

YET MORE EVIDENCE

**CONTINUING THE EXTENDED SMITH
AND AYRES FAMILY OF
WILLIAM AYRES, GYPSY
1806 – 1872**

Tony Dixon

MAY 2021

For
Maxwell Anthony

Latest in a long line.

The following pages are meant as a supplement to my book '*BUT FOR FURTHER EVIDENCE*' first published in 2013, revised and extended in 2019.

References back to this later publication will, for the most part, be made using the shortened version BFFE.

In 2011 a prequel to this book was published entitled '*BUT FOR A LITTLE MORE EVIDENCE*', and charted my research which had begun in a serious way in around 2007. It was with hindsight, very much the beginning of the journey into finding my Gypsy and Traveller ancestors.

References back to this publication will be abbreviated to BFLME.

Tony Dixon

Cover picture from an original by the author

My father's side of the family, including the **Ayres** Travelling people, were reasonably straightforward to investigate as the records were relatively easy to find, no pun intended, and agreed with each other as a rule, until it came to my 4 x Great Grandfather **William Ayres**. His wife **Mary Gray** had a sister **Elizabeth** who married **Anthony Smith** (**Vantino, Nymphany**, etc) and then the fun began.

The particular web I will try and untangle initially begins with an assertion that a **Delitha Smith** is a relative to **Anthony Smith**, his parents being **William Anscombe** and **Aquilla Smith**.

Delitha (Deleafey and other variants) had a daughter, also named **Delitha**, and it is her that is featured in the first instance as mother of **Clementina**.

Next it has to be remembered that **William Ayres** had a son, also a **William**, my 3 x GGF, who partnered a **Caroline Smith**, for whom I have not found any identifying records, and I still have no idea who her family was, or what happened to their children after **Caroline's** untimely death aged in her early forties. With the exception of one!

One of their offspring, their daughter **Caroline Ayres**, partnered **James**, son of **Anthony Smith**, and so the two families were joined together once again.

Add to that my father was told by his Grandfather that our family name was **Smith** and not **Dixon**, and I knew I was in for an interesting time!

Happily, that has been resolved through DNA test results and the expertise of those with more knowledge on the subject than yours truly.

But first.....

I have taken the following extract from my book, '**But For Further Evidence**', Chapter 5, as a place to begin this update. Here then is a bit of a recap.

Clementina Loveridge was baptised at Beckley, Oxfordshire:

December 9th 1838, Lemantina daughter of Cornelius and DALITHA Loveridge, (SMITH) of Stoke Lyne near Bicester, Travelling People.

In the fullness of time she married in the Parish Church at Headington Quarry, January 31st 1859:

Thomas Smith, 23, Bach. Lab. Of Headington Quarry, father Thomas Smith (2), Labourer.

Clementina Loveridge, 21, Spr. Of Headington Quarry, father, Cornelius Loveridge, Brazier.

Witnesses were George Loveridge, and Georgina Loveridge (brother and sister I assume).

(**Dalitha**, the bride's mother, is investigated in Chapter 5, page 40, BFFE).

On the opposite page of the Marriage Register on January 9th 1860 is **Thomas'** brother:

Wisdom Smith, 31, Bach. Lab. Of Headington Quarry, father Thomas Smith (2), Lab. Priscilla Bagley, 36, Spr. Of Headington Quarry, father, Robert Bagley, Lab.

Witnesses were, Thomas Smith, and Ellen Tolley.

It seems to be accepted that **Priscilla Bagley**, **Wisdom's** bride, is the daughter of **Robert Bagley** and **Sybilina Smith**. She is a sister of **Nymphany (Anthony Smith)**, and **Bethuna Smith**.

I also believe that **DALITHA**, mother of **CLEMENTINA LOVERAGE** shown above, is yet another relative of **ANTHONY SMITH**, explaining the hereditary use of the name **QUEENATION** in his female descendants. (Chapter 5, page 39, BFFE).

There is much on the internet concerning the Bagley and wider extended family, and this record was included because of its links to the main characters.

There now follows three generations in the family of **Thomas Smith**, so they have been assigned the numbers 1, 2 and 3.

The father of both of the above grooms, **Thomas (3)** and **Wisdom**, is another **THOMAS Smith (2)**, He was the son of **JASPER Smith**, baptised in 1759 at North Marston, Buckinghamshire. Add HIS father another **THOMAS (1) Smith**, baptised like his son at North Marston, Buckinghamshire. In 1727, and you have enough of the dynasty for our purposes here!

Thomas (2) was brother to the famous **Hercules Smith**, (1779-1871) a sometime 'Drover' whose family included various sons and grandsons also described as 'Gypsy Drovers' and the subject of my previous attempt to find a link to this family. Perhaps the answer is a mixture of all these threads.

This family of **Thomas Smith** have been looked at through the prism of possible connections in the mid to late 18th century, but now I have realised that this **Smith** family in the persons of perhaps one of his grandchildren, may be connected also as the biological father of another of my ancestors.

This would mean that both of my dad's grandparents originate from the same **Smith** dynasty. More later...

I have recently broken through a brick wall of several years standing, it has to be inserted somewhere in these notes but as it covers so many 'bases', here is as good a place as any. It is a birth certificate, and doubtless will need to be referred back to!

It concerns **James**, (son of **Anthony Smith**), and wife/partner **Caroline** (daughter of **William Ayres**) and their son **Goliath**. He is I think their first-born and the only birth registration I have found for the entire family to date.

Buckingham, 9th April 1844

GOLIATH, boy, Father **JAMES SMITH**, Mother **CAROLINE** formerly **AYRES**.

Father's occupation **Drover**.

Caroline made her mark registering the birth on the 20th April.

Apart from the 1871 census when the family (minus **Goliath**) were encamped at Alperton in Middlesex. I only had the baptisms of both **James** and **Caroline** as indication to their identities as a couple, as they seem to have evaded all other records.

James being the son of **ANTHONY SMITH** and **ELIZABETH (Gray/Grey)**, whose sister **MARY** was wife/partner to my 4 x Great Grandfather **WILLIAM AYRES**. His son **WILLIAM** was father to **CAROLINE**, making the couple cousins of course.

Drover, and '**Gypsy Drover**' was the occupation of several of the menfolk in both families, but never before recorded to **James**, as it was to his father and at least one brother, **HENRY** for example (he married **CAROLINE**'s aunt **HANNAH AYRES**).

They baptised a daughter **Placenta** (yes, really!) at Aston Abbotts, Buckinghamshire, on 29th October 1843, father '**Drover** to **London**', In other of their children's baptisms, he is recorded as 'Gypsy' etc.

Caroline's brother **BENJAMIN AYRES**, and her Grandfather **WILLIAM AYRES**, were both '**Gypsy Drovers**'.

GYPSY DROVERS

The following chapter is an article I had published in '*Romany Routes*', the journal of the Romany and Traveller Family Society (Volume 14 No. 8, September 2020)

It was a long, and in the mid 19th century, hazardous journey from Wales to London with herds of livestock. Typically on foot, the journey took weeks until the railways took over the job, and being a Drover soon became a redundant occupation.

I don't suppose it stopped abruptly, and there appear to be many routes through Buckinghamshire, avoiding Tolls and built up areas for example. Names like 'Cattleford Bridge' over the Grand Junction Canal south of Leckhampstead can be considered as evidence of these routes. This example sounds like a bridge was added to an original ford, perhaps once the canal had been built.

This story is contained geographically on what is today the Ordnance Survey Landranger map 165 of Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard. It is the area in which my distant Traveller family baptised a lot of their children, being described as Travellers, Gypsies, Gypsy Drovers and Drover.

Modern maps are useful for an overview of the area, but it is the old 'one inch to the mile' of the 1880's and 1890's which erase modern topographical 'clutter', and then a world our ancestors might recognise is revealed. Modern towns revert back to the villages they grew from before absorbing the countryside around them. Names found in the censuses suddenly appear as distinct places.

A good example of this is the town of Bletchley in Buckinghamshire.

The O/S map of 1893 shows all the reasons the town was to grow and prosper. Watling Street, the old Roman Road, passes through NE/SW diagonally at Fenny Stratford, as does the Grand Junction (Union) Canal.

Nearby, Bletchley hosts a railway station at what would have been a busy junction of the main line, London and North Western Railway (L&NWR) running roughly north/south, and two others, heading west from Bletchley, the L&NWR Oxford and Bletchley Branch, and to the east the L&NWR Cambridge and Bletchley Branch. From here it is easy to imagine not only cattle, but the Brickfields and Brickworks of the locality could transport their products to a much wider market, more cheaply and quicker.

But it is the evidence of Drowsing activity on the ground and place names which are of interest to this story, with its close proximity to the railways, which probably arrived much later, eventually causing Drowsing to be non profitable.

Modern maps show Water Eaton as part of the suburbs of Bletchley, but the older map has it as a separate and distinct village to the south west, roughly the same size as the surrounding villages of Fenny Stratford, Simpson, Little Brickhill, and Newton Longville. My family are baptised in all these places, with the exception of the latter. Perhaps because the area became a terminus for the Drovers, who once would have pushed on to London's Smithfield Market for example, before the railways arrival in 1838.

In 1843, on 29th October **Henry Smith** (see following list) baptised his daughter '**Placenta**' at Aston Abbott, Buckinghamshire. 'A Droker to London', the railway had yet to have too much effect seemingly!

Immediately to the west of Water Eaton is an area called 'Cowcommon', bisected on the map by the L&NWR running north/south, but connected still by two bridges under the railway.

This looks very much like a 'Stand', or holding area for cattle. Access to it from the NW is maintained by bridges both over and under the Oxford/Bletchley line to the north.

Further to the west is 'Cowpasture Farm', near Newton Longville, perhaps a holding area to allow the beasts to recover condition and weight after the journey from Wales, to make better prices at market in London and elsewhere.

Picking up the Drovers' route from Wales at Towcester, Northamptonshire, travelling south east, towards Leighton Buzzard, Bletchley lies on this route, and there would appear to be another coming from the direction of Buckingham, via the Welsh Lane, scene of the death of Caroline Smith, William Ayres' partner.

More information on the Drovers and their routes are described by K.J. Bonser, in his book, *'The Drovers'*.

More context has been given to my distant and extended families involvement with Drovelling in the second edition of my book BFFE.

There is also an excellent website www.localedroveroads.co.uk, well worth a visit.

The notes that follow, fit family names and baptisms to the general area just described.

Here, then, is a list of selected members of the **Smith** and **Ayres** families, known to have a connection to Drovelling, or a baptism in the vicinity of Bletchley or other place known for its links. What their actual involvement was, and over what distances, can only be guessed at. I have read that extra security was required as the herds approached London, and onward to Smithfield Market in the city centre, near St. Paul's Cathedral.

The earliest census dates found referring to Drovelling, with regards to my family, are in 1841, near Silverstone, (Cattle End), Northants. Here three members of the family of **William Ayres** Snr, born 1769, give Drover as occupation.

On his death certificate in nearby Whittlebury Forest, 1843, he is noted as Drover. (The burial record says he was 'A Gypsy found dead in his tent'.) He is the first on the list.

WILLIAM AYRES (4 x Great Grandfather) born 1769, Gypsy/Drover, wife

MARY AYRES (Nee **GRAY**). Married Bletchley, Bp. Water Eaton. Drovers Wife on death certificate. (Daughter of **John** and **Mary Gray**).

BENJAMIN AYRES, son of **William** and **Mary**, Bp. Bletchley. Drover 1841 census, Silverstone, Northants.

HANNAH, daughter of William and Mary, Bp Banbury, wife of,

HENRY SMITH, Gypsy Drover, son of **ANTHONY** and **ELIZABETH** (Nee **GRAY**). Henry noted as Drover in 1841, 1851, 1861 census.

SUSANNA, daughter of **Henry** and **Hannah Smith**, Bp. Radclive. Father Gypsy Drover.

PLACENTA (aka **Lavinia**) daughter of **Henry** and **Hannah Smith** Bp. Aston Abbott, Father Drover to London.

ANTHONY (VANTONE) and **ELIZABETH SMITH** (Nee **GRAY**, sister of **Mary Ayres**) Drover in 1851 census, parents of

HENRY (above). On **Elizabeth's** death certificate 'Drovers Wife'. She was baptised at Fenny Stratford.

ANTHONY, son of **Anthony** and **Elizabeth**, bp at Bletchley. Father 'Drover' on his marriage certificate.

EMILY, daughter of **Anthony** (junior), baptised at Bletchley.

RICHARD, son of **Anthony** and **Mary** Bp. Water Eaton.

MARY ANN, daughter of **Richard Smith**, wife of **William Capel**, Drover. Married at Leighton Buzzard.

LOUISA, daughter of **William** and **Mary Ann**, baptised at Brackley.

FREDERICK, son of **William** and **Mary Ann**, baptised at Leighton Buzzard.

A further Drov ing link between the Ayres/Smith families occurs between:

JAMES SMITH, son of **Anthony** and **Elizabeth (Gray)**, and his wife,

CAROLINE AYRES, daughter of **William** and **Mary (Gray)**

The 1871 census has them on the outskirts of London at Alperton, Middlesex, where two of their children are shown as being born in the Bletchley area.

ANN, daughter of **James** and **Caroline**, born Simpson, Buckinghamshire. And
QUEENATION, daughter of **James** and **Caroline**, born Simpson, Buckinghamshire.

Finally, a child's birth registration which places **James** into this context as a Drover.

GOLIATH, son of **James** and **Caroline Smith (nee Ayres)** born Buckingham, Father's occupation, Drover.

It is now Spring in the year 2021, two years after my book '***But For Further Evidence***' was re-published, and with the wonder of DNA testing and new discoveries much can be added to this story and my place in it. Before sharing this new information, it will probably be a good idea to recap where all this started.

My father, now passed away, was told as a teenager (in about 1935 he thought) by his Grandfather **John James Dixon** that our surname was actually **Smith**. He first passed this information on to me as a teenager which, with the ignorance of youth, held little or no interest to me as I recall. Luckily it was something he repeated to me at the beginning of this research which, as you might imagine, was now extremely relevant and important to me.

It was a stand-alone piece of information with no detail attached, and since then I have until now, been down many blind alleyways.

John James Read was born in 1863, illegitimate, to **Maria Read** in Beedon, Berkshire, no father appeared on his birth certificate. His mother later married a **John Dixon**, but she died soon after a child Thomas was born to them a couple of years later.

Fast forward to 1919, and **John James** was living in Fulham and now married to **Matilda Ayres** (granddaughter of **William**). He must have got news that his 'father' was gravely ill, and made the journey to Berkshire, where, after the death, he was shown as 'Informant, present at the death' giving his name as **John James READ Dixon**, son, on the death certificate.

For some reason he felt the need to 'flag up' his illegitimacy by including his mother's name of **Read**. If **John Dixon** was his natural father, I don't understand his reason for doing this, unless he was aware by this time that his biological father was a person named **Smith**, as he later told his grandson, my father.

I had begun to form a suspicion of a possible scenario as to the identity of who this **SMITH** might be as my book '***But For Further Evidence***' was being written, in 'Chapter 2'. All this without the least proof, just circumstantial evidence and a DNA match which meant no sense to me at that time, seemingly completely unconnected.

This DNA match was apparently to a person of Traveller descent named **Smith**, he being a direct descendant of **Jasper Smith**, whose dynasty was 'Gypsy Drover' who I had eluded to as being the possible family of the **SMITH** biological father of **John James** in Chapter 2 of my book.

Since then, I have found many 'cousins' as DNA matches connected to **Jasper Smith**.

I have chosen **HERCULES** Smith, as my ancestor (grandson of **Jasper**) purely as a possible candidate and starting point for a connection to my '**SMITH**' because of his family's 'Droving' occupation (in common with my **Ayres/Smith** family), and that might still be the case. However, I soon found direct line DNA connections to me from other offspring of **Jasper**.

Hercules and partner Esther baptised a daughter, Susanna, at Southrop, on 26 Dec 1864 (born 1862). His given occupation, Cattle Driver (a Gypsy). John James was born in 1863, so Hercules would be a strong contender.

Unfortunately, I do not suppose I will ever establish which one of **Jasper's** offspring is my ancestor, I strongly suspect activity on the 'wrong side of the blanket', and unless someone with an understanding of proper interpretation of the DNA results can assist, it will probably never be resolved.

The following are the children of **Jasper Smith**, who have direct descendants I am connected to.

LUCRETIA bp 1778 Shennington, Warwickshire.

HERCULES bp 1779 Bletchington, Oxfordshire.

THOMAS b 1794 Tysoe, Warwickshire. Bp 1817 Brailes.

HARRIET bp 1791 Hook Norton, Oxfordshire.

KEZIAH bp 1796 Epwell, Oxfordshire.

Also DNA matched to a direct descendant of **JASPER**'s brother (or perhaps son) **ABSOLOM** bp 1768 also at North Marston, Buckinghamshire.

Using the Gedmatch website I have been able to identify numerous matches to my DNA who share a common link to the family of **Jasper Smith**, 16, I am assured by one of my cousins.

Through the Ancestry website, I also have a match to a person who is a direct descendant of Jasper's brother (or perhaps son) **ABSOLOM** (1768), which suggests our common ancestor to be their father **THOMAS SMITH** bp 19 April 1727 at North Marston, Buckinghamshire. Potentially he would become my 6th Great Grandfather.

All this would strongly suggest a connection to the descendants of **THOMAS SMITH**, shown on the wedding document at the beginning of this chapter, one of whom being the biological father of **JOHN JAMES READ/DIXON** my Great Grandfather.

What gives further confidence to this being the case, is the fact that the families were apparently known to one another as the beginning of this account shows, dealt with more fully in my book in Chapter 5.

As I stated in the book, I had better get used to the idea that my name is really **Smith**, only now I can say it with a bit more conviction and with it, the satisfaction of having a long standing 'hunch' confirmed, and a sense of 'coming home'.

My father also maintained that he met and remembers his Grandfather **CHARLES AYRES'** sister **REBECCA** (both children of **William Ayres**) as a small boy. He remembered her speech as "having a barely understandable and very rural dialect", his words!

After having several children, she eventually married her partner **HENRY LOVERIDGE SMITH** while working in the market gardens at Ashford, Middlesex.

He remembered her as being a bit intimidating, and she teased my dad's father Albert, (her nephew) that he ought to have the snip (not the language she actually used!) after having had such a large family herself, a bit ironic dad thought, even as a youngster, as she had an even bigger family!



Photo of Rebecca Smith nee Ayres.

This photograph was sent to me by a cousin named Gary Farnes a descendant of Rebecca, also found through DNA matching.



Rebecca Ayres, sister of Charles, my 2 x Great Grandfather, son of William Ayres and Fanny Horton. Rebecca married Henry Loveridge Smith.



Albert Dixon, my Grandfather, biological descendant of Jasper Smith. His mother was Matilda Ayres, granddaughter of William Ayres and Fanny Horton.

Additional information relating to Chapter 4

Chapter 4 can be added to considerably with the benefit of an extra couple of years' research, and DNA information.

We can revisit Donovan's Yard on Cabul Road, Battersea, at the time of the **1911** census, and the Travellers found living there. (**BFFE**)

It consisted of 21 'vans' stopping in the yard, and I have found that all but one or two, it seems, are members of one extended family, namely **Gurney, Smith, Penfold, Williams** and **Harvey**. The matriarch and patriarch on site were **AMY (Queenation)**, daughter of **Caroline (nee Ayres)** and **James Smith son of Anthony**, and her husband/partner **JOHN GURNEY**.

Caroline, you will remember, was the daughter of **William Ayres** and **Caroline Smith**, they were **QUEENATION's** grandparents.

Queenation uses the name **AMY** in later life, and a possible reason for this is offered in **BFFE, Chapter 4, page 34**.

Firstly a little on Donovan's Yard. Mr Donovan lived on site, and it would appear he rented space for Travellers to pull onto during the winter months and perhaps longer. The yard was situated by railway lines on rough ground near Clapham Junction Station.

It would appear that in earlier censuses there was another yard adjacent to 'Donovans', (Manley's Yard) which I don't think was there in 1911, perhaps acquired by Mr Donovan as the number of wagons in the yard increases somewhat by 1911. Gurling's Yard was another in Battersea used by some of the extended family.

Here is a part extract from ROMANY HERITAGE found on Facebook concerning these yards, the original source given as, '*The Victorian City, Images and Realities, Vol 1*' by H. J. Dyos. Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.

"The domesticity was less extraordinary than Wilkinson implies. However far they travelled, the Gypsies, like others of the wandering tribes, eventually retained a base to which they regularly returned".

Also presumably from the same source:

"The Battersea Gypsies camped in Donovan's Yard, a plot of ground near the South West Railway, commanding an unpicturesque prospect of palings, walls and arches. The encampment in 1900 was occupied for about six months of the year, from October til the start of the flat racing season.

It was made up of two lines of wagons broken here and there by a firewood dealers hut. The horses had been sold off to save the cost of keeping them in idleness during the cold months.

T. W. Wilkinson writing about the camp, remarked on 'The curious air of domesticity', women, most of them stamped with their tribal characteristics, sit on the steps of the wagons, some at needlework, some merely gossiping. Other housewives are engaged in the family wash. Bent over the tubs and buckets in close proximity to the fire, on which clothes are boiling briskly, they are rubbing and rinsing with a will, now and again going off for more water to a tap at one end of the ground".



Two photos of Donovan's Yard I'm told.

I have no idea how these came into my possession so cannot credit the owner as is proper.

They were supposedly taken within a couple of years of the 1911 census, and could well show Williams, Gurney, Smith and Penfold family members.

Returning to the **1911** census and the 21 'vans' listed there, here are the details, beginning in reverse order with 'vans 20 and 21 belonging to **Queenation/Amy** and **John Gurney**, showing family connections I have found to date. A detailed look at their entry is made in '***But For Further Evidence***', so an edited version is shown here. Family of **John** and **Amy** are shown in bold.

VANS 21 - 20

JOHN GURNEY and wife **AMY(QUEENATION)** with sons, ANTHONY, MANUEL, and PLATO.

VAN 19

Thomas and Jane **PENFOLD** (Nee Harvey, perhaps connected to van 9?), with sons Thomas and Belcher.

VAN 18

WILLIAM and **FANNY SMITH**. (William also known as BRINKLEY Fanny's maiden name) With sons PLATO and ALBERT.

VAN 17

EDWARD and **KATE GURNEY** with son EDWARD, and daughter QUEENIE.

VAN 16

JOHN and **LUCY GURNEY**, with daughter CONDOLIA.

VAN 15 - 14

WILLIAM and **LILY PENFOLD** (Nee GURNEY, aka MARY JANE) with family, JOHNNY, EDWARD, ARTHUR and daughters LILLY and MARY.

VAN 13 – 12 – 11

Robert and Mary Hayford

VAN 10

ANTHONY and **PHOEBE TURNER** with family, ANTHONY, NELSON, MABEL, PHOEBE, EDWARD, ALFRED, WILLIAM.

Much of importance has been discovered on this family, PHOEBE's maiden name being WILLIAMS, who also are listed here. A separate chapter will be devoted to ANTHONY and PHOEBE.

VAN 9

Frederick Harvey, with sons Stephen and Thomas (see van 19, Jane **PENFOLD** nee Harvey).

VAN 8

HENRY and **ANNIE WILLIAMS** with family, HENRY, FREDERICK, WILLIAM, EOLER(?) and CHARLES.

VAN 7

ROBERT and **CHARITY PENFOLD** with son ALBERT. **PHEOBE WILLIAMS (TURNER)** witness at their wedding.

VAN 6 (see vans 1 and 2)

VAN 5

ELIZABETH COOPER (nee WILLIAMS) with daughter PATIENCE.

VAN 4

SAMUEL and CRENDRELLA WILLIAMS with sons LEONARD and HENRY.

VAN 3

CHILES and BEATRICE SMITH with daughter BEATRICE.

VANS 1 -2 and 6

ROBERT and MARY ANN (nee WILLIAMS) PENFOLD with family POLLIE, WILLY, FREDDIE, HENRY and MOSES.

It would appear that all the WILLIAMS family shown above belong to the family of CHARLES and MARY ANN WILLIAMS.

Not in the yard, but in a '3 room flat' nearby in Battersea.

JAMES and ADA (nee GURNEY) PENFOLD with family RICHARD, ADA and SHARLOTTE.

Many of these families can be found at the same place in the earlier 1901 census, but it is one in particular which is of personal interest to me, that of **ANTHONY** and **PHOEBE TURNER**, (VAN 10 in 1911). This time they are shown in Gurling's Yard, Battersea.

Firstly, some background. **ANTHONY TURNER** has been chosen firstly to map forward the Christian name of **Anthony**, so popular within the wider family, and also because I am DNA matched with a direct descendant of his. This is a good example of how complicated Traveller families can be to the researcher! He is, I believe, son of **EDWARD SMITH**, himself the son of **JAMES** and **CAROLINE SMITH**, and brother of **QUEENATION** later to become the wife of **JOHN GURNEY**.

In the **1871** census referred to earlier, where the family of **JAMES** and **CAROLINE SMITH** were encamped at Alperton, Middlesex, at the bottom of the listing is son **EDWARD SMITH** with partner **SARAH ANN**.

EDWARD SMITH, father, married, 19, Chair Mender, born Bucks, Long Stooley
SARAH A. SMITH, mother, married, 20, Hawker, born Sussex, Brighton
ANTHONY SMITH, son, 4 mths, born Middlesex, Notting Hill

Now to explore perhaps why **ANTHONY** uses the name **TURNER** in later life.

I had a suspicion that **TURNER** was likely to be his mother's maiden name. This is not uncommon amongst Travellers for a variety of reasons as we well know.

We have seen that he uses **Turner** in the **1911** census in Donovan's Yard alongside his aunt **AMY (Queenation) Gurney**, with his family as follows. Married 16yrs, 1 child had died.

ANTHONY TURNER, head, 39, married, Licensed Hawker, born, Notting Hill
PHOEBE TURNER, wife, 32, married assists in business, born, Harnsworth, Middx.
ANTHONY TURNER, son, 14, assists parents, born Holloway
NELSON TURNER, son, 13, born Shoreham, Sussex
MABEL TURNER, dau 12, born Battersea
PHOEBE TURNER, dau 6, born Battersea
EDWARD TURNER son 4, born Battersea
ALFRED TURNER son, 2, born Battersea
WILLIAM TURNER son, 3mths, born Battersea

Now we need to look back in time to the **1901** census, this time at Gurling's Yard, Battersea.

ANTHONY TURNER, head, married, 28, Hawker, born Notting Hill
FIBSEY (sic) TURNER, wife, married, 23, born Hannoth (sic), Middx.
MABEL TURNER, dau, 2, born Battersea

Six wagons distance in the yard separates them from 2 other children in the care of:

THOMAS DEARLOVE, head, married, 21, Bricklayers lab. Born Putney
ANGELINA DEARLOVE, wife, married, 20, born Notting Hill
NELSON TURNER, nephew, 4, born Shoreham, Brighton
ANTONY TURNER, nephew, 5, born Holloway

This is possibly due to the **Dearloves** having a larger wagon, who can say! **Thomas** does not appear to come from a Traveller background according to my research, but **Angelina** certainly does. She is the daughter of **Line (John) Anonion**, Hawker, according to their marriage certificate, and was witness to her brother **John's** marriage to **Elizabeth Penfold**, daughter of **Alfred Penfold**, all Hawkers.

Angelina is the more likely to be the boys aunt here, but the connection eludes me at present. Both she and her brother John give Notting Hill as their birthplace which might be a clue to their connection.

All of the children of **Anthony** and **Phoeby Turner** were baptised showing they were living in either Gurling's Yard, or Donovan's Yard, with the exception of two of them.

CHARLES ANTHONY TURNER Bp. 1896, Islington, **Charles Anthony** and **Phoebe** (This is the only record found that shows **Charles** as primary forename.) and,

NELSON TURNER baptised 1897, Shoreham, Brighton. **Anthony** and **Phoebe**, Hawker. Collins Yard.

As all but one of the baptisms occurred within Greater London, at all times of the year, it seems likely that **Anthony** and **Phoebe** did not venture very far from the Battersea yards, with the one noticeable exception of their son **Nelson**.

If we look back to the **1871** census, we see that **Anthony's (Jnr)** mother **SARAH ANN** gives her place of birth as Brighton, Sussex. Perhaps they were visiting his mother or her family in the September of 1897 for **NELSON** to be born, Registered and Baptised so far from their home patch?

PHOEBE was **Anthony's** second wife of three. His first wife was:

MARY ANN JANWAY. Married 2 August 1891. Dau of **John William Janway**, Cab Driver

PHOEBE WILLIAMS. Married 24 December 1894. Dau of **Charles Williams**, Hawker

LUCY WILLIAMS. Married 25 November 1917, witnessed by **Robert** and **ADA (GURNEY) PENFOLD**

Following the sad loss of his first wife **Mary Ann**, and 20 plus years of marriage to **PHOEBE, Anthony** finally marries what appears on the face of it to be a relation of his late wife at the age of 46. Neither **Lucy** nor **Anthony** give details of their Fathers on the marriage certificate

Common to all three marriages, is the fact that **Anthony** uses **Turner** as his surname, and does not disclose his father's name, leaving the name and profession blank (as does **Lucy** on the same certificate), except that on the certificate with **Lucy**, where **Anthony's** fathers name should be written, you can read a crossed out **SARAH ANN TURNER**. Significant surely?

According to the **1871** census which shows **Anthony** as a child of 4mths, to parents **Edward** and **Sarah A. Smith**, what could have caused him not to adopt or use the name **Smith**?

Whatever happened in his life, it was significant enough to not recognise **Edward** as his

father, but not serious enough to involve his father's sister **AMY/QUEENATION**, who he stopped alongside of in Donovan's Yard in 1911.

Turner was very probably his mother's maiden name, (see marriage certificate details to **Lucy Williams**) and it is this, seemingly, that he has reverted to.

A clue might be in the following marriage certificate.

A couple of pages back I gave the birth details of **GOLIATH SMITH**, son of **JAMES** and **CAROLINE**. He would be older brother to **Anthony's** father **Edward**.

Banbury, Oxfordshire. March 2, 1874. Between:

GOLIATH SMITH, 33, Bach. Lab. Father **James Smith**, Lab.

SARAH ANN TURNER, 23, Sp. Father **Charles Turner**, Saw Sharpener.

The likelihood of two brothers partnering different women named **Sarah Ann Turner** of the same age (1851) must be fairly remote to be coincidence I would have thought!

Anthony would have been 3-4 years old at the time of the wedding.

Goliath and **Sarah Ann** seem to vanish from the records thereafter, perhaps after changing their names. Doubtless there is a story there alright!

ANTHONY TURNER died on 5th Jan 1925, in Balham, SW Battersea. The address given was 46 Ouseley Road, Balham, which was the St James' Infirmary. (It was expanded and became known as a Hospital in 1946, with the formation of the NHS) and was associated with Garratt Lane Workhouse at that time.

Incidentally, his aunt **Queenation's** husband **John Gurney** also died there in 1913. His address was given as Donovan's Yard at that time.

However, **ANTHONY's** address at the time of his death is given as 50 Brougham Street, Battersea, a General Dealer. The 'Informant' was **M. A. Penfold**, Niece, of 90 Mills Yard, Battersea.

Amy (Queenation) Gurney, his aunt, was also living at 50 Brougham Street at the time of her death on 14 September 1921, 4 years earlier, and a widow by this time.

Twenty six years after the death of **Anthony Turner**, I was born a little over half a mile away in Weir Maternity Hospital, Balham, another Anthony!

At the beginning of this update I referred to **Delitha Smith** as possible family of **Aquilla Smith**. She was born somewhere between 1781 and 1796, at Finmere, Oxfordshire, according to her census entries, with much variation on her age.

Her burial record at Bicester on 3 June 1879 records her aged 98, giving a birth date of 1781. I think this a bit suspect!

She Baptised a daughter, also named **Delitha**, without mention of a father on 12 October 1809, at Oddington, Oxfordshire.

'**DELITHA**, natural daughter of **DELITHA SMITH**, a Gypsy woman'.

More background can be found on page 21, Chapter 2, '**But For Further Evidence**'.

Another researcher has an alternative family for **DELITHA** senior. They give her as **DELIPHIS**, born 1791 (but agrees with) Finmere, Oxfordshire.

Her father is given as **JAMES 'Gemmy the Gypsy' SMITH**, who died at Launton, Oxfordshire. and was buried there on 16 January 1830.

Perhaps the truth lies between the two of us, if **James** was a brother or other relation of **AQUILLA**?

He died at Launton, Oxfordshire, a place of some significance for the family of **Anthony Smith** at that time and in future years.

This alternative information is significant for me also, as this **JAMES SMITH**, is a direct ancestor of two DNA matches to me, one being a researcher whose pedigree looks to be close to pure Romany Traveller.

None of his other named family has any connection to me as far as can be seen.

The first thing to strike me with this **James Smith** is his nickname of '**Gemmy the Gypsy**'. There was nothing given to qualify this, and possibly it was a common name for any Gypsy named James!

I'm thinking of the **James 'Jemmy the Gypsy' Ayres** I have written about previously, caught sheep stealing with **Tankerfield Hearn**. Both were convicted at Aylesbury on 7 March 1795.

'**Jemmy the Gypsy' Ayres** was born in 1727 (giving an age of 67 at the time of his trial). '**Gemmy the Gypsy' Smith** was born in 1767 at Newbold on Avon, Warwickshire, so there is not any cause to think they could be the same person, however, he had a father also called James born around the right time!

The Baptism of this **DELEPHIS SMITH** took place at Finmere, Oxfordshire, on 26 February 1791.

DELEPHIS, daughter of **James** and **Ann Smith**.

Talking to a new-found cousin some time ago, after coming together through DNA, she told me I would soon discover I was related to 'half the Traveller world'!

How true that statement was to prove itself, and I'm looking forward to the task of trying to make sense of how some of these DNA results fit into my world.

Happily, a greater number make absolute sense, enabling me to say with confidence that I now know where and who I come from, meeting with cousins from the Travelling community who have literally changed the way I perceive myself, and my place within that world.

On page 98, of my first book, '**But For a Little More Evidence**', the opening words of the chapter are, "I am not a Gypsy". Despite knowing that a part of my ancestry definitely was Gypsy/Traveller, I thought it fraudulent to describe myself so. I was not raised that way and had not experienced the lifestyle nor endured the hardship and discrimination, and of course pride that I felt moulded people into who and what they are.

I had heard all about 'them and us' though, from my Irish grandmother, who experienced the 'no dogs, no Irish' era, and more indelible to my young mind the stories she told of the family living in Mary's Lane, Dublin, at the time of 'The Easter Rising' in 1916.

Their tenement apartment lay on the short route between The General Post Office and The Four Courts, where a lot of the worst violence took place. British soldiers burst in and violently beat senseless my Great Grandfather with their rifle butts in front of the whole family for no reason, she said, and they were terrified. She was 8 years old.

As you might imagine, I grew up with a sense of shame, anger and confusion at the actions of the country of my birth. I did not understand the politics of course, simply on a personal level, and a hatred of injustice in the wider world was born.

I could not call myself Irish, I thought, although I was connected to that country, and here now was another example of connection without belonging, within the Travelling community.

That was then, this is now. As a grown up I can fix the Irish issue with citizenship, which I am entitled to, in the same moment I know I do not have to, although I can, it's an attitude, that's all.

Similarly, this journey has given me a degree of what I consider (although others may disagree) of 'Gypsy Citizenship' from the people I have met along the way. 'A Gypsy is someone related to another Gypsy', is something I have heard many times. My South and West Asian DNA sits happily alongside my Irish DNA, and of course my Englishness.

Back in 2012, I think I must have just had an article published in the Romany and Traveller Family History Society magazine 'Romany Routes', because soon afterwards I was contacted by Charlie and Kathleen Harris, settled Travellers from South Devon. Settled only in the physical sense, but living as close to their culture as it is possible to be.

I was due to play with a band at the upcoming Clovelly Folk Festival in North Devon at that time and coincidentally Charlie and Kathleen were coming up to North Devon themselves for the event, so we arranged to meet up.

I was standing on the quay down at the harbour when they walked through the archway at the Red Lion, and came straight up to me amongst the people mingling there. We had never met before, but Kathleen said she felt an immediate connection right then, and it has proved that way ever since.

Charlie is an accomplished singer and musician, and Kathleen a fine step-dancer. Underscoring all that is their willingness to share all the aspects of their Romany lives with me. They have shown me so much of where I have come from just by being themselves, and you cannot get that from books or the internet.

From time to time I would share some of my DNA matched new-found 'cousins' with them in case the names meant anything to them. On one occasion, about seven years after meeting for the first time, I was asking about a particular Hampshire family. Imagine our surprise to learn this person was also Charlie's cousin too from his fathers side!

In that moment we went from *cushti pals*, to '*my old cousin*'.

A couple of years previously, Charlie and Kathleen had attended my dad's funeral as my good friends, there to show their respect and support which meant the world to me, not knowing until much later that they actually came as proper family to my dad.
Priceless.



Kathleen and Charlie Harris