

William Edmund May



Henry and Rebecca registered the birth in Burneston of William Edmund, their sixth child and fourth son, in the Jan-Mar quarter of 1862 in the district of Bedale.^v He is recorded as a 5 year old boy at home for the 1871 census, and ten years later as a nurseryman.^v Where William was for the 1881 census is not known, but it is likely that he may have joined the army –a very different occupation to that of his father. But at this stage, this is speculation based on the 1901 census.

What we do know is that William was in Leeds for the 1891 census, as head of the household at 40 Close Street, North Leeds.^v

William E May	28	Club Storekeeper	Burneston
Elizabeth Hiscox	35	Housekeeper	Leeds
George W Hiscox (Adopted Son)	12	Scholar	Leeds

This census records William as being Single and Elizabeth Hiscox as being Married. What is not clear is whether William has adopted George or he is Elizabeth's adopted son. This query has been resolved by checking up on Elizabeth in earlier census returns.

The 1881 census clearly identifies (or at least does not indicate otherwise) that George was Elizabeth's son, that Elizabeth was married to one John Hiscox, and that the family was living 3 Lorraine Place Leeds^v

John Hiscox	37	Bricklayer's Labourer	Frome, Somerset
Elizabeth Hiscox	27		Leeds
Hannah E Hiscox	5	Scholar	Leeds
George W Hiscox	2	Scholar	Leeds
Henry Slater (Lodger)	36	Labourer Leather Trade	Bradford

How come, then that Elizabeth, married, was housekeeping for William May in 1891, and where were daughter Hannah and husband John. To answer the query about Hannah – there is a registration at Leeds for the 1883 Apr-Jun quarter of the death of Hannah Elizabeth Hiscox, aged 7^v Elizabeth's husband John has been located in the 1891 census as an inmate of the Leeds Union Infirmary.^v So he was clearly unwell at the time – perhaps so unwell that William (whether formally or not) took on the responsibility for George Hiscox.

William next appears in the 1901 census, as we have noted above, at Burneston with his older brother John Henry and sister Rebecca.^v

John Henry May	40	Nurseryman Gard (Employer)	Burneston
Rebecca May (Sister)	41	Housekeeper	Burneston
William May (Brother)(Wid)	39		Ex Sergeant Ret (S ?? Account??) Burneston

This census return brings us back to the questions of when William joined/retired from the army, what the indecipherable words are, and whether the club he was running in Leeds was an army club. Of much greater interest is that if William was a widow, who had he married between 1891 and 1901? Very interestingly a check of the FreeBMD reveals the registration of a marriage in Leeds in the 1892 Jun-Sep quarter between one Elizabeth Hiscox and one William Edmund May - mystery solved.^{viii} Elizabeth's husband must have died sometime between April 1891 and the date of her second marriage. And, in turn, sometime between 1892 and 1901 Elizabeth died, but no record of this has yet been found.



George W Hiscox



Just to complete this part of the story, William's adopted son had set up house and married by the time of the 1901 census. He and his wife Ellen were living at 21 Wolsley Terrace, North West Leeds.^{ix}

George W Hiscox	22	Cloth Cutter Tailor	Leeds
Ellen Hiscox	25		Leeds

According to Kelly's 1908 Directory, George is still a tailor, now residing at 9 Wolsley Terrace.^v

It is likely that Ellen's maiden name was Chadwick, as a marriage between George William Hiscox and Ellen Chadwick was registered at Leeds in the Apr-Jun quarter of 1900.^x Pending confirmation of this registration

and the census return of 1881, Ellen was probably the daughter of William and Eliza Chadwick. The family was living at Strawberry Cottage, next to the household of the Vicar of Buslingthorpe, in North West Leeds.^{xii}

William Chadwick	29	Gardener	Leeds
Eliza Chadwick	31		London, Middlesex
John J Chadwick	8	Scholar	Leeds
Ellen Chadwick	6	Scholar	Leeds
Willie Chadwick	2		Leeds
Walter Shillito (B-in-L)	19	Stuff Dyer	Leeds

Also listed at Strawberry Cottage was another head of household, Thomas Chadwick, aged 36, also of Leeds, and also a gardener, and probably William's older brother. The fact that both were gardeners gives some compelling argument for Ellen being George's wife.



ⁱ FreeBMD Birth Index

ⁱⁱ RG10/4866/p11; RG11/4871/p10; RG12/4028/p8.

ⁱⁱⁱ RG12/3701/p22.

^{iv} RG11/4529/p31.

^v FreeBMD Death Index.

^{vi} RG12/3696/p4.

^{vii} RG13/4598/p1.

^{viii} FreeBMD Marriage Index.

^{ix} RG13/4232/p4.

^x Kelly's 1908 Directory of West Riding of Yorkshire, Vol 2, p416.

^{xi} FreeBMD Index.

^{xii} RG11/4529/p18.