

Connections: Alfred Archer Dixon



By Christopher Dixon

Alfred Archer Dixon 1846-1914

Alfred Archer Dixon, my great grandfather. Why he was called Archer is a family mystery. I know so little about him, yet I admire him so much. He had an awfully hard and lonely life - he must have been one tough man. And he probably wasn't very nice! He worked on the railways in north London and had nothing, yet finished up a wealthy man. But he was unlucky in love - three wives and all died before he did. And he lost most of his children as well. I have pictures of his father, grandfather and the generations that followed him - but nary a one of him or his wives. However this is his story:

Alfred Archer Dixon was the son of Alfred John Dixon 1815-1878 (see connections: Alfred John Dixon) and Elizabeth Sturgeon 1817-1861. See their photos below:

I am so grateful to Grace Lindsay of Mt Isa, Queensland for the photograph below. You will see Grace's line of descent later on in this chapter. Until she sent me this photo in 2017, I had no idea what Lizzie looked like (I'm sure she was called Lizzie). Similar great appreciation goes to my New Zealand Dixon cousins for the photos of Alfred John Dixon below right. It's staggering how different branches of the family still have mementos of family from more than 100 years past. And yet I have no photograph of my great grandfather Alfred Archer Dixon. And yet he was the wealthiest member of the family!



Elizabeth Sturgeon
Donated by Grace Lindsay



Alfred John Dixon
Donated by Grant & Cathy Dixon

Alfred Archer was born 17 Mar 1846 and baptised 10 Apr 1850 at St Mary's church, Harrow-on-the-Hill at the family home in Harrow on the Hill. The family had been there since 1816. His father Alfred John Dixon (AJ) ran a carriers business and kept cows.

Alfred Archer grew up with the family in Harrow and would have attended the local school (not the posh one). We know that at the age of 16 (1861 census) he was still at home and not working (at the same time his older brother was driving the family horse and cart). This was the age of the Industrial Revolution. The railways were thrusting out all over the country. Excitement was in the air. A vast new Empire was being carved out and AA wanted to be a part of the movement.

We know AA joined a railway company and for many years worked as a porter.

First wife

At the age of 21, AA was married to **Susan Climpson**. Interesting to note that Susan had a brother who married AA's sister Eliza Emma. AA and Susan were married at St James' Church, Pentonville on 6th Nov 1869. They both then lived at 74 Southampton Place, Pentonville.

Susan was born in Kensington, bap 19 Aug 1849, the daughter of **George and Margaret Climpson**. George was a cowkeeper and dairyman, the same as AA's dad. In 1851 the family lived in Marylebone, but they also lived for a time in Westminster. When Susan was born they lived at 14 Edward Street, Dorset Square, St Mary Bryanston Square. Pretty posh area today – it was built as part of the [Portman Estate](#). I expect the Climpsons lived in the workers cottages

It's interesting that AA was only a porter and yet he married the daughter of a gentleman! George was a dairyman but by 1871 his occupation is owner of house property.

The 1871 census shows us that AA was working as a railway porter and living at 1 Durham Place, West Hackney with wife Susan and they have a daughter **Edith Susan Dixon** aged 2 (born circa 1868).

The UK Employment Records, 1833-1956 lists the Midland Operating, Traffic, Coaching Departments and shows that A Dixon was a van boy, but that he resigned in 29 Aug 1872. He probably joined another railway company because he certainly didn't change his job..

By 1881 AA and Susan were living at 49 Red Hill Street, Regents Park, another very nice area (now! but not then!). Their daughter, **Edith** was aged 12 and AA was **still** working as a

railway porter. This area was one of the busiest areas of North London. There were warehouses, a busy canal, vinegar factory, distillery, piano factory, crystal works and a number of straw and hay storage facilities. Nowadays the area is dominated by the [Peabody Cumberland Market Estate](#). Other memories from older residents from this time include recollections that Redhill Street was one of the busiest areas in north London for prostitutes to pick up their clients and was known amongst locals at the time as 'Redhot' Street! Plan below was drawn in 1891.

AA must have worked at Euston station - just 4 streets away



But things weren't going well in their marriage. There were no more children and the marriage was on the rocks. Worse than that was talk of domestic violence. It was reported that Susan had taken off with a cabman 7 weeks before she was found dead. In 1882 at the age of 30,

Susan died at 11 Kentish Town Road and was buried 4 Oct at St Pancras cemetery. We have so little info about her, but so much about her burial!! We have the plot no 4; the square (11C) and the size (6 feet) and the depth (7 feet). The registry no is 62384. The cemetery told me that it is a communal grave with no reference to Susan.

This report from the 1897

Dr Diplock yesterday held an inquest at Providence Hall respecting the death of Susan Dixon aged 33, the wife of a railway porter, living at No 7 Burton Street, Burton Crescent - Alfred Dixon, the husband stated that his wife had been subject to fits and he had not seen her for three weeks - Mrs Bowen, of 21 Alfred Road, sister of the deceased woman, said that her sister came to her a few days ago and told her she had to make herself a new home, as Alfred had left her. Dr Finzi of 89 Sutherland gardens stated that he was called to 21 Alfred Road on Monday evening, whereas he found the woman lying on the floor dead. The post-mortem examination showed the cause of death to be fatty degeneration of the heart. The husband here said he wished to make a statement, as reports had gone out he had ill-used her; but so far from that, his wife had left him about seven weeks ago to live with a cabman taking 105/- (one hundred and five shillings) and on the day of her death was driving about with him and a sister. The Jury expressed

themselves entirely satisfied with the husband's explanation, and a returned verdict of Death from Natural Causes.

Second wife

Just two years later though, at the age of 36, he married **Eleanor Adeline Roope** aged 21 at the parish chapel St Pancras on 14 Aug 1883. Eleanor's father was **James Edward Roope** and he was a maltster. Is this where AA got into the old family business of selling alcohol?

1883. Marriage solemnized at <i>The Parish Church in the Parish of St. Pancras in the County of Middlesex</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
892	Fourteenth August 1883	Alfred Archer Dixon	36	Widower	Porter	204 College St.	Alfred John Dixon	Sawymen
		Eleanor Adeline Roope	21	Spinster	---	204 College St.	James Edward Roope	Maltster.
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>William Walling</i> or after Banns by <i>C.E. Richardson</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, <i>Alfred Archer Dixon</i> in the Presence of us, <i>Eleanor Adeline Roope</i> <i>William Walling</i> <i>C.E. Richardson</i>								

Eleanor moved in with the family in Harrow when she was coming close to giving birth. Sadly, the birth was not easy, as so many in those days were not and she and their son, died 12 days after giving birth to AA's first son, **Alfred Herbert Dixon**. She and Alfred were both buried 17 Jun 1884 at St Mary's Harrow, in the churchyard. Alfred Herbert was 12 days old.

Third wife

AA was not a man to hang around because within a year he married for the third time - to **Fanny Law**, daughter of **Richard Law**, a publican in Layer Breton, just outside Colchester. See Connections: Richard law for this branch of the family). They were married in layer Breton in the winter of 19 Oct 1885. At this time AA had been promoted to station master

We find this intriguing entry in the **National Archives for 1886**. This website gives details of Alfred Archer's negotiations for a property. "Mr. George Powell to Mr. A.A. Dixon: Assignment of Lease of the Premises known as No. 11 Stratford Place, Camden Town, St Pancras"¹ Surely this is not the same place where the Oriental Club is, just off Oxford Street? It's a really posh private club.

Also in 1886, a son was born, **Alfred James Dixon** and was baptised 28 Nov 1886 in the family church of St Mary's Harrow on the Hill. He was the last of our line to have any

¹ National Archives 1886 C.P LMA/4059/C/015 1886 Mar

connection to Harrow. By 1891 we find that AA lists himself as a publican/licensed victualler, living 179 Morning Lane, Hackney. This was a public house called the Duchess of



Kent. The picture below shows what it looks like now. It was and still is a pretty rundown area. But where was Alfred James Dixon, his son??? **Duchess of Kent public house leased by AA in 1891**

In 1892 AA and Fanny had a daughter - **Alice Mabel Dixon**. She lived for 5 months. A family story came down through the generations that the nursemaid dropped her on her head and she died.



AA took over the lease of the Old George at 61 Church Street, Kensington as reported in the West London Observer Friday 6 Jan 1899 and he was also the publican there in 1900. He sold the license to George Naylor in 1901. The area has been completely rebuilt. In the 1901 census he was the publican at the Coach and Horses (left), at 862 High Road, Tottenham. Fanny was with him and he had three employees. They lived on

the second floor. He was still there in 1908,

While he was the manager of this pub, I have to wonder if he had his finger in anything else. In his will - see later, he had amassed quite a lot of real estate in Enfield. More research is called for into his financial dealings.

In the 1911 census he has moved once again and is still a licensed victualler. This time the little family is at one of his own houses - 1 Bedford Villas, Southbury Road, Enfield. In Enfield he had two public houses - the White Horse in Enfield Wash and the Railway Tavern at Ponders End.

By 1911 he was 65 and a widower again. Son Alfred James was living at home. He was aged 24 and a commercial traveller. Also, his niece was there - **Winifred Diss**, in the capacity of housekeeper. She was the daughter of Fanny's sister. Winifred's descendants moved to British Columbia in Canada.

Below: Railway Inn, Ponders End



The photo below is the White House, Enfield Wash. In the 1970s I went in and explained I was doing family tree research. The publican said he had some old photographs of a bloke on a bike. He went up into the roof and brought them down. I still have them - Alfred James Dixon on his beloved motorbike.



According to some directories I have found on Ancestry.com, it appears he was the publican of all three pubs at the same time. The list below is from the electoral guides

Year	Place of abode	nature of qualification
1895	21 Baldwins Gardens, Finsbury	dwelling house
1896	21 Baldwins Gardens, Finsbury	dwelling house
1897	21 Baldwins Gardens, Finsbury	dwelling house
1899	South Street, Ponders End	dwelling house
1900	South Street, Ponders End	dwelling house
1901	Railway Tavern, South Street, Ponders End	dwelling house
1901	59 Church Street, Kensington South	dwelling house
1902	Railway Tavern, South St, Ponders End	dwelling house
1903	Railway Tavern, South Street, Ponders End	dwelling house
1904	Railway Tavern, South St, Ponders End	dwelling house
1906	Railway Tavern, South St, Ponders End	dwelling house
1907	Railway Tavern, South St, Ponders End	dwelling house
1908	Railway Tavern, South St, Ponders End	dwelling house
1909	Railway Tavern, South St, Ponders End	dwelling house
1910	South St	dwelling house
1912	1 Bedford Villas, Southbury Rd (5-12 Bell Rd ?), Enfield	freehold house
1913	11 Bedford Villas, Southbury Rd (5-12 Bell Rd ?), Enfield	freehold house
1914	11 Bedford Villas, Southbury Rd (5-12 Bell Rd ?), Enfield	freehold house

The handbooks of the time give us only a little more information. Kelly's Directories (1901-1914) make mention that he was the manager of the Railway Hotel and one other house.

However we know that he owned 8 houses in Bell Road. In the 1912/13 Directory we learn who lived in these houses:

5 Bell Road: George Gent
6 Bell Road: George Donald Harding
7 Bell Road: William John Newman
8 Bell Road: Henry Pearce
9 Bell Road: Charles Genower
10 Bell Road: Joseph Webster
11 Bell Road: William Cross
12 Bell Road: Frank Thomas Duddy

AA started our family's connection with the little village called Layer Breton, just outside Colchester (where I was born in 1949). On the 19th March 1897 AA erected a little pair of cottages next to Layer Breton Heath. For the full story of these cottages see Appendix One "A History of Sea View".

Fanny died in 1909 and is buried in the Council burial ground in the churchyard of St Matthews, Enfield Wash. The tombstone can be clearly read. It says:



"In Loving memory of Fanny, the beloved wife of Alfred Archer DIXON who died 4th July 1909 in her 50th year - For ever with the Lord."

AA died in May 1914 of gangrene and diabetes and is buried with her.

Unfortunately his name is not recorded on the tombstone. Did

they forget ?? Was it due to the onset of World War One ?? Was there bad blood between AA and his son Alfred James?? He is definitely in there because I checked the graveyard burial registry. From talking with Alfred James' children there was definitely some ill feeling between the siblings. Will we ever know? Alfred James died in 1935 and wasn't a particularly good father. In fact he was a bit of a rake by all accounts. But you can read all about him in Connections: Alfred James Dixon.

AA was a popular figure in the Enfield area. He rated the following obituary in the Enfield Gazette and Observer dated Friday 22 May 1914:

"Mr Alfred A DIXON.

On Tuesday the funeral took place of the late Mr Alfred Archer DIXON of No. 1 Bedford Villas, Southbury Road, Enfield, amongst many tokens of respect to his memory. The deceased had suffered from diabetes for some short time past and the cause of death was gangrene. He was 68 years of age. The body was interred in the family grave in the Enfield Highway churchyard. The officiating minister being the Rv J L BOULDEN, vicar of St James, Enfield Highway. The chief mourners included Mr A J DIXON (son), Mrs HUGHES (daughter), James, Enfield Highway. The chief mourners included Mr A J DIXON (son), Mrs HUGHES (daughter), Mr HUGHES (son-in-law), Miss DISS (niece), Mr John CREASEY and Mr FREEMAN. There were also some 50 members of the Northern Suburban Licenced Victallers Association of which body the deceased was a trustee.

He was widely known in North London as a licensed victualler, having been the licensee of several houses in the district. For several years and up to some 3 years ago he was the respected landlord of the Railway Tavern, South Street, Ponders End. At the time of his death he held the licence of the White House at Enfield Wash.

He was a well-known member of the Enfield Town Constitutional Club and was a Forester of some 47 years standing.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs Blake and Co. of Enfield Town.

The family of the late Mr A A DIXON wish to thank all their numerous friends for all tokens of respect in their bereavement."²

As is often the case when a parent has more than one spouse that has produced half brothers and sisters there is often a corresponding jealousy when it comes to the inheritance.

Alfred Archer DIXON's first and second wills are reproduced below and it is clear that between 1911 and 1914 someone else moved into a close association with him. This was **Winifred DISS**, his niece. In the first will dated 1911, the executor is AA's son Alfred James (called Jimmy) DIXON and he is to receive everything except for £300 which is to be given to AA's daughter. At this time Jimmy was spending a great deal of time away from home pursuing his motor racing career.

² Enfield Gazette and Observer dated Friday 22 May 1914:

My aunt Phyl (Alfred James' daughter) wrote: "He was bitterly upset when he returned home that his father died thinking he would not come to his deathbed. Mother told me many times that AA was licensee of a number of inns – all potential sources of income. On his deathbed it was Winnie DISS.

Looking at the second will - obviously a deathbed will, we can see that AA reduced his son's inheritance quite considerably. One must remember that in 1911, £920 was a great deal of money. By 1914 there would undoubtedly have been more. One could have bought 6 good houses at least. The 8 properties in Bell Road were worth £1000 in total.

The Executors - his son-in-law Frederick William HUGHES and his friend W. Freeman are made executors of his final will. It was they who should have attended to the carving on the gravestone, but they did not. After all, they had been left ALL the cash and saleable furniture and it is of course up to the executors to take care of that sort of detail. £

THE FIRST WILL DATED 23 FEBRUARY 1911

"This is the last will and testament of me Alfred Archer DIXON of No. 1 Bedford Villas, Southbury Road, Enfield in the county of Middlesex, Licensed Victualler. After payment of all my just debts, funeral and testamentary expenses, I give, devise and bequeath to my son Alfred James DIXON my property in Bell Road, Enfield, eight houses numbers 5 to 12 inclusive, two copyhold villas at Layer Breton Nr Colchester, Essex and seven hundred pounds, £700, invested at 401 with Messrs Boord & Sons Distillers of Tooty St Boror and two hundred and twenty pounds, £220, on deposit at 5% with Watney Combe, Reid & Co my brewers of the Stag Brewery, Pimlico. A life policy I hold of Mr Richard LAW for three hundred pounds, £300, which at his death I wish my daughter Mrs Edith Susan HUGHES of 128 Faulkland Road, Hornsey to receive. Should my daughter be deceased, I wish it to be equally divided between her two children Frederick and Violet HUGHES. I hereby revoke all other wills made by me and declare this to be my last will and testament and I hereby appoint my son - Alfred James DIXON to be sole executrix hereof, in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this twenty third day of February one thousand nine hundred and eleven.

signed Alfred Archer DIXON

THE LAST WILL DATED 9 MAY 1914

This is the last will and testament of me Alfred Archer DIXON of I Bedford Villas, Enfield. I

I hereby revoke all former wills by me. I give my son Alfred James DIXON my eight freehold cottages in Bell Road, Enfield also two copyhold cottages at Layer Breton near Kelvedon, Essex.

I give to James CREASEY of the White House, Enfield Highway a legacy of £100 clear of duty. All the rest and residue of my estate and effects of what nature of kind soever I give and bequeath the same unto my son-in-law Frederick William HUGHES and W FREEMAN of the George Hotel, Enfield upon trust to realise the same and to divide the proceeds between my daughter Edith Susan HUGHES and my niece Winifred DISS and I appoint the said Frederick William HUGHES and W FREEMAN executors of this my will as witness my hand this ninth day of May one thousand nine hundred and fourteen.

Alfred Archer DIXON

On 30th June 1914 Probate of this will was granted to **Frederick William HUGHES** and **Robert William FREEMAN** the Execs.

Children of Alfred Archer Dixon: Edith Susan Dixon

Through the ups and downs of marriages and deaths we see that **Edith Susan Dixon** survived because on 13 Aug 1895 she married **Frederick William Hughes (FW)** in the parish church of St Matthews, St Pancras. AA was present at the wedding and so was Ada Silvester Hughes (sister?). Frederick was the son of **Robert John Hughes** (deceased) and **Georgina**, a charwoman. Robert was dead by 1881. Frederick was born 14 Apr 1866 and baptised at Old Church, St Pancras 22 Jul 1866.

FW worked as a commerce clerk. They lived at 4 Corime Road, Islington, 44 Grayford Road and 128 Falkand Road, Hornsey.

Is this him? During WW2 FW was a fireman and was injured in the Blitz. He was taken to Highgate Hospital. His name is recorded as Civilian War Dead in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (his death is given as 19 Dec 1944 and his address is 170 Malden Road

Fredrick William Hughes died 27 Nov 1944 at the North Middlesex Hospital, Edmonton. Administration at Llandudno 19 Jun 1944 to **Frederick Dixon Hughes**, civil servant and Edith Violet Hughes, spinster. Effects £2922.8s.7d.

I don't know when Edith died.

FW and EV had only two children:

Frederick Dixon Hughes born 21 Jun 1896 and baptised 1 Aug 1897 St George church, Tuffnel Park

Edith Violet Hughes born 10 June 1897, baptised 1 Aug 1897 St George church, Tuffnel Park

Frederick Dixon Hughes

Frederick was born 1897 and was just the right age to get caught up in WW1 and we find that he was a corporal with regimental no 199172 and a gunner with the RFA. He was a member of the Alexandra Freemasons Lodge and was initiated 23 July 1919 at the age of 23. He also lived at Jubbalpore and his occupation is given as a soldier. He was awarded a British War Medal. After the war, the London Gazette 7 July 1922 states that he was appointed to the Board of Education. Frederick Dixon lived at 1 Frobisher Road, Haringay in 1928.

He married **Winifred Reeve Rask** on 27 Jun 1931 at St Catherine church, Hatcham, Lewisham. they were both civil servants. Her father was a seaman - John Victor Rask (deceased) and his wife Jane. She was born 11 Nov 1904 and baptised 18 Jan 1905 at St John Horsleydown, Southwark. They lived in 43 (Centre) Vine Street Buildings, [Southwark](#). In 1932-3 they lived at 56 Jerningham Road, Deptford. Frederick died 17 Feb 1978 in Hampshire aged 81. He lived at 22 Loxwood Avenue, Church Crookham, Aldershot. Probate was granted 25 April and effects were £860 . Winifred died in May 2001 in Milton Keynes aged 96.

Children:

- **John Dixon Hughes** b 13 Jul 1934 Deptford married and we will call her **wife 1**. Issue:
 - Ian Dixon Hughes who is still living. Ian married Wendy 1938-2005. Issue:
 - **Alexandra Hughes**
 - **Emma Hughes**
 - **Sam Hughes 2001**

John married again to **wife 2**. Issue:

- **Stephen Hughes**

Edith Violet Hughes

born 10 June 1897, baptised 1 Aug 1897 (St George church, Tuffnel Park). In the 1901 and 1911 census she is at home. She never married and died in June 1968 at Croydon aged 71.