

# **The Shoemaker's Daughters, 1867-1972 or, How I found my Great-Grand-Aunt Eliza**

[This paper contains detailed material as background to the presentation at  
Family History Day in DCLA on 24/3/2012]

## **Introduction**

In the course of an earlier talk on PJ Medlar, the Dublin undertaker and City Councillor who married my grand-aunt Tess, I remarked that my great-grandfather, the shoemaker of the title but actually a master bootmaker, had a gaggle of daughters to marry off, one of whom he offloaded onto PJ Medlar.

It subsequently occurred to me that this would be a good angle from which to approach a presentation of some of the more interesting aspects of my family history on my mother's side.

This is not a finished work. It never is. And I am not an expert in these matters. My objective is to share some of the more interesting aspects of the journey so far. There remain lots of unanswered questions and avenues of enquiry to follow up.

So here goes.

## **The Shoemaker**

The shoemaker <sup>1</sup> is Christopher Burgess, who hailed from Co. Wicklow, but who, at the time of his marriage was living in Thomas St. in Dublin city. In 1866 he married his second cousin<sup>2</sup>, Sarah Rankin, from Queen's County (Laois), who was in service to John Barrington, a tallow merchant, at 202 Great Britain St., now Parnell St. <sup>3</sup>

Barrington, had been Lord Mayor of Dublin in the preceding year and had entertained the Prince of Wales when he came over to the Great Exhibition in 1865. In common with many others of the Prince's hosts, Barrington was knighted [the following year].

By then, Sarah had married Christopher in the Pro-Cathedral (her parish church) and the couple had settled down in 10 Wood Quay, where Christopher was working with [John] Dowling, one of the many shoemakers who lived on that street.<sup>4</sup>

## **The Daughters**

In 1867 Sarah gave birth to the first of nine [surviving] daughters.<sup>5</sup> Leaving aside the daughter who went to America, who was a machinist, and about whom I know nothing more, Christopher succeeded in marrying off five of the remaining eight. Not a bad score.

I propose to look at each of these daughters in turn. Rather than taking them in strict chronological

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1 Actually a master bootmaker.

2 Pro-Cathedral listed in ledger as "tier"

3 Now the former Stringfellows end of the Parnell Centre.

4 The majority of premises on Wood Quay were shoemakers', as were those in Castle St. which was seen as a continuation of Wood Quay at the time.

5 See table at end. .

birth order I'll deal first with those who did get married. Their lives, and those of their families, are not only interesting in their own right but also cast a light on some aspects of Dublin life and of the development of the city itself over the century between the birth of the eldest and the death of the youngest daughter. I will probably, not unexpectedly, devote the a little more time to my own grandparents and parents and their ups and downs.

## The Married

### Sarah (Jnr)

Sarah, my grandmother, was born in 1874 in 122 James's St. This building was demolished around 1900 and the site is part of the carpark of the old Protestant church, which, perhaps appropriately enough, became a lighting emporium. Sarah was a bookkeeper but I don't know whose books she kept. Perhaps her father's.

She was the first of the girls to marry when, in 1901, she married Patrick Mortimer, a commercial traveller from Glasnevin. He originally lived in Ivy Cottage, on part of the site which, up to very recently, housed Enterprise Ireland. She was 27 and he was 31.

Patrick's father Joseph, was a carpenter in Glasnevin. Joseph's people were farmers in Creewood, Grangegeeth, in Co. Meath. Joseph's father was likely a Protestant, though his uncle appears to have been a Catholic.<sup>6</sup> In 1861 Joseph had married Mary Ann Conneely (Connolly), from Conemara, in the Pro-Cathedral, under dispensation from the Archbishop. I am assuming it was a mixed marriage (though you have to be careful with that term these days). This is probably why the dispensation from the Archbishop was needed. Otherwise, the dispensation might have related to the lack of parental consent. Mary Anne was only 17 while Joseph was [40]. In any event, I do know the surviving children were baptised and brought up Catholics.<sup>7</sup>

The first year of Joseph and Mary Anne's marriage was an eventful one. The marriage itself apart, Mary Anne got pregnant almost immediately. Tragically the baby, Joseph, born in November 1861, died soon after birth. The family were to have a further two children die young: William (b.1863 d.1865) and John (b.1872 d.1873). Each of these died at just over a year old, William from infantile cholera and John from inflammation from teething. There appear to have been 5 survivors in all: Francis (b.1866), Thomas (b.1868), Ellen (b.186X?) and the twins, William and Patrick - my grandfather, (b.1870).<sup>8</sup>

### – Patrick's siblings.

The father, Joseph, died in 1875, from acute peritonitis (certified – four days, appendix or rusty nail?). The family stayed on in Glasnevin until 1885. They then turn up in Leo St. in 1889, from where Francis got married in 1891. They left there in 1893. I only caught up with Mary Anne again (c.1899) just before her death when she moved into Dunville Terrace in Rathmines. She was

6 Evidence for Protestant: I have traced what appear to be two brothers with adjacent holdings in Creewood (Griffiths). Records (church) for one brother's descendants are extant, but not for the other. Protestant church records [many/most], unlike the catholic ones, were centralised and went up in the Four Court's fire. The Vicar of Navan was attempting to find such Protestant records for me locally, apparently without success. That plus the dispensation. Neither the Pro nor the Palace have any records of why the dispensation was needed.

7 Recount seeing William's name on mother's death cert, discovering he was a twin, and had not noticed the time recorded on Patrick's birth cert. Then discovered Ellen in 1901 digitised census. NB names of non-surviving children, Joseph, Wm Thomas, John.

8 Possibly refer to how found (i) Glasnevin lotto (ii) 1901 digitised census – Ellen, (iii) parish records, while searching for Ellen's birth .. Francis & Thomas.

accompanied by Ellen, who had no listed occupation at that stage, and was therefore probably a housekeeper or nurse to her sick mother, and William, who was a [shop assistant] and therefore a source of income. Neither of these was married. I don't know if Patrick (my grandfather), still unmarried, lived with them at that stage. I can't find him in the 1901 census (April). He married (August 1901) after his mother's death (in 1900). The marriage cert suggests he was a lodger in 21 Arnott St. prior to his marriage, but a check of that house in the 1901 census shows he was not there on census night. He could have been travelling (commercial) and not have been filled in wherever he stayed, at least not in any readily identifiable form anywhere on the island.<sup>9</sup>

William (Granda Mortimer's twin brother) died in 1902,.

That left only his sister Ellen out of that household. I don't know where she went then, but when she surfaces in the 1911 census she is living in Kevin St. with a Partick Martin. He is recorded in the census as a "cousin", a fact which had me starting to speculate on (newly found) Martin relations, but when I examined the actual census form I found that Ellen had originally been described as a "friend" but this had been crossed out and replaced by "cousin". What their actual relationship was is an open question, but the insertion of "cousin" would, no doubt, have avoided the possibility of giving scandal.<sup>10</sup> Ellen is now listed as a dressmaker. She is similarly described on her death cert when she died, at 11 Mountpleasant Place, Rathmines, seventeen years later in 1928.<sup>11</sup>

Francis, (Granda Mortimer's eldest surviving brother) was a postman (letter carrier). He married into, and moved in with, the Finn family, who were poulterers in Lr. Dorset St. (1891). I don't know if they were on his postal route! Francis and Mary Alicia had 6 children (by 1901) before they moved into a home of their own in Portland Row North (by 1911) and by which time they had a further three children. Patrick Finn's wife, Jane, had died in 1892, which may explain why Mary Alicia and Francis ended up living in the house in Lr. Dorset St. Mary Alicia was Patrick Finn's only daughter. He also had three sons, of whom more later. At some stage after 1911 Francis and Mary ended up in 168 Parnell St.. He died of a stroke in 1926 in the "Work House" [now James's Hospital].<sup>12</sup> Whether he had been in reduced circumstances or whether he was simply admitted to be treated/die is not clear. It may be significant that his wife Mary is not buried with him in a grave still occupied by only two people, Francis and his aunt (and my great-grand-aunt) Eliza Connoly, Mary Anne's sister. I gather that, by this stage, what had, in effect, become conventional hospitals were still described as Work Houses, even in official documentation.. It is hard to see, with a large family some of whom were still alive, how Francis would have ended up indigent in a Work House

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9 He wasn't in 31 either. It's not impossible the 21 was a typo and that his only Arnott St. connection was No.31.

10 It should be remembered that, while the census form was supposed to be confidential, it was checked by the enumerator when being collected. The enumerator would usually be one of the local policemen. Also, the dire warnings about confidentiality on the 1911 census forms, in the manner of roadside black-spot warnings, suggest that there had been breaches in previous years..

11 Quote from death notice in paper.

12 There is a conflict over where Francis lived prior to his death/admission to the Work House. His death cert has 160 Parnell St. [reported by the Work House](now the Shakespeare pub and then a wine shop) and 168 in the Glasnevin grave records. Mary was living in 168 in 1939/41. Could there have been a falling out and was Francis living alone? Glasnevin records him as a retired sub-postmaster. Mary seems to have drifted around after 1941 [possibly in 43 Wellington St. 1942/3, 13 Sherrard St. Lr. 1943/4, 143 Dorset St. Upr. 1944/5]. Glasnevin records her as having died in 1947 from senility in St. Kevin's Institute, which I think may now be James's Hospital. Her last address was 6 O'Brien tce. Between Drumcondra & Glasnevin. Though I am told that these buildings, while still known as the work house, served the function of a normal hospital. So it may be that he was living in Parnell St., and got carted off to hospital where he died. The conflict between 160 and 168 between the death cert and Glasnevin records as Francis's last address before he died may just be a typo or may indicate a split between himself and his wife Mary who is not buried with Francis. Mary is buried with her Finn siblings in Glasnevin (John, owner, his wife Sarah, and his brother Thomas). Her father, Patrick Flynn, is buried in a separate grave with his wife Jane.

in 1926. Just in passing, there was a housefull of Mortimers (No.82) further east in Parnell St..13  
They may turn out, at some stage, to be related.

Francis's son Thomas, who was 15 and unmarried in 1911, turns up back at 54 Lr. Dorset St., with his wife Mary Josephine, in 1939 14 The ratepayer for this address was Thomas Finn (son of Patrick, who had died aged 90 in 1931), and who was living at 11 Annesley Bridge Road. Thomas Mortimer would have been 43 and Thomas Finn 63. It is not clear if Thomas and Mary Josephine Mortimer15 had anything to do with the running of the shop at No. 54, or whether they were simply tenants using the accommodation while Thomas Finn treated it as a lockup shop [and employed his own family to run it] I'm told that Thomas Finn16 eventually moved to England. The shop became a chipper. And Thomas and Josephine Mortimer moved to a [Mortimer owned/occupied] apartment in Ringsend (25 Newbridge Avenue).17

I have no handle at all on Thomas (Grandfather Patrick Mortimer's sibling b.1868). He does not appear to be around in the 1901 census. He could have died 18 or emigrated. He might even have joined the British Army and be the "Corporal Thomas Mortimer" who died in 1892 in Ranikhet, India, while trying to save a fellow soldier from drowning. I have been trying to trace Corporal Thomas, without any success so far. There was also a Thomas Mortimer as sponsor at Francis's baptism in 1866, possibly a brother or cousin of Joseph. He would have to have been at least 10 years old to be a sponsor. So two possibilities for the 1892 death are Thomas, Patrick's sibling who would have been 26, or Francis's sponsor, who would have been at least 36. And it might not have been either of these. I'll just have to wait until I can get some more detailed army information and see if that helps.

So much for the Granda's siblings, now back to Patrick Mortimer himself and to my granny, Sarah Burgess.

Patrick and Sarah set up house in 31 Arnott St., where their first child Christopher Joseph19 was born. By the time the second child, May, was born in 1905, they were living at 31 Park View Terrace. This is now Brookfield Road, joining Kilmainham and Rialto. Patrick was now described as a Shop Assistant, having presumably moved in-house. When child No. 3 (my mother) came in

13 Michael, Kathleen, Bridget, Catherine & Mary. These are probably Michael Mortimer's people. Francis didn't have a Michael and his two girls were Florence-Mary and Eileen.

14 According to the Voters Register for that year (online) the first available year for the register. Patrick Mortimer, son of Thomas, told Eddie Mortimer that his parents lived in Killester. Was that in 1911-1939 period. Thomas was a mechanic and married Mary Josephine Owens. Did her people live in Killester (garage?) and did he move in with them or work for them and move in nearby? I will have to chase up other years in town. Thoms shows Patrick Flynn as the ratepayer up to the change of ownership out of the Finn family in 1945 (Thoms). However, Patrick died in 1931 and the shop was run by his son Thomas Finn.

15 Thomas Mortimer whom I found in Glasnevin cemetery, is buried with a wife Mary, and was a mechanic. Nuala Mortimer confirms that Josephine often went by the name Mary, and that Thomas was a first class car mechanic. (In the 1911 census, Thomas at 15 was an apprentice book maker – books or bets I don't know). When the Ringsend Mortimer were mentioned to Granny her response was "Oh them", clearly not in favour there.

16 Was Thomas Finn married? (Yes via VR?) and if so what happened to his children?

17 Thomas died out of 25 Newbridge Avenue in 1955. His wife Mary/Josephine died in 1976 out of 94 Kinvara Park. Nuala Mortimer tells me that Thomas Finn, having lost the business went to England. However the premises only changed hands in 1946 (Thoms) and Thomas Finn died out of 54 Lr. Dorset St. in 1951. Did he go to England in 1946 and come back to die? How could this address be given for him at his death in 1951 when the premises had already become a chipper and when Thomas and Mary Josephine Mortimer had already moved to Ringsend. And where was Thomas's family? When 54 became a chipper (by 1949.- it was temporarily a victuallers 1946+, Thoms' dates) Mary Josephine insisted they move as she couldn't stand the smell. The other occupants of 25 Newbridge Avenue were Mortimers.

18 Check Death Indices.

19 Originally Patrick. Consider including this story and referring to naming conventions.

1906, they had moved northside, to 11 Mount Temple Road, in Oxmantown<sup>20</sup>. When child No. 4 (Patrick Francis) arrived, in 1908, they were still at the same address, and Patrick was still describing himself as a Shop Assistant. By 1910 Patrick was manager of Lipton's in Birr, Co. Offaly, and the family had the use of a large house on the corner of Cumberland (now Emmet) Square. They left Birr in 1912 and I don't catch up with them again until 1915 <sup>21</sup>, when they are back in Dublin and living at 2 Thirlstane Tce, in Thomas Court, beside St. Catherine's church.<sup>22</sup>

Patrick is now described as “Canteen Assistant” in Richmond Barracks.<sup>23</sup> Clearly something happened to Patrick along the way. He had progressed to being a manager of an important Lipton's store and then, apparently, crashed back to Canteen Assistant in an army barracks. Whether this was related to his health or to some crime or misadventure I don't know. I suspect the Canteen Assistant job was got for him by his father in law, the shoemaker, who had a contract with the British Army there.

Three years later, Patrick was found drowned in the Liffey at Eden Quay. He had been missing for a week.

The coroner could not establish how he came to be in the water. <sup>24 25 26</sup> Did he suffer a similar fate to [ ] Gillespie in modern NI or was it just an accident. <sup>27</sup>

Sarah, my granny, was left a widow with four children. She seems to have been “given shelter” by PJ Medlar in the accommodation attached to his undertaker's premises at 48 James's St. She probably also did his books at this time. Christopher Joseph, the eldest child, was 16 and Patrick, the youngest was 10.<sup>28</sup>

By 1930 Sarah was living at 13 Gilbert Road, on the periphery of “Little Jerusalem”, and the house/tenancy was in the name of her eldest son, Christopher Joseph. In 1936 she moved into the newly built Orwell Gardens in Rathgar with her three children.<sup>29</sup> When my mother (her daughter) moved out to get married in 1942, Sarah was left alone in Orwell Gardens. Sarah continued living

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20 Refer Dublin Artisans Dwelling Company and its work & with Corpo. Park View to Oxmantown was a move down (cf John Burgess). Maybe cheaper (but smaller?) house with more kiddy expenses. Compare quality of houses in census listings. Why did Patrick move from Park View Tce to Mount Temple Rd. (from £22 rv to £7/10/-). Might there be a story here paralleling that of John Burgess? [Arnott St. 1899 – £17, Brookfield Rd. 1912 – £22, Mt. Temple Rd. (1912) – £ 7/10/-, Thirlstane Tce. (1912) - £9/10/-] Was there a question of purchase (even long-term) involved in Mt. Temple Rd. And did this explain the apparent downward move?

21 Thoms shows 2 Thirlstane Tce. in the name of Patrick Mortimer in the 1916 edition, which means he was there in 1915. Mam was then 9, and she has referred to the 1916 Rising.

22 This is a lower RV than Park View and certainly accommodation inferior to the Birr.

23 The “a” is important. Could he have been an Assistant Manager (ie “the” rather than “a” Canteen Assistant)? This description is from his death cert in 1918.

24 Tell story of how I found out. NB lots of drowning in Liffey and canals at the time. June 11 is also, ironically, my younger son's birthday. Say I examined Coroner's record of how he reported deaths and I believe him (not just PC). Patrick's spinster aunt had died [in the Union] three months previously. Might there be a connection?. Might she have been the only one of the Mortimers giving him the time of day at that stage? Were the Ringsend Mortimers at the funeral?

25 This is the second drowning I am aware of in the Mortimer family. The circumstances in the first one are much clearer. Corporal Thomas Mortimer drowned in 1892 while trying to save the life of a colleague. His regiment were on R&R in Ranikhet, a “holiday” resort up the mountains [from his base in Lucknow] (India).

26 Mention somewhere the verse in Mam's 1942 farewell to the Labour Exchange, where Dad is portrayed as ready to throw himself into the Liffey if Mam won't accept his advances.

27 Explain Gillespie, who figured in the recent Presidential election campaign and also in Brian Lynch's powerful poem “Pity for the Wicked”.

28 Work in mention of May's death from TB (25 July 1921: 48 James's St.).

29 Distinguish from eg Orwell Park. This was the lower end of the “purchase house” scale.

in the Gardens 30 until the mid 1950s when she moved in with us in Ballybrack, where she died in 1958. We (my mother, father, sister and me) had previously moved in with her in Orwell Gardens from 1950 to 1954, after we left Dollymount Park.

### **Bridget 31**

Bridget was born in 1880, also in 122 James's St. She was a Shop Assistant.

In 1906 32 she married Nicholas P Fleming, [then a Grade 5 Smeller but subsequently] a Cooper in Guinness's. 33

Bridget and Nicholas settled in Lorne Terrace off Brookfield Road. She had three children: Gerard (1909), Sara (1911) and Nicholas (1914). Bridget died in 1918 and her older sister **Julia** (see below) was pressed into service to look after the children. Nicholas P. married Julia In 1921 .

### **Julia**

Julia was born in 1873, also in 122 James's St. By 1901 she was an Assistant Cook in Flemings Restaurant and Dining Rooms34 at 1 South Great Georges St. (since demolished). By 1911 she had entered domestic service with James Inglis, a Scottish baker and flour merchant at 64 Upper Leeson St. She is described as Servant and Cook. James Inglis was the proprietor of Inglis & Co, then the biggest bakery in Belfast. That business was sold to Rank-Hovis in 1959.

In 1918, on the death of her sister Bridget, Julia moved to Nicholas P Fleming's house in Lorne Terrace to look after the three children. In 1921 at the age of 48 she married Nicholas P, then aged 37. She died two years later at a hospital in Arklow. The children were then accommodated in a variety of ways.

Nicholas married Julia (Ju) Kenny, from St. Kevin's Road, in University Church in 1925.35 Between 1927 and 1935 they had 3 children. Of the three original children, Sissie went to live with Nicholas and Ju, and Gerard and Nicholas eventually went to live with Nicholas P's sister in law, Mollie Fleming (née Duffy) in 5 St. Anthony's Road, Rialto.

Nicholas died in 1954 (aged 70) and Julia died in 1992 (aged 96). Contact was maintained between

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30 Any Orwell Gardens' stories. Nick Harris (link with Gilbert Road), Donnchadh & Coláiste Mhuire, stepping stones now bridge, falling in the river, pinkeens, Eddie's close escape from being the 3<sup>rd</sup> drowning in the family. If I'm including P/RC divide possibly relate Harrington (King of England) & Patricia (Do you not know the Hail Mary when Angelus struck). Also Lynch epidiascope horror movies, lots of Protestants – Ahern, Harrington, Blackford

31 Consider expanding this section (if possible) Ask Fr. Gerry's to set out multiple grannies.(Wilson, 2xBurgess, Kenny ?).

32 Where were Old Nick, Nicholas P and Peter in 1901 (possibly use to illustrate missing census returns)? Check Guinness work record = nothing. (too early to check online Census = Lorne Tce + where Old Nick & if not why not?.)

33 Nicholas, with his brother Peter, were the second generation in four generations of Guinness coopers. The cooper was the prince of tradesmen in Guinness. Nicholas's work records show that he was once/twice reprimanded in writing for spending too long in the toilet. [ Expand on toilet timing system & 2 pieces of toilet paper and its significance] He was also [briefly] interned by the British in 1921 but got his job back immediately on his release. It had been a case of mistaken identity. [History of Guinness & Dublin city very much intertwined.]

34 Check any possible connection with Nicholas P's family. Also if this is connected to Flemings Hotel, 31 & 32 Gardiner Place (SF No. 30?) This seems to have been a Republican Hotel. At least it was used by SF/IRA for meetings and was the destination of the parade from W/Row when prisoners released from English jails (1918?). Also check out Lawrence Collection for photos of Fleming's Restaurant.

35 Story of finding the marriage cert [merchant & father, Monkstown, Uni church – chapel of ease]

the two families over the years. [36](#)

Nicholas P.'s first two wives are buried in an unmarked grave in Glasnevin (St. Paul's). They are the only occupants of the grave. Both died of symptoms consistent with mercury poisoning. Hopefully, sometime, a historical epidemiological study of the water supply in Lorne Terrace will posthumously exonerate Nicholas P [only joking!].[37](#) [38](#)

### **Elizabeth**

Elizabeth (Lil) was born in 1884, in 19 Irwin St. (just down the road from James's St. at Bow Bridge).

Christopher's shoemaking business had just moved to No. 118 from 122 James's St. The latter building may have deteriorated beyond repair [as it was subsequently unoccupied up to its demolition around 1900]. Unlike Christopher's other premises, before or after, No. 118 was a lockup and it simply filled a gap between No. 122 and No. 43, into which he moved in 1887. With the exception of Thomas St.[39](#) and Wood Quay at the start of his career, all Christopher's premises were located around the Fountain in James's St.[40](#)

Elizabeth was a Shop Assistant. In 1918 she married Andy Duffy (a brother of Mollie with whom Nicholas P Fleming's children were to stay after Julia's death in 1923). Andy was an [Assistant Pawnbroker] working (and living) in Redmond's jewellers and pawnbrokers at 66 South Great Georges St. (now Sixty Six restaurant). The couple moved into 37 Arran Quay (now Mr. Tubs launderette and previously, among other things, a bicycle shop[41](#)).

Shortly afterwards, in 1920, Andy opened up on his own at 96 Gardner St. (a former premises of Redmond's and now part of Gandon Hall). This was on the corner of Railway St. and Gardiner St. and on the western border of Monto (the red light district of the day).

I'm sure there were lots of stories in the family concerning Andy's pawnshop, but I am only aware of two.

1. Larry Medlar has a story about a revolver which Andy gave him to dispose of. Andy was afraid that if the Black and Tans raided his shop and found the (pawned?) revolver he would be arrested, or worse. Larry smuggled the revolver to his workplace, narrowly avoiding interception on the way by the Tans. He subsequently gave it to an interested colleague, who narrowly avoided being arrested when it discharged in a pub in Parliament St. on a day when Dublin was on high security alert. [You can hear Larry tell it himself [42](#) ]
2. Granny has a story about Uncle Pat who broke a teapot in her house and profusely apologised. "Never mind" says the Granny "it was only Daniel O'Connell's teapot".

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36 I am currently following up various threads with cousin (Fr.) Gerry Fleming. Tell story of Fred Appelbe? - too modern? And not relevant except to balance clerics on Dwyer side and serve as general comment on P/RC divide.

37 To be fair, Nicholas's father and his antecedent are also buried in a (different) unmarked grave in Glasnevin, but there is no sign of Old Nick's wife. She's not in that grave.

38 Chase up Nicholas P's grave.

39 Two innings: pre-marriage, married out of Thomas St., and 1871 Mary's birth in Rotunda gives 30 Thomas St. as his address.

40 Mention my logo in this context,

41 Owned/operated by the grandfather of Paul Byrne with whom I worked.

42 <http://photopol.com/larry/larry.html#andy>

Given that other stuff from the pawnshop ended up in Granny's house this story is not at all farfetched.

Andy died in 1923, aged 35, and, while I don't know where Lil was in the meantime, she emerged as the owner/occupier [?] of 141 Iveragh Road (Gaeltacht Park) in that newly constructed estate when I caught up with her (via the digitised electoral registers) in 1937.

She had two tenants – the Dwyer brothers, Mick and Luke. Mick was the elder of the two and he was a canny businessman. Lil's niece, Sara (my mother), was supposed to have fancied him, and him her, only to be supplanted by Agnes Ferguson whom he married in 1934. This was a big society wedding 43 and was suitably reported in the social media of the day. Agnes was the daughter of William Ferguson, a Roman Catholic master confectioner who had fled sectarian Belfast and made a huge success of a posh bakery business in Rathmines. [I used to queue for the bus after school outside his shop window and salivate at the sight of the luxury cakes inside.] 44

Mick Dwyer, as he was know by all despite Agnes's best efforts to the contrary<sup>45</sup>, was a flour salesman in Boland's Mills and that is how he came in contact with the Fergusons. I originally thought he had been in Dev's garrison there in 1916 but, on deeper investigation (asking my cousin), that didn't prove to be the case . He was, however, reputed to have been a runner for Michael Collins in London, before his Mammy brought him home to Ballyhaunis to avoid conscription in WWI. His brother John, who had been working in the Civil Service in London, died in a botched Allied operation at High Wood on the Somme in September 1916.

In [1940] Lil, and her remaining tenant Luke, moved to 2 Harbour Road in Howth village. This was a tea rooms at the time having previously been a sort of hotel. Lil turned it into a shop and two years later let it to Luke and Sara (my mother) after they married in 1942.<sup>46</sup> I lived there from my afterbirth in 1944 to 1949, when we moved to Dollymount Park. 47

My folks ran the shop, then christened “The Gem”, and still there today, from 1942 to 1949 and made a great success of the venture [doubling the value of the business in the first three years alone]. 48

Lil, meanwhile moved up the hill to Balkill and Kitestown Roads. She died in 1957 49.

## Tess

Teresa (Tess) was born in 1886, [ in 43 James's St.]. She was a Shop Assistant when she married PJ Medlar in 1911. I have dealt with them elsewhere at length<sup>50</sup>.

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43 NB photo from Social & Personal

44 Check if still there, or what if not.

45 Mai's story of Agnes always correcting her “Mick” to “Michael”.

46 Irony of the sentiment attributed to the Da by one of the Ma's office colleagues. Throw himself in the Liffey at the spot where the Ma's Da was found drowned. Read MF's poem – relevant verse.

47 Kicking teacher / Gabriels

48 Gem & Gordon Brewster (get visual from NLI). CNC & Barrington connection. CIE & GNR. Dad worked for CIE but went to work on the GNR.

49 Lil died at 90 Greenlea Rd., Terenure, which is listed to Noel Kelly (who are these Kelly's, relations of Duffy's or is is a nursing home or what?)

50 <http://photopol.com/dca2/index.html>



In short: PJ was an insurance rep at the time of their marriage. He subsequently became an undertaker and Dublin City councillor, serving from 1920 ( pre-independence) to 1942. They had five children, one of whom died of TB in her teens in 1929. Tess herself died of TB in 1934. PJ subsequently married a childhood flame, but that marriage was a bit rocky. His second wife died in 1942 and he died in 1949. [See *The Medlar's Gotcha* online]

– *of the remaining children*

This might be a place to comment on accents. Tess junior had the flattest Dublin accent I ever heard and, in retrospect, I realised that my granny (Sarah) and my mother (also Sara ) both had strong Dublin accents. [There is also a small matter of vocabulary eg throw = trough.]

Tess Junior's husband, Dinny, was a train driver for Guinness and drove the last Guinness train. He then transferred to lorries. Their son Donal played soccer for Coventry City and was one of the wonderboys of his day.

PJ Medlar's son Paddy played for Ierne and his [brother in law's father – via Mai], Joseph Ledwidge, was a well known footballer who played for [Bohs etc] [and internationally] in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. [Expand, listing Mai & John also ??]

Paddy married Connie and his brother, John, married Phyllis, both of whom were Royalettes.

## **The Unmarried**

### **Margaret**

Margaret was the firstborn, in 10 Wood Quay in 1867. She was listed as a machinist [whatever that means, likely in the clothing trade?] in the 1901 census (aged 28) but by 1911 she is listed as a housekeeper (aged 38). It is possible that her outside occupation became too much for her and she withdrew to keep house for Christopher, perhaps after her mother's death in 1906, or even before that to nurse a sick mother.<sup>51</sup>

In [1917/18], aged 44/5 <sup>52</sup>, she was admitted to Grangegorman mental asylum with “epileptic insanity”. It is not at all clear what this condition was. It could have been menopausal (little understood in those days) or she could have been farmed out when her father was about to retire. The “insanity” bit could have been simply adding a mental to a physical condition to permit her admission into an asylum. That was not unusual in those days. It is interesting that she was not admitted to St. Patrick's across the road from where the family lived. <sup>53</sup>

She was transferred from Grangegorman to the branch office at Portrane where she remained until her death thirty years later. Her body was claimed by her two unmarried sisters (Kate and Christine) and nothing of her medical records survive in Portrane.<sup>54</sup>

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51 The census can be quite confusing on this and its reliability varies according to the different heads of household who complete it. The occupation “housekeeper” is supposed to apply only to an occupation outside the home, but Christopher was not a great one for accuracy in filling up forms as the variations in the ages of his children between 1901 and 1911 censuses will testify.

52 Check certs and admission record.

53 She was a paying patient (10/- per month) and finances would not then presumably have dictated the choice of Grangegorman over Pats.

54 Comment on the parlous state of the Grangegorman archive.

## Mary

Mary was born in 1871 in the Rotunda lying in hospital. She was also a machinist. I gather she went to America between 1901 and 1911 and I don't know anything else about her at this stage.

## Catherine

Kate was born in 1878 in 122 James's St. At 20 years of age she is listed as “scholar” [=schoolgoing] in the 1901 census and as housekeeper in the 1911 census. It is likely she simply stayed at home and joined Margaret in keeping Christopher's house from c. 1911<sup>55</sup>. On his retirement Kate went with Christopher to Sally's bridge and with her sister Christine ran Bridge Stores until her death in 1948. The sisters are listed in documentation relating to the 1941 WWII bombing of the SCR, but, while their property is listed in Corporation files as having been heavily damaged they were not evacuated. They are not listed in those files as seeking compensation. This would only have arisen in relation to contents etc. as it appears that the Corporation('s contractor) carried out repairs to the house itself.<sup>56</sup>

## Christine

Chris was born in 1890 (the youngest) at 46 James's St. She is described as a “scholar” (aged 10) in the 1901 census and similarly in the 1911 census (aged 21). This appears to mean simply that she stayed at home and didn't have an outside occupation.

She moved to Sally's Bridge (Bridge Stores) with Christopher on his retirement in [1918?] <sup>57 58</sup> and stayed there with Kate until the latter's death in 1948. She subsequently moved to 19a Curzon St <sup>59</sup> and around 1970 moved to a caravan in Ballybrack, owned by her niece Sara. She died there in 1972.<sup>60</sup>

## Note

It is interesting that the three unmarried girls are listed as housekeeper/scholar<sup>61</sup> in 1911 (ie they stayed at home or returned there?).

## The Sons

55 See note above re “housekeeper”.

56 There is also reference to a Mr. Ledwidge of 10 Lavarna Grove on the list for repairs. His compensation is listed as nil. The Corporation files on this are in the Dublin City Library and Archive in Pearse St.

57 48 James's St address in will in 1919 (? interim address on way to Sally's Bridge?).

58 Christopher's effective will was made on 12/6/1919 and the address he gives for himself is 48 James's St. which suggests he was [briefly] using the accommodation in the Medlar premises. He left everything equally to Chris and Kate, stating “my other daughters already having been [already?] provided for”. FOLLOW UP by listing how the others might have been provided for. Incidentally there is no reference to any continuing payment for Margaret in [Grangegorman/Portrane] so her status as a paying patient may not have lasted beyond 1929 when Christopher died unless the girls continued paying. There may have been contact of some sort as it was they who claimed Margaret's body when she died. Or perhaps they were just the only surviving relatives the asylum managed to contact, and it fell to them to do so anyway even if there had been no contact over the previous [30] years.

59 Today houses the St Kevin's Parish Credit Union.

60 She was a constant complainer and I vividly remember her “catch phrase”, as it were: “I'm only fit for the bone”. [Knacker's yard].

61 Discuss “housekeeper” category. I think officially it should only be applied to work outside the home.

## **John 62**

Born 1876 in 122 James's St. John was the heir to the shoemaking business to which he applied himself. He married Tess Fitzsimons, a carpenter's daughter from round the corner, in 1909. They met in the St. James's church choir. Tess is related to Eoghan Fitzsimons, briefly Irish Attorney General in 1993.<sup>63</sup>

When John married, Christopher seems to have set him up in a fine house in Adelaide Terrace, off the Brookfield Road. However, when John enlisted in 1914/15 (in a pub), and went to war, Christopher disinherited him and threw the family, including a possibly pregnant Tess, out of the family home and banished them to the northside (Oxmantown Rd.)<sup>64</sup>

On his return from the war, John was wounded and unemployed. He eventually got a short term job with a shoemaker in Capel St. who was waiting for his sons to be old enough to take over the business. John later got a job in the Gas Company and then in the Corporation (possibly through the good offices of Alfie Byrne?).

In [after 1924, by 1939/40]<sup>65</sup> the family moved upmarket within the same estate, to 10 Cowper St. Bono's grandfather, Alex Rankin (no relation), lived in No. 8 and the two families knew one another well.<sup>66</sup>

Along with PJ Medlar, John supported Alfie Byrne in his electoral forays. <sup>67</sup> John & Tess had 6 children. John died in 1953 and Tess died in 1968. The house remained in the family's possession until the death of John's daughter Sara (Sadie) in 1996, <sup>68</sup>

I understand that, till the day of her death, Tess could not bear to go near the vicinity of Adelaide Terrace from which she had been summarily ejected in [1915?].

I moved into Raheny when I got married in 1975 and unbeknowns to me three of John's children and their families were living within a stone's throw in Killester. Some of these have now left for places as far apart as Canada and Bavaria.<sup>69</sup>

## **Christopher Joseph**

Christopher Joseph (CJ) Burgess was born in 1884, likely the last of the children to be born in 122 James's St. before Christopher Snr moved the family home to Irwin St. at Bow Bridge. He is listed in the 1901 census at age 17 as a timekeeper<sup>70</sup>. I don't know if this involved clocking employees in and out or whether it might even have involved timing employees visits to the

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62 Fill out more details via the family.

63 Refer Brendan Smyth case

64 Possibly barely affordable out of John's army pay and her separation allowance (NB: Pdraig Yeates). Add valuation for Adelaide Tce., and comparison with Oxmantown (see earlier footnote)

65 Earliest available VR shows them at 10 Cowper St.

66 Possibly tell story of (i) exchanging houses (Finbarr Flood) and (ii) Bono's parents two marriages. (include ref in Bono book of subsequent RC "blessing" of the marriage) Possibly also illustrate how GRO use digitised indexes to check the chits.

67 Thank you letter from Alfie.

68 Story of Sadie's cyber disinterment in [2007?]

69 Marie's story about John and Wolfgang's father in WWI.

70 Corcoran's story about the timekeeper and the 2 sheets of toilet paper. Might have timed Nicholas P.

toilet and making sure they were provided with the requisite two sheets of toilet paper. [see Corcoran's book]

On 20 April 1904 at the age of 20 he married Mary Kate O'Brien (22) in what may have been a shotgun wedding. 71 She was the daughter of a (retired) RIC man, Thomas O'Brien. She was born in Ballyfarnon in Co. Roscommon where her father was stationed. They moved to St. John's Terrace in Mountbrowne in 1904, after the father's retirement in 1900. From the records it appears she was 5 months pregnant when she got married. The wedding was in James's St. Church and the witnesses were Joseph Molloy and [ ] Dunne (neither were relatives as far as I know). Christopher Joseph moved in with Mary Kate and her father after the wedding. 72

A son Leo was born in the Coombe hospital on 6 August 1904. Leo is a strange choice of name. It is not the name of Christopher Joseph's father, Christopher, or grandfather, John, or Mary Kate's father, Thomas, or grandfather, Martin.

Some 9 months later, in May 1905, Christopher Joseph arrived on his own in Canada (Montreal) on the Allan Line ship Bavarian. 73

Mary Kate stayed behind. I don't know whether this was to look after a possibly sickly child who might not have been able to travel or her father who may not have been in the best of health. In any event it was another five years before she and Leo arrived in Canada. By then Christopher Joseph was living in Toronto, and it was not long before another baby arrived, Murry, born on 4 or 5 June 1911. That would put Mary Kate's arrival in early September 1910 at the latest. [Canadian Census 1911] I don't pick Christopher Joseph up again until 18 February 1924 at Buffalo [NY] where he was crossing into the USA to visit his [sister in law Cathleen O'Brien 74] in New York.

I gather a daughter, Josephine (?), came back to Ireland to visit the family [1950/60s?] but there does not seem to be any documentation on this (except for a possible photo 75) and Christopher was untraceable when it came to sorting out family wills in the 1960s.

### **Note**

Around the time of Christopher's retirement, Margaret went into Grangegorman and Kate and Chris accompanied Christopher to Sally's bridge where they ran Bridge Stores. Around the same time Bridget died, Lil married Andy Duffy, John came back from the war and Patrick Mortimer drowned in the Liffey. Stirring times for Christopher. 76 77

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71 The child was certainly "conceived out of wedlock" as opposed to inside it. Leo was born three and a half months after Christopher Joseph's marriage to Mary Kate.

72 List "round the corner" marriages: John, Christopher, Tess, [Bridget & Julia]. People didn't go far afield then.

73 That particular ship is not listed for landing in Montreal in May 1905 (April 7<sup>th</sup> and July 4<sup>th</sup>). However the online list is not necessarily complete and there may be a landing in May 1905. Equally CJ could have got the month wrong 21 years later.

74 Records are clearly not a "Mary" although they describe him as visiting his "sister". Could be a sister in law but that would imply an unmarried sister of Mary Kate's who had either remained unmarried or married an O'Brien. [I assume it is not Mary Kate herself following a split up.]

75 Check back of photo [= nothing].

76 Don't forget to draw on Christopher's will for info/attitude.

77 In his will Christopher said he had looked after the others. Try and enumerate how. (Christopher Jnr. Shotgun & gone to Canada, John in bad odour. Sarah, widowed, Lil married, Tess married, Bridget dead, Julia with Nicholas P, Margaret in Portrane-paying, Mary gone, leaving only Kate and Chris with him.)



Name	Born	Married (age) <sup>78</sup>	Spouse	Died	Occupation	Born
Margaret	1867			1948	Machinist	10 Wood Quay
Mary	1871				Machinist	Rotunda
Julia	1873	1921 (48) (37)	Nicholas P Fleming	1923	Cook/domestic	
Sarah	1874	1901 (27) (31)	Patrick Mortimer	1958	Bookkeeper	122 James's St.
Catherine	1881			1948	Housekeeper	
Bridget	1883	1906 (25) (22)	Nicholas P Fleming	1918		
Elizabeth	1884	1918 (34)	Andy Duffy	1957	Shop Assistant	19 Irwin St.
Teresa	1886	1911 (35) (26)	PJ Medlar	1934	Shop Assistant	43 James's St.
Christine	1890			1972		46 James's St.
John	1876	1909 (33)	Tess Fitzsimons	1953	Shoemaker	122 James's St.
Christopher	1884 ?	1904 (20)	Mary Kate O'Brien		Timekeeper	

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78 (Burgess) (spouse)