

The family of Thomas and Ellen Leach



Memorials to members of the Lightcliffe Leach family.

in St. Matthew's churchyard



A descendant kindly gave us a very extensive Leach family tree. This printout along with the family tree he uploaded to Ancestry has helped greatly in putting this article together. The extended family have many connections with Lightcliffe.

The story begins with Thomas Leach and his wife Ellen née Jowett. They were both from Thornton near Bradford. He was born on 8th April 1824 the son of John Leach and Mary née Craven who had him baptised at the Wesleyan Methodist chapel there on 11th May 1824. Ellen was the daughter of a Joshua Jowett, but no baptism record has been found for her. Neither have been positively identified on the 1841 census but their 12th August 1844 marriage certificate confirms some details and tells you more.

1844. Marriage solemnized at <i>St Peter's Church</i> in the <i>Parish of Bradford</i> in the County of <i>York</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
440	12 th	Thomas Leach	20	Bachelor	Weaver	Thornton	John Leach	Weaver
	August	Ellen Jowett	19	Spinster	Weaver	Thornton	Joshua Jowett	Collier
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, after Banns by us, <i>J. Richardson Curate</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>Thomas Leach</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>James Jennings</i>		
		<i>Ellen Jowett</i>				<i>John Miller</i>		

Four children were born in Thornton; George on 31st December 1844/5, Sarah on 22nd September 1846, Alfred on 22nd January 1849 and Mary Jane on 14th October 1850. Mary Jane was baptised on 2nd March 1851. The non-conformist baptism record for George is confusing. He was probably baptised on 9th March 1845 and so born in 1844. Little Alfred died 18th December 1849 leaving the Leach household looking like this on 30th March 1851.

1851 census

Thomas Leach	Head 26	Carpet Weaver
Ellen Leach	Wife 25	
George Leach	Son 6	
Sarah Leach	Dau 4	
Mary Jane Leach	Dau 6m	
Address Mount Pleasant, Thornton		

Shortly after this the family moved, perhaps to Halifax at first but then to Northowram. When son John, born on 15th September 1852, was baptised on 12th December 1852 the family's abode was given as Halifax. Amelia born 25th August 1854, Walter born 1857 and Thomas Alfred born 17th May 1859 as well as Harry born 12th November 1860 all had their births registered in the Halifax district.

1861 census

Thomas Leach	Head 36	Overlooker at carpet factory
Ellen Leach	Wife 35	
George Leach	Son 16	Works at ditto
Sarah Leach	Dau 14	Worsted winder
Mary J Leach	Dau 10	ditto spinner
John Leach	Son 8	Bobbin Setter at a carpet factory
Amelia Leach	Dau 6	
Walter Leach	Son 3	
Thomas A Leach	Son 1	
Harry Leach	Son 3/12	
Address Range Bank. Prospect St., Northowram		

And then there was another move to Lightcliffe, suggesting that Thomas was the Overlooker at T.F. Firth & Sons Ltd carpet mill in Bailiff Bridge. Eldest son George, a joiner, may have remained in Northowram as this was his address when he married Emma Birstwhistle on 8th October 1868 and for the 1871 census.

1868. Marriage solemnized at.		in the Parish of <i>Leeds</i>		in the County of <i>York</i>				
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
74	<i>Oct 8 1868</i>	<i>George Leech</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>Bachelor Joiner</i>		<i>Northowram</i>	<i>Thomas Leech Overlooker</i>	
		<i>Emma Birstwhistle</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Spinster</i>		<i>Leeds</i>	<i>Thomas Birstwhistle Joiner</i>	

Married in the *Leeds Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by *George Parker* or after *Banns* by me, *George Parker*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *George Leech* in the Presence of us, *Emma Birstwhistle* *George Parker* *John Brown*

Daughter Sarah also married, a widower Samuel Sharp on the 16th January 1871 just before the census was taken. They had six children, four of whom survived. The Sharp family story has already been told in the article about the second daughter

Fanny Sharp who married **Francis William Bradley**

who became the Sexton and Verger of St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe

They lived in Till Carr Cottage in the churchyard

But back to the family Leach in Lightcliffe.

1871 census

Thomas Leach Head 46 Overlooker
 Ellen Leach Wife 44
 Mary Jane Leach Dau 19 Reeler
 John Leach Son 18 Carpet Weaver
 Amelia Leach Dau 15 Yarn Winder
 Walter Leach Son 13 Maker Up Wd
 Thomas Alfred Leach Son 11 Scholar
 Harry Leach Son 9 ditto
 Clara Leach Dau 7 ditto
 Address Lightcliffe

1871 census

George Leech Head 26 Joiner
 Emma Leech Wife 23
 Sarah Birtwistle Sister (in-law) 20 General Servant
 Address 4 Warwick Road, Halifax

Many members of the Leach family worked for the carpet manufactures T.F. Firth & Sons Ltd but not George.

Eldest son **George Leach** does not appear on any other England censuses, but he does get a mention on the memorial inscription on a flat stone next to that of other family members beginning with his father.

ALSO OF GEORGE LEACH
 SON OF THE ABOVE
 DIED AT NEW BRUNSWICK. USA
 JUNE 15TH 1903
 AGED 58 YEARS



There are several England-born George Leaches on earlier censuses in New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA. One, who was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, North Brunswick, Middlesex, died in 1903 which agrees with the Lightcliffe memorial. However, the birth year is wrong and that George Leach had a wife, Rachel. They are probably this couple on the 1900 census but not necessarily the 'right' George Leach.

1900 USA

George Leach	Head 54 Saloon Keeper
Rachel Leach	Wife 40
George F Leach	Son 3
Henry E Leach	Son 1
Louis Hollins	Stepson 17
Address New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA	

Returning to Lightcliffe.

On 29th October 1871 Thomas and Ellen had their son Harry, born on 12th November 1860, and a daughter Clara Ellen, born on 5th September 1863, baptised together as young children at St. Matthew's Church. Their granddaughter Martha Ellen Sharp was baptised at the same time. Another son Jowett Leach had been born Q3 1865 but died Q2 1866, an Ancestry tree gives the date as 2nd May 1866.

Two years later a son, Fred, was also baptised there on 1st June 1873. Was this Thomas Alfred Leach born on 17th May 1859 who somehow missed out on being baptised with his younger siblings Harry and Clara? Quite probably as no birth registration for a Fred Leach born around 1873, that fits, has been found. Rev. George Bagot baptised nine other children that day including three grandchildren of Thomas and Ellen Leach. For some of the older children he did indicate when they were born but not for Fred Leach.

Meanwhile two of his older siblings, John and Mary Jane, had married. John Leach married Martha Mitchell on 23rd March 1872 in Halifax. Martha Jane Leach married Squire Ingham on 18th May 1872 in Bradford. John Thomas Ingham, William Leach and the previously mentioned Fanny Sharp were the three grandchildren baptised with their uncle Fred on 1st June 1873. As many of this next generation were eventually buried in the churchyard their stories will be told separately.

Read **Squire Ingham and family** and **John Leach and family**

Thomas Leach died on 21st January 1878 aged 53. He was buried in plot H1 in Lightcliffe churchyard on 24th January 1878. This plot would eventually get the headstone at the start of this article. A few months later during Q2 1878 Amelia Leach married William Albert Stockwell, the son of John Stockwell and his wife Grace. They lived in Chorlton-upon-Medlock in Lancashire where their son Percy Vincent Stockwell was born.

Twenty-three-year-old Walter Leach died on 17th June 1880. He was buried on 21st June 1880 with his father in Lightcliffe plot H1 owned by his mother Ellen.

1881 census

Ellen Leach Head 53 Widow
Thomas Alfred Leach Son 21
 [no occupation recorded]
Harry Leach Son 20 Silk Dyer
Clara Ellen Leach Dau 17 Worsted Winder
Thomas Cook Boarder 23
 Commercial Clerk in Carpet Mill
Address Sugden Buildings, Lightcliffe

1881 census

William Stockwell Head 25
 Agent Carpets, Blankets etc
Amelia Stockwell Wife 26
Percy V. Stockwell Son 2
Address 13 Molyneux St. Chorlton upon Medlock

In 1882, not long after the census was taken, Thomas Alfred Leach (Fred) travelled to the USA according to later USA census data. This may well have been with the first cohort of workers from the carpet mill of T.F. Firth & Sons Ltd in Bailiffe Bridge. The company first set up a factory in Philadelphia but then moved to a new site in a place they named Firthcliffe.

Read more at

[Firth's Carpets in the USA.pdf](#)

On 7th November 1885 Clara Ellen Leach, married a widower, Samuel Cooper Armytage. He was a member of the Armytage family whose story has already been told in

George Armytage and family

In 1886 her brother Thomas Alfred Leach married an American Eleanor Macauley in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Their story will continue in

Thomas Alfred Leach and family

Another brother Harry Leach married Hannah Hoyle in 1887. In time he became the landlord at The Sun Inn, Lightcliffe. Again, his story will be continued separately in

Harry Leach and family

On 5th April 1891 the widow Ellen Leach was in Lightcliffe, as were most of her extended family apart from George and Fred who were both in the USA and her daughter Amelia who was in Manchester.

1891 census

Ellen Leach	Head	65	Widowed
John W Rushworth	Boarder	23	
	Groom		Domestic Servant
Address Stoney Royd, Lightcliffe			

This was quite close to the Sharps and Inghams as well as the families of her sons John and Harry Leach.

1891 census

William A Stockwell	Head	35	Comm Agent for Carpets
Amelia Stockwell	Wife	36	
Percy V Stockwell	Son	12	
William Stockwell	Son	6	
Edith A Stockwell	Dau	5	
John F Stockwell	Son	3	
Gertrude Stockwell	Dau	9/12	
Sarah Roberts	Servant	20	General Servant
Address 371 Dickenson Road, Rusholme, LAN			

Although the Stockwells lived in Lancashire they had two children baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe; William Norman Stockwell on 2nd August 1884 and Edith Annie Stockwell on 24th March 1886. The death of four-year-old Walter Reginald Stockwell was recorded in the Halifax district suggesting that his family had moved back across the Pennines by the end of 1896. He died on 30th December 1896 and was buried with his Leach grandfather and namesake uncle Walter in Lightcliffe plot H1 on 2nd January 1897.

His father's name appears on Greater Manchester Electoral Rolls in the 1870s to 1890s but then in 1899 William Albert Stockwell was on a 1899 West Yorkshire Electoral Roll for a property at 3, Roydlands Terrace, Hipperholme. This Whitehall address may be where Amelia died on 27th May 1899. She was buried in Lightcliffe plot H2 i.e. next to her father and brother, on 31st May 1899. Her mother, Ellen Leach, owned both plots at the time.

STOCKWELL Amelia of Whitehall Hipperholme Halifax (wife of William Albert Stockwell) died 27 May 1899 Probate Wakefield 3 August to Harry Leach licensed victualler and Clara Armitage widow. Effects £1400 6s 7d

It is interesting to speculate as to why her husband was not granted probate.

In 1895 Percy Vincent Stockwell, a 15-year-old 'Boy', was on a crew list for a ship travelling to Sydney, New South Australia. By the time of the 1901 census, he had returned to Halifax where he married and where on censuses as well as the 1939 register, he was a variously a provisions traveller, an insurance agent, a wholesale toffee confectioner and a commercial traveller. According to an Ancestry family tree, a family legend has it that his father William Albert Stockwell also went to Australia after his wife died. But no further records have been found for him.

But what about the other Stockwell children who had lost their mother and whose father seems to have disappeared? On 31st March 1901 the two boys were with their Leach grandmother, and the girls were with their widowed aunt Clara Armitage, also in Lightcliffe.

1901 census

Ellen Leach	Head	75	Widow
Norman Stockwell	Grandson	16	
			Boot maker's Assistant
Fred Stockwell	Grandson	14	Office Boy
Address Wakefield Road, Lightcliffe			

1901 census

Clara E Armitage	Head	37	Widow
Annie Armitage	Dau	16	
			Assistant in Fancy Goods Warehouse
Elise Armitage	Dau	10	
Maggie Armitage	Dau	9	
Edith A Stockwell	Niece	15	Milliner
Gertrude Stockwell	Niece	10	
Address Ivy House, Lightcliffe			

On 30th March 1906 the *Brighouse News* had the following announcement.

DEATH OF MRS LEACH. - Many residents in the district will hear with regret of the death of Mrs Thomas Leach, who passed away yesterday week at her residence, near the Sun Inn, at the advanced age of 80 years. She had been a very useful woman in her time and was much esteemed. She leaves behind fourteen children (one of whom is in America), 32 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. For forty years Mrs Leach had resided in Lightcliffe. The remains were interred at Lightcliffe on Monday, when the funeral was largely attended, and a number of beautiful floral wreaths were placed on the coffin.

Ellen Leach née Jowett who died on 22nd March 1906 was buried with her husband on 26th March 1906. This was the fifth burial in plot H1 of St. Matthew's churchyard which was then declared full. Two separate memorials now cover the side-by-side plots H1 and H2. They may well have been placed over the plots much later as the memorial inscriptions do not run in chronological order. The names of four grandchildren, including three who have not yet had a mention, - but they will be in subsequent articles - and the son who died in the USA were remembered.



On the right hand stone

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THOMAS LEACH
 WHO DIED JANUARY 21ST 1878 AGED 53 YEARS
 ALSO OF TOM AND EMMA THE INFANT CHILDREN OF JOHN AND MARTHA LEACH
 ALSO OF WALTER SON OF THE ABOVE THOMAS LEACH
 WHO DIED JUNE 17TH 1880 AGED 23 YEARS
 ALSO OF AMELIA DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE
 WHO DIED MAY 29TH 1899 AGED 44 YEARS
 ALSO OF WALTER REGINALD HER SON
 WHO DIED DECEMBER 30TH 1896 AGED 4 YEARS AND 9 MONTHS
 ALSO OF ALICE THE BELOVED DAUGHTER OF HARRY AND HANNAH LEACH
 WHO DIED AUGUST 13TH 1901 AGED 10 YEARS

On the left hand stone

ALSO OF GEORGE LEACH SON OF THE ABOVE
 WHO DIED AT NEW BRUNSWICK USA JUNE 15TH 1903 AGED 58 YEARS
 ALSO OF ELLEN THE BELOVED WIFE OF THOMAS LEACH
 WHO DIED MARCH 22ND 1906 AGED 80 YEARS.

Ellen did have a very large number of children some of whom had predeceased her. She then looked after two Stockwell grandsons. Their stories and that of their sisters will be continued as they had further links with Lightcliffe.

Stockwell grandsons

St. Matthew's Church was the setting when **John Frederick Stockwell**, a mechanic, married Annie Naylor on 6th January 1910 as this marriage record shows. Notice the witnesses; as well as Annie's father, sister Edith Stockwell and cousin Amy Ingham there was a George Pickles.

10. Marriage solemnized at *St. Matthew's Church* in the *Parish* of *Lightcliffe* in the County of *York*

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.
January 6 th 1910	John Frederick Stockwell	22	Bachelor	Mechanic	Widfield Road Lightcliffe	William Albert Stockwell	Commissioned Agent
	Annie Naylor	20	Spinster	—	Holme Terrace Lightcliffe	John Berry Naylor	Carpet Weaver

and in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Established Church after Roman* by me,
R. Percie Whitlington

Married in the presence of us,
John Frederick Stockwell
Annie Naylor
John Berry Naylor
George Pickles
Amy Ingham
Edith Stockwell

Annie Naylor was the daughter of John Berry Naylor, a carpet weaver, and Martha Jane née Wade. This family also have Lightcliffe connections and so their story will be told later. On the 1911 census the Stockwells were living in East Street, Lightcliffe which was presumably where their eldest son Robert Stockwell was born in 1915. He died on 11th July 1916 and was buried with his maternal grandparents in Lightcliffe plot C64 on 14th July 1916 aged just 10 ½ months. After that his parents moved to Paisley, Renfrewshire in Scotland where John Frederick worked as an engine fitter. This was where they both died, John Frederick Stockwell on 18th March 1949 and Annie Stockwell née Naylor on 3rd April 1965.

Willaim Norman Stockwell known as Norman also got married in 1910 during Q3. His bride was Beatrice Riley. On 2nd April 1911 they were living in Halifax where Norman was a shop assistant for a bootmaker. During WW1 Norman, a 'Boot Store Manager' served with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves from 1917 to 1919. At the time of the 1921 census he was an employer a 'Boot & Shoe Dealer' at 3, Woolshops, Halifax. On the night of 19th June 1921 he, his wife and two sons were living with his Riley in laws in Halifax.

1939 register

William N	Stockwell	02 Aug 1884	Boot & Shoe Dealer Retired	Married	198	1
Beatrice	Stockwell	12 Jul 1885	Unpaid Domestic Duties	Married	198	2

Address 150 Wakefield Road, Brighouse, Brighouse M.B., Yorkshire (West Riding), England

For the 1939 register they were in Lightcliffe, most probably at Mayfield House as this was the address for a Norman Stockwell in telephone directories from 1928. It was also the address when they acknowledged a Riley bereavement in 1941. But then they moved back to Halifax as the following newspaper announcements confirm.

Halifax Evening Courier 1st June 1959

DEATH of Mr. W. N.

Stockwell

The death occurred at his home 5, Savile Road, Halifax, on Saturday of Mr William Norman Stockwell, aged 74. Fomerly he was for some years in business as a boot and shoe retailer in Crown Street, Halifax. .Mr. Stockwell leaves a widow and one son, Mr Paul Stockwell, who has a footwear business at King Cross

Halifax Evening Courier 10th Mach 1966

FORMER SHOE RETAILER

Mrs Beatrice Stockwell, of 30, The Avenue, Lightcliffe, late of Savile Road, Halifax, at one time in business with her late husband in a retail shoe business, who died on November 25 last year, aged 81, widow of Mr. Norman Stockwell left £11,429 15s. 0d. gross, £11, 303 11s. 0d. net (duty paid £1,187). Probate has been granted to her son, Mr. Paul Stockwell, of 30, The Avenue, Lightciffe, the sole executor.

STOCKWELL William Norman otherwise Norman of 5 Savile Road Halifax died 30 May 1959 Probate London 29 July to Beatrice Stockwell widow and Paul Stockwell boot and shoe dealer. Effect £4845 18s. 5d.

And now the **Stockwell granddaughters.**

In 1901 they lived with their aunt, widow Clara Armytage née Leach and their cousins. On 2nd April 1911 Aunt Clara and her daughters were in Hesketh Place, Lightcliffe. The two Stockwell sisters were in a three-roomed property in Victora Place, Lightcliffe. 25-year-old Edith was recorded as being 'At home', 20-year-old Gertrude was a 'Sewer' at 'Carpet Works', no doubt T. F. Firths & Sons Ltd.

Four months later **Edith Annie Stockwell** married George Pickles on 3rd August 1911 at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe. George Pickles was the son of Samuel Pickles, the Lightcliffe vergers and sexton for over twenty years.

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.
384	3 rd August 1911	George Pickles Edith Annie Stockwell	31 25	Bachelor Spinster	Designer —	Grange Terrace Lightcliffe Pillar Street Lightcliffe	Samuel Pickles (Deceased) William Albert Stockwell	Sexton Vergers Common Lawn

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after banns by me: R. Price, Minister

This Marriage was solemnized between us, George Pickles in the Presence of us, Mr Norman Stockwell
Edith Annie Stockwell Gertrude Stockwell
Charlotte Pickles

The Pickles family story has already been told and links up with the Greenwood family of the already mentioned Mayfield House, Lightcliffe.

The Pickles family story parts 1 and 2

George and Edith Annie Pickles had a son Harold Pickles born on 1st March 1913.

1921 census

George Pickles Head 40 Carpet Designer for T.F. Firths & Sons
 Edith Annie Pickles Wife 35 Home Duties
 Harold Pickles Son 8 Scholar
 Address 1 Grange Terrace, Lightcliffe

Four years later in 1925, George Pickles died followed by his wife in 1934 as announced by the *Halifax Evening Courier* 28th September 1934.

PICKLES ---- On Sept. 26th, 1934, at the Royal Halifax infirmary, aged 48 years, Edith Annie, the dearly loved wife of the late George Pickles, 1, Grange-terrace, Lightcliffe. Requiem Eucharist, St. Matthew's Church, 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept 29th, Interment 3 p.m. Lightcliffe Church.

Edith Annie Pickles née Stockwell was buried with her husband, George, and her in-laws in Lightcliffe plot F12 on 29th September 1934.

Their son Harold became a priest. When he died, on 16th May 1999 aged 86, his ashes were interred in the Pickles family plot F11/12 in St. Matthew's churchyard, Lightcliffe. His memorial inscription was added on the kerbstone around this double plot.

The third Stockwell marriage to take place at St. Matthew's Church occurred on 10th August 1912 when **Gertrude Stockwell** married Norman Bentley, a clerk from Sowerby Bridge.

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.
10 th August 1912	Norman Bentley	21	Bachelor	Clerk	Blough House Sowerby Bridge	Robert Bentley	Engineer
	Gertrude Stockwell	22	Spinster	—	South View House Lightcliffe	William Albert Stockwell	Commission Agent

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, after banns by me, C. Isaac Hulbert (Vicar)

Marriage was solemnized in the presence of us, Norman Bentley Gertrude Stockwell Berttram Bentley.

Norman Bentley

They had a daughter Dorothy Stockwell Bentley born 16th January 1921.

1921 census

Norman Bentley	Head	30 Years	Bookkeeper Head
Gertrude Bentley	Wife	30 Years	
Dorothy Stockwell Bentley	Dau	5 Months	
Address Pear Tree Cottage, Lightcliffe			

Gertrude Bentley née Stockwell died on 20th June 1924 aged just 34. She was buried in Lightcliffe plot D82 on 13th June 1924. The plot near the currently used section of the churchyard has no headstone. There were no other internments in this plot.

Her husband Norman Bentley died in Q1 1953 aged 61 years. His death was registered in the Spen Valley district.

D. M. Barker

June 2026