

## Notes on the Woodroffe family

### *Ellis Woodroffe c.1740- after 1799*

Ellis was a junior official in the Excise. He was appointed Officer of Barnsley 7th Ride, Sheffield Collection, on 13 January 1789, following a reorganisation of the Excise Collections. He was moved to Rotherham the following year, to Chesterfield in 1794, finishing his career in Sheffield in 1799; though the children were born in Otley in the 1760s. The Board of Excise by a minute dated 15 November 1799 ordered him to retire on the grounds that he was 'thro' Age and Infirmities rendered incapable of performing the Business of an Officer.' He was given leave to apply to the Charity, and another minute two weeks later authorised the Charity accountant to issue a warrant for him. His son Nathan followed him into the service, and rose to become a Collector of Excise.

### *Nathan Woodroffe 1767-1840*

Nathan followed his father into the Excise service, and achieved greater success, becoming a Collector; his final posting was the Surrey Collection. He began as an assistant at Bury in 1790, soon after Sarah was born, then moved to Bolton. He was promoted to Officer at Boston, posted successively to Manchester, where Mary Ann was born, to Liverpool and then Warrington, where James and William were born, then promoted in 1801 to Examiner at Head Office in London. After spells as Supervisor at Brigg and Middlewich (where Harriet and Elizabeth were born), he returned to Head office as a Senior General Examiner. In 1813 he and his wife Peggy were living in Shoreditch, near the Excise Office in Broad Street, when their daughter Sarah married Charles Instan at St Leonard's church; they were still there in 1822 when the Instans came up from Barnstaple, where Charles was also Collector of Excise, for the christening of Charles and Sarah's daughter Harriett. In 1827 Nathan was directed to travel with other examiners to Dublin, then within three weeks was appointed Collector of Haddington near Edinburgh, immediately transferred to Inverness, but then finally appointed to Wales Middle Collection before taking up either of the Scottish appointments. In 1828 he was appointed to the Surrey Collection and moved to Brentford, where he lived at what is now 296 High Street. His wife Peggy died in February 1833 and is buried in Brentford churchyard. Six years later the elderly Nathan was married for a second time, to a local Brentford girl, twenty-four year old Matilda Porter, on 7 December 1839 at St Bride's, Fleet Street, but he had a stroke about four months after the wedding, and the Board of Excise appointed a substitute to act for him on 18 April 1840. He was sufficiently competent to make his will on 19 April 1840, but died eleven days later on the last day of the month. He is buried beside Peggy. In his will he leaves his personal effects to be sold at auction and the proceeds divided between Matilda and his unmarried daughter Elizabeth; the rest of his property is to be divided equally between Matilda, Elizabeth and his son William, who had followed Nathan into the Excise, but was sacked in 1838 for getting into debt and going to jail. Nathan appointed his neighbours Matthew Gibson, gentleman, and Henry Richards, surgeon, together with John Browne of North Brixton, as executors: probate was granted on 15 May 1840 to the first two named. William, who may have been living with his father and was present when he died, registered the death, but neither he nor Matilda appears in the 1841 census for Old Brentford: they were living together not far away at 39 Cuthbert Street, Hall Park, Paddington, when their first child George was born on 15 March 1841, before the census. In the next census ten years later they are at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, with Matilda shown as William's wife, and with four more children. William died in 1852, but Matilda lived on until 1897.

### *Margaret (Peggy) Woodroffe née Wigfield c.1767- after 1839*

Little is known about Peggy Wigfield. One of the witnesses to her marriage to Nathan Woodroffe in Wath upon Dearne in 1789 was Samuel Wigfield: this could be her father, brother or uncle. IGI has a Samuel christened in Wentworth, Yorks, on 9 April 1765, son of James Wigfield, and a James Wigfield married Sarah Iredale on 24 May 1762 at Wath upon Dearne, so it seems quite possible that these were Peggy's parents. No record of her baptism has been traced, but she and Nathan called their first-born Sarah. She and Nathan spent time in the north of England and in London, and moved to Brentford when Nathan was appointed Collector of Excise for Surrey. They were living there when she died early in 1833. She was buried in St George's churchyard on 21 February. Six years later Nathan married twenty-four year old Matilda Porter, but died less than five months later and is buried beside Peggy.

### *Sarah Instan née Woodroffe 1790-1874*

Sarah's father joined the Excise soon after her birth, and after postings mainly in the north-west became a senior Examiner working in London at the Excise Office in Old Broad Street. At the time of her marriage, Sarah was living with her parents in Shoreditch, near her father's place of work. After the marriage, she moved with her husband (who also worked in the Excise) to his postings at Leominster, Barnstaple and Birmingham, where she is recorded with him and their children in the early censuses at the Revenue Office in New Street. After her husband Charles's death in 1863, Sarah lived with her widowed son William and his daughters, with whom she is recorded in the 1871 census at Crompton Terrace, Handsworth, 'blind from cataract'. The family moved to 12 Crompton Road, Handsworth, where Sarah died three years later of 'old age'. Her death was notified by 'A.Instan, present at the death': presumably William's daughter Annie.

## Notes on the Woodroofe family

### *Marianne Instan 1815-1863*

Marianne never married. She is recorded in the 1841 census as a governess, living in New Street, Birmingham, with her parents and siblings. In 1851 she is with her recently widowed brother William and his two daughters in New Bridge Street, Edgbaston. In 1861 she and William are at 69 Summer Hill Terrace with their parents, her sister Elizabeth, and William's two daughters; she is now described as a governess.

### *Charles Nathan Instan 1817-1862*

Charles was apprenticed on 16 July 1832 to John Higham of Brentford, Apothecary: probably he was staying with his grandfather Nathan Woodroofe, after whom he was named, and who lived in Brentford at this time. He is listed in the 1841 census, where he appears living in New Street, Birmingham, with his parents and siblings, as a medical student. He began studies for the licentiatehip of the Society of Apothecaries in 1838, attending lectures and demonstrations. He qualified as MRCS Eng in 1843, which exempted him from the LSA first exam. He appears as a witness at his sister Harriett's marriage to Samuel Painter in 1844. He continued his medical studies. In the 1851 census he is at Gwennap in Cornwall, as assistant to S.P.Arthur, surgeon. On 24 March 1859 he was examined by Mr Semple, a member of the Society of Apothecaries' Court of Examiners, and passed, adding LSA to his qualifications. 1861 he was working as a sole practitioner at the Surgery at 6 Denvour (?Dynevor) Street, Merthyr Tydfil, and is recorded in the Medical Directory of the same year as surgeon for the Cyfartha Iron Works in Merthyr. He is unmarried, accompanied only by Eliza Williams, house servant, and George Mary, groom.

### *William John Instan 1819-1906*

In 1841 William, a bank clerk, is with his parents and siblings at the Inland Revenue office in New Street, Brmingham: later that year he married Ann Evans, daughter of his father's colleague, the late Abraham Evans, Collector of Excise at Exeter. Ann was at that time living in the Instan household with her widowed mother, also Ann. Widowed in 1847, William was one of three executors of his wife Ann's will, under which he received a pecuniary legacy of £1000 out of her marriage settlement. The other executors were Ann's brother William Chambers Evans and Joseph Sayell, an Exeter city councillor. William is recorded in the 1851 census with his sister Marianne and his two young daughters in New Bridge Street, Edgbaston. In 1861 he is at 69 Summer Hill Terrace, All Saints, Birmingham, with his parents and children, and his sisters Marianne and Elizabeth. He is described in the return as a banker's clerk. William registered his father's death at the same address two years later. In 1871 he is unemployed, living at Crompton Terrace, Handsworth with his mother and daughters, and niece Catherine Painter. In 1881 the family is at 12 Crompton Road, where William's mother Sarah died in 1874. Annie and Emily are unmarried; Catherine is still with them, but has gone by 1891, by when William, Annie and Emily have moved to 52 Crompton Road. In 1901, still at number 52, he is described as a retired bank accountant; his unmarried sister Elizabeth is now living with him. He was presumably still in the same house when he died five years later.

### *Harriett Margaret Painter née Insrtan 1821-1869*

Harriett's father was a Collector of Excise, living at the time of her birth in Barnstaple (although Harriett's baptism took place some nine months later on 15 May 1822 at St.Leonard's church, Shoreditch, where her parents had been married in 1813; they were presumably still there in 1822. At the time of her marriage in 1844, Harriett's parents were living at 95 New Street, Birmingham. In the 1851 census, she is recorded in the Wirral with her husband, three eldest children (the fourth was due shortly after the census), and her brother Henry. In 1855, soon after the death of her husband Samuel, she is living in Barker Street, Lozells, Aston, and her youngest child, Arthur is baptised (two years late) in St.Silas' church Lozells, with Harriett's brother Frederick entered in the register as father. In the 1861 census Harriett and Frederick are at 35 Summer Hill Terrace, All Saints, Birmingham, with two lodgers, her three youngest children and a servant. At the time of her death in 1869, Harriett is back in Barker Street. Her death is registered by her late husband's brother in law, William Eagles.

### *Henry Woodroofe Instan 1825-1852*

In the 1841 census Henry is described as an apprentice, living with his parents and siblings in New Street, Birmingham. In the 1851 census, at the age of 26, he is living with his sister Harriett and her husband Samuel Painter in the Wirral. He is described as a banker's clerk and unmarried. He died eighteen months later in Birmingham

## Notes on the Woodroffe family

### *Frederick Instan 1828-1865*

Frederick is first recorded in the 1841 census at the age of 13, living with his parents and siblings in New Street, Birmingham. In 1851 the family is living at the Inland Revenue office in New Street, where Frederick is described as a merchant's clerk. He next appears as the father in the baptismal register entry for his nephew Arthur Painter, his sister Harriett's youngest child; Harriett's husband Samuel being a month dead at the time of the (late) baptism in March 1855. According to his probable descendant Carolyn Burley, he fathered a child, Ellen, by the family servant Sarah Skinner in 1855. Frederick did not marry Sarah, but Ellen Skinner's father was named on her birth certificate as Frederick Skinner, merchant, and when in turn her children were married their mother's maiden name was given as Instant (sic). It is possible that Frederick had left his parents' home (or been ejected?) when the maid Sarah became pregnant and moved in with his widowed sister: he is certainly recorded in her household in the 1861 census. He died four years later.

### *Elizabeth Sarah Instan 1830-1914*

Recorded in the 1851 census with her parents and siblings at the Inland Revenue office in New Street, Birmingham, where her father was Collector of Excise. In 1861 she is at living at 69 Summer Hill Terrace, All Saints, Birmingham with her parents, sister Mary, widowed brother William and his two daughters. In 1871 she is at Crompton Terrace with William and his family, now joined by their 80 year old mother, blind with cataract (Elizabeth is described as her nurse). In 1881 Elizabeth is working as housekeeper to the family of George Muvis (?Meevis), a rope and twine manufacturer, at 7 Vicarage Road, Edgbaston. She has not been traced on the 1891 census, but in 1901 she is again living with brother William: now at 52 Crompton Road, Handsworth, Staffs, which is probably where William died five years later. In the 1911 census, three years before her death, Elizabeth is living with a companion/housekeeper, 30 year old Edith Austin, at 180 Putney Road, Handsworth.

### *William Woodroffe 1797-1852*

William was christened in Warrington, where his father was then posted, on 10 December 1797. He followed his father into the Excise, and was appointed as assistant in Northwich on 16 November 1820 at a salary of £85. He moved to Salop (1821), Birmingham (1826), Stourbridge (some time between 1826 and 1833) and finally Madeley (1833). Five years later he became indebted to some of the traders within his survey and, being insolvent, was imprisoned at Shrewsbury on 11 April 1838. As a result the Board of Excise dismissed him from the service on 23 May. The Judgments Act passed later that year abolished imprisonment for debt, and following a hearing at the Court House in Shrewsbury on 18 August 1838, William was discharged on 21 August. The Salopian Journal of 22 August 1838 records:

*A Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors was held in this town on Monday and yesterday before J.G.Harris Esq. one of Her Majesty's Commissioners when William Woodroffe late of Broseley, Officer of Excise (and others) were respectively examined on their several petitions and declared to be entitled to their discharge forthwith.*

William's petition for reinstatement in his post as Excise Officer was rejected by the Board of Excise on 14 January 1839.

His mother had died in 1833, and at the end of 1839 his father Nathan married a local girl, Matilda Porter; but Nathan died of a stroke on the last day of the following April. William may then have been living with his father in Old Brentford High Street; he was present at the death and registered it. Under his father's will he inherited a one-third share of the residuary estate (his stepmother Matilda and unmarried sister Elizabeth shared the proceeds of the personal effects and received a third each of the residue: Matilda was bequeathed Nathan's portrait). It appears that William then moved in with his newly widowed stepmother, who lived with him as his wife and bore him six children. They do not appear on the 1841 census, but their address was given as 39 Cuthbert Street, Hall Park, Paddington, on the birth certificate of their first child, George, who was born on 15 March 1841: William is described on the certificate as a clerk. A month earlier, on 9 February, he had appeared as the prosecutor giving evidence at the Old Bailey against Sarah North, whom he had employed as an ironer, and who had stolen a silver spoon worth 10s which he had placed in his wash house: she had pawned it for 5s to raise money for her children. After a plea in mitigation, testimony of good character, and a recommendation to mercy by the jury, she was sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

William and his family appear in the 1851 census at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, with William again described as a clerk, aged 51 and born in Lancashire. With him are Matilda and the five eldest children. William died the following year, leaving no will, and his sixth child, Robert, was born later in the year. Some time after his death, Matilda acquired a seventh child, Walter (origin unknown), who appears with her and the

## Notes on the Woodroofe family

other six as her son on the 1861 census at Penn Cottage, St Lukes, Chelsea. Walter named William as his father when he married in 1877.

### *Matilda Woodroofe née Porter c.1815-1897*

At the end of 1839, at the age of 24, Matilda married elderly widower Nathan Woodroofe, Collector of Excise (aged 72) at St Bride's Fleet Street. Her previous connection with him is not clear, but Nathan was living in Brentford, where Matilda was born: she could have been working for him as a housekeeper or other servant, or have been a neighbour. When Nathan suffered a stroke four months after the wedding and died a fortnight later, Matilda moved in with his son William and lived with him as his wife. They have not been traced on the 1841 census, but were living at 39 Cuthbert Street, Hall Park, Paddington, when their eldest child George was born on 15 March of that year. In 1851 they are at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, now with four more children. William died in 1852, but in the 1861 census Matilda has acquired a sixth child, Walter, listed as her son aged 6 and hence apparently born two or three years after William's death. Walter's father is unknown, and no register entry for his birth has been traced, but William was named as the father on Walter's marriage certificate in 1877. Before that, in 1871, Matilda appears with Walter and his older 'brother' Nathan. She is working as a laundress, living at Penn Cottage, Middle Row, Chelsea, and Nathan and Walter are clearly working with her, both described as laundrymen. By 1881 Walter has married, and Nathan (who has not been subsequently traced) is no longer there: Matilda is with her grandson Christopher Spiller (her daughter Matilda's son), who is a plumber's labourer. Christopher in turn married in 1883, but Matilda carried on alone and was still working in Chelsea in 1891; she died six years later at the age of 82.

### *George Ellis Keep Woodroofe 1841-1914*

George was born at 39 Cuthbert Street, Hall Park, Paddington, on 15 March 1841 at half past nine in the morning. He appears with his parents and siblings in the 1851 census at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, and in 1861 at Penn Cottage, St Lukes, Chelsea. After his marriage to Eleanor Folley in 1865, he lived with her in Kensington, and are recorded in 1881 at 111 Southam Street with their four younger children; the eldest, Elizabeth, is a live-in maid with her uncle Charles and his family. In 1901 and 1911 George and Eleanor are still in Kensington: George is a painter, Eleanor (Ellen) a laundrywoman. George was born at 39 Cuthbert Street, Hall Park, Paddington, on 15 March 1841 at half past nine in the morning. He appears with his parents and siblings in the 1851 census at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, and in 1861 at Penn Cottage, St Lukes, Chelsea. After his marriage to Eleanor Folley in 1865, he lived with her in Kensington, and are recorded in 1881 at 111 Southam Street with their four younger children; the eldest, Elizabeth, is a live-in maid with her uncle Charles and his family. In 1901 and 1911 George and Eleanor are still in Kensington: George is a painter, Eleanor (Ellen) a laundrywoman. George was born at 39 Cuthbert Street, Hall Park, Paddington, on 15 March 1841 at half past nine in the morning. He appears with his parents and siblings in the 1851 census at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, and in 1861 at Penn Cottage, St Lukes, Chelsea. After his marriage to Eleanor Folley in 1865, he lived with her in Kensington, and they are recorded in 1881 at 111 Southam Street with their four younger children; the eldest, Elizabeth, is a live-in maid with her uncle Charles and his family. In 1901 and 1911 George and Eleanor are still in Kensington: George is a painter, Eleanor (Ellen) a laundrywoman.

### *Matilda Elizabeth Augusta Spiller née Woodroofe 1843-1873*

Matilda is recorded with her parents and siblings in the early censuses at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington (1851) and Penn Cottage, Middle Row, Chelsea (1861). She has not been traced on the 1871 census, but seems to have died in 1873.

### *Christopher Spiller c.1865-1934*

There are some unresolved questions about Christopher. No birth index entry has been traced for him, but his mother died in 1873 and he appears in the 1881 census with his grandmother, the widowed Matilda Woodroofe, at 1 Camrose Cottages, St Luke's, Chelsea. There is no sign of his father, who may also have died. His birthplace is given as Notting Hill, his occupation as plumber's labourer, and his age as 15. But two and a half years later, on Christmas Eve 1883, he appears as of full age (i.e. over 21) on a register entry for his marriage to Lucy Heath at the church of SS Andrew and Philip in Kensington. The witnesses are his

## Notes on the Woodroofe family

uncle and aunt, Walter Woodroofe and Elizabeth Smith. His death index entry in 1934 gives his age as 67, which is consistent with a birth date of 1865. Did he lie about his age when he married?

### *Charles Nathan Woodroofe 1846-1917*

In 1881 Charles and Annie are at 7 Absalom Road, Kensington. with Charles junior and George; also sixteen year old Elizabeth Woodroofe, niece, listed as servant. After Annie's death in 1899, Charles is recorded alone in 1901 in Paddington.

### *Elizabeth Mary Ann Wright née Woodroofe 1847-1924*

After her marriage in 1867, Elizabeth has not been traced in the census records, but she appears as a witness with her half-brother Walter at the marriage of their nephew Chrstopher Spiller to Lucy Heath in Kensington in 1883.

### *Nathan John Woodroofe 1849-1887*

Nathan is recorded with his parents and siblings in the 1851 census at 35 Harrow Road, Paddington, and with his widowed mother and siblings in 1861 at Penn Cottage, Middle Row, Chelsea. In 1871 most of the children have left home, but Nathan and his half (or adoptive) brother Walter, both listed as sons, are working with their mother in her laundry business, still at Penn Cottage. After his marriage to widow Amelia Parker in 1876, they lived in Wornington Road, Chelsea, where Nathan's occupation is given as 'upholsterer'. Their first two children, Amelia and Maud, are listed with them; also two older children, Harry (11) and Anne (10), presumably the offspring of a previous marriage of Amelia's. Nathan and Amelia had a third daughter, Alice, born in 1883. Nathan's death in 1887 was registered in Dartford; it is not clear why.

### *Edwin Robert Woodroofe 1852-1931*

Robert is recorded with his widowed mother and siblings in 1861 at Penn Cottage, Middle Row, Chelsea. He has not been traced in 1871, but in 1881 he and Emily are with one year old Ethel at 32 Westbourne Terrace North, Paddington. According to Celia Cotton, Robert is described on his marriage certificate as a labourer, son of William Woodroofe, clerk (deceased). In 1891 the family is still in Paddington, but in 1901 Robert and Emily, still with Ethel and William, are in Kensington: Robert is now a painter and decorator. By 1911 Robert and Emily have moved to Fulham: William is still with them, but Ethel married in 1901. Robert and Emily later moved to Birmingham, where they both died in 1931 and 1935 respectively.

### *Harriet Higham née Woodroofe 1804-after 1880*

In the 1841 census Harriet is recorded with John and their first three children Elizabeth (5), Alfred (3) and Frederick (3 months) in Northleach, Glos. In 1851 they are in Cross Cheaping, Coventry: John is described as LSA. (Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries) London, Practitioner in medicine: chemist and druggist. Elizabeth is away at her aunt's school in Handsworth: Alfred and Frederick have been joined by younger brother Charles. In 1861 the family has moved to Brinklow, near Rugby, where John died in 1870. In the census of the following year, the widowed Harriet is on her own in Clifton Road, Rugby. In 1881 she is with her unmarried son Alfred in Duffield, Derbyshire, but Albert was probably ill by this time: he died the following year in the Isle of Wight, which suggests that he may have suffered from TB. Harriet has not been traced subsequently. She could possibly be the Harriet Higgott whose death aged 78 is in the GRO index for Belper (which includes Duffield) in the third quarter of 1885.

### *Elizabeth Margaret Higham c.1836-1859*

In the 1841 census Elizabeth is recorded with her parents and siblings in Northleach, Glos. In 1851 she is a scholar with four other teenage girls at her aunt Elizabeth Woodroofe's school in Handsworth. Sadly, she seems to have died in 1859, aged 23.

### *Alfred Woodroofe Higham c.1838-1882*

In the 1841 census Alfred is recorded with his parents, elder sister Elizabeth and infant brother Frederick in Northleach, Glos. In 1851 the family are in Cross Cheaping, Coventry; youngest brother Charles has now joined them; Elizabeth is away at her aunt's school in Handsworth. By 1881 Alfred is unmarried, a railway clerk living in Milford Road, Duffield, Derbyshire, with his widowed mother Harriet. He died the following year, probably having contracted TB: his death was registered in the Isle of Wight, where he may have been in a sanatorium.

## Notes on the Woodroofe family

### *Frederick Augustus Higham 1841-1855*

In the 1841 census Frederick is recorded with his parents, elder sister and brother Elizabeth and Alfred in Northleach, Glos. In 1851 the family are in Cross Cheaping, Coventry; youngest brother Charles has now joined them; Elizabeth is away at her aunt's school in Handsworth. Sadly, Frederick died four years later at the age of 14.

### *Charles Henry Higham 1844-1915*

Charles appears on the census for the first time in 1851 with his parents and elder brothers Alfred and Frederick at Cross Cheaping, Coventry. Their sister Elizabeth is away at their aunt's school in Handsworth. After his marriage Charles lived with his wife Sarah in Rugby, where they are recorded in 1881 at 2 Clifton Road with their first three children. Charles is a bookkeeper. The family later moved to Birmingham where Charles died in 1896.

### *Elizabeth Woodroofe 1810-1868*

Elizabeth has not been traced on the 1841 census, but in 1851 she is established as proprietor of a small dame school at Rose Hill, Handsworth, with an assistant, Amy Tookey and five teenage girl pupils, one of whom is her niece, Harriet's daughter Elizabeth Higham. The school is still going ten years later, still with the faithful Amy, but a different (illegible) address in Handsworth. Elizabeth sadly died before the next census: she never married.