Farm. She is an annuitant aged 39 and has her sons James and John with her, but no servants. As we have already seen, daughter Ann is at Beckside Farm with her aunt Margaret James and Mary is with her uncle William Dodgson at Sandside; all four of the children are shown as scholars.

By **1861 Jane** has moved to Town Street, Ulverston (right) and is recorded as a Fund Holder. This time Ann, James and John are with her, working as a dressmaker, ironmonger's assistant and railway clerk respectively. James is no doubt employed by his cousin John Mason at his shop in the Market Place, and Ann probably works from home. John would be working at Ulverston railway station. They have one boarder working as a draper's apprentice, surely at his Uncle James' premises in the town centre. The fourth child Mary is still with William Dodgson and his brother James, by now at age 18 as their house servant.



Jane's son **James** died a few weeks after the census, on 20th July 1861 at Ulverston, and was taken back to Kirkby Ireleth for burial at St Cuthbert on the 23rd. He was just 21 and unmarried.

In the 1861 census above, **John** Mason as a 16 year old has already embarked on his long career with the Furness Railway which eventually led to a senior management position in that company. He continues my direct family line, and his next move was to become an audit clerk at the railway headquarters in Barrow-in-Furness. Thus we find him there in the **1871 census**, and his mother Jane and sister Mary are living with him. Jane is shown as the head of household at 59 Ramsden Road, Barrow (right) functioning as the housekeeper and Mary is a domestic servant. Also with them on census night is Jane's brother James Dodgson the joiner, 53 and unmarried, listed as a boarder.



Ten years on, both **Mary** and **John** have married and moved elsewhere in Barrow. We continue their stories below and in section 8.2 following respectively. **Jane** is however still at 59 Ramsden Road and in the **1881 census** is simply shown as "widow of a farmer" aged 69. Her brother James, 64 is still with her, now a retired joiner and they are managing without servants. **Jane** Mason nee Dodgson died there later that summer, on 26th August 1881, and was buried at St Cuthbert, Kirkby Ireleth on the 29th.

In the 1881 census, Thomas and Jane's eldest daughter **Ann** is as we have seen housekeeper to her uncle John Mason and his wife Tamar at Little Croft, Kirkby Ireleth. She was married from there on 24th May 1882 at St Cuthbert to **Thomas Abbotson**, the Bailiff to Elizabeth James at Beckside Farm; her younger brother John was a witness. She was by now 45, and in a curious reversal of the normal situation she was 14 years older than her husband. Thomas was christened at Cartmel on 16th March 1851, the son of Charles Abbotson, a slate quarryman and his wife Hannah (nee Myers), and both he and Ann's late father Thomas are recorded as farmers in the register. In 1891 Thomas is shown as a farmer at Soutergate and the couple have 1 house and 1 farm servant living in; 1901 is the same, but with two farm servants by now - a ploughman and a

cowboy. Certainly by 1904 (and probably already in 1891) Thomas and Ann were at the old Mason family holding of Headgate Farm, Soutergate and Thomas Abbotson died there on 5th December that year aged 53. Ann then moved to “West View”, Devonshire Park, Kirkby Ireleth, and passed away there on 25th June 1915 aged 78. Both are buried at St Cuthbert.

Mary Dodgson Mason married **John Atkinson Speight** in the summer of 1874, when she was 31. John was born on the 13th February 1845 at Lowick Bridge to the north of Ulverston, so two years younger than his wife. In the **1881 census** John and Mary are living at 21 Cheltenham Street, Barrow-in-Furness with John a “Teacher of Middle Class School”; Mary has no occupation shown and they had no children. By 1891 they have moved to 85 Mount Pleasant in the town and were still there ten years later, with John a schoolmaster throughout.

According to her headstone at St Cuthbert, Mary Speight died on the 1st of March 1910 aged 67, but the registration entry has been indexed under the December quarter of 1909, “aged 66” so one or other of these is clearly in error! Johnny Speight lived on in Kirkby Ireleth to the very good age of 95, passing away at Broombank, Sandside on 19th January 1941. His funeral was thought to have been the last in the village which used the old horse-drawn hearse from Soutergate Square.

8.2 John Mason, railwayman and his family at Barrow-in-Furness

John, the younger son of Thomas and Jane Mason married **Dinah Parker** at St Cuthbert, Kirkby Ireleth on 15th October 1874 when he was 30. The register shows him as an office clerk of Barrow, with father Thomas a farmer. Dinah was born in the hamlet of Osmotherly, west of Ulverston and christened at St Mary, Ulverston on 26th August 1843, thus again slightly older than her husband.

Dinah’s parents were Henry Parker, farmer and his wife Deborah (nee Lund?); at the time of her marriage she was living at Chappels, Kirkby Ireleth, but in the 1851 census the Parker family is at North Hollow Mire, Osmotherly where Henry, 40 who was born there, is working 66 acres with two labourers. Deborah was a year younger and born in Ulverston, and they have 4 children at home, Dinah being the third and the youngest, Eleanor aged 5 is the one who later married William Mason, son of John & Tamar from Marsh Grange, in 1872. Boarding with them is Joseph Parker aged 80 born in Kirkby Ireleth who is probably Henry’s father and claims to be still working as a farm labourer!

Around 1852 the Parker family moved to Chappels, Kirkby, where in 1861 Henry is now farming 100 acres with three men, two of whom are living in at the farmhouse. There are now 6 children, of whom the eldest, Isabella at 20 is a dairymaid, Dinah the family cook and Eleanor a domestic servant. Ten years on the residence is shown as Marshside, Chappels, and the family holding has increased to 137 acres. Son John at 24 has been entrusted with just 7 acres of this as his very own; the other children are listed just as “Farmer’s son, daughter...” but no doubt still doing their fair share of the work! Like George Mason at Ashlack, Henry has realised the value of free family labour, enabling him to dispense with all the servants by now.

After their marriage John and Dinah Mason continued to live in Barrow for John’s work, and they had a total of six children born there, as follows.....

Henry Parker	born 5 th August 1875
Thomas Dodgson	“ 11 th March 1877
Winifred	“ 14 th November 1878
George Dodgson	“ 31 st August 1880
John James	“ 24 th August 1883
Frederick Joseph	“ in the spring of 1886

In the **1881 census** the family are living at 23 Cheltenham Street, Barrow, with John shown as a railway clerk. Children Thomas, Winifred and George are with them, and they have one house servant, a 17 year old girl. The eldest child **Henry** is found staying at the house of George and Isabella Ashburner at Low Hall Farm, Kirkby Ireleth as a visitor on census night.

By **1891** John has been promoted to the Board of Management as Accountant of the Furness Railway and is living in a railway-owned residence, 21 Salthouse Road, Barrow close to the company headquarters building. In the census all six children are at home with them shown as scholars, and there is again one young female servant.

In 1895 it is recorded that John Mason, here strangely demoted to “railway clerk” bought two houses in Ulverston, no’s 2 & 4 Stockbridge Lane (right) for £80 from a widow Agnes Dodgson, presumably to let out. Later the same year he also bought no. 8 Stockbridge Lane from Mary Johnson for £18-10s.



The **1901 census** shows the family still at 21 Salthouse Road (pictured), with John now reinstated correctly as Accountant (Railway). A handbook published in 1900 by the Furness Railway Company which has recently been re-printed lists John thus alongside his other management colleagues, and also carries the only known photograph we have of him:



The five youngest children are still at home, with the 24 year old Thomas as Civil Engineer’s Assistant, also in the Furness Railway Company’s offices. George is a civil engineer apprentice in the same department, and John is a bank clerk in the town. No occupations are shown for Winifred or Frederick, and again there is one house servant.

Henry Parker Mason has by now moved to Chesterfield, Derbyshire with his work as a metallurgical analyst; in the census he is at 17 Queen Street there, as “occupier of rooms”. We return to him and the other children below.

By 1911, John and Dinah have moved nearby to another railway-owned residence but of higher managerial status, Salthouse Villa on Salthouse Lane. The census shows their children John James and Winifred still with them there, and there is one young female servant.

Presumably on his retirement shortly afterwards, John

and Dinah moved to 46 Hawcoat Lane, Barrow (right), and John died there on 25th May 1915, aged 71. He was taken back to Kirkby Ireleth and buried at St Cuthbert on the 28th. Probate was granted at Lancaster 23/8/1915 for effects totalling £3552-5s-1d to the three executors, sons Henry Parker analytical chemist, Thomas Dodgson civil engineer and John James bank clerk.



Dinah stayed on at Hawcoat Lane, and the 1921 census shows her there with son Frederick, a foreman in the train lighting dept of the Furness Railway at its Barrow

works, and his wife Elizabeth Ann (see below). Dinah passed on there on the 19th May 1932 aged 88, and was interred alongside her husband at St Cuthbert on the 21st. During 1920 the trustees of John Mason's estate sold his portfolio of rental properties in Ulverston, comprising no's 16 & 18 Daltongate and no's 2, 4 and 8 Stockbridge Lane for a total of £350.

Thomas and Dinah's son **Thomas Dodgson Mason** continues my own family line, in section 8.3 below. **Henry Parker Mason** came back to Kirkby Ireleth from Chesterfield a few weeks after the census to marry **Florence Elizabeth Hill** on 4th June 1901. Florence was born locally on 12th April 1871 thus four years older than Henry – this appears to be something of a tradition in the family! In the 1881 census she is shown as the daughter of widow Sophia Williamson, Beer house Keeper living at 2 Stanley Street, Ulverston, with her elder brother William and sister Mary. Sophia was born with surname Fildes in Gloucestershire, married a James Hill, was widowed, remarried to a Robert Williamson and widowed again shortly afterwards. By 1891 she had married yet again, her husband at 3 The Poplars, Ulverston being Robert Longson, a tailor aged 63 born in Burnley; Florence at 19 is there with them and the situation remains the same in the 1901 census.

Henry and Florence had a daughter **Irene Parker Mason** born on 11th March 1903 at Chesterfield, who as we have already seen married her distant cousin **Robert Grice Mason** (in early 1938) and went with him to farm at Swellendam, South Africa. She returned home after he died there in 1949, initially living at Little Croft, and passed away at The Beeches, Pennington on 15th January 1968 aged 64; she was buried at St Cuthbert, Kirkby Ireleth on the 17th. Robert and Irene's daughter, my cousin **Margaret Joan Mason** married Douglas Wood of Becks Farm, Pennington near Ulverston on 28th March 1959 at St Cuthbert, when she was living at Little Croft with two elderly aunts. They are remembered as the last of the Masons living in Kirkby Ireleth.

Evidently having to move around a fair bit with his job, the 1911 census finds Henry, Florence and Irene living at 39 Kensington Road, Oldham, Lancashire. By 1920 Henry's address is recorded as Market Chambers, Long Causeway, Peterborough, with occupation analytical chemist but this is no doubt his place of work rather than their residence. He was one of the trustees of his father John Mason's estate at that time. A few months later in the census he is at Puncteston Buildings, Peterborough, working as a Metallurgical Chemist with Messrs Peter Brotherhood, Walton in the town; daughter Irene is an assistant metallurgical chemist at the same firm.

In the 1939 ID card index Henry, a metallurgical chemist & Florence are at "Garth Nook", Soutergate with daughter Irene and her husband Robert who is evidently on a visit; they surely returned to South Africa as soon as possible due to the war in Europe.

Florence Elizabeth Mason died in October 1942 aged 71 (the headstone says on the 3rd of that month, the probate register – which is probably correct – the 24th) and her husband Henry, by then

living at Vine Cottage back in Kirkby Ireleth on 15th January 1963 aged 87; he was buried at St Cuthbert on the 21st.

George Dodgson Mason died unmarried on 30th December 1908 at Barrow; he was just 28 years old. **Winifred** married Herbert Goodier on 4th September 1911 at St Luke, Barrow aged 32. She is shown living at Salthouse Villa, with father John as chief accountant of the Furness Railway Co. Herbert was an engineering draftsman aged 31 (born at Radcliffe near Bury on the 29th of May 1880 and still living there in 1901), resident in Barrow and probably working in the railway offices; his father was William Goodier a brick maker by then deceased, and the witnesses were Winifred's brothers John James and "H.P." Mason, and Herbert's younger sister Martha Ellen Goodier. The couple had one known child, Dinah Winifred Mason Goodier, born on 8th May 1917 in the Wandsworth area of London. In the 1939 ID card index Herbert & Winifred are shown at 90 Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, by which time Herbert had become Director of an engineering works. He died on 28th June 1945, aged 65 in Bury St Edmunds. Winifred died on 11th September 1957 in the Sheffield area, aged 79.

John James Mason married **Marion Stewart** in the summer of 1912 at Barrow. Marion was born in Scotland on 9th September 1884, and was an apprentice dressmaker lodging at 12 Greengate Street, Barrow in 1901. Their one known child, Frederick Joseph Mason was born in Barrow in the spring of 1914. In 1920, **John** James was another named trustee of his father's estate; his address at that time was 8 Coniston Road, Barrow, with occupation "Bank". The census clarifies:- still at Coniston Road, he is a bank cashier with the London Joint City & Midland Bank co in Barrow town. In 1939, John James is listed at 11 Furness Park Road, Barrow, as an assistant bank manager, with his wife Marion, who died in late 1941 at Barrow, aged just 57.

Frederick married Elizabeth Ann Suttill, born 1887 at Ramsgill, near Pateley Bridge in Yorkshire in the summer of 1917. In 1921 they are living with his mother at 46 Hawcoat Lane in Barrow, as we saw above. He is listed as an engineer in 1932. Frederick died in the Harrogate area of West Yorkshire in the spring of 1971 aged 85. My father recalled John James & Frederick as both known by their second names, his uncles **Jimmy** and **Joe** respectively.

8.3 Thomas Dodgson Mason – Civil Engineer and his family

Thomas, the second son of John and Dinah Mason married **Nina Violet Hill Robertson** at Barrow in the summer of 1908, when he was 31. Nina was born in Barrow on 7th May 1879, thus two years younger than Thomas. Her father Charles Robertson owned and ran a chemist's shop in Barrow for many years, but was born in Scotland; he was one of many of his fellow countrymen to come down in the early 1870's, a time of very rapid expansion of Barrow-in-Furness with the development of the dockyards, shipbuilding and iron & steel manufacturing industries. For more detail of the Robertson family, see appendix B).



Thomas Dodgson Mason and Nina were living at 8 Croslands Park Road, Barrow (above) by the time of the 1911 census, with one young female servant. They had just one child, my father **John Robertson Mason**, born there on the 11th October 1911.

The family were still there in 1920 when along with his brothers Henry and John, Thomas acted as a trustee in the administration of their father John Mason's estate as already recorded above. Thomas is then recorded as a Civil Engineer, in fact he had by then been promoted to chief of that department for the Furness Railway, and had his own private saloon carriage for use as his office and sleeping accommodation when working at site anywhere on the company's system. Apparently neither his wife Nina nor my father were ever allowed to set foot within its hallowed portals! Our picture (right) shows Thomas and Nina, with it is thought Thomas's sister Winifred on the right, at the back of the Robertson family house, also in Croslands Park. The 1921 census shows the family at 8 Croslands Park Road, with Thomas as expected, Railway Engineer (Civil) with the Furness Railway Company and son John in full-time education; they have 1 servant.



With the formation of the London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS) in 1923 by amalgamation of the Furness and several other companies both large and small, Thomas continued in charge of the Furness area civil engineering operations as District Engineer based at Barrow, and we have several interesting photographs from his collection showing works in progress on various parts of the system from around 1920 onwards.

The 1939 ID card index shows Thomas, Railway District Engineer, and Nina at 17 Infield Park, Barrow.

Upon retirement in around 1940, Thomas Mason moved with Nina to a new large detached house called "The Haven" at Allithwaite, (right, since re-named), built for them by the LMS railway company. They lived there until the mid 1950's then moved down to Cheshire to stay with my father and our family.



Thomas Dodgson Mason, lately living with his son John & family at 107 Bramhall Lane South, Bramhall in Cheshire, passed away on the 18th January 1961 at Stepping Hill Hospital, Hazel Grove aged 83, and was buried in Woodford churchyard near Bramhall; he left effects totalling £4550-13s to his son. Nina died at the Cottage Hospital in Knutsford, Cheshire on 10th December 1971 at 92 and was buried with him at Woodford, but strangely is not recorded on the headstone.

My father **John** Robertson Mason did not follow his father or grandfather into the railway industry, but instead joined his uncle John James (Jimmy) as a bank clerk, eventually accountant and manager, moving around between various posts across the north-west of England. He met my mother Maureen Helliwell in Manchester in the late 1930's but they married in Carlisle in June 1941 whilst he was on wartime army service around Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. Though Maureen and her two sisters were born at Birkenhead during 1911-15, daughters of an architect,

the Helliwell family originated in Heptonstall, West Yorkshire later moving to Todmorden and then Alfreton, Derbyshire. We look at their story in a separate article.

John Robertson Mason passed away at Stepping Hill Hospital on the 29th August 2005, aged 93. Since he and Maureen had no sons, this particular branch of the Mason family thus comes to an end, which prompted our interest in looking at his forebears. Curiously, while he was alive he always discouraged, even forbade us from even thinking about tracing their history, but as we have seen this has turned out to be a substantial and absorbing exercise, particularly in the high Victorian era of English society, while turning up no more scandalous activity than any other typical study of this period

Appendix A) The Dodgson family of Kirkby Ireleth

This is another long-established local family, a **Richard Dodgson** was vicar of St Cuthbert's church from 1579 to 1606 and in 1600 is also recorded as a tenant of land owned by the Kirkby family. More recently, **John Dodgson**, son of Anthony was christened at St Mary, Ulverston on 2nd January 1704; he was Jane and Hannah's great-grandfather and married **Agnes Wilson** when he was 27, at the same church on 19th June 1731. They had seven known children, all christened at St Cuthbert, Kirkby Ireleth as follows.....

Sarah	baptized 22 nd March 1730 (as a Dodgson, despite this being before the parents were married!)	
Richard	baptized 9 th January 1731 (ditto)	
John	“ 9 th September 1732	died in infancy
John	“ 19 th January 1735	
Mary	“ in March 1738	died in infancy
Margaret	“ 20 th December 1740	
Mary	“ 3 rd March 1744	

The second John forms the continuation of our family; he married **Ann Wilson** (maybe a cousin?) on 29th November 1764 at St Mary Ulverston, when he was 29. They in their turn had four known children, again all christened at St Cuthbert.....

John	baptized 3 rd August 1765
Deborah	“ 30 th August 1767
Elizabeth	“ 1 st July 1773
James	“ 12 th May 1776

of which the last entry in the register gives the parents' abode as Copp, Kirkby Ireleth.

Their son **John** was by 1824 living at Beanthwaite Farm and gave £300 for the education and support of the poor of the parish, as recorded by the plaque in St Cuthbert's church (right).



James Dodgson forms the continuation of my direct line; he married **Hannah Tyndal** on 7th November 1801 at St Cuthbert, when he was 25. They had eight known children, once again all christened at St Cuthbert; in these later entries both the abode and occupation of the father is given.....

Ann	baptized	15 th August 1802	father a farmer	at Lawrence Ground
John	“	15 th June 1804	“	at Sandside
William	“	24 th January 1807	“	“
George	“	15 th April 1809	“	at Lawrence Ground
Jane	“	28 th March 1812	“	at Cockfish Hall
Hannah	“	1 st May 1815	“	“
James	“	9 th October 1817	“	“
Mary	“	18 th January 1820	father a slate-river	“

Lawrence Ground is in Middle Quarter, near to Copp. Cockfish Hall is at the southern end of Sandside and by 1821 was in the occupation of a Parker family, then later the Coulton's for many years. Both James and his wife Hannah died before 1841.

Of their children, **Hannah** was the one who married Isaac Mason of our family B in 1850 but died a few months later (see section 6). Her sister **Jane** is the one who married Thomas Mason of family C in 1836 (section 8).

In 1841 the eldest, **Ann** is working as a house servant to Joseph Kirkbank, a clerk and his wife at Dalton in Furness village. Her brothers **William & James** could not be found in 1841, but ten years later they are back together with Ann at an unidentified dwelling in Sandside, Kirkby Ireleth. William is a slate river (splitter) in the quarries, James a master carpenter and Ann is keeping house for them. Also staying over on census night is their niece Mary Dodgson Mason aged 8, the daughter of Thomas & Jane of our family C who had lost her father when she was only 3. Ann could not be found in any later census so she is probably the one who died either in 1853 or 1857. By 1861 William & James are still together, but William is now farming. Mary Mason is still with them, now as their housekeeper. They are shown living five households away from elder brother John, so we catch up with him next....

In the 1841 census we find **John** Dodgson farming at High Gillhouse, Kirkby Ireleth, with just a housekeeper Mary Pepper for company. In 1851 he is still there, working 33 acres, but by now has a wife; he married **Hannah Newton** in the spring of 1849. Hannah was born at Crosby Ravens, Westmorland, the daughter of Henry & Jane and christened at nearby Bolton on 8th October 1820, so was over 15 years his junior.

Ten years on they were still at High Gillhouse, with three children, James 9, John 4 and George 1. Neither John nor his brother William could be found in 1871, so we can deduce that William was probably the one who died in the summer of 1862 aged 55, and John in late 1863 at 59. **James** Dodgson the joiner never married; by 1871 he has moved to Barrow, staying with his widowed sister Jane Mason and her children at 59 Ramsden Road. As we see in the main story, he is still there with her in 1881, though by now retired at 65. He died in the Ulverston area in early 1889 aged 71.

The last of the brothers, **George** is also elusive in 1841, but ten years later we find him at Duke Street, Ulverston also working as a house carpenter. He has a wife Mary 5 years his junior who was born in the town. She was Mary Woodend, daughter of Thomas, a shoemaker and they were married at Holy Trinity church on 11th August 1850. George is shown in the register as a joiner of

Kirkby Ireleth parish with father George (sic) a yeoman; Mary was resident at Daltongate, Ulverston.

In 1861 George is at High Roshead, Ulverston, retired at only 51, but Mary had died around 1854 and he is now shown with a wife Agnes aged 48, born at Swarthmoor, but no record of a marriage could be found. By 1871 they had moved back to the town centre, to a cottage in The Gill, and are both listed at no. 27 there in 1881; George at 72 years old now curiously gives his occupation as “Yeoman”!

George died in Ulverston in late 1887 aged 78, and Agnes then moved to 13 Maurice Street, Pendleton, Salford near Manchester, staying with Henry Dixon, letterpress printer & photographer and his wife Margaret who was her niece; she died there in early 1898 at 84. Henry was born in Broughton in Furness and Margaret in Ulverston.

Of James & Hannah Dodgson’s youngest child **Mary** we know nothing more; she had undoubtedly either married or died by 1841, so could not be identified in the census.

The third Dodgson who married a Mason, **Ann** born in 1830 who wed William Mason, son of James and Mary of our family B in 1859, was descended from a different branch of the Dodgsons in Kirkby Ireleth; they are no doubt related to the above, but a couple of generations or more back. Her father was **John** Dodgson, son of George and Peggy, christened at St Cuthbert on 2nd April 1789. He married **Ann Woodburn** there on 6th November 1813 when he was 24 and she 17, though described as a “a minor” in the parish register. At that time, John was a slate river living at Friar’s Ground, Kirkby Ireleth. Their known children were as follows; all christened at St Cuthbert:

George Jackson	christened on 9 th April 1814; father a slate river of Bolton Ground
Roger Woodburn	ditto 12 th September 1816; father a slate river of Friar’s Ground
John	on 11 th June 1818; father a slate river of Bolton Ground
Elizabeth	on 6 th June 1822; back to Friar’s Ground!
Margaret	on 15 th August 1823; father a slate river at Friar’s Ground
Seattle	on 15 th October 1826, father a labourer of Friar’s Ground
Ann	on 17 th January 1830, ditto
Sarah	on 11 th April 1832, back to slate riving at Friar’s Ground
Mary	on 1 st December 1834, same
James	on 24 th July 1836, and back to labouring, at Friar’s Ground
Jane	born around 1843

In the 1841 census we were surprised to find that John was by now a farmer at Friar’s Ground, presumably working land inherited from his father. His is the next household listed to that of the other John Dodgson, above, at High Gillhouse. His wife Ann and eight of their 10 children are at home, the missing ones being John and Margaret. The eldest two, George and Rodger are working as slate rivers in the quarries. Ten years on, John senior has gone back to slate riving together with his sons George & Seattle, all three as journeymen, whilst young James is an apprentice at same aged 14. They are the only three children still at home now, but two grandsons James B, 9, an errand boy, and George B, 1 are staying over on census night; both were born in Kirkby Ireleth.

Daughter Ann in 1851 was living at the house of William Butler, Solicitor & Attorney, and his family in Dalton village, as their house servant.

John Dodgson died at Friar’s Ground in the summer of 1854, aged 65. In the 1861 census his widow Ann continues to farm there, but this is shown as being only of 5 acres. The same three sons George, Seattle & James are with her, now all slate quarriers. Daughter Ann Mason with her husband William another quarryman and daughter Hannah, 5, are also at the house. Sometime during the next ten years Ann moved to Moorhouse, Kirkby Ireleth, where the 1871 census shows

her as an annuitant; her youngest daughter Jane, 27, is with her. Next door at Moorhouse, son James, 33 is still working as a slate river, and has his sister Mary and nephew George Dodgson, 21 “searvant” for company. Ann Dodgson died at Moorhouse in the spring of 1872, aged 77.

Appendix B) The Robertson family of Farnell, Angus, and the Hill family of Portpatrick

Our information was greatly supplemented and corrected by David & Lyn Chester of Sussex, who kindly supplied the detailed results of their family history research; Lyn being a Robertson descendant also.....

Nina Violet Hill Robertson’s great grandfather **John Robertson** married **Elizabeth Sutherland** at the Parish Kirk, Alyth, Perthshire on 3rd July 1792; his occupation is given as linen handloom weaver. John and Elizabeth had had three known children as follows.....

William	born 12 th July 1793 and christened on 14 th July at Alyth Kirk
Mary	christened 19 th April 1795 ditto
Margaret	christened 3 rd September 1797 ditto

William forms the continuation of our family line. He married **Mary Bruce**, a few months older than him, in around 1815, and they had four known children, as follows.....

William	christened 23 rd October 1816 at Cortachy & Clova, Angus
George	christened 29 th October 1818 at Kirriemuir, Angus
David	christened 1 st May 1820 at Lintrathen, Angus
Adam	christened 31 st July 1831 at Farnell, Angus

William married Martha MacReadie on 23rd April 1850 at Ardrossan, Ayrshire; they had 6 known children at Ardrossan, Glasgow and Belfast before settling in Dublin after 1860. William died in 1894 and Martha in 1901; both are buried at Mount Jerome cemetery, Dublin.

Mary Bruce Robertson died at Farnell Mill (where William senior was the grain miller) on 3rd November 1832, aged just 40. William then married **Ann** (Anne, Annie) **Ducat Duguid** (or Dogood) on the 20th February 1833 at Farnell Kirk when he was 39 and she just 21. Annie was born at nearby Kinnell, Angus. Farnell is a small village then in that county, four miles south-east of the town of Brechin, with around 600 inhabitants at the time. It was mainly a farming community (with some forestry) and had two grain mills. The demesne was that of the Carnegie family of Kinnaird Castle within the parish.

William had a further twelve known children with Annie, born at Farnell in the years from 1834 to 1852; all were christened at the parish kirk as follows.....

Jean (or Jane)	born 28 th December 1833, christened 2 nd February 1834
George	“ 5 th August 1835 “ 16 th August
Andrew	“ 28 th July 1837 “ 5 th August (died 2 nd Jan 1838)
Alexander	“ 20 th December 1838 “ 6 th January 1839
Susan Ruxton	“ 16 th May 1840 “ 30 th May (died 27 th Oct 1845)
Andrew	“ 8 th October 1841 “ 24 th October (died 14 th Nov 1842)
David	“ 17 th May 1843 “ 22 nd May
Anne	“ 26 th April 1845 “ 11 th May
Robert	“ 23 rd March 1847 “ 11 th April (died 11 th June 1864)
Peter	“ 5 th January 1849 “ 25 th January
Thomas	christened 26 th December 1850
Charles	born 21 st October 1852 “ 11 th November

In the Scottish census of 6th June 1841, William, Anne and their four surviving children are shown living at Milltown of Farnell where William continues as the miller. Also staying with them is William senior's firstborn child with Mary, William Robertson, employed as a mechanic.

Ten years on, in the census of 3rd March 1851 the family is still at Milltown, with William now shown as a journeyman master meal & barley miller employing 3 men and 5 boys. Annie's seven surviving children are still at home, with George, Alexander, David & Ann all shown as scholars. There are 2 house servants and 2 of the mill workers living-in at the main mill house.

The 1861 census is the last showing most of the Robertson family still at Farnell before the remaining children went their separate ways. On the 7th of April William at age 67 was still working as the community miller, also employing his elder sons Alexander and David; the five youngest from 15 years down to 8 are all attending school. There is now just one house servant and a carter employed at the mill living in. Daughter Jean had married James Coutts, an engineer on a steamship, at Farnell in 1857. The other missing child is George, evidently also moved away by 1861, but we know not where.

Alexander married **Catherine Davies** in the Chester area of England (presumably her family home; she was born in Cheshire around 1843) in late 1870, and in the census the following year they were living at Little Pethrie Cottage, Farnell, presumably close to the mill as he is still working with his father there. Alexander died at Farnell in 1913, and Catherine in nearby Monifeith four years later.

David had at least one child with **Ann Middleton Graham** in the spring of 1871 at Scotston, Kinnaird, but no record of a marriage has been found. He died in 1924 at Farnell, aged 81.

Peter married **Jeanne Lawrie** in July 1874 at Renfrew, but died just over three years later at Farnell, on 9th December 1877 aged just 28.

In the 1871 census **Thomas**, by now 20 is living with his uncle Andrew Duguid, a journeyman baker and his family at 28 Helen Street, Arbroath, and working as an engine fitter in that town. He married **Sarah Creighton** at her family home of West Derby, Liverpool in the summer of 1876. By 1878 they had moved to Lambeth in South London, and the 1881 census shows them at 13 Meadow Road there, with Thomas employed as a gas engineer. By 1921 Thomas & Sarah are at 11 Lyford Road, Wandsworth Common, he at 70 years old, a builder & contractor (employer) based at 1 Rosamund Street, Tooting. They have a daughter Jane Elizabeth, 39 a drop curtain designer at Dridge & Co, 10 Friday Street in the City of London. Sarah died in 1929 aged 87, and Thomas in 1946 at an incredible 95, both in Wandsworth registration district.

William senior died at Farnell Mill on 5th March 1877 when he was 83 years old, and **Ann Ducat** Robertson also passed away there on 2nd February 1898, aged 86.

This postcard picture in our collection was posted in Brechin, Angus by "Nell" on 28th December 1904 to "Miss Robertson" (Nina Violet, see below) at 229 Dalton Road, Barrow. She wrote "this publicity is one of the penalties of being in a high social position!" Was it possibly the mill house at Farnell? (it appears to no longer exist).



The youngest of William Robertson's 16 children, **Charles**, forms the continuation of our family line. At 19 years old he is nowhere to be found in the 1871 censuses, either in Scotland or

England, so may have been travelling and/or studying while considering his career options, before eventually landing up at Barrow in Furness.

We do know that Charles' bride to be was **Joanna Maria Hill**. They married in Aberdeen in 1875, when Charles had already been in Barrow for a couple of years, so perhaps he had undergone his pharmaceutical training at college there around 1870-72? They were married by the minister of Ferryhill at 22 Watson Street (presumably the address of his Kirk) in the Old Machar district of the granite city on 27th December 1875. On the marriage certificate, Charles is recorded as a druggist (manager) of 6 Paradise Street, Barrow, and Joanna of 57 Huntly Street, Aberdeen with no occupation shown. This treasured early picture of Joanna (right) is thought to have been taken about 1872, perhaps to mark their engagement?



Looking back at Joanna's family, her father **Alexander Hill** was born at Portpatrick, Wigtownshire in late 1819 and christened there on 18th January 1820, the son of Alexander and his wife Mary nee McCraith. He married **Cathrine McHaffie** around 1839, his bride being the daughter of Alexander McHaffie christened on the 8th March 1816 at Stoneykirk, Wigtown, thus nearly 4 years older than him. The 1841 census shows them living at Dinvin Street, Portpatrick, with Alexander working as a labourer. They have a four-month old daughter **Mary**, born there in February.

Alexander and Cathrine had nine more known children over the following 16 years, making their full family as follows.....

Mary	christened at Portpatrick on 14 th March 1841
Jane Gordon	ditto, on 26 th June 1842
Alexander	on 7 th February 1844
Jessie	born around 1846 at Portpatrick, no baptism record found
Joanna Maria	christened at Portpatrick on 15 th March 1848
Cathrine	ditto, on 26 th November 1849
Elizabeth	christened at Tyree, Argyll on 31 st August 1851
Alexina Violet	ditto, on 5 th May 1853
Grace Jemima	born at Lismore, Argyll on 20 th November 1855, christened at Tyree
John	ditto, on 15 th August 1857

The change of location around 1850 is explained by the 1851 census, since Alexander Hill has become a light-house keeper at the Skerryvore Light, Tyree & Coll. One of four there, he was on recorded as duty on census night, 3rd March. Cathrine and her five children are living at Hynish, on dry land nearby; young son Alexander is missing and evidently did not survive infancy in Portpatrick.

As expected from the birthplaces, the 1861 census finds the family at Lismore, Argyll, where Alexander was now Keeper of the Light. They actually lived at the lighthouse, and all nine children are at home. However by the time of the next, ten years later, they have moved from the Western Isles right across Scotland to the east coast, with Alexander at 55 now the Lighthouse keeper at Montrose Ness, Craig, Angus; they were again living in. By now only two of the younger children are still with them, Elizabeth at 19 with no occupation listed but presumably busying herself around the house and with needlework etc, and John, 13 a scholar. At this time, daughter **Joanna**, 22 has moved to Aberdeen, living at the house of William Taylor, iron founder

and his family at Footess Ironworks in the St Nicholas district of the city. She is employed by Taylor as a nurse to his youngest children, and this is where no doubt she met her future husband Charles Robertson.

Meanwhile, her father Alexander has winged his way back up north-westwards to become the Lighthouse keeper at Stornoway, Western Isles, recorded as such on Joanna's marriage certificate in 1875. By 1881 however he has retired, and he and Cathrine went to live at St George, Midlothian. The census taken on 3rd April that year also shows that three of their unmarried children have now returned to the family fold there, with Alexina, 27 working as a "Telephonic Clerk" (she could not be found in the 1871 census); Jemima, 25 is the family housekeeper and John 23 is working as a druggist's assistant. We think that both Alexander and Cathrine passed away there within the next ten years, in their late sixties, as there are no obvious candidates for them in the 1891 census.

Meanwhile, **Charles and Joanna Robertson** went back to live in Barrow-in-Furness after their marriage in 1875, and had two children there as follows.....

Charles Bryden born on 8th February 1877
Nina Violet Hill born on 7th May 1879

In the **1881 census** we find Charles and his family living at 13 Shakespeare Street, Barrow with Charles a chemist and druggist. They are still there in **1891**, with Charles now "Chemist & Druggist (registered), Fire, Life & Accident Insurance Agent". These three family album pictures show Charles Bryden aged around nine, Nina Violet on the same occasion and also about three years later.....



By **1901** Charles and his family have moved to live at 234 (later recorded as 229, nearby), Dalton Road (below left) in the centre of Barrow, in a brand new block of buildings which features in several photographs of this main shopping thoroughfare of the town over the next ten years or so (example right)



He was by now 48 and continued to run his business there for many years following until retirement about 1915. They have just one house servant, a girl of 14 also born in Scotland, and presumably any assistants employed in the shop lived elsewhere. On the same census page there are others from Scotland and several from Ireland, London, Manchester, Birmingham, Worcester and Liverpool, plus one from Poland indicating the cosmopolitan nature of this greatly expanded and then-prosperous town.

In this 1901 census, Charles and Joanna's son **Charles** Bryden Robertson aged 24 is like his father a chemist and druggist "at home", also shown as an employer, implying that he had by now been taken into the business as a joint partner, presumably since he graduated from college with the necessary qualifications a year or two previously. He married **Alice Foulis** in the spring of 1903 at Barrow. Her surname indicates she also is of Scottish descent, but was born in late 1879 in Barrow. Her father William Foulis was born at Balmerino, Fife around 1830 and in the 1851 census was a handloom weaver of linen cloth at Gallowhill Farm in Galdry nearby. However he moved south soon afterwards and married **Mary Clayton** in Liverpool in the summer of 1855.

The birth registers and censuses of 1871 at 57 Dalton Road, Barrow and 1881 at 6 Harrison Street show his very large family, of sixteen known children! By this time he had become a draper and outfitter. He fathered the first 13 children with Mary, including such exotic names as Williamena Ferguson Foulis, Isabella and Helena, in Blackburn and then at Barrow after 1861 before Mary died at the latter place aged 41 in early 1876, no doubt worn out after all the effort. William then married **Alice** nee **Holding**, born in Bolton and the widow of John **Holt** whom she had married in 1867 but who died 10 years later at the age of just 37, in late 1878 at Bolton. She brought with her a daughter, Bertha Louisa A. Holt born 1873, and William & Alice then added two more children to their combined brood, the aforementioned **Alice** in late 1879 and Albert Holding Foulis in February 1881, both at Barrow. On census night, 3rd April 1881 the family is living "above the shop" at 6 Harrison Street, Barrow, with eldest son John at 22 a travelling draper in the family business. The next, William at 18 was however a marine engineer in Barrow's then quite new and rapidly expanding industry. As well as 13 children still at home, there are also three shop and house servants living in – quite a household!

By 1891 the Foulis family had moved to Abbey Road, Barrow, where head William has retired from the business at 61 and is "living on own means". 10 children are now at home, including Alice, a scholar at 11, and yet another, Beatrice Holding Foulis born in 1883. The 1901 census confirms the address as 147 Abbey Road, and that father William has been widowed a second time, Alice Holding Foulis having died in early 1900 aged 59. There are still 10 offspring with him at home, including Alice at 21 soon to become Mrs Charles Bryden Robertson, step-daughter Bertha Holt, also living on own means at 27, and daughter Susan, 40 by now married to a Mr. Thom. William Foulis died at Abbey Road in the spring of 1902 aged 72.

By 1911 the Robertsons no longer lived "over the shop" at Dalton Road; Charles senior and his wife Joanna were at Croslands Park (picture right, the house nowadays known as no.14, Infield Park), very close to the Masons, and his son with wife Alice and 6-year old son Charles William at 44 Thorncliffe Road, Barrow (below right).

Ten years later, the 1921 census gives the address as 69 Croslands Park, with Charles as Chemist & Druggist, retired. They have 1 servant, Jean Robertson aged 30 born in



Glasgow, possibly a relative? Son Charles Bryden and Alice, together with son Charles William are still at 44 Thorncliffe Road. Charles is a Retail Shop Keeper, Chemist & Druggist at 229 Dalton Road.



These two pictures show Charles and Joanna in the Croslands Park house, and possibly in the back garden of the Mason's house, both during the 1920s.....



Charles senior died in Barrow (probably at Croslands Park) on 1st November 1928, aged 76, **Johanna** following just a few weeks later in early 1929 aged 79.

We think this picture was taken about 1920, showing a family occasion at a hotel probably in Barrow. Charles Bryden and Alice are at left, with Charles' sister Nina at right, we could not identify the lady between them.



Charles junior continued to run the family shop at 229 Dalton Road until 1939, when his registered address with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society was changed to Mill Road, Cranfield, near Bletchley in Buckinghamshire; we think this would have been at the western end of Mill Lane, on the north side of the main road junction, but a modern convenience store now occupies the site. In 1941 he moved again, to 4 St John's Street, Kempston in Bedfordshire. This in a 1930s block of shops with residential flats above, almost opposite St John's Church. He remained in practice there, and living above the shop until his death there on 5th December 1957, aged 80. The shop & flat premises still exist in Kempston and easily recognisable from our photograph (below), though no longer a chemist's shop.

It was taken on 15th August 1953 and shows Charles unlocking at "opening time", possibly for the last time, as perhaps he retired from the day-to-day running of the business then, aged 76.



Meanwhile Charles and Alice's son Charles William Robertson is shown as passing the RPS examination as a Chemist & Druggist, and registered on 11th October 1927 with premises at 187 Abbey Road, Barrow in Furness. During 1934 he moved into the Wilberforce Hotel, Bletchley Road, Bletchley, Bucks, presumably to investigate and set up the new businesses in that area, for both himself and his father. He was still recorded as living in the hotel when he returned north to marry **Lilian Birtles** at St Lawrence Church, Morecambe on 1st July 1937. Lilian was born on 5th October 1905 at Morecambe, and the 1911 census shows her at home at 85 Westminster Road in the town with father Tom, a postman born in Bradford, Yorks, mother Kate from Carnforth and an elder brother Tom junior. Lilian was married from home, at 6 Woodhill Lane in Victoria ward of Morecambe, nearby. There is a picture

taken at the reception, probably at or near the house at <http://www.dance-family.com/james.htm>

After their marriage Charles and Lilian also moved permanently to the Bletchley area, where Charles initially joined his father in the pharmacy business at Mill Lane, Cranfield, with Lilian assisting in the shop. After his father moved down the road to Kempston in 1941, Charles junior took over the Cranfield shop, remaining there until retiring from the business upon his father's death in 1957.

We think however they lived in a house near to the Kempston premises, though not known exactly where. There were no children. This picture (right) showing Charles and Lilian is from a set taken about 1954 at Kempston, sent by them to my parents John & Maureen Mason. They wrote on the back "Lord & Lady Robertson in portion of extensive grounds". Two others from the set (below) are included for their historical interest and show "St John's Church, almost opposite to us" and "the war memorial on square, a few yards from the shop". Others show "drive to the Manor House a few yards from shop" and "a corner of the dining room". The church was already derelict, and was demolished in around 1960. The implication of all this is that Charles William had by now taken over management of the Kempston business, as well as his own Cranfield one, after his father had officially "retired".



In early 1958 Charles and Lilian moved to Cromer, Norfolk, where on 14th February he is recorded as running a tobacconist's shop at Newstead House. It is presumed that the businesses at Kempston and Cranfield had been sold, and that Charles' mother Alice moved with them to Cromer at around the same time. Alice died on 24th October 1969 in Fletcher Hospital, Cromer, aged 90; she was latterly residing at Flat 3, 2 Norwich Road in Cromer.

Charles William Robertson died in the Fletcher Hospital on 1st March 1982, aged 77. At that time they were at Lockley, 9 Cromer Road in Cromer. Lilian passed away on 9th September 1987 aged 81, at The Eiders, Holt Road, Aylmerton in Norfolk.

Appendix C) Richard Mason, Locomotive Superintendent of the Furness Railway

At the very outset of our research, we noticed in an old railway book the name "R. Mason" as chief mechanical engineer of the Furness Railway 1890 – 97 and automatically assumed this would be a member of our family. Indeed my father thought that this was the case and suggested his name was Robert, possibly his great grandfather. However, when the name indexes to all the censuses from 1841 to 1901 became available a few years ago, it quickly became apparent that he was not related at all. This railwayman's name was in fact **Richard Mason**, and he was born in Scotland about 1820. He married **Janet Johnston McGeorge** from Holywood, Dumfries about 1840 in Scotland, and they moved down to Liverpool then or soon afterwards. Three children were born in Liverpool from early 1842 to late 1849, and a fourth in Barrow in late 1850 indicating that they had moved there sometime earlier that year; a separate reference shows that he took up his post with the Furness Railway then.

The **1851 census** shows the family living in the "village of Barrow" in the parish of Dalton, which was then so small that no individual names of streets or residences are shown. As such, they must have been amongst the very first people from Scotland to settle there. Richard's occupation is shown as Engineer. By **1861** they are one of several families at "Salthouse Marsh" with him as "Railway Engineer" and his son Thomas, 18, an apprentice, and **1871** is much more precise as the area was now becoming well-developed; the residence is 25 Salthouse Road, a railway company house close to that of our John Mason the company accountant at no 21 (though not necessarily at the same time). Richard is now shown as "Locomotive Superintendent". In **1881** they are still at the same house, and with the same job description, but 10 years later have moved to 18 Church Street, Barrow. Richard is by now 71 years old, and still in office; he finally retired in 1897 at 77 with much acclamation for his unprecedentedly long and loyal service since the very beginning of the company's existence. Unlike later men in his position, Richard Mason does not appear to have designed any of his own locomotives; he preferred instead to buy in the standard products of established British manufacturers such as Sharp, Stewart. The fact that the locomotives of the Furness Railway during his tenure were both functional and reliable, also in many cases quite elegant in appearance, is a worthy tribute to this policy.

Richard Mason passed away at Barrow on 22nd February 1904 at 91 Clifton Terrace, Abbey Road in Barrow, aged 84. His effects totalling £4057-13s-7d passed to son Richard Mason, engineer and daughter Elizabeth Mason, spinster.

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