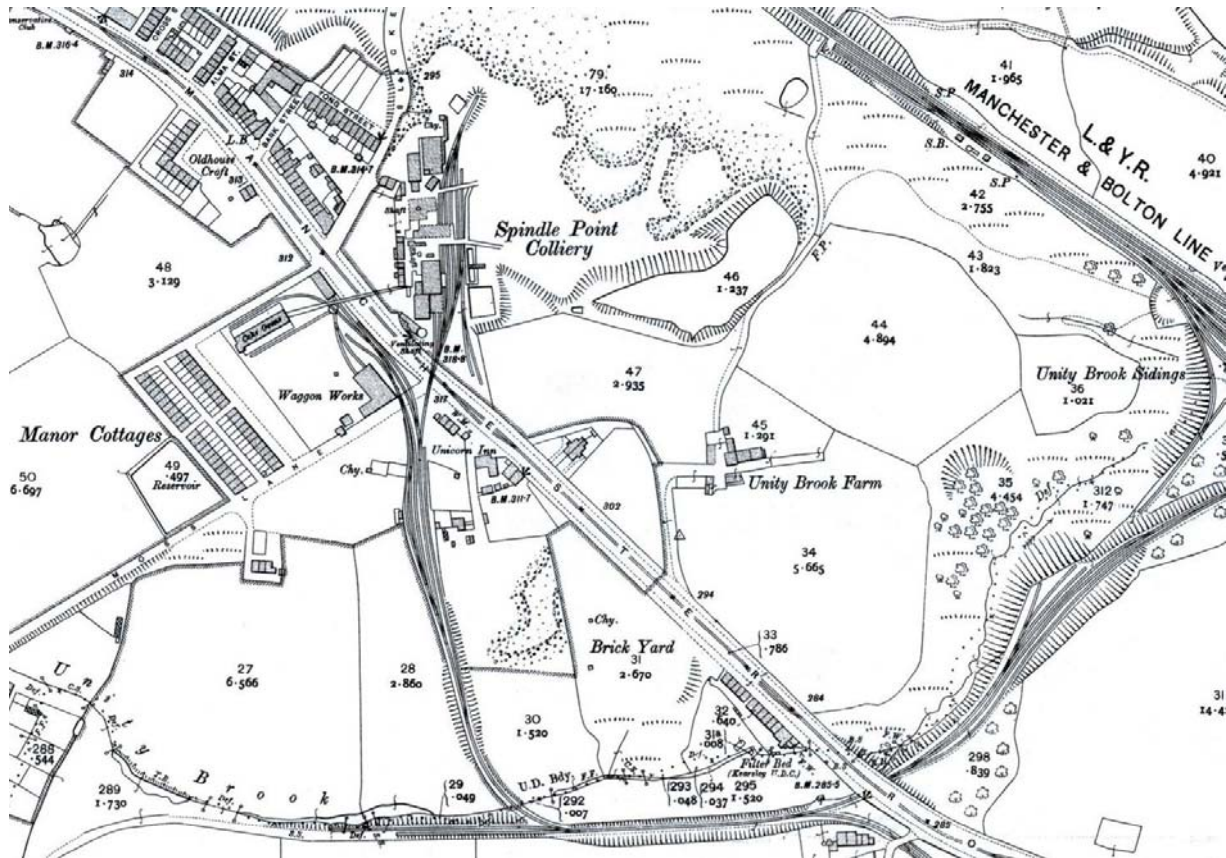


The Wolstenholmes



Bold, Martha and Emily Wolstenholme circa 1915

The lives of the Wolstenholmes in the nineteenth century were largely centred in the area shown on the map. On the upper left is Old House Croft with Alma Street just a step away to the north on the other side of Manchester Road. To the front of Old House Croft, about 200 metres to the east, is Spindle Point Colliery where William was to lose his life in a mining accident in 1874.



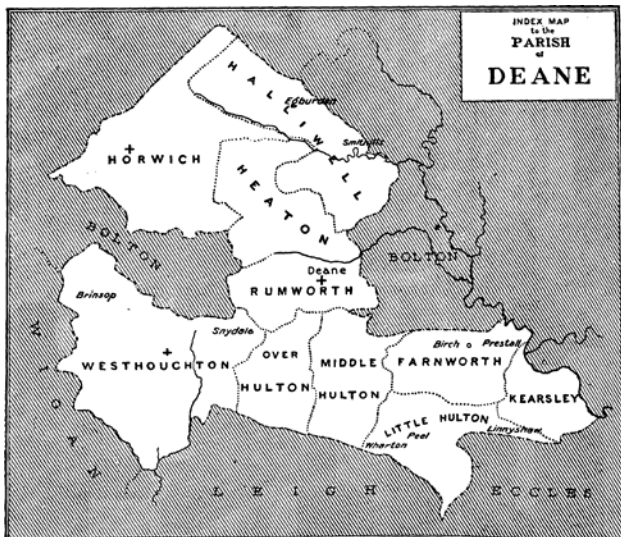
His son Thomas was to be killed in nearby Unity Brook Colliery (bottom left before being closed down) in 1878. The Unicorn Inn, centre alongside the main road, is where the inquest in the Unity Brook disaster was held. St. Stephen's Church, Kearsley Moor Church of England School – which some of the Howarths and Harrisons attended - and the Antelope pub (mentioned in the inquest) are just off the map to the top left.

Today, each side of Manchester Road is banked up with houses. The mines and mills have gone. Old House Croft was demolished at some point in the 1930s to make way for multiple rows of houses parallel to the road. Alma Street, so central to our family, is now no more than a name. Wind teases around stray vegetation where the houses once stood, but it is still possible to look out to the hills and valley beyond. Massive pylons bestride the landscape, but the bridge over the river in the cleft of the valley formed part of the everyday view 150 years ago. Without this anchor, our Wolstenholmes would surely walk through the Kearsley of the 21st century without realizing it. Just the odd building, beached like flotsam from the past, would awake a puzzled flicker of recognition.

The Forebears of Thomas Wolstenholme

The first Thomas mentioned in the Pilgrim's Progress was born in 1836. He was the grandfather of our Thomas and was himself the son of William and Ann Wolstenholme, who were registered as living in the parish of Deane, Salford,¹ at the time of the country's first census in 1841.

Three of William and Ann's six children were working in that year. Sarah (16) was a spinner;



James (14) was in the coal mine, presumably the same one as his father, along with young Joseph who was just eight years old. These mines – the Grundy Pit, the Rothwell Pit and the Smedley Pit, to name a few - would have been small and simple, with coal accessible through shallow digging.

Compulsory schooling had not yet been introduced and working days for adults and children alike could have been as long as fourteen hours. We do not know if Sarah worked in a mill or on a handloom – at the time the power looms in the factories

produced simple plain or patterned cloth. Fancy checks and figured patterns still demanded the skill of the handloom weaver. We do know, though, that the Rose Cotton Mill was established in Kearsley by 1850 and that other mills in nearby Farnworth had been established as early as 1828.

The three youngest members of the family were **Thomas**² (5), Mary (3) and little William (1). The family lived in one of the dwellings on Old House Croft³ in Kearsley. William and Ann were to remain there for the rest of their lives, sharing their home with their daughter Mary who was to remain single. Close relatives and friends lived in the same row and at times in the same house. Their grandson **Robert** (father to our **Thomas**) was to set up home just across the road in Alma Street with some of his in-laws as well as his family.

As the map shows, there were no more than a dozen houses on Old House Croft bent around an L, all with yards at the back overlooking the fields of Kearsley Moss. The impression of verdure around these dwellings is somewhat misplaced, however. During the nineteenth century the land would have already been degraded and would have supported only cattle and sheep, rather than being intensively cropped. Potatoes may, however, have been grown. Though so small, Kearsley was already industrialized by the time we take up our story – it was no longer a rural community. All food was purchased since people had no land of their own, and unlike their country cousins they did not make foodstuffs like butter or jam. Large

¹ This is misleading since they actually lived in what is commonly referred to as Kersley/ Kearsley. The so-called Salford 'Hundreds' (an Anglo-Saxon word meaning 'district'), included most of modern Manchester, as far as Heaton Mersey in the south, Bolton and Bury to the north, Oldham and Rochdale to the east, and Warrington and Wigan to the west.

² In the Pilgrim's Progress his date of birth is given as 29th May 1836.

³ Presumably number 4 since this is the address given in the census of 1881, 1891 and 1901. Old House Croft seems to have been pulled down in the mid-1930s and we have not found any pictures of it.

landowners were building speculatively. Manor Cottages, shown on the map, look like a textbook example of jerry-built housing for the working class.



124-130 Manchester Road, Clifton. This was close to Kearsley; many Clifton children attended Kearsley Moor School. Old House Croft probably looked like this

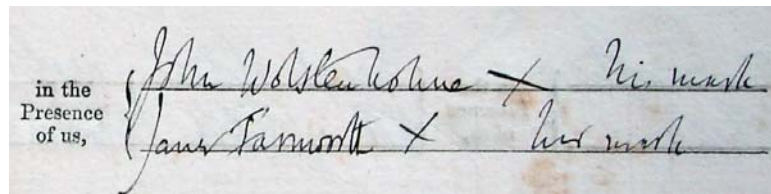
Packhorses bearing bales of cotton trudged up Slackey Brow towards Spindle Point Colliery and thence to the market in Manchester; they would have been a familiar sight well after Bolton and Manchester were linked by rail in 1838. Although coal was quite cheap most people had peat fires, for rights immemorial allowed people to cut turves on Kearsley Moss. These turves would have been stacked outside the cottages to be dried by the sun and wind. In the first part of the nineteenth century people drew their water from springs and wells – there was a spring beside Slackey Brow

which the Wolstenholmes probably used. The mains water supply from Bolton was extended to Kearsley in 1854 through the efforts of the local wealthy philanthropist, Harrison Blair, who also paid for St. Stephen's Church. During the first half of the century there was no street lighting and so darkness governed the streets at night. It was only in 1866 that the first lamp-lighter, a local man called Thomas Brown who would have been a familiar sight to our Wolstenholmes, took up work.

From 1841 to 1851

The 1851 census shows that three more children had joined the family of William and Ann Wolstenholme. They were Ann (9)⁴, John (5) and Robert aged one. During the census William's widowed brother John was staying with the family. William was then thirty-eight years old whilst his brother was sixty-two. They must have come from a large family, given the space of twenty four years between them. This was not unusual: William and Ann's nine children were born over a space of twenty-five years.

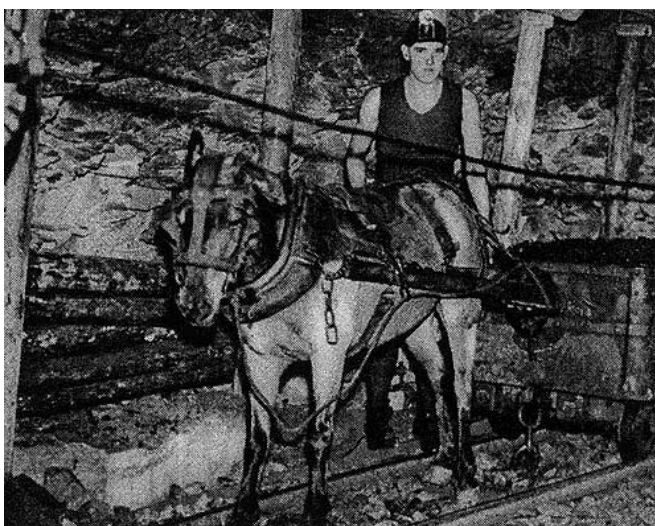
Like almost all of their peers, none of the children appears to have received an education. John Wolstenholme (son of William and Ann) was to act as witness to his nephew Robert's wedding in 1882; he placed a simple cross next to his name.



⁴ This Ann was to marry a John Harrison, who was killed in the Unity Brook Colliery disaster of 1878 – in which her brother, Thomas, also died along with many other men and boys, 43 in all.

1851 Census, William and Ann Wolstenholme, Old House Croft, Kearsley	Age
William Wolstenholme	38
Ann Wolstenholme ⁵	40
Joseph Wolstenholme	18
Thomas Wolstenholme	14
Mary Wolstenholme	13
William Wolstenholme	11
Ann Wolstenholme	9
John Wolstenholme	5 ⁶
Robert Wolstenholme	1 ⁷
John Wolstenholme (widower)	62

The census makes no mention of Sarah and James, now both in their mid-twenties. Presumably they had left home and were married. The two younger boys, Joseph and Thomas, aged 18 and 14 respectively, were waggoners in the coalmine along with their younger brother William, aged eleven. Mary (13) was a 'Tenter of Slubber' in the mill. She spent her days looking after a machine that produced a twisted thread strong enough to be put into a spinning machine.



From 1851 to 1861

We lose track of William and Ann in the 1861 census. However, **Thomas** married Mary Ann Howarth on 1st Jan 1857 at the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

They were both 20 years old. Mary is recorded in the 1841 census as being three years old⁸ along with an older sister, Alice, and a younger brother, Richard. Her father, Robert, was a blacksmith. Her mother was also called Mary. Our Mary Ann is named in the Pilgrim's Progress.

By 1861 Mary Ann had given birth to their only child, **Robert**. She may have suffered complications during that birth, making her unable to have further children. We do not know the details, but certainly it was very unusual to have just one child. At the time they were living at 131 Joab Row⁹ in Kearsley.

⁵ She 'aged' only three years between 1841 and 1851.

⁶ John Wolstenholme acted as witness to the wedding of his nephew Robert Wolstenholme in 1882

⁷ In the Unity Brook Pit Colliery disaster of 1878, a Robert Wolstenholme acts as witness to the enquiry. It is likely that this is the Robert mentioned here; if so he lost his brother Thomas in that disaster. Records show that a Robert Wolstenholme was buried on 20th July 1907 in St. Stephens at the age of 56 - surely the same man.

⁸ In the Pilgrim's Progress she gives her date of birth as being 12th November 1837.

⁹ This street has disappeared entirely.

1861 Census, Thomas and Mary Ann Wolstenholme, 131 Joab Row, Kearsley		Age
Thomas Wolstenholme		25
Mary Ann Wolstenholme (née Howarth/ Howard)		23
Robert Wolstenholme		1

From 1861 to 1871

In 1871 William and Ann turn up again, still living at Old House Croft but now with just two of their children. Robert (21) was a coal miner and Mary (33), who was to remain single for the rest of her life, had graduated from being a tenter of slubber and was now a cotton



spinner in the mill. Their daughter Ann had married a miner called John Harrison on 1st January, 1862, at the Church of St John the Evangelist.

Thomas and Mary were witnesses to their wedding. In the suddenly spacious home William and Ann had space for a lodger, Samuel. He was to stay with the family for at least 40 years, for he is recorded in the 1901 census along with Mary Wolstenholme. Samuel's surname seemed to have given the census takers no end of difficulties over the years, being variously recorded as Yates, Bates,

Bait and even Peter – a testimonial to the thickness of his accent. We decided to go with Samuel Yates, aged 33, coal-miner.

From 1871 to 1881

In 1871 William was working as a labourer at the top of the colliery rather than below ground. Within a year or so he was to return to working underground as a maintenance man in Spindle Point Colliery - which is how he came to be killed. The record of William's death in 1874 reads: *'Roof coal falling in the old workings as he was getting material for gob walling'*¹⁰. He was (approximately) sixty-five years old.

1871 Census, Thomas and Mary Ann Wolstenholme, 165 Manchester Road, Kearsley		
Head: Green Grocer	Thomas Wolstenholme	34
Wife	Mary Ann Wolstenholme	32
Son: Scholar	Robert Wolstenholme	11
Brother-in-Law: Coal Miner	Robert Howard (Howarth)	18
Brother-in-Law: Coal Miner	James Howard (Howarth)	14

¹⁰ Gob or Waste. The area left behind as the face advances between the main and return headings.

The census of 1871 tells us that **Thomas**, Mary Ann, and **Robert**, now aged eleven, had moved a short distance to 165 Manchester Road, Kearsley. At the time of the census there were two other occupants of the house, both recorded as Thomas' brothers-in-law. Although their surname is shown as 'Howard' there is no doubt that this is the first mention of the James Howarth recorded in the Pilgrim's Progress.



Kearsley Streets in 1929: Grocery Wagon

At this time **Thomas** was engaged in a newfound trade as a greengrocer. It is likely that working underground was taking an increasing toll on his health, particularly his lungs and his limbs, and that he desperately wanted to change his life and that of his only child. **Robert's** writing is beautiful; it is clear that Thomas, who was almost certainly illiterate like his siblings, invested in his son's education before the Education Act came into force. Surely he hoped

that his son would not enter the mines – a hope that became even more urgent after the death of his father. At all events the shop appears to have failed. To set up his business Thomas would have rented premises with living space above or behind the shop, and would have had to buy in some stock. Perhaps he was unable to calculate the profit margins at a rate high enough to secure a return on his capital outlay yet please customers for whom every penny counted. Customers may also have been paying on tic.

At some point Thomas made the fateful decision to return to the mines. He had worked just two weeks at the Unity Brook Colliery when he was killed in a massive explosion in 1878. The Bolton Chronicle grimly records the broken bodies, crushed skulls and ripped skin of the men and boys brought to the surface over three days of searching. Many could only be identified by their clothing or clogs. The sorrow of the mutilated small community living within a few minutes of the mine must be beyond our imaginings¹¹.

Record of death in a mining accident 1878	
Name:	WOLSTENHOLME Thomas
Age:	41
Date:	12/03/1878
Year:	1878
Colliery:	Unity Brook
Owner:	James Stott and Co
Town:	Kearsley
County:	Lancashire
Notes	Explosion of firedamp in Cannel Mine. An outburst of gas from the first large fall of roof in the west workings. Candles being used. 43 killed.

Thomas Wolstenholme and John Harrison, his brother-in-law who was killed alongside him, were buried at St. Saviour's Church in Ringley. The majority of victims are buried at St.

¹¹ A fuller account of the Unity Brook Pit disaster is provided in the Kearsley Mines section.

Stephen's Church in Kearsley. The following is a short abstract from the extensive newspaper coverage of the time.

Bolton Evening News, Monday, March 18, 1878

THE KEARSLEY CATASTROPHE

INTERNMENT OF THE BODIES

ST. STEPHEN'S, KEARSLEY

Long before two o'clock, the hour fixed for the first internment, the road in front of the churchyard was filled with spectators and as the afternoon advanced it was computed that between five and six thousand persons were present. But the spectators were allowed to occupy positions on the road only, entrance to the churchyard being strictly confined to the funeral *corteges*. Disappointing as this regulation must have been to the large number of sympathetic visitors present, the comfort of the relatives and friends of the deceased in the carrying out of the last sad rite was sacrosanct

ST. SAVIOUR'S RINGLEY

Though Ringley itself, as far as its people were concerned, enjoyed immunity from the deaths at the Unity Brook colliery, still it was largely interested by ties of relationship and friendship with many who had been called upon to bear the trial, and this was abundantly manifested not only by the several internments at St. Saviour's, which took place on Saturday afternoon, but also by the large number of persons who had assembled to pay a last mark of respect to the deceased. From



end to end of the village the shops were closed and the blinds in the houses drawn. There were eleven internments, and these were conducted between three and half-past five o'clock, and in such a manner as reflected the highest credit on Mr. Wardle, the sexton, there being not the slightest confusion.

The funerals arrived in the following order – William Leach, Lower Kearsley; Alfred Isherwood, Stoneclough; **John Harrison, Kearsley; Thomas Wolstenholme, Kearsley;** Thomas Hilton, Kearsley; William Mayoh, Kearsley; Joseph Welsbey, Kearsley; James Partington, Stoneclough; Robert Clarke, Kearsley; Peter Fogg, Clifton; and Thomas Peake, Kearsley. Several of the coffins had upon them beautiful wreaths of flowers. Mayoh's funeral was attended by a number of members of the Friendship Lodge of Shepherds; Clarke by the Rev. P. Ramage and a number of scholars of the New Church, Kearsley; and Peter Fogg's by a number of the members of the Alma Lodge of Druids.

On Sunday morning, a very large congregation assembled in St. Saviour's Church, amongst the worshipers being a large number of relatives and friends of the men interred in the burial ground of the church the previous day. The hymns selected were very suitable to the occasion, and whilst they were being sung the remembrances of many would no doubt be carried back to the occurrences of the past few days, and even to the last Sabbath, when husbands, fathers, sons and brothers now absent were at the church.

From 1881 to 1891



Waiting for news: The Pretoria pit disaster, Westhoughton 1910

In the Unity Brook Colliery disaster Ann Wolstenholme (widow of William) had lost not only her son, but also her son-in-law, John Harrison. Following these deaths, the two Ann's - widowed mother and daughter - pulled together, the latter bringing her four young children with her to live again at Old House Croft with her mother and sister Mary, and the tenant, Samuel Yates. The house was full again though money, with three girls not yet in work, must have been very short.

The 1881 census records the seventy-nine year old Ann (William's widow) as the head of the household at 4 Old House Croft. Apart from the ever-present lodger, Samuel Yates, Mary Wolstenholme - now forty-three - was working as a slubber operator in the cotton mill alongside her widowed sister Ann Harrison. Ann's eldest daughter, Mary Ann (15), was a spinner. Her other daughters Sarah (11) and Alice (5) were both at school while little Elizabeth (3) was being looked after by the matriarch, Ann. It must have been quite a job for a woman aged almost 80. John Harrison may not have known his wife was pregnant with a fourth child; the Bolton Chronicle records him as having three children at the time of his death¹².

1881 Census, Ann Wolstenholme, No 4 Old House Croft, Kearsley		
Ann Wolstenholme	79	Head – widow
Mary Wolstenholme (daughter, single)	43	Slubber operator.
Ann Harrison (daughter, widow of John)	38	Slubber operator.
Mary Ann Harrison	15	Spinner
Sarah Harrison	11	Scholar
Alice Harrison	5	Scholar
Elizabeth Harrison	3	
Samuel Yates (boarder)	43	Coal miner

The widowed Mary Ann (43), wife of **Thomas** killed at Unity Brook, was now living at 5 Alma Street, directly opposite Old House Croft, along with their son **Robert** (father to our Thomas) who was now twenty-one.

¹² The baptism records tell us that John and Ann had - and presumably lost - three children: Margaret, Mary Ann and William – between 1864 and 1871.

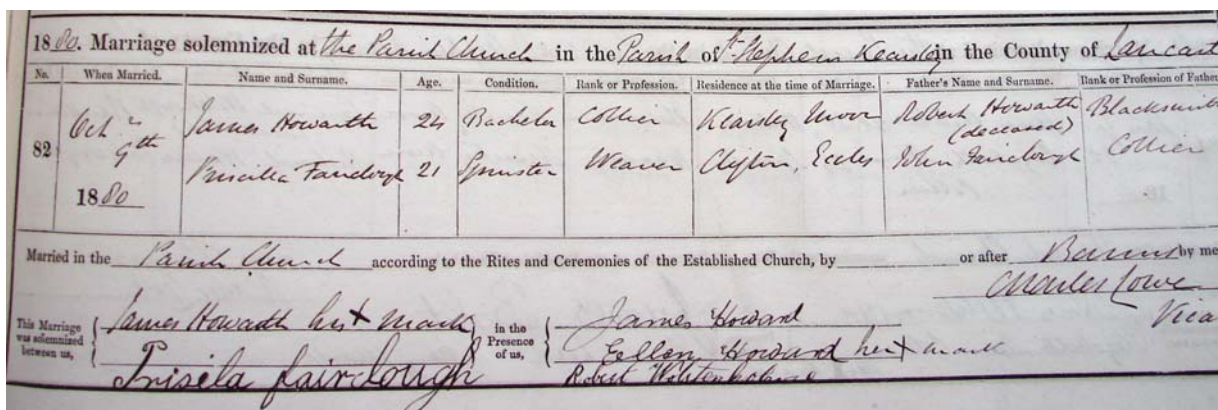
1881 Census, Wolstenholmes and Howarths, 5 Alma Street, Kearsley

Mary Ann Wolstenholme (née Howarth)	43	Head – widow
Robert Wolstenholme	21	Son – coal miner
James Howarth	24	Head - coal Miner
Prisella Howarth	21	Wife of James
Ernest Howarth	5 mo	Son
Ellen Howarth (sister of Mary Ann and James)	19	Cotton weaver

Also residing in the house were the members of the Howarth¹³ family whose names are listed in the Pilgrim’s Progress in the same strong hand. Ellen Howarth (19) was Mary Ann’s sister. James Howarth (24), a coalminer, was Mary Ann’s brother. His wife, Prisella, who was born in Rugeley, Staffordshire, but working as a weaver in Kearsley at the time of her marriage, was twenty-one¹⁴.

Without exception, their neighbours were employed in the cotton mills, of which there were by now eight close by, and in the collieries, two of which were just a stone’s throw away (with many more within a radius of ten kilometres).

James and Prisella Howarth had married on 9th October 1880, with James and Ellen Howard, and Robert Wolstenholme, as witnesses. James signs with a cross, Prisella (here Prisila) in a somewhat ornate yet childish, laborious hand. Ellen, though she is given the name Howard here, was certainly James’s sister. According to the Pilgrim’s Progress Ellen Howarth was born on the 19th August 1861, making her 21 at the time of her wedding – which correlates with her age upon her marriage to James Howard on August 23rd 1882.

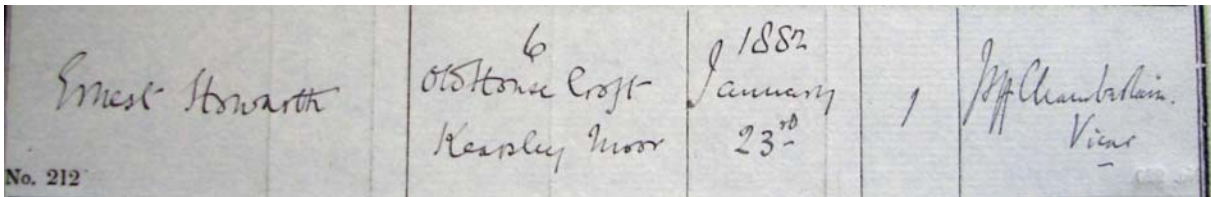
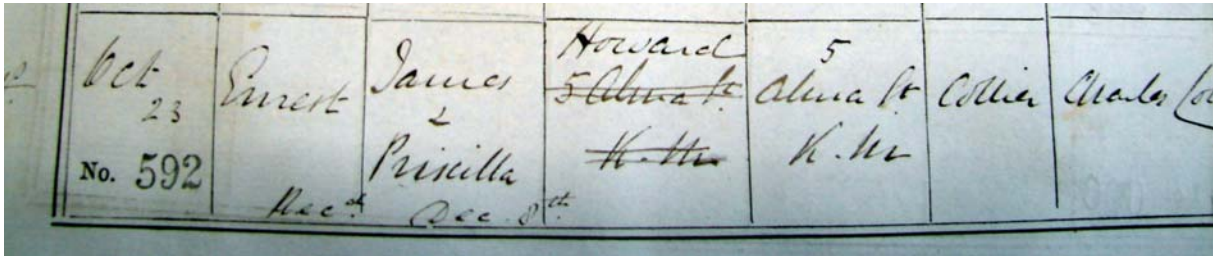


The 1881 census records James and Prisella’s first-born son, Ernest. He had been born within two weeks of his parent’s wedding, on October 24th 1880. Was the reason for the late wedding a simple inability to pay, a lack of awareness that Prisella was pregnant, or an unwillingness to seal the marital bond? We will never know. Ernest’s name and date of birth are recorded in the Pilgrim’s Progress, but not his death which occurred when he was little

¹³ One of the idiosyncrasies of the census documents and their subsequent transcriptions is the variation in spelling, not only of place names (e.g. Frostenden with its silent “r”) but also peoples’ names. Is it Prisella (the spelling selected for the Pilgrim’s Progress), Pricilla, Prisila, or Priscilla? All were used at various times. Alternative spellings for Howarth included Howorth, Howath, and Howard. It is also difficult to locate people using Christian or given names plus surname simply due to the fact that many children bore those of their parents or grandparents. The proliferations of Ann’s and Mary’s, plus the frequency with which the names Thomas, James, and William were used, make searching for the correct census forms immensely time-consuming.

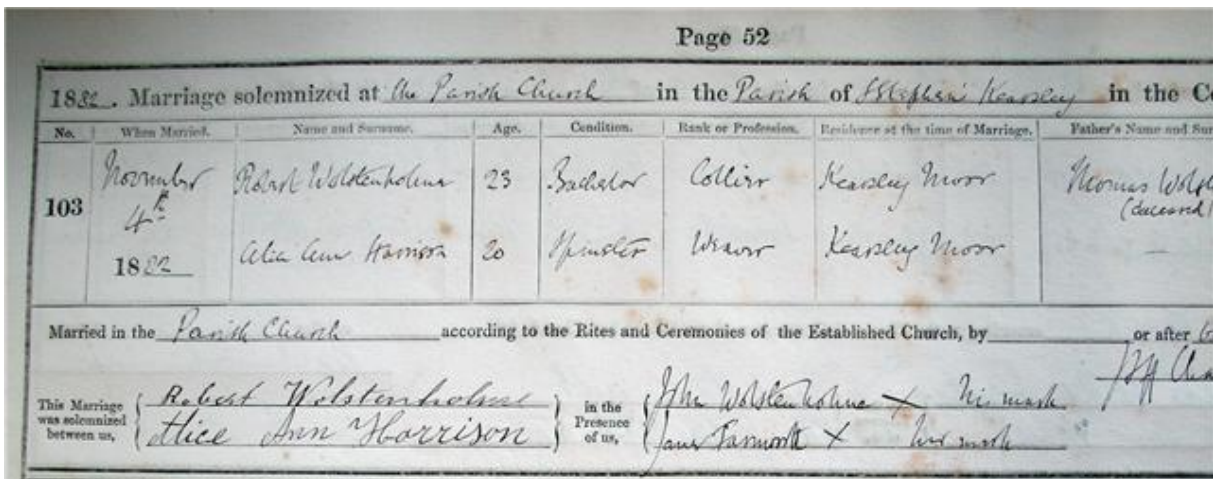
¹⁴ In the 1860s Lancashire miners went on strike. Labour was imported from Staffordshire to break the strike and presumably the presence of Prisella is a consequence.

more than a year old, in January 1882. The registers in St. Stephen's Church show his baptism, which was not entered into the register until it had been paid for on December 8th – several November baptisms precede this entry. The second entry below shows the date of his burial¹⁵.



Little Ernest was laid to rest in St. Stephen's graveyard where, in time, two of his young siblings and his parents would join him.

Robert Wolstenholme (23) married Alice Ann Harrison (20), a weaver, on 4th November 1882 at St. Stephen's church. John Wolstenholme, uncle to **Robert** and brother to **Thomas** (deceased) acted as witness. It also seems most likely that Alice Ann was in some way related to John Harrison. Like **Robert**, she was literate and wrote her name in a bold confident hand.



From 1891 to 1901

By 1891 the matriarch, Ann Wolstenholme, widow of William, had died. Her daughter Mary (53) was now the head of the household at 4 Old House Croft and was working as a cotton spinner. She shared her home with her widowed sister, Ann, and three of Ann's daughters. Sarah (21) was now a throstle spinner, whilst Alice (15) and Elizabeth (13) were both cotton winders. Ann's other daughter, Mary Ann (25) had left home a few years earlier, in 1887, to marry a Samuel Hayes, miner. She had been working at a colliery. Despite her menial occupation, she was able to sign her name alongside the very uncertain signature of her

¹⁵ Note the use of Howarth / Howard.

husband – a testimony to the Education Act. She had in fact been educated at St. Stephen's School. **Robert** Wolstenholme's elegant signature testifies to his presence at yet another wedding.

1887. Marriage solemnized at *the Parish Church in the Parish of St. Stephen's Kearsley* in the County of *Leeds*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Pr
142	<i>April 9th 1887</i>	<i>Samuel Hayer</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Collier</i>	<i>Kearsley Moor</i>	<i>William Hayer</i>	<i>Colt</i>
		<i>Mary Ann Harrison</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>Collier</i>	<i>Kearsley Moor</i>	<i>John Harrison</i> <i>(deceased)</i>	<i>Colt</i>

Married in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or after *hours* _____
George W...

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Samuel Hayer* in the Presence of us, *Robert Wolstenholme*
Mary Ann Harrison *Sarah Harrison*

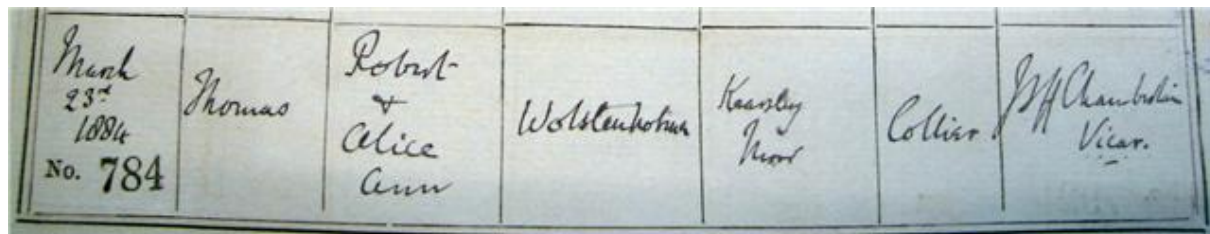
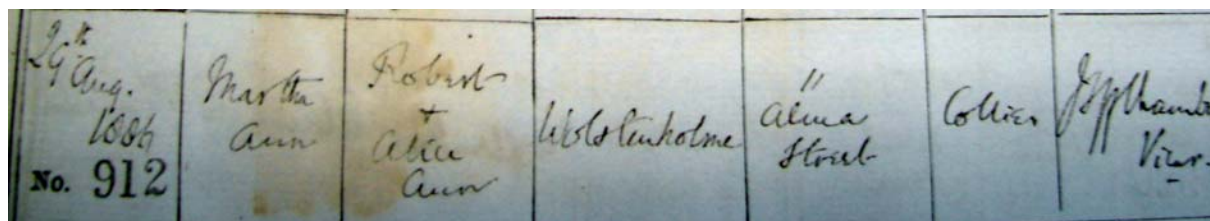
Ann Harrison herself, now forty-three, was not working. Perhaps she acted as housekeeper or she may have been in ill-health, possibly as a result of the catastrophe that had befallen her family. In the decade that followed, all her daughters were to marry and leave home. Sarah married in 1894, Elizabeth in 1897, and Alice in 1898.

The growing Howarth family had moved out of 5 Alma Street by January 1882, but not very far. They were now living at 6 Old House Croft, next door but one to the older Wolstenholme family. Three children had joined the family: Emma, James and Joseph aged eight, seven and four respectively. And there was a newcomer, Matilda, who was just two weeks old at the time of the census (held on April 5-6). Prisella (31) must have had her hands full. James (34) was the sole breadwinner and still working down the mine.



Original baptismal font, St. Stephen's

By the time of the census in 1891 **Robert** and Alice Ann Wolstenholme had had three children, all of whose names and dates of birth were diligently recorded in the Pilgrim's Progress. For the first time the census tells us about our **Thomas**, aged seven. He must have named in honour of his grandfather. His siblings were Martha Ann, aged four, and little John, aged one. The family had long moved out of 5 Alma Street. We find them in 1886 living just a few doors away at 11 Alma Street (where Martha Ann was born), and in 1891 the family were living at 38 High Street, Little Lever, about three kilometres north. Although they moved away, they baptized their first three children at St. Stephen's church. John, born under a summer sun in June 1889, died on 9th October 1891 and was buried three days later at St. Stephen's Church.



At this time **Robert** was still hewing coal but presumably working at a new colliery. It must have taken great courage to continue working in the mines, given that his father and grandfather had both died 'below'. Presumably he felt he had no choice, despite his education and the hopes of his father.

1891 Census, Robert and Alice Ann Wolstenholme, 38 High Street, Little Lever	
Robert Wolstenholme	31
Alice Ann Wolstenholme (née Harrison)	28
Thomas Wolstenholme	7
Martha Ann Wolstenholme	4
John Wolstenholme ¹⁶	1 (actually 2), died shortly after the census was taken

It is interesting to observe that only one man in the High Street is registered as a joiner/builder; all other adult men were coalminers. As ever, the occupations of wives are not given. It is hard to know whether it was a matter of pride to a family that married women did not work, or whether women earned 'pin money' that did not seem worth mentioning. Most people had been born in Little Lever and thus had not moved far, if at all, though the place of birth of Robert Wolstenholme is recorded as 'Kearsley'. Neighbours must have known each other well.

¹⁶ It is tempting to think that little John was named after his great-uncle John, witness to Robert and Alice Ann's wedding.

From 1901 to 1911

Ten years later, in 1901, we find Mary (63) still at 4 Old House Croft along with her long time lodger, Samuel Yates, also sixty-three. He was now working above ground at the colliery.



Mill workers at Pletheans Mill, Farnworth, in 1910

Mary's nephew - John Hayes (13), the son of her sister's daughter Mary Ann, was now living with her and likewise working above ground at the mine. Once again, the home had shrunk and the name Ann Harrison does not appear. Given the fact that she was recorded as not working in the previous census, despite her straitened circumstances, we can speculate that she may have died from ill-health and that her daughters had all left home. She may also have moved out of the area.

James (44) and Prisella (41) were still living two doors away at No 6. They were also still having children, the youngest being Martha at just seven months old. It is interesting to see that, unlike in the other families studied, Prisella did not pass on her name to her children. One child, though, was named identically to a Wolstenholme child: Martha Ann. James and his two sons were working 'below'; the oldest daughter had become a weaver. Thus four incomes sustained the household. Mary, aged 7, is not shown and must have been away.

1901 Census. James and Priscilla Howarth, 6 Old House Croft		Age
Head: Colliery labourer - below	James Howarth	44
Wife	Priscilla Howarth	41
Daughter: Cotton Weaver	Emma Howarth	18
Son: Colliery labourer - below	James Howarth	17
Son: Colliery labourer - below	Joseph Howarth	14
	Matilda Howarth	10
	Elizabeth Howarth	5
	Georgina Howarth	2
	Martha Ann Howarth	7 mo

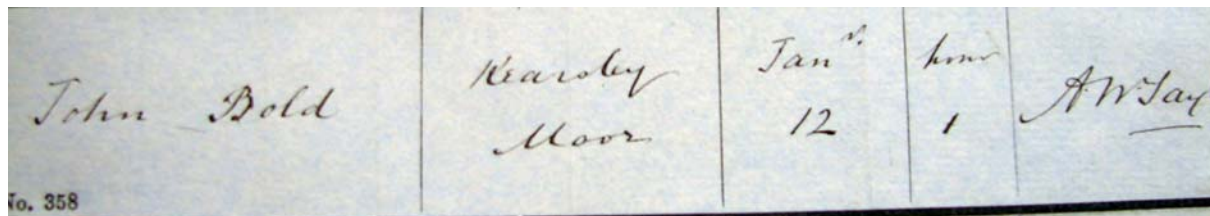
James and Prisella were to stay in 6 Old House Croft till they died. Prisella was buried at St. Stephen's Church on 14th December 1929 (aged 69) and her husband was buried on 2nd May, 1931 (aged 74). By the time they died they had had 11 children that we know of, three of whom had died: Ernest, Frances (1898) and little Georgina, who died two years after the census in a sanatorium – a sad and lonely death. Ellen Howarth was born after 1901.



Ellen Howard, James' sister, died in 1924 at the age of 63. She lies under an imposing peaked slab with her husband (see picture left). The graves of the rest of her family - her brother James, sister-in-law Prisella and the children that preceded them - cannot be found though their burials are registered in the

book held at the church. Despite the lack of headstones, we know they lie somewhere under the massed trees. Little John Wolstenholme lies here too in an unmarked grave.

A new thread in our story emerged through our examination of the 1901 census. It notes that between the homes of Mary Wolstenholme and the Howarths a new family had moved in, the Bolds. James and Mary Bold may have suffered grievous loss, for at the age of 39 their oldest child was 10 years old, the youngest just one. They had married in 1886, aged 25 and 26 respectively (Mary was already a widow) and their first son John died aged 'one hour' in early 1887.



James' brother John lived with his wife Lettice at 11 Alma Street at the same time (1882) the Wolstenholmes and Howarths were living at 5 Alma Street. We also know that the daughter of Alice Ann and Robert Wolstenholme - Martha Ann - was born at 11 Alma Street in 1886. It was at this time that John and Lettice Bold, now living nearby, lost their second child, aged four months - just a year after their first child had also died. In some way the extended Bold family appears to have been very important to Robert and Alice Ann Wolstenholme, for they named one of their boys Bold in 1896¹⁷. Perhaps they even helped James and Mary Bold to move in next to their aunt when that property became free.

By 1901 Robert and Alice Ann had returned to Kearsley and were living at 26 Oakes Street, along with a boarder, Joseph Seddon, an eighteen year old employed at the colliery. Robert

¹⁷ We were curious as to where the name 'Bold' came from since it is not recorded in any census. At first, we thought it was in honour of a well-known local family of aristocrats who fought at Crécy and Agincourt and were granted land for their services to the crown. It is possible that the Bold family living at 5 Old House Croft had some distant link to the nobles of old, but surely links of friendship bound the two mining families.

was still working 'Below' as a coalminer, and like his lodger, he had the job of a Dataller¹⁸ – a day labourer employed to do maintenance work, particularly roofing, in a mine. A dataller received less money than 'coal-getters' and his job was intrinsically insecure. However, coal getters were only paid by the amount of coal extracted. If they struck rock they were not paid. A dataller in regular employment had a wage he could count on.

1901 Census, Robert and Alice Ann Wolstenholme, 26 Oakes Street, Kearsley		
Head: Dataller below ground.	Robert Wolstenholme	41
Wife	Alice Ann Wolstenholme	38
Son: Cotton Warehouseman	Thomas Wolstenholme	17
Daughter: Weaver	Martha Ann Wolstenholme	14
Daughter	Emily Wolstenholme	9
Son	Samuel Wolstenholme	6
Son	Bold Wolstenholme	4
Boarder: Dataller below ground.	Joseph Seddon	18

Martha and **Thomas** had completed their schooling and were now employed. For the first time in perhaps a century, a man in the Wolstenholme family had not entered the mines, for Thomas is recorded as a cotton warehouseman. This decision would change the life of his descendents irrevocably. New members of the family included Emily aged nine, Samuel aged six, and Bold aged four. Two more children were to be born into the household, Joseph in 1901 and Stanley in 1904.



Believed to be Alice Ann in her 60s

In October 1908 Thomas married Euphemia according to the rites of the Primitive Methodist Church. The witnesses were Sarah Hannah (Nan) and Albert Sunderland who were to marry a year later. The marriage certificate shows Robert to be a colliery overlooker. This term describes a safety official elected and appointed by the miners - rather than the colliery owners - to satisfy the workers by careful and regular inspections that the mine was safe to work in. James Redgrave, Effie's father, was working as a miner.

¹⁸ A daye tale – meaning 'by day' – engaged by the day. A daye tale man (daily labourer), a daye tale pace (a slow pace) – dataller survived as a dialect word up to around 100 years ago and then became obsolete. Most probably it was last used 'officially' in the 1901 census.

Certificate of Marriage.

1908 Marriage solemnized at *the Primitive Methodist Chapel Little Hulton* in the District of *Bolton* in the County of *Lancaster*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
5	<i>Twenty-fourth October 1908.</i>	<i>Thomas Wolstenholme</i>	<i>24 years</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Cloth Warehouseman</i>	<i>10, Aakes Street Farnworth</i>	<i>Robert Wolstenholme</i>	<i>Boilerm Overlooker</i>
		<i>Euphemia Redgrave</i>	<i>26 years</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>Dress-maker</i>	<i>29 Worsley Road Little Hulton</i>	<i>James Redgrave</i>	<i>Local Miner</i>

Married in the *Primitive Methodist* Chapel, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Primitive Methodists* by *Rev. J. G. Robinson*

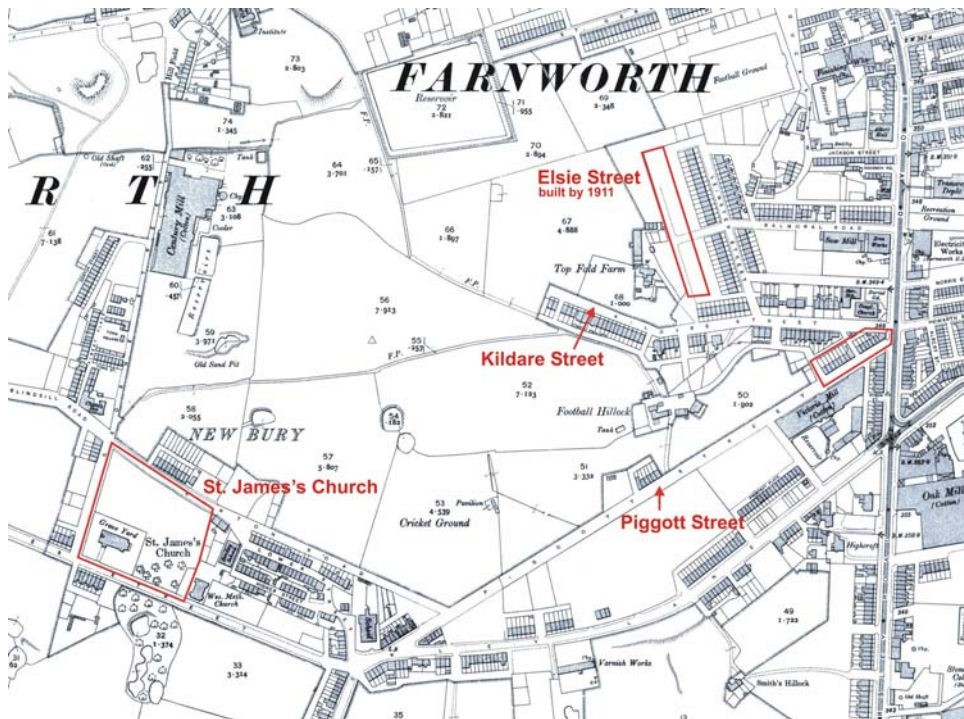
This Marriage was solemnized between us. *Thomas Wolstenholme* in the presence of us. *Albert Edward Sunderland* and in the presence of *Edward Robinson* of *Little Hulton* and *Sarah Hannah Redgrave* of *Little Hulton* Authorized Person for the said Chapel

I Certify the above to be a correct Copy.

Extracted this *24th* day of *October* 1908 *Edward H. Dancer* Signature.

From 1911

The census of 1911 finds Robert (52) and Alice Ann (49) heading a household at 10 Elsie Street, Farnworth. At the time Elsie Street was brand new – it is not shown on the map of 1908 though it is clear where it is going to be. Six children shared the house with them, ranging in age from 19 to 8. Thomas had of course left, but Samuel was now working, like his father, as a dataller in the mines. Bold was a dyer hank carder¹⁹. Emily and Martha were working in the mill. Some of the Redgrave family were to set up home just around the corner in the newly built Kildare Street.



Farnworth, 1908. Alice Ann and Robert lived in Elsie Street and later in the houses, now demolished, opposite Victoria Mill on Piggott Street

¹⁹ A carder operated a carding machine to prepare hanks of cotton or wool for weaving. Presumably a dyer hank carder dyed the hanks as well.

Emily, weaver, married Robert Lord, munitions worker, in 21st August 1915 at St. James' Church. Robert lived in 10 Elsie Street and presumably was a lodger. Martha was one of the witnesses to the wedding. It appears that they lost a son, Reginald, in 1917, who was born on March 28th and baptised just two days later.

At the time, Emily and Robert were still living in 10 Elsie Street. Later, they were to have a daughter they named Ivy. She seems to have been close to the children of Thomas and Effie since Leslie kept a picture of her.

Samuel Wolstenholme, living at the time in 10 Elsie Street, married Lily Edge at St. John the Baptist church in Little Hulton on 20th May 1916. Thomas acted as witness to this wedding and so we can assume that Effie was present. She must have attended this church through much of her childhood; her sister Rebecca was both baptised and married there. Samuel and Lily's daughter Mary Edge Wolstenholme was born in the following January, so there was, no doubt, a sense of urgency about the wedding.



View towards 10 Elsie Street (just beyond sale sign) in 2009

Martha, now aged 30, married Harry Coope in 1916. Bold became a soldier in World War 1. We do not know his character, but the picture conveys a man with an open vulnerable face with the strong dark features of the Wolstenholmes. He married Winifred D. Morgan in 1918. Of the remainder of his life we know nothing.

Joseph (Joe) married Mildred at some point and he seems to have played an important part in the life of the Wolstenholme family. His daughter Audrey was a bridesmaid at Kenneth Wolstenholme's wedding. The pictures show a handsome, strong-willed young woman. We know she was a popular cousin to Effie and Thomas's children. At the time of writing this book in 2009 Audrey was still alive but suffering from Alzheimers disease, and so, to her, the past is a blank.



We do not know when Samuel married, or anything of his life.

Stanley married Doris in 1927. Their wedding photograph is evocative. They literally stand at the threshold of a new life, and seem proud and eager to step forth.



Doris and Stanley



Audrey as bridesmaid on left. Mildred and Joe behind second bridesmaid

We do not know when, but at some point Robert and Alice Ann Wolstenholme moved again to 60 Piggott Street. Robert lived, following Alice Ann's death, in 20 Piggott Street. Their homes have been demolished, but we know they faced the gigantic Victoria cotton mill which still stands, blocking off the sky.



Victoria Cotton Mill, Piggott Street, Farnworth in 2009

The Wolstenholmes and Redgraves 1841 - 2002

It was along this road that each of them took their last journey to the broad hulk of St. James' Church. Alice Ann was buried on the 18th of February, 1935, at the age of 72. Her husband joined her on the 13th of July, 1938. He was 78. We do not know exactly where they lie, but believe it to be close to the spot where the picture, bottom left, was taken²⁰.



Burials in the Parish of <i>St James New Bury</i> in the County of <i>Lancaster</i> Diocese of <i>Manchester</i> in the Year One thousand nine hundred and <i>Thirty five</i>				
NAME	ABODE	When Buried	Age	By whom the Ceremony was performed
<i>Alice Ann Wolstenholme</i>	<i>60 Piggott Street Farnworth</i>	<i>18th February 1935</i>	<i>72 years</i>	<i>Geo Hansford Vicar.</i>

E
73

<i>Robert Wolstenholme</i>	<i>20 Piggott Street Farnworth</i>	<i>13 July 1938</i>	<i>78 year</i>	<i>W. H. Townsend Vicar</i>
----------------------------	--	-----------------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------

E
73

²⁰ This is where the graves dug in the 1930s are ranged, row by row. A short headstone lies flat on its face, close to the boundary wall. We could not lift this stone, but believe it may mark Robert and Alice Ann's grave.

Nineteenth Century: Wolstenholmes



Believed to be Emily Wolstenholme



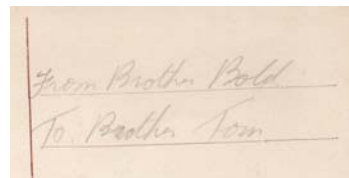
Ivy Lord, daughter of Emily and Robert Lord



Stanley, Leslie and Thomas



Mildred and Joseph (Joe) Wolstenholme



Card sent by Bold to Thomas