

The Whichello Family

The Whichellos arrived in Benson in the early 1800's, as butchers in Crown Lane and then for nearly 50 years as publicans in the Lamb & Flag in Brook St – with a butchers shop on the premises as well. Abiel Whichello was born in Tetsworth in 1780, but his son Richard was born in Benson around 1809 and then Ralph in 1813. Altogether there were at least 10 children born to Abiel & Ann and the family established itself in Benson

Richard married Mary Hewett in 1840, whilst brother Ralph married Elizabeth Wakeling in 1846, and the two brothers ran the family butchers business for many years. Between them they had some 14 children at least, but of course child mortality was high and not many survived to adulthood.

Life was also hard on wives/mothers of course, and Ralph's wife Elizabeth died quite young in 1859 and at some time soon after that Ralph and surviving sons seem to have emigrated to Ontario, Canada – where Ralph died in 1886 aged 73.

Richard died in 1869, and for many years his widow Mary ran the business at the Lamb & Flag, helped by their son Walter working as the butcher. After his mother died in 1887, Walter continued to run the beer & butchery business with his second wife (Bessie, nee Wragge) and then the third wife (Mary, nee Smith). Altogether, Walter had at least 9 children with his three wives, the eldest being Richard William (b1882) from his marriage to Clara (nee Walker). Sadly Clara died in 1883 when Richard was still an infant

It was this son Richard Whichello who was the first Benson man to die in WW1, being lost at sea when his ship (HMS Hogue) was sunk in September 1914. At this time, he had a mother & father, 8 siblings and a wife and child of his own – so what happened to them after his death in 1914?

His father Walter died the next year leaving his second wife Mary to run the family shop. Mary did this for many years – she was still listed as a shopkeeper in Kelly's 1939 Directory – but died in Benson in 1940. Richard's actual mother (Clara) had died long ago in 1883 when Richard was an infant.

Richard had 5 sisters and 3 brothers, born to the three wives of Walter. The eldest girl Daisy (b1883) worked briefly as a nurse in Hull, before marrying and settling in Stoke Newington, London. Nothing much is known of Caroline (b1885) except she lived until 1958, whilst Louisa (b1887) was a domestic servant for the West family in Benson

in1901. Margaret Lily (b1889) stayed working in the Lamb & Flag pub after the family left, but died young in 1922. Evelyn (b1898) married locally in 1940 and lived in Ealing until her death in1972.

Richard's brother Frederick (b1891) lived for a while with sister Daisy in London, working as a butcher, before serving in the RFA in WW1. He survived the war, setting up as a butcher in Hillingdon by 1923 and eventually died in Bristol in1977. Brother Joseph (b1896) seems to have lived in Benson all his life; he lived with his elderly mother in Brook St in 1939, and died in Benson in 1980. The remaining brother – Harold – was born in 1900, married Lucy Collett here in1926 and died here in 1968.

Richard's wife – Beatrice (nee Batholomew) – quickly remarried in 1915, and still lived in Portsmouth in 1939 with her second husband and son.

Richard's only son – Richard Henry Smith Whichello – was born in 1911 in Portsmouth, and later lived in Aldershot where his son Robin was born in 1939 and Petersfield, where Trevor was born in 1942, the eldest child Richard being born in 1932. Richard Henry did marry - perhaps abroad? - since the whole family are recorded as returning from Hong Kong in 1956, with Richard Henry recorded as being an Admiralty Officer.

Richard the eldest son of Richard Henry Smith Whichello lived in the Portsmouth area for some time, before setting in the USA. His descendents still live in the Portsmouth area today, but sadly the Benson line of Whichellos is not believed to be with us today.