

Connections: Fletchers; Barratts & Evans



By Christopher Dixon

William Fletcher & Elizabeth Nock

William Fletcher bc 1801 in Wolverhampton and married **Elizabeth Nock**, called Eliza bc 1801 in Sedgley on 13 Nov 1820 at St Peter's Wolverhampton. Bill was a coal miner.

In the 1841 census we find that the family lived in Ettingshall and both parents gave their age as 40. William Fletcher was a miner and probably worked down the Fighting Cocks Colliery. The Fighting Cocks pub gave its name to the colliery. What is really interesting is that their next door neighbours in the census were George Evans and his wife Alice, who was daughter of **William and Eliza Evans** and are intimately connected with the Fletchers.:

Their children, as far as I know were:

- **John Fletcher** b 1825 Wolverhampton
- [Alice Fletcher](#) b 1827 Wolverhampton - click on her name to see her history
- **William Fletcher** b 1829 Wolverhampton, coal miner
- **Joseph Fletcher** b 1831 Wolverhampton, coal miner
- **Edwin Fletcher** bc 1834 Sedgley, coal miner
- **Thomas Fletcher** bc 1841 Sedgley. In the 1861 census he was living with his sister Alice and brother-in-law George Evans in Cleveland Street, Wednesfield – no occupation is listed for him although he is 20.
- **Edward Fletcher** bc 1833 Sedgley,
- **Mary Anne Fletcher** was baptised 5 June 1842 at St Leonard's church Bilston. There is a Mary A Fletcher aged 58 living with her brother on own means at 97 Bilston Street, Sedgley. Her brother was Edward Baker a former shopkeeper aged 72 b Sedgley. Mary had an illegitimate child, **William Fletcher** (1867-1946), who was brought up by his aunt Alice and uncle George (Evans). For more information - see below



The map of the day shows the Fighting Cocks area hemmed in by collieries. There was a pub called the Fighting Cocks, demolished and the Aldi car park in Parkfield Road now sits there. The Fighting Cocks name lives on as a bus stop on service 1 (Dudley to Tettenhall via Wolverhampton)

Thankfully the Sedgley School Park is still there, but not as a school. This gives us a landmark so we can see where the family

lived. The school is now called the Park Hall Hotel and Spa. Perhaps the author of the webpage should have spent more time on literacy as he states [here](#) that "The Hotel is built in the style of Indigo Jones." Indigo Jones??? He means of course Ingo Jones.

The house was built in 1705 and was the home of the family of Dudley and Ward until 1757. became a school in 1761, founded by Bishop Challoner for Catholic schoolboys, before the Earl of Dudley took up residence in 1947. Park Hall finally became a hotel in 1981 when the Grigg and Brettell Brewery bought the building and transformed it into a hotel.

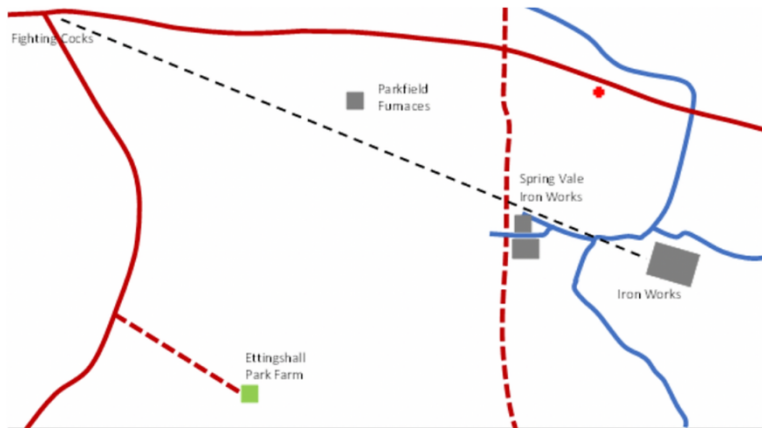
The 1861 census adds confusion to the mix. Is this our William? Now aged 6 - but working as a shoemaker? Elizabeth his wife aged 59 and there is a daughter aged 17 living with ten others.

From the 18th century onwards, Ettingshall became heavily industrialised as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Until April 1979, an area of wasteland on the southside of Millfields Road was the location of the Bilston Steelworks and old Bilston quarries. Ettingshall Road was the location for Cables and Instruments, Dixon's Wallcoverings and Tools and Machines. Spring Road is the location of Tarmac Limited (head office closed 2013) and John Thompson Limited (closed 2004).

As the northern parts of the original Ettingshall extended across the border into Bilston, many new houses and factories were built and this area became known as "Ettingshall New Village", the Ettingshall that still exists in the present day.



The picture on the front cover shows what the Fletcher family would have seen every day. This is believed to have been painted in 1852/3 and to depict the Springvale Ironworks at Bilston to the south of Wolverhampton and appears in the book "Petit's Tours of Old Staffordshire". The position from which the picture is painted can be more precisely defined. A sketch from the 1845 map showing a wider area is shown below and indicates the likely position – at the road junction to the top left, where the name (presumably of a pub) is given as the Fighting Cocks.



This is at the junction of the current Parkfield Road with the Dudley / Wolverhampton Road. The 1845 map indicates a cluster of housing at this point. Interestingly the 1882 map shows the latter road is the course of a tramway, and this might also be the case for the 1845 map, although tramways and roads are not always distinguished on these maps. If this were the

case then the horses in the foreground might be pulling wagons along the tramway.

The 1851 census shows us that the family lived at the Fighting Cocks and right next door to the Toll Bar and Toll Gate house, which would have been at this spot. Genuki has an article about the minerals that can be found in the area. They say that "The hissing of the blast furnace, the clanging of hammers, the dusky appearance of the workmen, and the various operations upon unwieldy masses of red-hot iron, combine to excite an idea of terror in the spectator:

*"The ponderous hammer falls,
Loud anvils ring amid the trembling walls.
Strokes follow strokes, the sparkling ingot shines,
Flows the red flag, the lengthening bar refines.
Cold waves immersed, the glowing mass congeal,
And turn to adamant the hissing steel."*

Alice Fletcher & George Evans 1827

William Fletcher & Elizabeth Nock > Alice

Alice Fletcher bc 1827 in Bilston, Staffordshire and she is the glue that joins us to the Evans family, as she married **George Evans** on 1 May 1844 in Sedgley. They lived next door to each other and would have known each other from childhood. George was born in Shrewsbury and trained to be an engine driver. He married her 1 May 1844 and then the young family lived at the fighting Cocks in Ettingshall.

In 1861 they lived at Cleveland Street, Holy Trinity, Wolverhampton. They would not recognise the area today. Now it's hard to imagine that the quiet cul-de-sac at the top of Hospital Street was once part of the main route through Wolverhampton, to and from the west, carrying large amounts of traffic into Shropshire and North Wales via Cleveland Street, Salop Street and Chapel Ash. The road was built in between 1828 and 1830 as part of the town commissioners' road improvement scheme. The new ring road has turned it into a cul-de-sac.

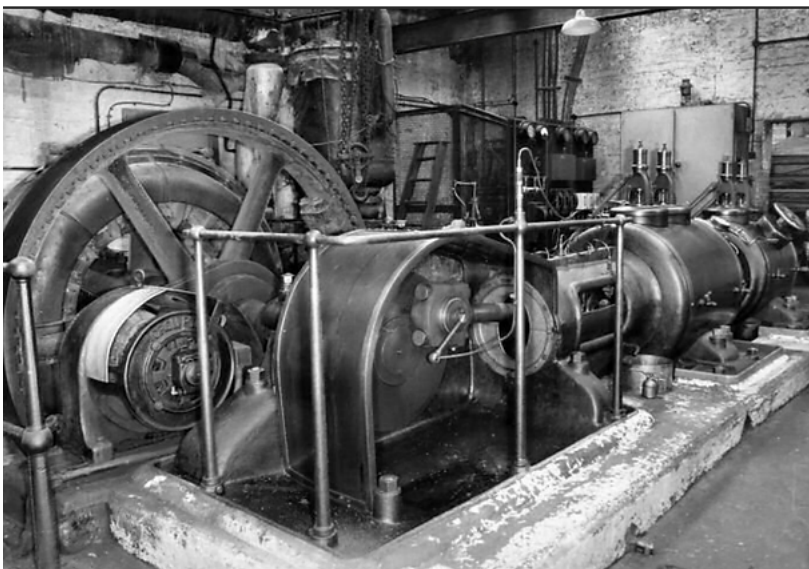
Alice and George had the following kids:

- **Mary Ann Evans** b 1848 Fighting Cocks, Sedgley, baptised 6 April 1848 Holy Trinity Ettingshall. Married **George Deakin** 8 Nov 1869 Wednesfield. They were one of the families that left Staffordshire and moved to the South Yorkshire coalfields and settled in Darfield. In 1891 they lived at 26 Havelock Terrace, now Havelock Street. The houses in the Terrace have been demolished. Other researchers have her listed as living in Burton on Trent aged 90 in the 1939, register but the birthdate is wrong. Children:
 - **George H Deakin** bap 22 Oct 1879 St John the Baptist
 - **Ruth Deakin** bap 22 Oct 1879 St John the Baptist
 - **Comfort Maid Deakin** bc 1882 Darfield d Oct 1892 Barnsley aged 12
 - **Aaron Deakin** bc 1885
 - **Edith Deakin** bc 1890
- **Joseph Evans** bc 1851 Sedgley. In the 1871 census, right next door to where George Evans and William and Eliza Fletcher are living, we find him, aged 19, a collier engine driver married to **Elizabeth** aged 19 with daughter **Ellen** aged 6 mo b Wolverhampton.
- **Ruth Evans** b 1854 Sedgley/Wolverhampton
- **Ann Evans** b 1856
- **Comfort Evans** b 1861-2 Wolverhampton

- **John Thomas Edward 'Jack' Evans** 1863 - see below
- **William Evans bc 1865** Sedgley; engine fitter. Married 6 Aug 1893 in Bilston to **Emily Morris**. He and Emily moved to Mexborough, South Yorkshire, together with brother Jack. Children
 - **Alice Evans** born 4 May 1894 - 26 Jan 1985 married a **Mr Thomas**
 - **Clara Edith Evans** died 24 Dec 1985 married **Albert Burke**
- **Emily Evans bc 1868 Bristol, Gloucester**
- **George Evans** b 15 May 1871 Blakenhall/Wednesfield. Married **Jane Ann Heafy/Heapy** 1 Nov 1897 at St Luke, Leek, Staffs. Jane was bap 15 Feb 1874 in Quarnford, St Paul, Staffs, the daughter of George Heapy and Sara Lavinia In. In 1891 he and Jane are living at House 1 Court 7 in a street beginning with a P. He is a general labourer and Jane is a blackstover. Jane died 12 Feb 1916 at Cheshire House Waterfall, Staffs, widow. She left her estate to Minnie Heapy, spinster and Arthur Rushton, accountant. Effects at £1208-3-8d. George moved to Mexborough in South Yorkshire and we find him there in the 1939 census. He listed his occupation as retired coal miner dataller. Also in the house was William Fletcher, illegitimate son of Mary Ann.

Alice and George took in the illegitimate son of Alice's sister **Mary Ann Fletcher** for a time - **William Fletcher** 1867 - 1946.

For the next 20 years they lived at 25 Wards Meadow Rookery Road. Rookery Road is still there (see photo on the next page) and we can see what was probably a meadow right behind it. The original houses have all been



torn down and replaced with big modern ones. The residents are up in arms because the council wants to build a new estate on this vacant land.

George was working as an engine driver - he operated a steam factory engine, used for all processes, usually linked by a system of shafts, pulleys and belts. He was doing well and the family had moved by 1871 to Briggins Lane Grocer's Shop, Heath Town, Wednesfield and it is

interesting that his father-in-law, William Fletcher b 1804 Wolverhampton, and his wife Elizabeth are living with them.

In the 1881 census we also find that William Fletcher, his grandson aged 14, b 1867 in Sedgley was living with them. Moving on 10 years they were in the same place and two of their children were there as well – Eliza who worked at home was looking after her parents and William, now aged 20, was a labourer.



Not sure where the family was in 1901 but there was an Alice Evans boarding in the home of Rosamale Barrett, a widow aged 62 b Cosely, working as a coal dealer. Her daughter, Rosamale aged 21 was there as well. Alice Evans was a widow aged 76 b Wolverhampton. Also in the house was Clara (12) and Laura (10) Southaw, grand daughters

Eliza was still going strong in 1911, living in the home of her son William, now a furnace man in a steelworks. Their address was 3 Holcrofts Meadow, Ladymoor, Bilston. Alice was now aged 17 and Edith was 12, both born Sedgley.

George was working as an engine driver - he operated a steam factory engine, used for all processes, usually linked by a system of shafts, pulleys and belts. This is a factory steam engine.

William Fletcher

William Fletcher & Elizabeth Nock > Mary Anne & ? > William

This story has been written by Nick Shaw.

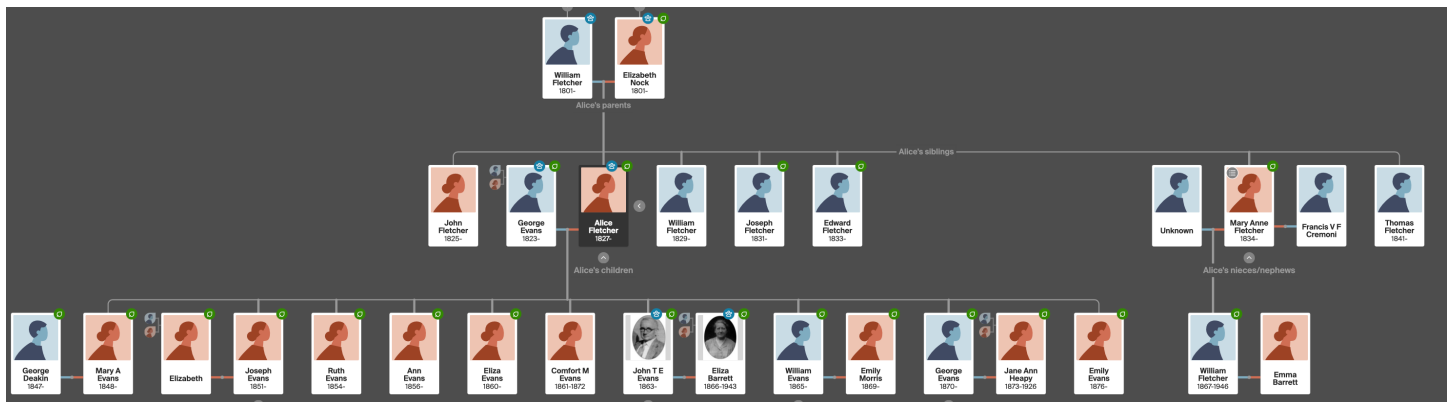
William Fletcher married **Emma Barratt** on Christmas Day 1890 at St Chad's church, West Coseley. On his marriage certificate he gave his father's name as **Albert Fletcher** (deceased) a miner. A considerable amount of time and effort went into trying to find Albert Fletcher and it was only after William's birth certificate was finally obtained, that it was discovered that **Albert was a figment of William's imagination!**

William was illegitimate. He was born 14 September 1867 at a location near to the Fighting Cocks Hotel in Sedgley and his mother is listed as **Mary Ann Fletcher**, aged about 23. No father is named.

Mary Ann and William should have appeared on the 1871 census, just four years after he was born, but despite all my efforts, I have been unable to find them. It is not unusual for people to dodge the census enumerator and this appears to be the case here. So we do not know if Mary Ann lived at home, or was forced to fend for herself. It would appear from later investigations, that the latter was the case.

The 1881 census is the key record. William is shown as aged 14 living with [George Evans](#), an engine driver and one time publican/bar manager, born in Shrewsbury and his wife **Alice Fletcher** from Bilston. William is listed with their five children, as a "grandson".

By this time, I believe that William's mother Mary Ann had moved on and had married a man of Italian extraction. When she left William is impossible to be sure, but in 1881 she would have been in her late thirties, so I suspect that it was not long after 1871.



I traced George Evans and his family back to the 1871 census and there was in fact a William Fletcher living with them. But this was William Fletcher aged 67 and his wife Elizabeth of the same age. They are listed as mother and father and are the parents of George's wife Alice. She was Alice Fletcher, who married George Evans at

Sedgley in 1844. Further investigations show that Mary Ann Fletcher (William's mother) was Alice's younger sister. The plot thickens....

So who could be William's father?

Firstly, it must be said that it obviously could have been anyone. Mary Ann could have been in a long-term relationship, or she could have had a number of partners, but the circumstances of William's upbringing mean that we should look more closely at the Evans family.

The spotlight is now shining on George Evans himself. It is not unique for a man to have a relationship with his wife's sister, but we should look at this from Alice's viewpoint.

Her husband has a relationship with her sister which results in a child, which she then agrees to bring up, whilst her sister wanders off. That is a big call and I can't help feeling that most women would have shown George the door.

But realistically, who would support her and her children (they had a total of 10), if George moved on? So he has to be in the frame.

There is, however, another possibility. Let's turn the spotlight onto George and Alice's eldest child – a boy named **Joseph**. Born around 1850, he would have been some six years Mary Ann's junior but would have been 17 when William was born. Add to that the fact that if he was the father, then the term "grandson" on the 1881 census is accurate. However, the relationship between a nephew and his aunt (in this case his mother's sister), would have been regarded as incestuous. It is certainly genetically worrying but, as William does not appear to have been born with two heads, it must be a consideration.

We find that William is living in Mexborough in 1911 and good lad that he is, he has William Barratt and Elizabeth Potts (his inlaws) and one of their sons – Thomas living with them in 11 Regent Place - which was located in or near Oliver Street.

There is one more document that helps with William's history and that is the 1939 Register. This is a document that was compiled just as the Second World War started and was used to determine who should receive a ration book. Somehow it seems to have circumnavigated the 100-year ruling that is applied to the census and has been released now. It is heavily redacted, which makes it virtually illegible in some parts, but is very useful in this instance.

The register shows William Fletcher living at 55 Oliver Street Mexborough. His wife Emma is a patient in the Montagu Hospital in Mexborough. Presumably being treated for the breast cancer that was sadly to end her life some four years later.

Two further entries are of importance. Firstly, it shows William`s date of birth. This matches that of his birth certificate, proving beyond doubt that we have the correct document. Secondly, living with William in Oliver Street is George Evans son of George and Alice. He is shown as being a widower, three years younger than William. George was one of the children that William grew up with. He married **Harriet Holding** at Wolverhampton in 1892. She died at Mexborough in 1937.

There is little else that we can find out about William`s birth and life, but there are still questions regarding his mother. I have so far failed to find her birth registration and certificate, which are proving irritatingly elusive. We know that Mary Ann and Alice`s parents were William Fletcher, born at Wolverhampton in 1801 and Elizabeth, born at Sedgley in the same year, but Elizabeth who??

There are three candidates and until I find Mary Ann`s birth certificate, we will not know which one it is. I may have to try looking for her slightly older brother Thomas.

John Thomas Edward Evans

William Fletcher & Alice Nock > Alice & George Evans > John

For more information about Jack – see the booklet Connections: Jack & Eliza Evans

John Thomas Edward Evans (Jack) was born circa 1862 in Ladybride Street, Bilston, Staffordshire (1881 census lists Sedgley and he is working as a boat builder). He and his brother Bill moved to Mexborough at a time when the canal transportation system was being developed, in order to move the vast amounts of coal to Sheffield and Doncaster. He found employment at [Waddington's Boatyard](#) down near the canal. He would be delighted to know that they are still there and I expect that he could walk right in and get on with [the work](#), though he would be amazed with modern tools.

Jack Evans married **Eliza Barrett** (who was born 21 Canal Street, Corstley 1864) at Corstley Parish Church. Eliza's mother (known as Great Grandma Barrett, died aged 96. Rene gave me these dates and recalls a Great Grandma Potter), and Jack's parents died aged 88 and 86 years respectively. Eliza's sister Emma, married William Fletcher.

Jack and Eliza left Staffordshire and moved to Mexborough and lived at 37 Oliver Street. Oliver Street was in the poorer end of Mexboro and was considered the other side of the railway tracks. Not true now though. In 1930, at the age of 60 and when most of the children had left home, they should have been looking forward to a gentle old age in retirement. However, their son's wife - **Ada Severn** - died of pneumonia.

This was a hard time - the General Strike of 1929 was followed by the Great Depression - money was scarcer than ever before and work was hard to get. Jack and Eliza took in Ada's three children: Rene, Stan and Marian, as well as their own son, Bill. At the time their youngest son, Frank, was still living at home. And then, just two years later, Thomas' wife, Ellen nee Goddard died and two more children were gathered in.

Jack and Eliza (called "Granny Evans") were typical products of the Victorian age. Strict and very religious, they ruled their house according to biblical ethics. Sunday meant 3 visits to church. No-one was allowed to work on Sunday - that meant not even cutting your nails was allowed.

Maureen recalls that *"Jack had a slight Welsh accent and Granny Evans had a big organ in the front room. The house was made into a 3 up/ 3 down and God help you if you moved on a Sunday. On that day you were given two books to read - the Bible and Pilgrims Progress. Granny Evans wore high-button boots, black stockings, big baggy drawers, 3 skirts under another black one that extended down to the top of her boots and a white blouse. She only ever had one coat until she was quite old. Jack was a hard drinker - consuming 18 rum and peppers before going to work, though he became timid later in life"*

Jack died Oct 12 1942 aged 80 and Eliza died 2 December 1943 aged 79. They are buried in Mexborough Cemetery.

The full story of Jack and Eliza is contained in the booklet [Connections: Evans of Mexborough](#)

The wife and family of the late Mr John Thomas Edward Evans desire to express their sincere thanks to Nurse Crawley and Dr Agascar for their very hard care and attention to Mr Evans during his illness. Also to all friends and neighbours of the Mexborough Reform Club for their very kind sympathy and for the many beautiful floral tributes received during their recent sad bereavement.

37 Oliver Street, Mexborough

The South Yorkshire Times issue dated 17 October 1942 (page 10) reported his funeral. It reads:

The death of Mr JTE Evans (80) of 37 Oliver Street occurred on Monday. Mourners were:

Mrs JTE Evans (widow); Mr & Mrs A Prosser; Mr & Mrs W Evans; Mr & Mrs E Evans; Mr & Mrs T Evans Mr & Mrs F Evans; Mrs W Fletcher; Ernest Prosser; Thomas Evans; Robert Evans; Mrs J Heaton; Marian Evans; Maureen, Nancy & Chrissie Evans; Mr & Mrs T Donaghue; Steve, Don, Edith & Alice; Mr W Fletcher; Mrs Norton; Mr & Mrs Barrett; Mrs Chipp;

Bearers were Messrs Marsden, Slater, Oxley, Haigh, Baker & Wright. Funeral arrangements were by Millwood & Sons, 105 Main Street & 24 Market Street, Mexborough. Tel 2138.

South Yorkshire Times issue dated 17 October 1942 (page 10)

The Barratt Family

The Fletchers and Evans are tied in with the Barratts. They were all living in Staffordshire at the heart of the Industrial Revolution, and they all knew each other. When better working conditions were offered in South Yorkshire, our branch moved across. This is their story

Generation 1: Richard Barratt

Back in the middle of the eighteenth century **Richard Barratt** was born in Old Swinford, Worcestershire. Swinford is derived from a brook called Swin. Old was added later to distinguish the settlement from that at nearby Kingswinford. The ford refers to Roman and then later crossing of the brook. But the brook has changed position over the years so the exact location of the crossing is not known.

Generation 1: William Barratt

Back in the middle of the eighteenth century, **William Barratt** lived in Worcestershire with his wife **Sarah Lee**. Children:

Generation 2: Benjamin Barratt

Benjamin was born in June 1794 in Old Swinford, Worcestershire. He married **Mary Cook** bap 11 Jun 1809 in Kingswinford, Staffordshire. Her parents were **William and Elizabeth Cook**. Benjamin died 27 Dec 1859 and Mary died Mar 1870 in Staffordshire

- **John Barratt** b 1827 Stourbridge d Jul 1908 Woodsetton, Sedgley, Staffordshire. Married **sarah Jackson** 1834-1901
- [William Barratt](#) b 1828 Stourbridge d 1911 Mexborough married **Elizabeth Potts** b 1839 Sedgley, Staffordshire. [See below](#)
- **Elizabeth Barratt** b 1831 Stourbridge d 1894 married **John Reeves** 1838 d 1901
- **Joseph Barratt** b 1834 Stourbridge d Jun 1921 Dudley married **Mary Ann Nicholls** b 1824 Tipton, Staffordshire d Jun 1879
- **Thomas Barratt** b 1835 Stourbridge d Oct 1901 married **Selena Reeves** b 1840
- **Samuel Barratt** b 1839 d 1912 married **Mary Powell** b 1839 d 1914
- **Richard Barratt** b 1842 – d 1897 married **Martha Jane Bassford** b 1875 d 1941. Richard and Martha had:
 - **Samuel Barratt** 1868 – 1949 married **Martha Jane Bassford** 1875-1941. Issue:
 - **Gwendoline Barratt** 1901-1977 married **Joseph Cox** 1894-1960. Issue:
 - **Gwennie E Cox** 1932-1913 married **George H Gutteridge** 1931-1988. Issue

- **Living Gutteridge** married **William T Fellowes** 1955-2014. Issue:
 - **Georgina Fellowes**

William Barratt 1828 – 1911

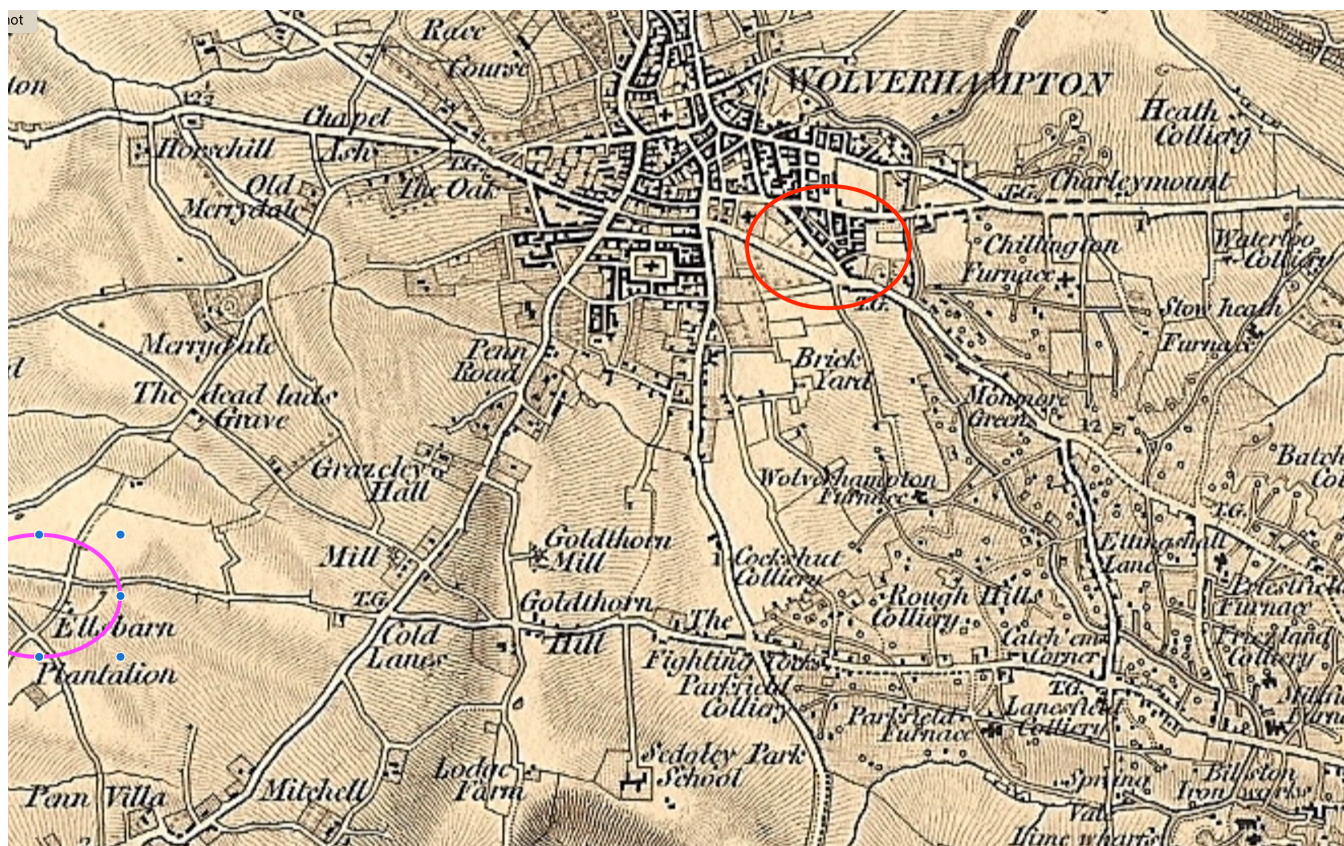
William Barratt & Sarah Lee > Benjamin Barratt & Mary Cook > William

William Barratt was born in Old Swinford, a picturesque little town in Worcestershire. I'm sure he would have been called Bill. The family lived in Old Swinford High Street, surrounded by familiar names – next door was Thomas Nock, a currier and William Cartright, a labourer. Bill's dad Benjamin was a shoemaker.



Bill might have gone to school until the age of 10, and then it was out to the workplace. He could have followed in his father's footsteps and become a shoemaker, but the industrial revolution was in full swing in the Midlands, factories and canals springing up everywhere – except in Old Swinford. Bill moved to Staffordshire and it was here that he married **Elizabeth Potts**. In 1861 he was working as a mill furnaceman and living in Highfields, Wolverhampton. The mill where he undoubtedly worked in 1861 was along the Coalway Road, and from the map we can see that there was a lot of heavy industry in the area. Ellsbarn Plantation, Goldthron Mill and just past this was the Fighting Cocks Mill – the picture that is on the front of this booklet. The map that Bill knew is on the next page. Highfields is just to the left of Ellsbarn Plantation and Highfields School. Bill moved jobs and residence and by 1871 his growing family were living in New Hall Street in Willenhall, which is still an industrial powerhouse. New Hall Street is still there but the houses have all gone. Ten years later, Bill, now 52

years old, no longer has the stamina to be a puddler and possibly wanted a quieter life as he described himself as a labourer in 1881 and the family now lived in York Street, which is right on the edge of Wolverhampton. The street is still there but the terraced houses have been replaced by bigger houses. The purple circle was where they were in 1861 and the red circle in 1881



There was no such thing as retirement in those days, unless you had made enough money to keep you alive. So by 1891 Bill and Elizabeth had moved 12 miles south to Canal Street, Sedgley. The houses have gone, but the street is still there albeit made up of car parking spaces. Bill was working as a Council labourer. His daughter Mary was living at home, a widow because her husband (Mr Turner) had died. The household income was helped by son William working as a baker and Thomas a miner. The family had adopted a girl called Mary aged 2 – no surname was given. Elijah Cook and his family lived next door. They liked living in Canal Street as they were still there in 1901 with Bill a hale and hearty 72 and his job was a road labourer. The only child still with them was Thomas, a horse driver at a colliery. There were at least 6 within walking distance.

Bill was a tough old bugger. Imagine the life that he would have led with extremely hard work, poor living conditions, pollution everywhere, and yet at the of 82 he has moved halfway across the country to live with his so-in-law William Fletcher, who had moved across to Mexborough, in South Yorkshire. Mexborough was a coal-

mining centre but needed manpower and were willing to pay for the workers travel, housing and higher wages. You will recall that William Fletcher was the illegitimate son of Mary Ann Fletcher and he married Emma Barratt. The family lived at 11 Regent Place, Mexborough. Regent Place has disappeared but is was very close to or actually in Oliver Steet. Bill died shortly after.

Bill and Elizabeth had 8 children as far as I know:

- **Mary Ann Barratt** b 1862
- **Eliza Barratt** 1866 – 1943 married [John Thomas Edward Evans](#), son of [Alice Fletcher](#) and **George Evans** – see above and the booklet [Connections: Evans of Mexborough](#)
- **Sarah Barratt** 1868 – 1950 married **Thomas Cartwright** with 5 children in Wednesfield
- **Emma Barratt** 1869 – 1922 married [William Fletcher](#) – see above
- **Benjamin Barratt** 1871
- **William Barratt** 1872 - 1957
- **Elizabeth Barratt** 1873
- **Thomas Barratt** 1875