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## The Storrs of Stalybridge

The Storrs of Stalybridge were descended from two brothers Joseph Storrs and George Storrs. Joe stayed in the Doncaster area, but George and two of Joe's sons crossed the Pennines to Stalybridge. They and their descendants became very prominent in Stalybridge between 1850 and WW2. John Storrs the Machinist became an influential member of Taylor Lang, the main Stalybridge firm of textile machinery engineers and William Storrs created the town's leading firm of building contractors William Storrs and Sons. In 1881 these two cousins lived next door to one another in Mottram Road. Joe and George were two of the children of Joseph Storrs (1768 - 1843) and Ann Abson (1769 - 1843).

### George Storrs (1801 - 1885)

George was a corn miller. He was born at Adwick le Street and married Susannah Butcher (1801 – 1870) also from Adwick, at Conisbrough in 1827. Conisbrough is about a mile from the confluence of the Dearne and the Don and about eight miles from their birthplace. George was the fourth child of Joseph Storrs and Ann Abson.

After their marriage in 1827, the next known record of the couple is a baptism for their son William at Sheffield Cathedral in July 1828. There was a christening of another son Joseph at St. Michaels Ashton under Lyne on 1st January 1832, which places the family in Ashton that year and suggests they were there when Joseph was born presumably in 1831. Joseph died in 1834. According to Samuel Hill the family moved to Stalybridge in about 1832, which is consistent with that, so 1831 marks the first arrival of this Storrs family in the Stalybridge area.

The 1841 census shows the family in Acres Lane Stalybridge with George having shed five years from his age, Susannah correctly five years older, John a mechanic at the age of fifteen, which places his birth before their marriage, William, Edwin and Mary.

George Storrs	35	Miller	2
Susannah do	40		2
John do	15	Mechanic	2
William do	12		2
Edwin do	5		2
Mary do	2		2

We know who William, Edwin and Mary were. They were George and Susannah's children. The obvious candidate for John is their nephew from Misson, who was not with his family on the farm in Doncaster. He must actually have been about eighteen but ages are often used loosely in this period and George too has managed to lose some years, which might have been important for work.

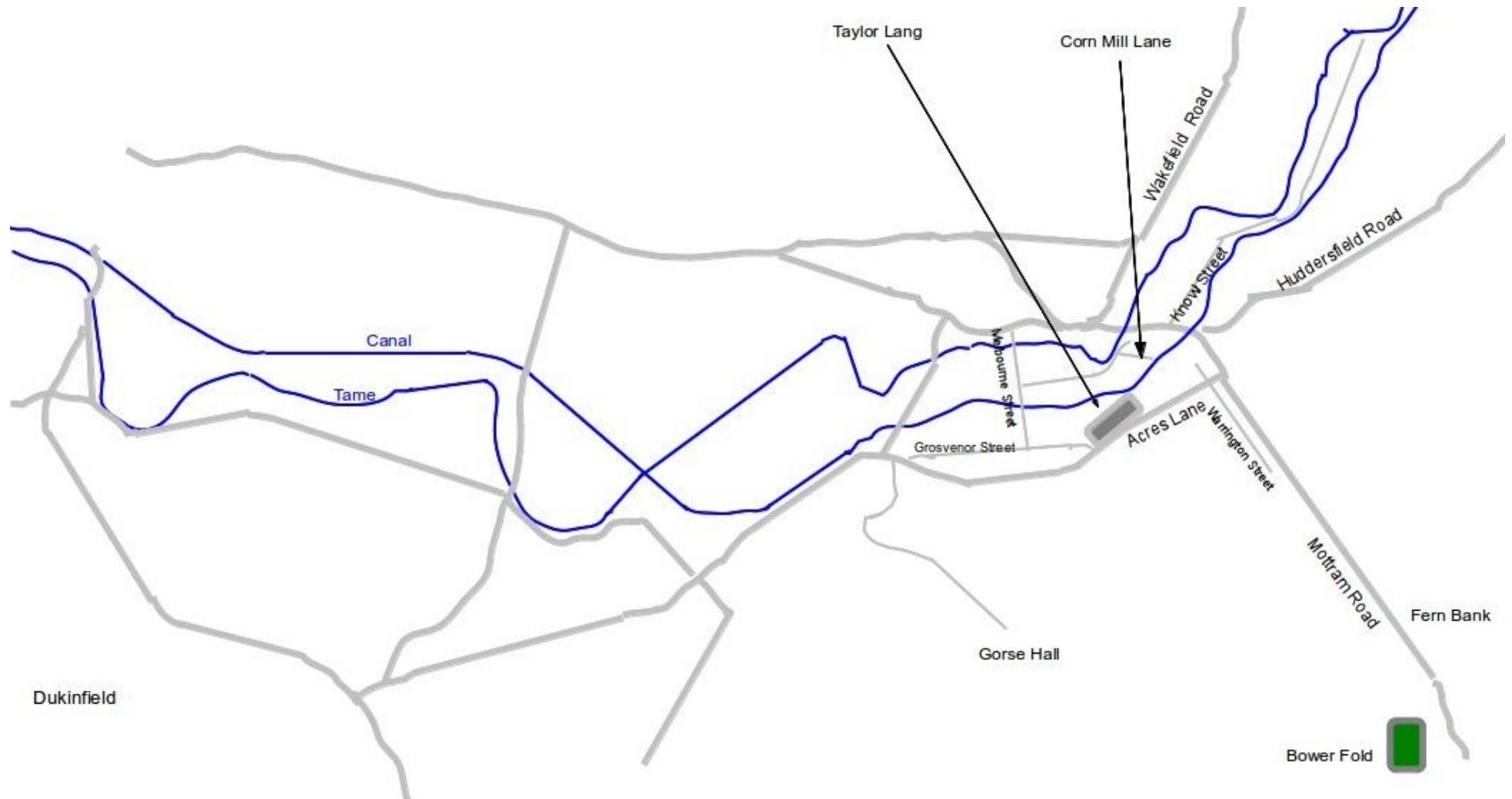
In 1851 they were still in Acres Lane living next door to the cotton weaving Vernon sisters, one of whom would go on to marry George's corn milling nephew, another William Storrs. George had regained a few missing years and was now shown as both a corn miller and a grocer suggesting the business might have been his. John had married and moved to Oldham, but William was still there as a joiner and Edwin as an apprentice millwright. Further up the street was the Hargrave family.

For the 1861 census George was absent leaving Susannah in Warrington Street with Edwin, now a millwright, and Mary Ann, now a milliner. By 1871 Susannah had died and the remaining family was living in Grosvenor Street. George had retired, Edwin and Mary Ann were both present in their thirties and unmarried. In 1881 George was an annuitant living with Edwin and Edwin's family. George died in 1885 at Melbourne Street, which was the address of Mary Ann his daughter and the address at which she died . He left £36 8 shillings to be administered by William, who was to die only nine years later.

Twenty-five years after his death, one of his grandchildren would be famously tried at Chester, accused of murdering another. It seems fair to deduce from the fact that none of his children went into the business that corn milling was really not paying well at the time. His corn milling nephew William left no will at all and that William's son Walter, a third corn miller in Stalybridge, left for the US at an early age. Only Edwin as a millwright went into the industry and he may have been working on other kinds of mills.

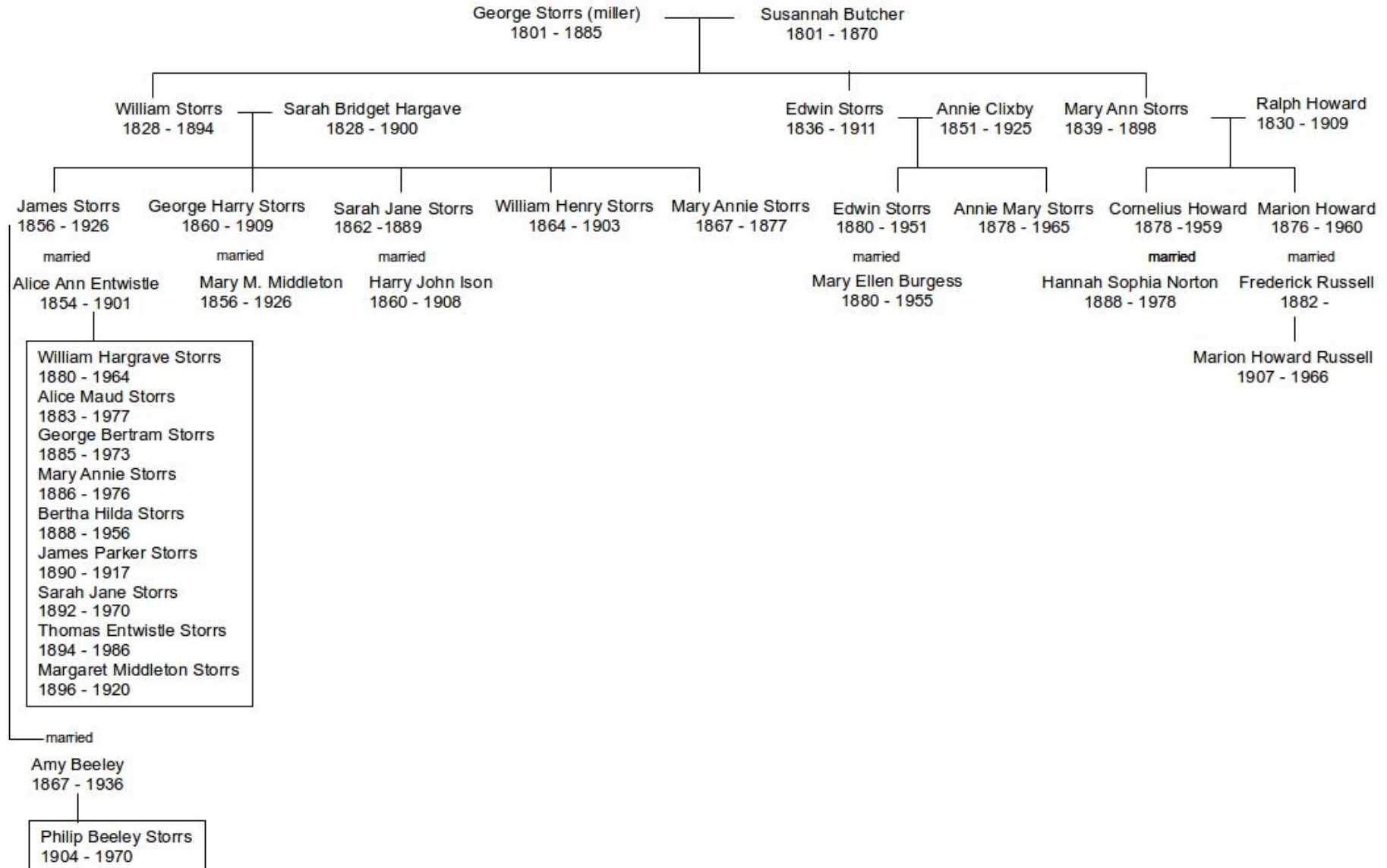
George was the first of the Storrs of Stalybridge. It looks as if John the Machinist came to join him and a second nephew William followed the same route. The presence of George, his nephew and other millers in the vicinity hints that George was running the mill in Corn Mill Lane.

## Stalybridge Schematic – roads, rivers and key locations



*Illustration 1: Stalybridge & immediate district*

## Descendants of George Storrs and Susannah Butcher



## John Storrs and Taylor Lang



*Illustration 2: Taylor Lang Advertisement with prominent Buckley reference*

By 1850 Hibbert and Platt in Oldham with thirteen hundred employees was one of the biggest manufacturers of textile machinery in the country. According to Foster there was a dispute primarily over the employment of unskilled labour and the dispute at Platt's led to a national lock out which began on 31st December 1851.

Samuel Hill wrote

*MESSRS. TAYLOR, LANG AND CO.*

*The well-known local firm of textile machinists, Messrs. Taylor, Lang and Co. was established in the year 1852, and from a very small beginning the progress made has been most marked, whilst it cannot be denied that to-day their name and fame as reliable makers of cotton spinning and other*

*machinery are known not only in the great commercial centres of this country, but also far beyond the confines of the British Empire.*

*From a reliable authority we learn that many of those who afterwards became the founder members of the firm, were connected as early as, if not prior to, 1850, with a co-operative store in Oldham, which only opened its doors after ordinary working hours, and where several of the more energetic members served behind the counter. It was there, amongst its members, whilst measuring and weighing out the groceries, that the idea took root that if they could buy and sell groceries, they might have a try at buying iron and making and selling machines. This was the state of affairs when, on 10th January, 1852, there commenced what was known as the "Great Lock-out," which involved in its meshes the artisan iron workers and machinists of the Oldham and Manchester districts, resulting in many skilled operatives being thrown out of permanent employment amongst the number being the future members of our local firm.*

*The idea conceived in the afore-mentioned Store now materialised and resulted in the co-operation of 23 individuals, which "appears to have been a spontaneous outcome of the community of interests and determined self-reliance." Each member was well known to be efficient as a tradesman; in fact, the majority had held position as foremen, and have been classified as follows:*

*Books (Pattern Maker) - James Taylor;*

*Iron turners - John Storrs, Samuel Booth, Henry England, William C. Birch, Thomas Cheetham;*

*Fitters - Andrew Birchall, William Lees, Thomas Rhodes, Martin Scragg, Charles Rothwell, John Lang, James Byrom, Joseph Walter Watts, James Uttley, Joseph Rushton;*

*Joiners - James Whitehead, James Sutcliffe, Thomas Watson, Jacob Marshall;*

*Moulders - Thomas Armitage, Samuel Mitchell*

*Grinder – Joseph Woolhouse*

*When they had organised themselves, a suitable town was sought wherein to establish the business, and after several places had been visited, Stalybridge was selected. Many risks and dangers lay before them, but the working-men masters appear to have had the fullest confidence in each other, and trusting to their united abilities and experience, they launched their enterprise on its course.*

*The new firm was known locally as "The Amalgamated shop," and was established in April or May, 1852, "with a capital of £600." With the avowed intention of succeeding, it was mutually agreed that each of the masters should receive as wages the sum of 15s. per week until they had obtained a firm footing and become established. This resolution meant a great sacrifice for skilled mechanics, who had been hitherto earning from 30s. to 50s. per week, and again, at this very time each might have been in receipt of lock-out pay, varying from 10s. to 20s. per week. From its inception, the firm made steady headway, in the face of stern and determined opposition, and the traditions of these early years are valuable and interesting. One incident is recorded in print, as under: - "A short period after the firm had commenced work the owner of the premises, seeing a light burning, visited the works and found one of the masters hard at labour, and at an hour, too, long after every engine had been stopped and every workshop in the town was closed."*

*Certain of our local cotton masters became alive to the merits of the new firm, and rendered assistance and encouragement in various ways, whilst to the credit of one gentleman it is recorded that he allowed his name to be used as a surety on the purchase of a valuable piece of machinery which the new firm urgently needed. At the termination of a period of seven years from its formation, a re-organisation of the firm took place (1859) and seven of the original members withdrew their interests, viz.: James Sutcliffe, Thomas Watson, Martin Scragg, James Uttley,*



*Thomas Cheetham, Charles Rothwell, and Jacob Marshall; Samuel Mitchell had died prior to this time.*

*There is in existence a printed statement published nearly forty years ago, which says:- "That upon the withdrawal and re-organisation referred to, the firm was worth in machinery, stock and working capital a sum which would probably reach £30,000." Many of the originators lived to see their scheme attain dimensions never anticipated. The last survivor of the original twenty-three masters, Mr. Martin Scragg, died at Romiley during the present year (1907).*

*Samuel Hill, Bygone Stalybridge 1907 pp 296-299*

Taylor Lang was established as a manufacturer of textile machinery at the Castle Iron Works in Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge. Its scope was global. Its sales of textile machinery were not limited to the north of England but included the USA, Italy, South Africa and India. To our knowledge three generations of the Storrs worked for Taylor Lang, John the Machinist, his son William Whisker Storrs, John's nephew Joe Storrs and Joe's son Bill Storrs all worked for the company which was a major employer in the town. Fitters like Joe and Bill went abroad to install the machinery.

# **TAYLOR, LANG & CO., LIMITED,**

Makers of OPENERS, SCUTCHERS, RING SPINNING & DOUBLING FRAMES, SELF-ACTING MULES and SELF-ACTING TWINERS, with Movable Creels; BRASS and IRON FOUNDERS, &c.

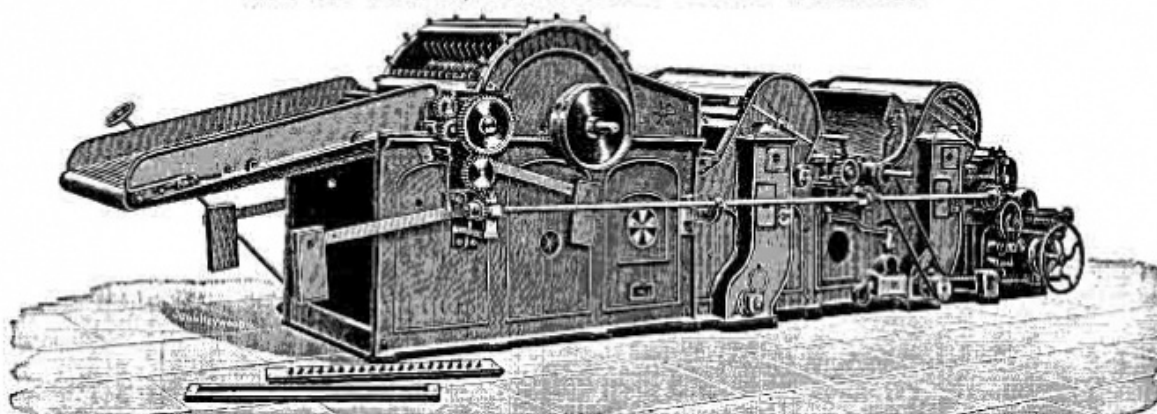
**Castle Iron Works, STALYBRIDGE, England.**

Telegraphic Address—"LANG, STALYBRIDGE" Telephone No., 197.

Sole Makers of BUCKLEY'S (of Taylor, Lang & Co., Limited)

**IMPROVED PATENT COMBINED OPENER,**

With LAP MOTION, FEED ROLLERS DOUBLE WEIGHTED.



We beg respectfully to call the attention of Spinners and Manufacturers to "Buckley's" Patent Combined Opener, with Lap and Feed Motion, also Patent Regulator combined, of which we are the SOLE MAKERS. We have already supplied a large number of these Machines, and have pleasure in stating that we are constantly receiving every proof that they are giving entire satisfaction. The Machine entirely dispenses with Breaker Lap Machines, and the labour of attending and spreading upon them. The Laps can now be taken direct from the Combined Machine to the Finishers, thereby very materially economising the cost of production, and will supply Laps a little in excess of the requirements of two Finishers.

Illustrated Circulars, containing full description of this Machine, and showing Sectional Arrangement of Opener to make Laps without Beater, will be sent on application.

We must caution the Public against being imposed upon by other Firms who Profess to be Makers of this Machine.

Continental Agents—Messrs. R. HIBBERT & SONS; and Messrs. JAMES SCOTT & SON, Manchester.

ADVERTISEMENT

W. G. M. 1907

*Illustration 3: Another Taylor Lang Advertisement, again with a reference to Buckley*

John Storrs was a founder member of Taylor Lang, one of the original 23 partners who had created the company in about 1852. He became a major shareholder when the firm was incorporated as



Taylor Lang & Co. Ltd in 1872. At that time noted shareholders were John Lang, 'Brick of Cocker Hill', James Whitehead, Thomas Rhodes, Henry England, Joseph Watts and John Storrs. In 1881 the census record attributes to him the role of Machinist Master employing 273 men and 65 Boys. Edward Buckley was the firm's outstanding inventor and engineering innovator. By 1901 the census records John's son William Whisker Storrs as 'Manager Machine Works' and the 1911 census has 'manager textile machinery' so it looks as if John's position in the company was passed on to his son.

Taylor Lang received its final order for a single mule in 1936 and was wound up in 1937.

## **John Storrs, Machinist (1823 - 1885)**

He was the first son of Joseph and Mary Storrs born in 1823. He sometimes gave his birthplace as Everton Carr, which was no more than a stone's throw from Misson on the other side of the river Idle. He became a machinist, though sometimes he is described as an iron turner or mechanic. A machinist was so called because he, for it was usually a man, machined the metal.

He must have joined his uncle George in Stalybridge in or shortly before 1841. We find him in the records marrying Eliza Edwards (1823 - 1892) at Stockport in 1845 and baptising their son William in Oldham the following May. At that time they lived in Royton Road and John was shown as a mechanic, as he had been earlier in Stalybridge. In the 1851 census he appears as a machinist from Misson in Lincolnshire (sic) living in Oldham Below Town. He and Eliza have their first three children with them as well as Eliza's widowed father, William Edwards, a joiner from Flintshire. In the following year John was one of the twenty-three who founded the Amalgamated Shop the forerunner of Taylor Lang. By 1861 they were living at 58 Kay Street Dukinfield with six children and a ten year old niece called Alice from Bramwith in Yorkshire. The only plausible candidate for Alice is Anne Ewart Storrs, who was his niece and born in the vicinity of Kirk Bramwith, which was the church for Trumfleet where John's father was then farming. Older son William had been apprenticed as a mechanic, presumably at Taylor Lang. Fellow machinist and Taylor Lang founder Samuel Booth was living four doors up the street. In 1871 John and Eliza were living in Staley with six of their children. William the eldest was a mechanic, Ann Carswell was a dressmaker and Mary a Milliner. The youngest three were all at school and 13 year old Alfred was at boarding school in Ashton. What a salubrious location for an Alma Mater. In 1872 Taylor Lang and Co Ltd. was incorporated and John became a significant shareholder.

The 1881 census shows the Storrs family in Stalybridge at the very zenith of its powers. At 219 Mottram Road, John claimed to employ 273 men and 65 boys at Taylor Lang. Living with him were Eliza, Ann Carswell, no longer working, John jnr, now an accountant and Arthur, still at school. Next door at 221 Mottram Road lived his cousin William Storrs JP (1828 - 1894) with his family and servants claiming to employ 54 men and ten boys in his building firm. Perhaps the cousins were having a competition to see who employed most. John died at Brookside, Mottram Road in August 1885 leaving £7286 1s 8d in his will. Eliza died in 1892 at the same address leaving £806. Brookside and 219 Mottram Road were one and the same. The tombstone in St. Paul's churchyard indicates that like his cousin John Storrs was a JP.

History has neglected John Storrs. He was not Taylor, he was not Lang. He was not the firm's engineering genius Edward Buckley, whose patents the company exploited, nor was he Buckley's initial supervisor, Thomas Rhodes, but he was able to pass to his son William Whisker Storrs a leading role in the management of the firm, which suggests that his claim to manage 273 men and 65 boys might be more than mere puffery. Given the significance of Taylor Lang as an employer in Stalybridge and the sheer numbers required when almost all the machine production was done

manually by skilled labour, 273 looks very low to be the entire Taylor Lang work force. It is far more plausibly a reference to what John Storrs saw as his division i.e. the numbers refer to those under his direction, not the whole firm.

It is a notable sign of the times that a machinist like John Storrs who learned his trade on the tools and apprenticed his oldest son in the same way, saw to it that his younger sons all trained in the professions. They appear to have been privately educated.

John and Eliza had nine children

William 'Whisker' Storrs (1846 - 1936) trained as a machinist and went on to manage Taylor Lang

Ann Carswell Storrs (1848 - 1895)

Mary Storrs (1850 - 1918) was shown as a milliner in 1871. She married Roger Hardy in 1875.

George Storrs (1852 - 1852)

Susannah Storrs (1854 -1855)

Alfred Storrs (1858 - 1925) became an accountant in Sale

Eliza Storrs (1860 - 1886) was not at Brookside in 1881, but that was her address when she married a local solicitor Robert Innes in 1885. She died shortly after the birth of their child Eliza (Elsie) early the following year.

John Storrs (1863 - 1944) went to Bristol and founded the Bristol branch of the family.

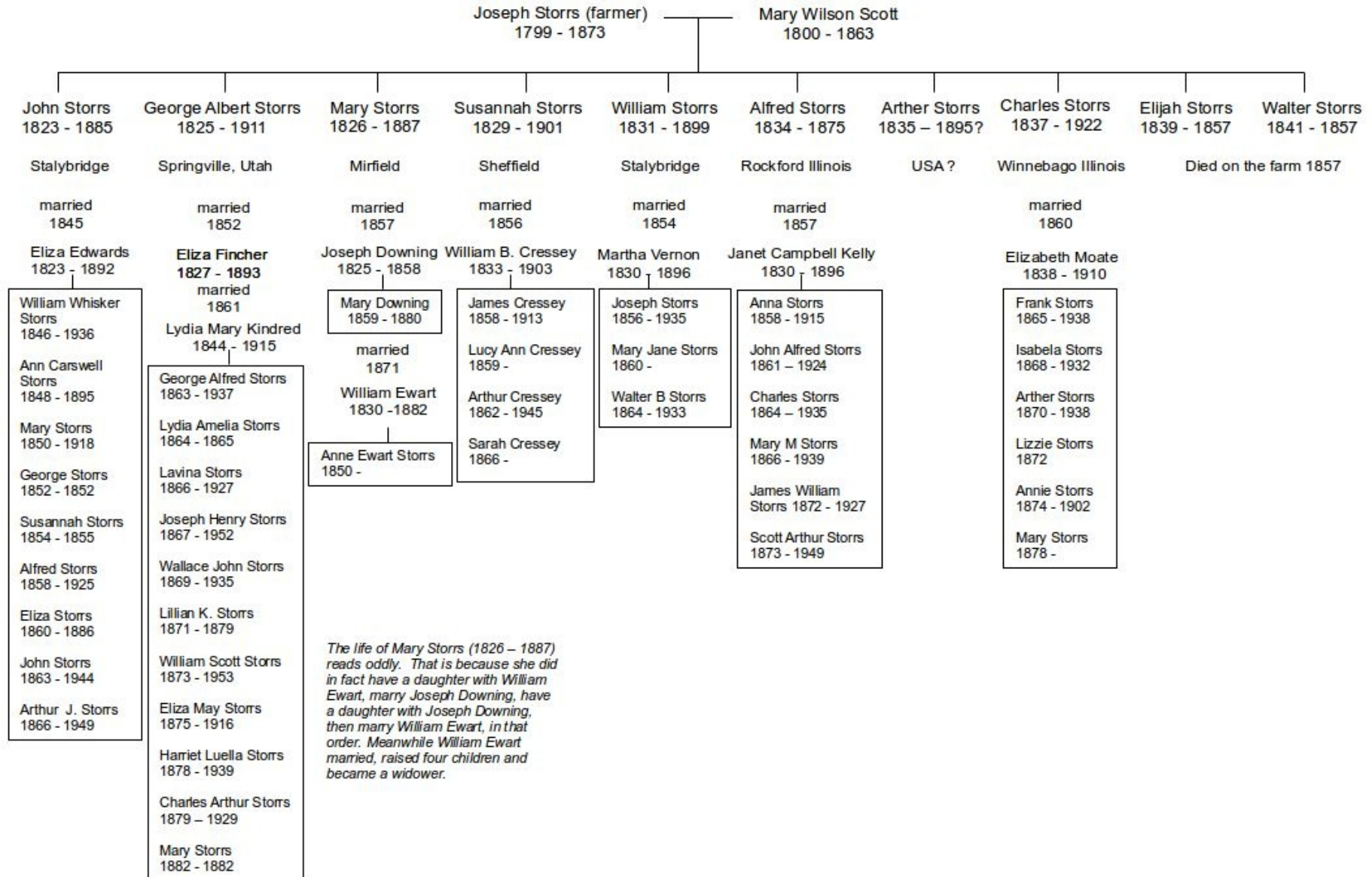
Arthur Joseph Storrs (1866 - 1949) also went to Bristol.

Page 16]										
The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the Borough of Stalybridge										
Municipal Ward of		Municipal Borough of		Parliamentary Borough of		Urban Sanitary District of		Rural Sanitary District of		Ecclesiastical Parish or District of
Stalybridge		Stalybridge		Stalybridge		Stalybridge		Stalybridge		St. Paul's
No. of Household	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES		NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	II (1) Dead and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Imbecile or Idiot (4) Lame
		No. of Household	No. of Persons							
69	215 Mottram Road	1		Emily Jane Taylor	Wife	Married	39	Occupation	Cheshire Stalybridge	
				Eliza Taylor	Daughter	Single	16	Occupation	Lancashire Bolton	
				John Taylor	Son	Single	14	Occupation	Cheshire Stalybridge	
				Elizabeth Brown	Daughter	Single	14	General servant Domestic	Lancashire Worsley	
70	219 Mottram Road	1		John Horro	Head	Married	58	Blacksmith Master Taylor Langley	Worthingham Lincolnshire	
				Eliza Horro	Wife	Married	57	Housewife	Lancashire Wigan	
				Ann Passwell Horro	Daughter	Single	39	Occupation	Lancashire No	
				John Horro	Son	Single	18	Accountant	Weshire Warrington	
				William Joseph Horro	Son	Single	16	Scholar	Cheshire Stalybridge	
71	221 Mottram Road	1		William Horro	Head	Married	59	Employment 51 man J.P. Contractor & 10 Boys	Yorkshire Sheffield	
				Ann Horro	Wife	Married	57	Housewife	Yorkshire Penistone	
				George Harry Horro	Son	Single	20	General apprentice	Cheshire Stalybridge	
				Isabel Jane Horro	Daughter	Single	18	Occupation	Cheshire Stalybridge	
				Joseph Horro	Visitor	Single	39	J.P. Contractor & 10 Boys	Durham Wolsingham	
				Mary Jane Horro	Visitor	Single	30	Occupation	Yorkshire Threlkirk	
				Ann Horro	Visitor	Single	24	General servant	Yorkshire Threlkirk	
				Alfred Ann Horro	Visitor	Single	23	General servant	Yorkshire Threlkirk	
72	223 Mottram Road	1		John William Brown	Head	Married	45	Commercial traveller	Lancashire Stalybridge	
				William Henry Brown	Son	Single	18	Scholar	Yorkshire Stalybridge	
				Harold Arthur Brown	Son	Single	11	Scholar	Yorkshire Stalybridge	
				Robert George Brown	Son	Single	9	Scholar	Lancashire Stalybridge	
				Isabel Ann Brown	Daughter	Single	14	General servant	Lancashire Stalybridge	
				Ann Brown	Daughter	Single	12	General servant	Lancashire Stalybridge	
				Margaret Brown	Daughter	Single	11	General servant	Lancashire Stalybridge	
Total of Houses...		4	1	Total of Males and Females...		11	13			

Notes.—Draw the pen through each of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

Illustration 4: Mottram Road Stalybridge in the 1881 Census

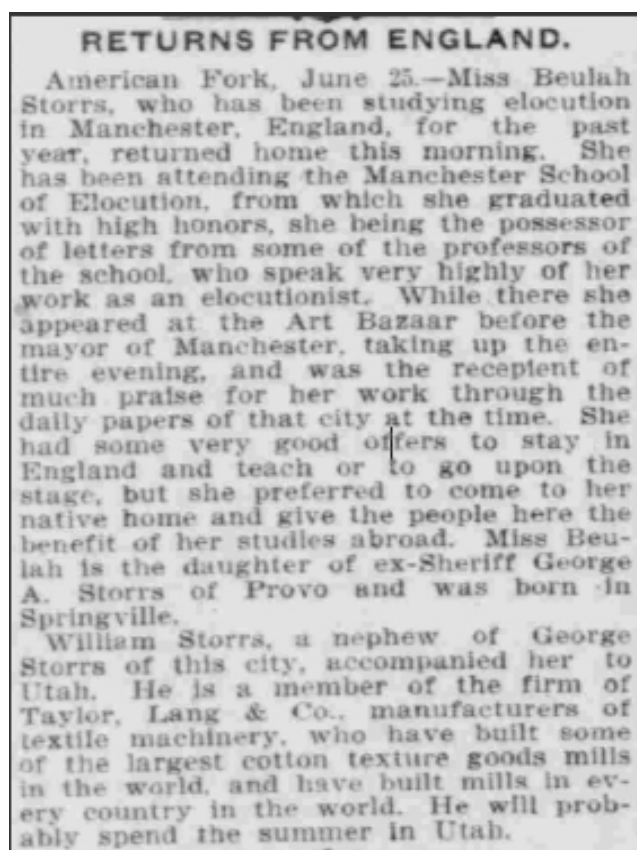
## Descendants of Joseph Storrs and Mary Scott



## William Whisker Storrs

We only have the memory of Annice Storrs for the soubriquet Whisker Storrs and she would have been only ten years old in 1930, but it suits our purpose because we have at least three other contemporary William Storrs in Stalybridge from whom we need to distinguish him. He was the first son of John and Eliza and the only one to be apprenticed to the business. He lived to be ninety, a very good innings, but the Storrs who survived infancy do appear to have had a propensity for longevity as well as height.

He was born at Royton Road in Oldham in 1846. Up to the time of his death in 1936 William continued to live in his father's house at 219 Mottram Road, also known as Brookside, with the family of his father's cousin William Storrs the builder next door at No. 221, Fern Bank at least from 1881 onwards. There is no record of Whisker Storrs in the 1881 census, but he may well have been abroad on Taylor Lang business. In 1891 he was shown as a machinist living with brother Alfred, Alfred's wife Anna and their son Leonard Carswell plus a servant living in. His mother Eliza and sister Ann were at that time staying among very affluent company in some kind of lodgings in Southport, which explains why William and Alfred are shown in the census as sons. Their mother was still alive.



*Illustration 5: Salt Lake Herald June 1908  
provided by Lucia Finley*

following year.

Whatever the true facts, we can be confident that John Storrs and William Whisker Storrs saw themselves as playing a leading role in Taylor Lang. This is quite consistent with the oral history as expressed later by Annice Storrs, "Whisker Storrs pretty well owned Taylor Lang." Her informant

In 1901 William was recorded as the Manager of a Machine works living alone in Mottram Road with a young servant called Ada Williamson, which is unfortunate because in 1911 he was still living alone with the same young house servant now shown under the name of Ada Wilkinson. The 1911 census shows him as Manager Textile Machinery and the property to have eight rooms which presumably meant two reception rooms and a kitchen downstairs with five bed rooms on the upper floors. There is a record of a return voyage from Boston in 1908 on the Cunard vessel Celtic which lists William Storrs as a sixty-two year old manager. He must have been coming back from his visit to Utah and his uncle, who was still alive, with Beulah Storrs.

On his death at Brookside in January 1936 William Whisker Storrs left £53037 to be administered by John Storrs and Arthur Joseph. According to a Chicago university calculation, that would be about £3 mn using a retail price index or £8.5 mn using an index of average wages in contemporary 2012 terms. Taylor Lang was wound up the

would have been her grandfather Joe Storrs (1856 - 1935) who had worked for Taylor Lang all his life.

### **Ann Carswell Storrs (1848 - 1895)**

Ann was the second child of John and Eliza. She got her 'Carswell' from her maternal grandmother. There is a plausible marriage for those grandparents at St. Chad, Shrewsbury in October 1815. In 1871 she was a dressmaker. In 1881 she was living with her parents at Brookside, but has “no occupation”. Given that her father was now presumably at the height of his wealth and powers why should she? In 1891 she was staying with her mother in lodgings in Southport and she died only three years after her mother in 1895. She died in Manchester but the probate record shows Brookside as her home and William as the executor. She left £1192.

### **Mary Storrs (1850 - 1918)**

She married Roger Hardy (1850 - 1930), a local butcher, at Stalybridge Congregationalist church in 1875, which was a significant year for Storrs' marriages because Mary Ann and Edwin had both belatedly married that year. She gave an address in Market Place which suggests that the move of the family residence to Mottram road had yet to take place. Roger moved on from butchering to cattle dealing and took his son John Carswell Hardy into the cattle dealing business, which makes John's given occupation of horseman on his war records rather puzzling. Perhaps John was trying to get into a cavalry unit. He did not, but he did survive the war as a gunner. He had married Fanny Bottomley in 1902 and had two sons by the time he went to France. After WW1 he went to Canada.

Mary and Roger had three daughters, Eva Storrs (1878 – 1941), Martha (1881) and Eliza Esther (1891). Another child died young. When Roger died in 1930 he left £11,250 in his will so cattle dealing seems to have been a rewarding business.

### **Alfred Storrs (1858 - 1925)**

Alfred was at school in Ashton in 1871. In 1881 he was living in Lindsay Street with Annie Smith Newton (1858 - 1924) also from Stalybridge, whom he had married earlier that year and working as an accountant, but in 1891 they were back in Mottram Road with their son Leonard Carswell (1882 -1929). They had also two other children Ruth Smith Storrs (1883 - 1890) and John Newton who was born and died in 1885. By 1901 they had moved to Penarth, Alfred was working on his own account and Leonard was in articles. In 1911 they were occupying a six-roomed house in Sale, Leonard also was qualified as an accountant. Leonard married Beata Jenkins (1876 - 1918) at Abergavenny in 1913, but she died in 1918 at the age of forty-two. Annie died in Sale in 1924. She left £1600 and Alfred died the following year leaving £6500. Leonard had married for a second time in 1920 to Helena Gertrude McKenlay (1895 - 1957) from Newmarket and that marriage did not last long either because Leonard died in Sale within five years of his parents in 1929. They had two children, Ruth Bonnette in 1921 and Marjorie Newton in 1926. He left £14000 to Helena

### **The Bristol Storrs**

John and Eliza's son, John Storrs (1863 - 1944) went to be an accountant in Bristol. He married Sarah Bottomley (1863 - 1903) in 1886 in Stalybridge and in 1891 the couple were in Horfield Bristol with their first three daughters Edith (1886 - 1976), Mary (1888 - 1978) and Nina (1890 -1975). In 1901 he was shown as a solicitors' clerk and the couple had added three sons and another daughter to their brood. Sarah died in 1903 and John re-married to Florence Emily Price (1869 -1959) the following year. In the 1911 census there were no children of the second marriage and

John had reverted to being an accountant working for himself, Edith was working as an accountant's clerk, presumably for her father. John left £19000 in his will which is not great assuming he had received a substantial portion of the Whisker Storrs estate but perhaps as an accountant and father of an accountant he had methods for reducing the value of his estate. Florence left about £3000 to the family in her will when she died in 1959, which suggests perhaps she had no other relatives.

Edith did not marry and died in Bristol in 1976, we understand that Edie trained as a nurse and at John's insistence looked after Whisker Storrs until he died. Apparently Edith had trained at Rochdale infirmary. Perhaps John was just keeping an eye on the family fortune. Mary married in Glasgow but died back in Gloucester; and Nina married in Bristol and died in Weston super Mare. Edgar Kershaw Storrs (1892 - 1981) was a timber merchant working for Jones and Wainright when he enrolled in the army territorial force in 1911. He married Florence Matthews in Birmingham in 1921 and had two children. Evidence from John Storrs' will shows him to have been an accountant in 1944 and he died locally in 1981. Dorothy Storrs 1884 – 1886) only lived to the age of two. John Bottomley Storrs (1895 – 1971) acquired his master's certificate in 1920 to be a ship's captain. He married Elsie Jean Matthews and raised two children with her. Their son Roger William Storrs (1941) provided the computerised records which are the source for much of the information about the Bristol Storrs used here. Ivor William Storrs (1897 - 1966) left £17000 in his will to be executed by Edgar. Marjorie Storrs (1899 - 1976) did not marry and died in Weston super Mare.

Arthur Joseph Storrs (1866 - 1949) moved down to Bristol to join his brother with whom he was staying in 1891. In 1894 he married Minnie Sharland (1869 - 1950). He worked as a legal clerk and accountant. By 1911 the couple had no children. They died in Poole within two years of each other, each leaving £15000 to be administered by Edgar with whom he had maintained contact despite falling out with his brother John over work.



## **William Storrs, Building Contractor (1828 - 1894)**

William Storrs (1828 - 1894) was the second son of George Storrs the corn miller and Susannah Butcher. We have an admiring description from Samuel Hill of his stature and preeminence in nineteenth century Stalybridge. We also need to distinguish him from at least two other contemporary William Storrs in Stalybridge, William Storrs the corn miller and William Whisker Storrs at Taylor Lang. Our builder William Storrs married Sarah Bridget Hargrave (1828 – 1900) from Penistone in Stalybridge in 1855. Her family too was resident in Acres Lane in 1841 and 1851. We also have Hargraves, Hargreave and Hargreaves as variants on her family name in the records, but in the name of her oldest grandson they opted for Hargrave so that must be the authorised version. William and Sarah had five children, but lost both their daughters at an early age.

He was actually christened at Sheffield Cathedral, perhaps that was a matter of convenience rather than any particular affiliation with the cathedral. In 1851 he was a joiner still living in his father's household, but that year we understand he started his own joinery business. He married Sarah in 1855 and by 1861 they had set up home in Stanley Square with sons James, George Harry and a servant called Annie Lawton, which makes it unlikely that George Harry was born at Fern Bank as suggested by Goodman. William was at that time a joiner employing 16 joiners, and a substantial number of boys, labourers and other personnel.

The 1871 census shows the family at Mostyn Street, Dukinfield, the older boys to have been born in Stalybridge, but the younger three children, Sarah Jane, William Henry and Mary Ann are shown to have been born in Dukinfield which suggests the move to Mostyn Street took place in about 1862. William was then recorded as a Builder and Timber Merchant employing 52 men and 8 boys. There was also present in the household a 20 year old Annie Clixby from Penistone who would go on to marry William's brother Edwin four years later. The incorrect reference to Penistone, she was in fact born in Gainsborough, is explained by the fact that she had lived in Bradfield in 1861 and that is a stone's throw from Sarah's Penistone. Perhaps there was a family connection to the Hargraves.

In 1881 the family was at 221 Mottram Road, Stalybridge with cousin John at 219 next door. 221 Mottram Road was Fern Bank. Only George Harry as an apprentice joiner and Sarah Jane of 'no occupation' remained at home. William was shown as a Justice of the Peace and contractor employing 54 men and 10 boys. Staying with the family were 59 year old JP and Alderman from Tynemouth, Joseph Green and his 30 year old unmarried daughter Mary Grace Green. A reasonable surmise would be that they were connected with William's shipping interests. Also present were two servants, Ann Senior and Alice Ann Hibson, both from Hoylandswaine. Hoylandswaine is no further from Penistone than Bradfield. Did Sarah return to her Yorkshire roots for trusted household staff? Her younger sister Emma was taken back from Stalybridge to Penistone in 1836 for christening so it looks as if her family did maintain connections with the area. In the 1891 census George Harry and William Henry were both at 221 Mottram Road assisting William in the business, William Storrs Sons & Company and this time the servants had been recruited from Shropshire. Next door at 219 was William Whisker Storrs with his younger brother Alfred's family.

William died at Southport in June 1894 leaving £26000 pounds to be shared between the three sons. By that time he had no living daughters. His address was given as Fern Bank, Mottram Road.

£26000 does not sound like a great deal for a man of his prominence and wide ranging business interests, but we should bear it in mind that there had already been some significant distribution of assets. The Gorse Hall is supposed to have been purchased as a wedding present for George Harry, though William kept the freehold. Sarah died at Fern Bank in April 1900 leaving £2300 to be administered by James. Perhaps she had a different view of her oldest son from those who held him to be irresponsible (Goodman).

William and Sarah had five children, but four of them were childless.

James Storrs (1856 - 1926) was a director of William Storrs and Sons and prominent local politician, who married twice and raised ten children.

George Harry Storrs (1860 - 1909) trained as a joiner. He assumed the greater part of the responsibility for the management of his father's building company. He married Mary Margaret Middleton (1856 - 1926), but they had no children and he was famously murdered at his home at Gorse Hall, Stalybridge in November 1909

Sarah Jane Storrs (1862 - 1889) married Harry John Ison a Shropshire chemist in April 1888 and was dead within the year. She was 26.

William Henry Storrs (1866 - 1903) was another director of the family firm, though there are suggestions he never really worked at all. He did not marry and was only 37 when he died having reputedly drunk himself to death. He was obviously privately educated because the 1881 census shows him at boarding school in Wilmslow. In 1891 he was back in his father's household at 221 Mottram Road and in 1901 he was living at 221 Mottram Road, with a couple of servants, next door to William Whisker Storrs, his parents having died in the meantime and George Harry having moved to Gorse Hall. William Henry died at Fern Bank, Mottram Road in February 1903 leaving £14000 in his will to be administered by James and George Harry.

Mary Ann Storrs (1867 - 1877) died at the age of ten.

Some sources refer to George Harry as the third son implying there was another between James and George Harry.

According to Samuel Hill

*WILLIAM STORRS, ESQ., J.P.*

*William Storrs was the son of George Storrs, a corn miller of Doncaster, and was born on the 3rd July, 1828, at Sheffield.*

*His parents migrated to Stalybridge about the year 1832. As a lad the future contractor was apprenticed to John Bayley to learn the trade of joiner, and on attaining his majority, worked for some short period as a journeyman. This position did not satisfy his ambition, for we find that in the year 1851 Mr Storrs commenced business on his own account as a builder and contractor. He soon worked up a connection, and established a reputation which grew, until his name became recognised not only in this district but throughout the North of England as that of a conscientious and experienced builder. As a proof of the solid and business-like manner of his dealings, he has left behind him many pleasant memories, whilst numerous buildings throughout the district, including the District Infirmary, the Baths, and the Victorian Market, are monuments of his skill. From the erection of a substantial cotton mill to the restoration of a stately cathedral, scarcely any class of constructive work was left untouched. As a youth he showed marked signs of practical and methodical gifts, being for several years honorary librarian to the Mechanics Institute of that day. At a later stage he filled a position of tutor to the elementary and technical classes attached to that place, and ever continued his connection, having been a vice-president for many years at the time of his death.*

*His services to the town were numerous and varied. In 1872 he was elected to the Council Chamber as a representative for the Dukinfield ward, and in the same year he was elected a member of the Board of Guardians, of which body he was Chairman in 1885. In 1874 his name was placed on the Commission of Peace for the Borough, and a few years later he became a magistrate for the County of Chester. Mr. Storrs was a Churchman of broad views, and a trustee for some of the property connected with St. Paul's, Staley.*

*In addition to his contracting business, he had large financial interests on the firm of "John Wagstaffe and Co," of which he was chairman. He was also chairman of the Tame Valley Thread Mills, Ltd., a director of the Albion Mills, and chairman of the "Red R. Steamship Co, Newcastle," one of whose boats was named in compliment to him, the "William Storrs."*

*In physique Mr. Storrs was one of the finest men in this vicinity, and being gifted with a constitution hardened and developed by practical training in early manhood, it was therefore a surprise that he should pass away at the very period of his life when his valuable experience and advice would have been so useful to his fellow towns-people. Mr. Storrs was supposed to have contracted lead poisoning, and he died at Southport, 3rd June, 1894, his remains being transferred to St. Paul's churchyard Stalye, where they were reverently interred.*

Samuel Hill, Bygone Stalybridge 1907 p 291 – 293

## **James Storrs (1856 – 1926) and his descendants**

He was the oldest and longest lived child of the builder William Storrs and Sarah Bridget Hargrave. He was a big man, as were all the Storrs, but according to Goodman, 'Big Jim' stood at 6' 3½", quite a height in England before WW1. His role was the political side of the business, William Storrs Sons & Co, leaving most of the building work to be managed by his brother George Harry. He was a local councillor and in 1923 Mayor of Stalybridge. Then as now the combination of construction industry and local politics made for a sound business. In 1917 he was elected president of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers. In 1879 he married Alice Ann Entwistle (1854 - 1901) a local weaver and they had nine children. James died in 1926 at Fern Bank the Storrs family home he had moved into shortly after his other brother William Henry's death in 1903, after which event half the business was in James' control and half owned by George Harry.

It is not surprising that James was more than a little resentful that the large family home Fern Bank, 221 Mottram Road, had been left to William Henry. Neither his brothers nor his sisters had children so he understandably thought the family home should be his. On his death James left £40,000, which bears comparison with William Whisker Storrs £50,000 in 1936, though James had raised ten children and William none. Setting aside the hint in Goodman that Sarah junior might have suffered a significant embarrassment in her youth, James was the only child of William and Sarah to have children of his own.

William Hargrave Storrs (1880 - 1964) was a builder trained in his grandfather's firm. He took over management of the company on the death of his uncle George Harry. In 1909 he also married Emily Gertrude Pratt (1878 - 1951) the daughter of a local washing powder magnate and they had a daughter Florence Mary Storrs that year. In 1911 they were living in a nine-roomed establishment called Staveleigh in Stalybridge with two resident servants. At the age of two, Florence died later in 1911. In the early 1930s they bought a mansion, Bryn Eithin, in Colwyn Bay. William Hargrave became High Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1941. Emily Gertrude died in Denbighshire in 1951 leaving £8000 and William died in 1964 at Colwyn Bay leaving £106000 to Sheila Stuttard, another daughter.

Alice Maud Storrs (1884 - 1977) married John William Underwood (1883 - 1953) a solicitor and son of local contractor William Underwood, who as a magistrate, tried both suspects in the murder of George Harry Storrs in 1910. Alice and John William became mayor and mayoress of Dukinfield in the 1920s. He died in 1953 at Netherscales, Mottram Road Stalybridge leaving £54000 to William Stuart Underwood. As senior resident engineer of Manchester corporation, Stuart Underwood was later responsible for the construction of the Hattersley overspill estate with its Underwood Road and Underwood Court, home to the moors murderers (Hindley and Brady). Alice Maud died in the Stockport area in 1977, which may have covered the same district.

George Bertram Storrs (1886 – 1973) was a twenty-five year old cotton spinner manager in 1911. He died in the Oldham area. He served in WW1 as a 2nd lieutenant in Egypt, but he cannot have gone abroad until later in the war because he married Gladys Kathleen Read (1889 – 1932) at Oswestry in 1916. His military records give Tintwistle as his home address. In 1925 he was living in Hadfield and in 1932 at the same place.

Mary Annie Storrs (1886 - 1977) married Harold Bottomley (1887 – 1964) an architect's assistant in 1909. They lived in Sale in 1911 with their two-year old son Douglas and there they died decades later. Harold left Mary Annie £7000 in his will, not an insubstantial sum, but it might suggest that his architecture had not been so successful.

Bertha Hilda Storrs (1888 – 1956) had no occupation listed in the 1911 census and did not change her name so she appears not to have married. She died in Worksop leaving no will.

James Parker Storrs (1890 – 1917) was a law student in 1911. He graduated subsequently from Clare College Cambridge and became a 2nd lieutenant in the Cheshire Regiment during WW1. He died of his wounds in August 1917.

Sarah Jane Storrs (1892 – 1970) was not present at Fern Bank in 1911. She died locally in 1970 without changing her name.

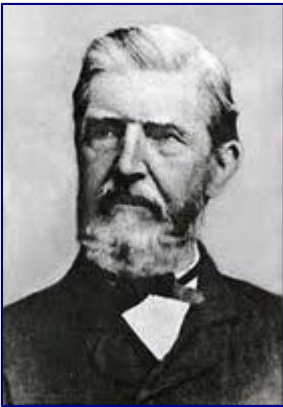
Thomas Entwistle Storrs (1894 – 1986) played a major role in the running of the Storrs building business until it ceased trading in 1960. He served in France during WW1 rising through the ranks to become a lieutenant. The address on his military records is given as Brookfield 187 Mottram Road. He married Marjorie Woods (1899 - 1960) at Bolton after the war. She went on to become a JP and Mayor of Stalybridge in 1957. Her place of death was listed as Bower Fold 216 Mottram Road and her address at the time of her death was given as Brookfield 187 Mottram Road so Thomas had been there since WW1. She left £ 8000 to Joan Shaw. When Thomas died in the district in 1986 it was over one hundred and fifty years since George the corn miller, Susannah and the infant William Storrs had arrived in Stalybridge

Margaret Middleton Storrs (1896 - 1920) married William Herbert Rhodes (1888 – 1937) in 1919. In 1920 she died in childbirth. At that time they lived at the Woodlands, Mottram Road. Herbert Rhodes had his own cotton spinning business by the time he was twenty. He went on to own three cotton spinning mills and a cricket team. He was a founder of Stalybridge Celtic Football club, which of course played at Bower Fold. He also owned a racehorse and lost a fortune investing in the Moscow State Railway before the revolution. On his death in Blackpool in 1937 Herbert left £40000 to Gladys Rhodes. His military records have proved difficult to locate.

In 1901 James married for a second time. He married a former schoolteacher Amy Beeley (1867 - 1936) and they had one son.

Philip Beeley Storrs (1904 – 1970) qualified as a solicitor and practiced briefly in Colwyn Bay. Amy left him £1000 when she died there in 1936. Philip was then shown as unemployed and did not practice after that time. He died in Bournemouth in 1970.

## The Murder of George Harry Storrs



George Harry Storrs (1860 - 1909) was the second son of William Storrs the builder and Sarah Hargrave though Goodman avers that there may have been another son Edwin born between George Harry and his older brother James. He was born in Dukinfield and went straight from school at the age of 13 into his father's building firm William Storrs and Sons Ltd taking over the management on his father's death in 1894. He was a little under six feet tall, not exceptional by Storrs family standards, but tall in the nineteenth century.

Until 1891 he lived at home with his parents. In August that year he married Margaret Middleton and they moved into the Gorse Hall in Stalybridge. They adopted Margaret's orphaned niece Marion Lindley shortly after they were married, but they had no children of their own.

There is something puzzlingly mean or miserly about George Harry, though that does not appear to have damaged his reputation. He only decorated and furnished the rooms in Gorse Hall that he used. When he thought, with obvious good reason, that his life was in danger, he installed a bell on the roof that was loud enough to be heard in the local police station and in fact for some miles. Opting for such mediaeval technology was rather odd behaviour for a man whose father had been the librarian and champion of the local mechanics institute. Though expensive and less secure, telephone technology was already available and a telephone would have been a more natural part of the technical solution for someone with an eye to the future. George Harry was not short of a bob or two. Successful businessman though George Harry was, he was clearly no Randian visionary or William Gates jnr. This is at odds with the portrayal by Fellowes of an innovator on the verge of setting up as a motorcar manufacturer.

On 1st November 1909 George Harry Storrs was brutally murdered at home at Gorse Hall. He left £29,000 in his will to Margaret. Presumably that included his half share of the firm, which his brother James tried unsuccessfully to acquire from Margaret. Clearly neither of them thought that the value in the business resided wholly in George Harry's acumen. The third brother William Henry had died in 1903.



The Gorse Hall in Stalybridge had been built by the cotton mill owning Leech family. It remained unoccupied from the death of its last Leech family occupant, who was the grandmother of Beatrix Potter, in 1884 until acquired by William Storrs as a wedding present for George Harry at a price of £3,250 in 1891. After the murder of George Harry Storrs in 1909, his wife Margaret Storrs had the hall demolished in 1910.

This account of the murder of George Harry Storrs at Gorse Hall draws heavily on Goodman's *Stabbing of George Harry Storrs* as a source and adds little original information or research. The murder has a number of aspects which made it particularly interesting then, in

1909, and continue to maintain interest.

A little bit of glamour is added because it involves the murder of a wealthy businessman who lived in a large mansion in its own grounds. Despite lengthy investigation leading to two widely reported trials at Chester Assize, no one has been convicted. We do not actually know who killed George

Harry Storrs, but there are very strong grounds for thinking that he knew his life was threatened because he had recently introduced some unusual security measures and tested them publicly. His assailant produced a gun which did not work, which is a rather puzzling precursor to stabbing someone to death. Eleven days after the murder, George Harry's coachman James Worrall hanged himself. Finally, the trial featured a black barrister for the defence, Edward Theophilus Nelson, from what would then have been known as British Guiana. This was at a time when black people were a rare sight in England, let alone black barristers. He may well have been the first barrister from the West Indies.

On 10th September 1909 the police were called to an incident at Gorse Hall. Shots had been fired by an unknown intruder. At about 9.30 in the evening George Harry had noticed movement outside the window. As he went to the window to investigate, a man's voice shouted, "Hands up or I'll shoot!". One of the window panes was broken as the gun barrel was pushed into the room and as George Harry attempted to close the blinds two shots were fired. Investigation by police officers found no evidence of gun shots, bullets or powder marks. We know this, because that is what the police recorded at the time, so from the outset the police at the time clearly indicated a suspicion that George Harry's account and the evidence were not consistent.

In response to this incident, police patrols of the Gorse Hall estate were instituted. George Harry was a wealthy and influential man. He also installed a very large bell on the roof of the hall with a pull rope in the attic. On 29th October at midnight George Harry carried out an unannounced test of the bell, it could be heard as far away as Ashton, in which he timed the speed of response of the police constables.

Three days later on the evening of 1st November the cook and the house servant disturbed a young man who was already in the kitchen area of the house and holding a gun. During a prolonged struggle which ensued George Harry managed to dislodge the gun from the man's hands, but his assailant also had a knife with which he inflicted fifteen separate knife wounds from which George Harry died within hours. Though he was able to be questioned on the subject by the police before he died, George Harry was unable to identify his attacker, nor were his wife, who had rung the alarm bell, his niece or the two servants who had been present and witnessed the attack. The attacker, who had been in a lengthy fight with a big man and must at the very least have been covered in blood, as was the area in which the fight had taken place, managed to escape unobserved. It is unlikely that the killer was not also injured in the fight.

On 12th November James Worrall hanged himself. Formally, he was the coachman, but it is clear that he had a much wider role as an assistant to George Harry about the hall. Goodman is clear that the shooting event on the night of 10th September was a "burlesque", a theatrical stunt designed by George Harry to create an impression of danger and generate enhanced police protection. The local police too were clearly suspicious about this event. Whether his killer could have known that that police protection had been withdrawn on 1st November, because an election was taking place, is another matter. Goodman's candidate for the gun man outside the window is Worrall himself.

There are three primary candidates for the murderer of George Harry Storrs and only one of these is not connected with the Storrs family. The first two who were tried at Chester Assizes were reserve service men Cornelius Howard, George Harry's cousin, and Mark Wilde. The third candidate is a person unknown, but with a more plausible motive. One of the reasons for the acquittal of Wilde, as emphasized by Edward Nelson in his defence was that the witness identification that identified him was the same as that which identified Cornelius Howard, so it was demonstrably wrong on at least one of those identifications and if wrong once, why not twice? This has led to a suggestion that had Wilde, who had a very dubious alibi, been tried first, he may well have been found guilty and hanged.

## Cornelius Howard (1878 - 1959)

Cornelius Howard and George Harry Storrs were first cousins. George Harry's aunt Mary Ann Storrs was Cornelius Howard's mother. Their shared grandparents were George Storrs and Susannah Butcher.

Mary Ann Storrs (1839 - 1898) was the fourth child of George and Susannah Butcher so she was born after their move to Stalybridge. For reasons which are not apparent she was baptised at Stalybridge St. Pauls at the age of fourteen in 1853. Up until the time of her marriage in 1875 she was a milliner, but thereafter she assisted her husband Ralph Howard in his butcher's shop. They moved to Southport in 1877, but later they returned to Stalybridge, which might suggest they were not very successful in business. Had they been successful, a more natural move would have been from industrial Stalybridge to the far more congenial coastal setting of Southport. They married late by nineteenth century standards. She was 36 and he was 45. Brother Edwin and Annie Clixby, who would marry the same year were the witnesses. They had two children, Marion and Cornelius who was named after Ralph's father. Cornelius Howard snr had also been a pork butcher who had left £2000, a not inconsiderable sum, in his estate when he died at the age of 84 in 1869.

Mary Ann died in 1898 leaving Ralph £265 which had dwindled to the £36 Ralph left to Marion by the time he died in 1909. Cornelius did not inherit a penny. Marion had married Frederick Russell, a cinema manager and son of of Ralph's sister, in 1906.



Cornie had been born in Southport in 1878. Like his father and grandfather he had become a pork butcher, but not particularly successfully and he got into trouble with the law. Through some sort of deal with the courts he enrolled in the army rather than returning to prison, having already served one brief sentence. Between 1901 and 1909 he served in the Royal Field Artillery in India and was promoted to the rank of sergeant. At the time of the murder of George Harry Storrs he was a military reservist.

A possible motive for Cornie to have been the murderer lies in a suggestion that he had asked George Harry, who was an employer of substantial numbers, for a job and been refused, but murder under those circumstances does seem somewhat excessive. Another motive, discussed by Goodman, lies in the possibility that Cornie was, or believed he was, actually George Harry's son. When Cornie was born in October 1878 Mary Ann was already 39 and Ralph was 48, so it is not impossible that Cornelius was the illegitimate consequence of George Harry's youthful indiscretion passed to his aunt for upbringing. Cornie had received nothing from his recently deceased father's estate. Perhaps he thought he was entitled to some of the Storrs' wealth.

Cornie Howard went on to marry Hannah Sophia Norton in Blackpool in 1915. At the outbreak of WW1 he was recalled to the army. He appears to have served in France and Flanders throughout the war, rising again to the rank of sergeant, before retiring again when he was 40. He must have maintained his connections with the Lancashire coast because he died in Southport in 1959.





*Illustration 6: Picture by permission of Gillian Kendall (relative)*

## Mark Wilde (1882 – 1950)

Mark Wilde was the second suspect charged with the murder of George Harry Storrs. Like Cornelius Howard, Mark Wilde was a military reservist, a former serviceman, born in Stalybridge in 1882. The case against him was very strong and his defence was lacking in plausibility. He had been convicted of another violent offence in the vicinity. There was evidence that he had been the owner of a revolver resembling the unusual and apparently unusable American Bullock deployed in the murder event. Finally he appears to have had a motive, because George Harry Storrs had sacked his girl friend. Had it not been for the previous acquittal of Cornelius Howard which cast strong doubt on the identification evidence, there is a good chance he would have been convicted and presumably hanged.

The missing element in the case against Mark Wilde is the reconciliation of the attack at Gorse Hall with the known threat, which led to the security measures, the bell and additional police patrols. If Mark Wilde was perhaps threatening George Harry, why would that need to be kept secret? Goodman's third candidate for the murderer goes

some way to solving the problem of the secrecy.

## The Third Candidate

George Harry Storrs had a strong relationship with his solicitor Robert Innes (1858 - 1940). It looks as if George Harry met his wife Maggie Middleton through Robert's neighbours the Lindleys, who were Marion's parents. George Harry was also related to Robert Innes because in 1885 Robert married Eliza Storrs (1860 – 1886) the seventh child of John Storrs and Eliza Edwards. She gave her address as Brookside, which was 219 Mottram Road and he gave his address as Melbourne Street. They had a daughter Eliza Storrs Innes (1886 – 1966) in January 1886. Eliza Storrs died that February. George Harry must have known Eliza well, not least because he lived next door to her family.

In 1910 Eliza jnr graduated from Westfield College, London University under the name Elsie Storrs Innes. This was quite an achievement, because university opportunities for women were still highly restricted at that time. Goodman has Eliza sent to London in 1906 for a formal "finishing" education, but that must be a rather different kind of finishing to that in later decades in which those who attended university were not thought to be in need of "finishing." Such was the significance of graduating from university that in the 1911 census return it is shown as Eliza's occupation i.e. BA graduate of London University. Presumably the record was written by a very proud father. She went on to marry William Hadfield and in her will left £11000 to be shared between her three children including a farmer and another solicitor. At the time of her death in 1966 she was in Farnham Surrey, but her address was given as Montreux, Switzerland. She had an earlier connection with Switzerland because that was the birthplace of her governess

Robert Innes married for a second time in 1893 to Emma Elizabeth Ellen Gertrude Bostock (1858 – 1947) and had a second daughter Irene Bostock Innes (1895 - 1985). Robert left £173000 in his will and though he died in Devon, still used the same Holme Lea address in Stalybridge he had used in 1911. £173000 in 1947 converts to £ 8 mn using a retail price index or £23 mn using an average

earnings index in 2012 terms. Emma left £36000 to Irene seven years later though that probably includes a significant portion of Robert's estate. Irene was by then a widow. There is correspondence indicating that Robert Innes also acted for William Whisker Storrs and that the Bristol Storrs were dealing with Robert, or Robert's practice, when it came to the administration of William's Estate.

In 1897 Robert and his second wife, Emma Bostock, had engaged a governess for Eliza junior and their daughter Irene. She was Maria Hohl. Maria was the daughter of Swiss pastor and a devout member of the now defunct Catholic Apostolic church. In February 1907 Maria committed suicide. She was found drowned in the canal. The Goodman thesis is that Maria was pregnant, that George Harry Storrs was the father and that his murderer was a vengeful member of Maria's family. Fellowes concludes that the killer was in fact Maria's younger brother Gottfried. This would go some way towards explaining the security arrangements and the 'burlesque' of a staged shooting to bring about heightened security. George Harry was in fear for his life, but unable to tell anyone why.

The great bell which could be heard across the district and had been rung throughout the murder attack was later to be found in William Hargrave Storrs' residence Bryn Eithin, in Colwyn Bay.

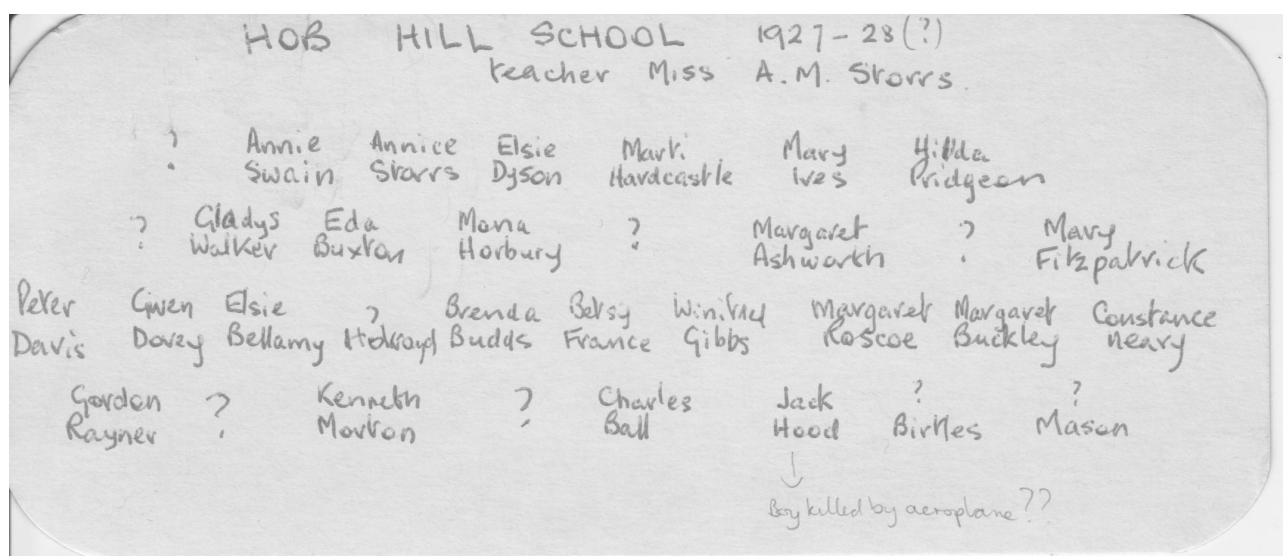
## **Other Storrs Family Branches in Staley**

### **Edwin Storrs (1836 - 1911)**

Edwin was the second of George the corn miller's children. He was variously a millwright, an engineer's patternmaker and a millwright's model maker. He married 25 year old Anne Clixby (1851 – 1925) from Gainsborough when he was 40. She had formerly been in service in the household of his older brother, William. He spent his entire life in Stalybridge latterly living at Cheetham Hill. They raised two children Edwin (1880 - 1951) who became a postman and Annie Mary (1878 - 1965) who became a schoolteacher and died under the same name in 1965 so presumably did not marry. In 1927 Annie Mary was Annice Storrs' classroom teacher at Hob Hill primary. She is thought to have been the headmistress, as she would have been then known, of the school.



Illustration 7: Annie Mary and Annice Storrs at Hob Hill School



Edwin jnr became a postman in 1898 and married Mary Ellen Burgess (1880 – 1955), a local weaver, in 1905. His WW1 record is odd because for some reason three years were added to his age. In December 1915 when he joined the Royal Army Veterinary Corps he was clearly recorded as 38, when he was actually 35. It is not obvious that men of his age were required to do military service and if he was volunteering adding to his age would hardly have enhanced his prospects of recruitment. Harry Vernon Storrs (1883 - 1964) did not do war service, so it looks as if Edwin must have been volunteering. Edwin's height was given as 5' 10", quite tall for an Englishman of that time and confirmation of the Storrs' family height. He was mobilised and went out to France in 1916 and remained there for the rest of the war by which time he would have been nearly forty. His address at 88 Huddersfield Road was next door to the 90 Huddersfield Road, which appears on the records of the death of Annie Mary in 1965. Annie Mary left £1250 in her will, to an assistant

postmaster called Samuel Vincent Thomas and his wife Betty Thomas, but she is the only member of this family for whom a will has been located which suggests that whatever riches were available to their relatives did not pass to Edwin's descendants.

## **William Storrs Corn Miller**

William Storrs (1831 – 1899 ) the third son of Joseph Storrs and Mary Scott was born like his older brothers at Misson near Doncaster and became a corn miller. He married Martha Vernon (1830 - 1896), one of four sisters from Rosthorne, Nether Knutsford in Cheshire in November 1854 at Stockport St. Mary. She had been a neighbour of his uncle George Storrs' family in Acres Lane in 1851. George Storrs had moved to Stalybridge in 1831, so it is likely that William the corn miller, we need to distinguish him from the other Williams, moved to Stalybridge to join George. In 1861 William and Martha were living with Joseph and Mary Jane, their first two children, at 20 Knowl Street, Staley. There were several corn millers in the street so the mill must have been nearby, presumably in Corn Mill Lane, off Knowl Street, between the river and the canal. In 1871 they were at the same address, but had acquired a third child, Walter. In 1881 they were still at the same address, Walter was corn milling, probably with William, and Mary Jane was weaving in the cotton mill, but Joseph had move next door to No. 22 setting up house with his wife Sarah Hannah Cartledge from Birmingham and their new daughter Gertrude aged 5 months. By 1891 the birds had flown the coop leaving only William and Martha at 20 Knowl Street. Joe had moved with his family further up the street to North End Road, Mary Jane had married Herbert Phillips from Huddersfield and Walter had left for the USA. Martha died in 1896 having had one of her legs amputated in later years. In 1899 William died at Joe's address in North End Road. There is no record of a will for William suggesting there was no estate to leave. The absence of a will for corn-milling William, the relatively small estate of his uncle George the corn miller and the fact that the only one of their descendants who went in to the business left at an early age suggests that corn-milling was not at all profitable.

Walter Storrs (1864 – 1933) sailed to New York in 1887 on the Arizona arriving from Liverpool on 25th July. He became a roofer in Sioux city, Woodbury, Iowa, about a hundred miles to the west of his father's migrant brothers. In 1892 he married Alice Fader from Canada, who was twelve years older. They had a daughter called Lillian who had been born in South Dakota in 1889. Alice had had several children so she may have been married before she met Walter. In later life the census records for Lillian show her father's birthplace to be unknown, which again suggests that Walter was not her father. Lillian married Clinton B. Rickman and died in Los Angeles in 1977. They had two children.

Mary Jane Storrs (1860) and Herbert Phillips raised three sons Tom 1884, William 1886 and Albert 1890. In 1901 they were living a few doors along the street from Joe at 13 North End Road. Herbert was weaving as was William, but Tom was cleaning locomotive engines. In 1908. Tom sailed from Liverpool to Boston on the Ivernia arriving in September. The following April William and Albert sailed across on the same vessel, citing Tom as their friend. Herbert and Mary Jane arrived on the Saxonia at the end of September. It looks as if the boys or the interests of the boys were the stimulus for migration. In 1910 they were all cotton weaving in Warren, Bristol, Rhode Island bar Mary Jane who was keeping house. They were following a fairly well trodden path from the Lancashire cotton industry to Rhode Island at the time. There was a family with the uniquely Lancashire name of Bardsley living next door. By 1920 the boys had left. Tom was married and living in Berkeley California with three children Gertrude, Justin and Herbert while working for the Union Ice Company. He died in Berkeley in 1955.

William Phillips married Annie Grundy, who also gave a Stalybridge address when she crossed on the Carmania in 1909. In 1930 they were both still in Rhode Island and William was still in the cotton mill. They owned a home then worth \$3600. There is no indication they had any children. Albert married Bertha Johnson and they had two children, Albert Junior born in 1914 on Rhode Island and Mildred born in December 1919 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Mildred died as Mildred Quintin in California in 1997. Albert jnr married Phyllis and continued to live in New Bedford until well after WW2. Albert snr was registered for the draft in 1942, also in New Bedford. We do not know where or in which continent Mary Jane Storrs and Herbert Phillips died.

Joseph Storrs (1856 - 1935) was the only child of William Storrs, the corn miller, to remain in Stalybridge, but he travelled the world installing textile machinery for Taylor Lang. In 1878 he married Sarah Hannah Cartledge (1859 - 1935), whose mother was from Stalybridge, and they raised three children. Gertrude died when she was thirteen. William Storrs (1885 - 1961) was a textile fitter in 1911, presumably with his father at Taylor Lang. In 1916 Bill Storrs married Clara Marshall (1885 - 1956), from another local family, in India. Because her mother died young, Clara Marshall had been brought up in the household of her aunt, who just happened to be married to Bill's uncle, Samuel Cartledge. Both her uncle and her father were textile machinery fitters, presumably at Taylor Lang. Bill and Clara's first two children were born in India in 1918 and 1922, the first did not survive. They had their third, Betty, in 1929 back in Ashton. Bill and Clara continued to travel the world after WW1. On his departure record from Liverpool en route for Bombay in 1920, Bill is shown as a Mule Fitter. Their descendants live in Australia, but Clara died back in Hyde in 1956. The final record of Bill has him embarking with Betty at Southampton on the Stirling Castle for South Africa in 1960 at the age of 75.

Harry Vernon Storrs (1882 - 1964) lived his whole life in Stalybridge, apart perhaps from the occasional visit to Blackpool. Given the experiences of his brother, father, his uncle, his aunt, so many relatives and the men who went away to two world wars during his lifetime, that must have felt very strange. He is reputed to have known Cornie Howard, but that does not surprise us, because he was 28 when Cornie was tried and related to the Howards, albeit distantly. Harry had been an iron planer and during the latter part of his working life had worked for Beyer Peacock the major manufacturer of railway locomotives to the world at Gorton. At a guess his expertise was needed to replace the men who had been conscripted into the forces for WW2, because before that he had spent long periods unemployed. He married Ellen Walker Stuart from Ashton in 1912 and they had two children who survived birth. We gather there were several who did not. Charles Storrs (1917- 1919) almost made it to the age of three and Annice (1920) alone lived to adulthood. Unsurprisingly Harry Vernon took out, within days of her birth, an insurance policy against funeral costs. Such policies were obviously readily available.

It is the collaboration in the nineteen-nineties between Annice and Philip Marshall, nephew of Clara, that provides the original research on which this document is based. Most of the research was done by Philip, but it was Annice who had been brought up in Stalybridge and knew some of the people involved.

## Sources

The personal family history in this document is derived from a collaboration in the 1990s between Annice Storrs, Betty Storrs, Philip Marshall (nephew of Bill Storrs and thus Betty's cousin) and Roger Storrs of the Bristol branch of the family.

Unfortunately Philip Marshall used the IGI index as one of his principal sources. That IGI index includes information submitted by members of the LDS Mormon church so there is a real risk that Philip's records might appear to confirm the evidence of George Albert's descendants when in fact he was using records submitted by them.

John Foster's *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* 1974

Jonathon Goodman's *The Stabbing of George Harry Storrs*, London, 1983

Samuel Hill's *Bygone Stalybridge, Traditional, Historical, Biographical*, Stalybridge, 1907

*The Moors Above The Mills Below - Stalybridge Memories*, Hilda Siddelley, Neil Richardson, 1994.

Julian Fellowes' *A Most Mysterious Murder*, BBC Video 2006, which draws heavily on Goodman, but does not indicate its sources of information.

Ancestry.co.uk gives us a considerable advantage over our forebears particular through its access to sources like the census of England and Wales