

William Milner and his ridiculously extraordinary family

William Milner, born in the summer of 1844, was the son of plumber **Peter Milner** and his first wife **Mary Grime**, both from Skerton, north of the river in Lancaster. Mary died when William was just three so he was brought up by his dad and his step mother **Bridget Bradley** who had another seven children, at least. It was a busy household.

At the age of 14, William undertook an apprenticeship in brass founding with **James Marsh**. However just two years later, in 1861, he was brought to court charged with absconding [7]. The generous Mr Marsh withdrew the charges when William returned to work and paid costs. William seemed to stick with it as, when he married in 1868, he described himself as a brass finisher. His wife was **Mary Elizabeth Walker**, a farmer's daughter. Unfortunately, she died five years later, aged 30, perhaps related to childbirth issues.

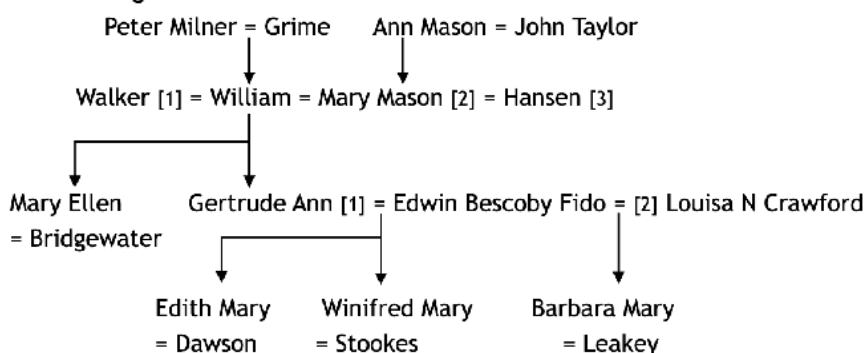
ABSCONDING APPRENTICES.— On Monday, William Milner, son of Peter Milner, plumber and glazier, was brought before the Magistrates at the Town Hall, charged with absconding from the service of his master, Mr. James Marsh, brass founder, &c. on the 8th inst.— Mr. Marsh did not press the case, and kindly withdrew the information on the lad agreeing to return to his work and pay the costs, which amounted to 7s.

By 1875 William had given up working with brass — it seems his heart was never in it after all. He lived in Church Street, Giggleswick working as a labourer and builder's carter when he married **Mary Mason**, the illegitimate daughter of **Ann Mason** who later married **John Taylor**. Before marrying, Mary worked as a kitchen maid for **Isabella Hartley** at the Golden Lion. William and Mary had two daughters, **Gertrude Ann** and **Mary Ellen**, but also brought up another child, **Joseph Taylor Flowers**. Mary's half-brother **Joseph Taylor** was already married when he got a teenager, **Sophia Flowers**, pregnant with Joseph Taylor Flowers. Little Joseph was brought up by William and Mary and later became a timber wagoner in Skipton. When she was 21, Sophia married and had more children.

Mary died in 1889, aged 44, when daughter Mary Ellen was seven, and was buried in an unmarked grave in Giggleswick graveyard. William took his daughters to live in Bowskills Yard above Castle Hill in Settle. Nine years after Mary's death William married for the third time, to widow **Kate (Richardson) Hansen**. Incredibly, Kate Richardson, a dock labourer's daughter from Glasson Dock, near Lancaster, had married an international trader, **Niels Claus Hansen**, from Denmark. They had two sons and a daughter, still in Glasson Dock. It's not clear what happened to the husband and the sons but perhaps they were to be found in Denmark? Kate and daughter **Kate Helena Hansen** found their way to Settle.

Kate married our William Milner and Kate Helena married **Thomas Holmes** from the Holmes plumbing dynasty. William died in 1901 and was buried in the unmarked grave *Old EX27*, so Kate lived with daughter Kate Helena and her husband and daughter in

Milner Family Tree



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Bowskill's Yard. Kate Helena died in 1919 at the age of just 40 after an attack of flu, possibly Spanish Flu, which 'had affected her mind' so that she had been under medical observation for a while [A]. In a confused state she drank from a bottle of ammonia with fatal results. Mum Kate was there at the time. Eventually Kate and her daughter Kate Helena were buried together in the unmarked grave *Old FX67*.

So, what about William and Mary's two daughters?

Youngest daughter Mary Ellen Milner worked in domestic service for a while but managed to catch the eye of **James Henry Bridgwater** who was the professional player appointed to Settle Golf Club. He had held the record for the nine holes course at Settle 'for some time' [1]. James was the son of a hay trusser from Shropshire so definitely demonstrated a bit of social climbing. In 1907 he was appointed to Jarrow and Hebburn Club but they married in March 1908, back in Giggleswick. It's a shame Mary Ellen's father was not still alive to witness it. Mary Ellen and James Henry had a daughter, **Constance Bridgewater**. Mary Ellen died in 1930, aged 48 so James Henry married again and moved to Doncaster to start a golf school, having laid out courses in the north east [2].

following day as stated.—Catherine Mills, mother of the deceased, stated that she was attending deceased in consequence of her illness, and was present when she reached down the bottle, but did not think it contained ammonia, and therefore took no notice of her action.—The husband, Thomas Holmes, stated that deceased had suffered from a severe attack of influenza last November, from which she had never recovered and it had affected her mind. She was a very loving and admirable wife, and there was no reason for her act.—The Coroner found that deceased, being of unsound mind, drank a quantity of washing ammonia, causing death. Much sympathy is felt with the bereaved husband in his sad trouble. The funeral took place soon after the inquiry.

Appointment for a Yorkshire Professional.

James Bridgwater, professional to the Settle Golf Club, has been appointed professional to the Jarrow and Hebburn Club. **Bridgwater** is a very fine player, and for some time held the record for the nine holes course at Settle.

When she was 17, in 1894, William and Mary's eldest daughter Gertrude Ann gave birth to a daughter, **Edith Mary Milner**. Church baptism records helpfully tell us that she was baptised on 5th August that year and that the father was **Edwin Bescoby Fido**. Just over a year later Gertrude Ann and Edwin got married. Despite this, probably to avoid embarrassment, Edith Ann was given to another (childless) couple to be brought up. The other couple were thought to be **John William Bilton**, a Settle carpenter and his wife **Susannah Allen** from Montgomeryshire. Unfortunately, Susannah died when Edith Mary was seven. John William remarried and had a daughter of his own with **Margaret Murphy** which probably explains why poor Edith Mary moved back in with Edwin and Gertrude. By then, they had another (legitimate) daughter **Winifred May Fido** who was two years younger than Edith Mary. Winifred May Fido married **William Stookes**, a loco man from Durham and they had at least five sons up there. We'll come back to Edith Mary later.

Edwin Boscoby Fido had a fantastic name and an incredible ancestry. He was one of five children of **Robert Bescoby Fido** and **Sarah Ferrand Busfield**. Edwin was the only one of his siblings to marry — the rest lived together, uneventfully, at Throstle Nest Farm in Addingham. Edwin's paternal grandfather, **Thomas Fido**, was wealthy enough to be in the electoral registers of the 1830s, running the Punch Bowl Inn in the centre of Sheffield [3].

Edwin's maternal great-grandparents were extremely wealthy and are mentioned in Burke's Landed Gentry under the name **Ferrand**. They descended from a relation who was the warden of Skipton Castle in the 13th century. **Edward Ferrand** was an MP and JP with the family estate being Old Harden Grange at St Ives, Bingley near Bradord, built in 1680, now at



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the heart of a golf club owned by Bradford Council [ph1]. They made their fortunes through the cotton mills. Sarah Ferrand Busfield [ph7] had some ridiculously interesting children, as well as Edwin's ancestor **Currer Fothergill Busfield**, a solicitor.



A great-uncle **Benjamin Spence Ferrand** met an most unfortunate end after graduating from Cambridge — in the middle of the night he fell between a pier and a boat and his body remained undiscovered for three weeks [4].

Another great-uncle was **William Busfield Ferrand** who was born in Bingley St Ives but attended Giggleswick School. William inherited the family estate when his mother died. William stood unsuccessfully for the post of MP for Bradford in 1837 and later became MP for Knaresborough. He was staunchly right wing and opposed the reforms to the Poor Laws and the Anti-Corn Law League. As a result, Lord Harewood withdrew his backing and William lost his seat. The newspapers filled several columns doing battle with him, *'this scurrilous and vulgar slanderer of the manufacturers'* pointing out that his *'airs of insolence...against the manufacturers and his scandalous imputations upon their characters, are virtually a spurning and a spitting upon his own immediate ancestors'*. [5,6] William attempted to regain a seat in the House of Commons numerous times in Aylesbury and Devon with some results being overturned as he was found guilty of bribery. What a nice man.

An Inquest was held at Plaistow, on the Essex shore of the Thames, on Thursday evening, on the body of Mr Benjamin Ferrand Busfield; which had been found that morning by four ballastmen, floating in the water, after it had been submerged for more than three weeks. Mr Busfield was the brother of Mr Busfield Ferrand the member for Knaresborough, and the nephew of Mr Busfield the member for Bradford. He was twenty years of age, and an Under Graduate at Cambridge. He had arrived in

DEATH OF A POLITICAL CELEBRITY.
Mr. William Busfield Ferrand, of St. Ives, near Bradford, has just died in his 80th year. For many years the deceased was in his way a Parliamentary celebrity. He sat for Knaresboro' 1841-47, and distinguished himself by his advocacy of the Ten Hours' Factory Bill, no less than by violent attacks on free trade and poor law legislation.

Meanwhile a great-aunt **Caroline Ferrand** married **William Crispin**, Captain of the Royal Steam Yacht *'Victoria and Albert'* [ph4]. Caroline died at the birth of their twin daughters, **Victoria Caroline** and **Albertina Sarah** [ph2]. Upon her death the girls were sponsored by no less than Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Wow!



This is no ordinary ancestry for a resident of Settle however any wealth had passed to other members of the family long before Edwin arrived on the planet.

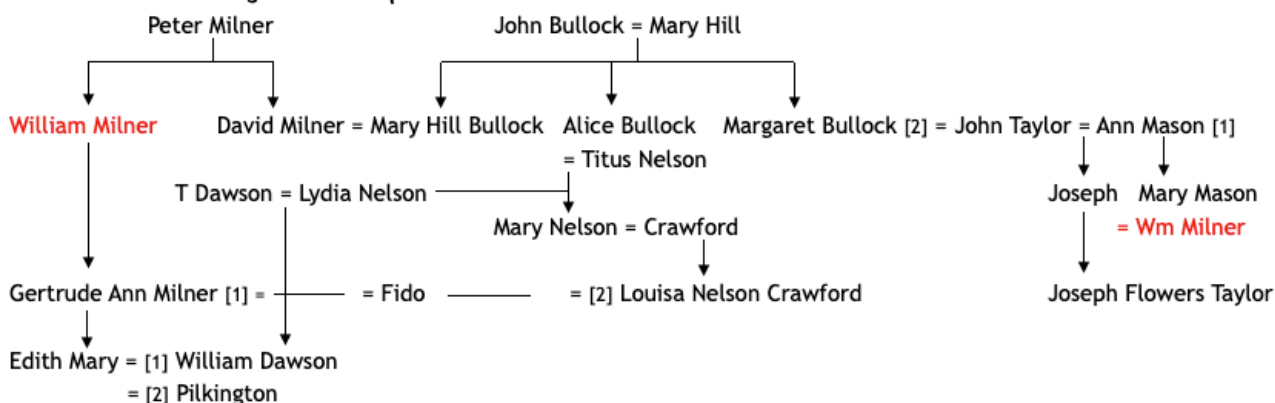


Edwin began his working life as a farm servant for **Robert Frankland** at Gildersleets near Settle. He was 23 when he married Gertrude Ann Milner. Once married, Edwin worked as a cattle hand for a farmer at Stackhouse and then became a builder. Edwin's building career was to take him a long way. He was known to build some of the Marshfield estate and had various contracts for maintenance on the council estates [ph4].



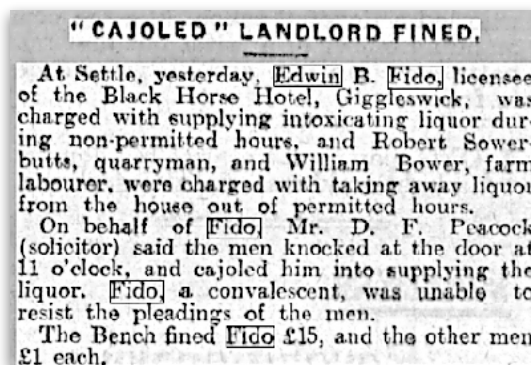
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Bullock Milner Nelson Taylor relationships



In 1909 Gertrude died, aged just 32. It wasn't until 1922, aged 50, that Edwin decided to remarry. His second wife was **Louisa Nelson Crawford** from Rochdale. Louisa was the fourth out of seven children of **Charles William Crawford**, a Scottish tailor, and his wife **Mary Nelson** from Cononley. Mary's father was none other than Settle's cobbler, **Titus Nelson**. For some reason, Louisa didn't live with her immediate family at the time of census returns. Instead she lived with grandparents Titus and Ann Nelson in Settle. First and second wives Gertrude Ann Milner and Louisa Nelson Crawford were distantly connected through marriage and Gertrude's daughter Edith also married into the Nelson family.

Louisa was 44 when she married Edwin Boscoby Fido in 1922 and managed to have a daughter **Barbara Mary Fido** a year later which is quite an achievement. Edwin and Louisa took over the Black Horse in Giggleswick. In 1929 Edwin, described as a 'convalescent' was cajoled into supplying alcohol outside permitted hours and was fined £15 [6].



By 1929/30 the Black Horse was taken over by Edwin and Gertrude Ann's widowed daughter, Edith Mary Milner/Fido. When she was 18, Edith Mary married 21 year old **William 'Willie' Arthur Dawson**, a builder, who was another grandchild of **Titus Nelson** via his daughter **Lydia** and her husband **Thomas Dawson**. Edith and William Arthur Dawson had two children, **Dorothy Ferrand Dawson** and **Edwin**, known as **Bunty Dawson**. Family remember that Willie went off to war leaving Emily and Dorothy at home. It is thought he came home to find Emily had a new son, Bunty, and then the marriage appeared to break down. However the 1921 census tells us that



SIMPSON & PILKINGTON,

Duke Street, SETTLE.



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Willie, Emily, the children and Emily's father were living together at Whelpstone Grove. It's not clear when William died but, at the time of the 1939 pre-war register Edith, a widow [ph8], was the landlady at the Black Horse Inn with her two children and had a lodger, **Alfred 'Fred' Pilkington**, a shoe dealer who had a shop in Duke Street, close to the Golden Lion [LSA]. Fred was married but had separated from his wife, **Jane Elizabeth Barlow** — she took their children to Southport to live with her mother. Just weeks after Jane Elizabeth died in 1852, Fred and Edith Mary got married. Fred's father, **John Thomas Pilkington** had previously run the shoe shop with **Thomas Simpson**, taking over the partnership from **Edwin Wilkinson** who had emigrated to Canada [ph3]. When John Thomas died, Thomas Simpson retired and Fred took over the business. In later years Fred ran his shop at the bottom of Castle Hill [ph4].



Edith Mary and William's daughter Dorothy Ferrand Dawson married a painter and decorator, **Geoffrey Smith** and they lived in Skipton. Edith Mary and William's son Edwin (Bunty) Dawson was a wagon driver at Dry Rigg Quarry. He lived at 1 Ribble Terrace and owned the strip of land in front of it, beside the river. He later sold the land to Settle Anglers. He married **Josephine Mary Taylor** and they had a son **John Dawson** and they lived at 1 Ribble Terrace. Edith Mary and Edwin are buried in the new section of Giggleswick graveyard, A3/C12 although the stone has now fallen over.



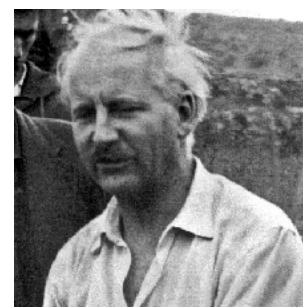
In loving memory of Edwin Dawson died 7th August 1965 aged 46 years. Also his mother Edith Mary died 27th April 1961 aged 67 years

Back with the Fidos, by 1929/30 Edwin, Louisa and Barbara moved to Sutcliffe House at the top of Belle Hill, one of the oldest houses in Giggleswick, being built in the 17th century, if not before. It is thought to have been the Bell Inn at the top of Belle Hill a long time ago. Edwin's daughter Edith Mary (Fido) took over the Black Horse from him (above). Edwin and Louisa ran Sutcliffe House as a boarding house. Edwin died in March 1939, aged 67 and Louisa



continued to run the boarding house until the 1950s. Her business apparently survived the snows of 1947! [ph3] You can see the boarding house signs on the left of the photo.

In 1947, daughter Barbara, a radiographer, married **Robert (Bob) Dove Leakey**, [ph5] an aeronautical engineer who had been born in Kenya. The Leakeys were a British Kenyan family with several notable 20th century military figures, agricultural scientists and archaeologists. The family originated from Somerset in the 16th century and missionaries arrived in Kenya at the start of the 19th century.



Bob's father, **Arundell Gray Leakey** was a farmer, killed in 1954 during the Mau Mau uprising in which native people fought against the European colonists and the British Army. It began in 1952 and continued until Kenya was granted independence in 1963. The uprising

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cost the British £55million and the lives of 11,000 natives, including 1,090 executed at the end of the war.

Bob is described by *Wikipedia* as an inventor, potholer and cave diver — the ‘*Edmund Hillary of potholing*’. He came to the UK to study aeronautical engineering in Chelsea and then worked for Vickers. In his spare time Bob discovered the 9km Mossdale Caverns near Grassington, partially in an attempt to cure his claustrophobia. It was many years before his feat of exploration was repeated. Aeronautical engineering was a reserved occupation but Bob's services were called upon in India and Burma. Due to the lack of raw materials to do the job he was asked to do, Bob spent some time mountaineering including two failed attempts to be the first man to climb the 6,316 metre Bandarpunch mountain in the Himalayas [ph6 - left]. This would not have been helped by primitive equipment. Almost inevitably he endured bullet wounds and ambushes by the Japanese.



After marrying, Bob and Barbara continued to live at Sutcliffe House with their two sons and two daughters and mother-in-law Louisa. Bob spent his time inventing things, including the first catamaran fishing boat. He took out 20 patents including one for a folding lobster pot and another for a long line handler to make fishing easier and more efficient. Bob was invited to boat shows and onto an Esther Rantzen TV show to demonstrate his inventions. Bob was known as a character at Wapping Hall in Commercial Street in Upper Settle, surrounded by his lobster pots and fishing nets that he was making. He ran a successful business designing and building boats and advertised them as ‘Leakey Boats’ at the top of Belle Hill in Giggleswick! He continued caving and potholing discovering new pots in the Gaping Gill system. He was also a magistrate in Settle. He stood as a candidate in local council elections, and stood for Parliament in Skipton and Ripon in the 2005 and 2010 UK general elections. As a result, he is thought to be the oldest candidate ever in a UK general election, just before his 96th birthday, three years before he died. The Craven Herald's obituary said he had ‘*led the life of ten men, a war hero, caving daredevil, inventor, pioneering environmentalist and economic philosopher.*’ Widow Barbara died two years later.



In loving memory of Robert Dove Leakey 23 June 1914 to 22 April 2013, Caver and Campaigner and his beloved wife Barbara Mary Leakey (nee Fidoe) 6 August 1923 to 20 January 2015, Loyal and Loving. Together, Independent in Mind, Courageous in Spirit.

Louisa died in 1962, aged 83 and was buried in an unmarked but brick built grave at Giggleswick, hopefully with husband Edwin Fidoe and his first wife Gertrude Ann Milner.

There are no ordinary people in this family and it's not a bad story for a labourer from Skerton. The links with Settle do not end there. William Milner's younger brother **David Milner** had a bit of an accident when he was 13, trapping his arm in machinery at a table baize factory. He was dragged up a shaft and broke and lacerated his arm [8].

ACCIDENT.—On Wednesday last, a shocking accident occurred to a boy named Milner, 13 years of age (son of Mr. Peter Milner, plumber), who is employed at the table baize manufactory of Mr. James Williamson. He was putting a strap on a pulley which was in motion, when his arm caught between the strap and the pulley, and he was dragged up to the shaft. The engine was immediately stopped, and he was released and conveyed to the Infirmary, where it was ascertained that, besides being severely lacerated, his arm was broken in two places. We learn that he is progressing satisfactorily, and the surgeons have the most sanguine hopes of his recovery.

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He must have recovered as he later worked as a hawker and after marrying, as a railway porter, at one time in the Isle of Man. When he was 24, in Settle in 1872, he married **Mary Hill Bullock** from Settle, the daughter of **John Bullock** and **Mary Hill**. Mary's sister **Margaret Bullock** became the second wife of John Taylor, the same man that had previously married Ann Mason, above. It's a small world. Perhaps David and Mary's wedding brought brother William Milner to Settle in the first place? Unfortunately, David and Mary's marriage was not the most successful. After living in the Isle of Man Mary spent the rest of her life with her sister **Esther (Bullock) English** in Barrow-in-Furness.



This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.

The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and can be found on dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project. The 'Old Settle' family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

With thanks to descendant Frances Leakey for her help with this account.

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