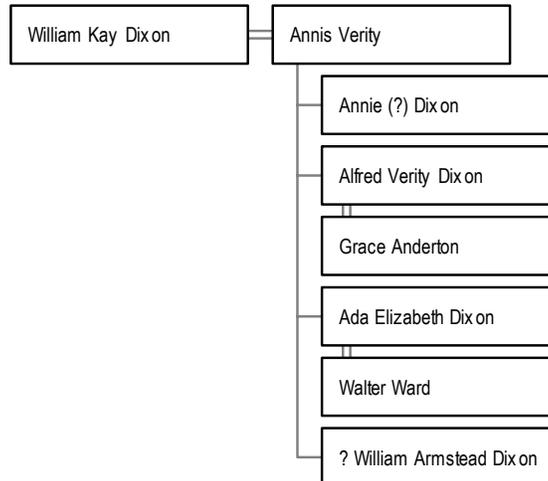


William Kay Dixon



William Kay Dixon, born about 1836 at Leeds was found at home with his parents Elizabeth and John Dixon for the 1841 census but was not listed with the household for the 1851 census as he was at that time enrolled at Bramham College, seemingly a school for the children of reasonably well off parents.¹

William K Dixon 13 Scholar Leeds

At this stage there is no record as to whether his brothers later also went to this College. Were William's parents financially able to pay the fees, at least when William was enrolled? If not, was there some benefactor who paid for William to go to the College, an account of which follows.

During its short life, Bramham College attracted the sons of many leading Yorkshire families before being forced to close after falling into decline following a severe epidemic of cholera in 1869. Several pupils died and are buried next to their Headmaster under the yew tree to the east end of Bramham Church; others were sent home and never returned.



Originally opened in 1842/3, when Dr Benjamin Bentley Haigh leased Bramham Biggin and 130 acres of parks and gardens and moved his school from Grimston Lodge, Tadcaster, the College quickly earned a reputation as a happy, well ordered school, and flourished. Dr Haigh, who was known as an "old-fashioned gentleman" with high standards, spent a great deal of his own money extending, upgrading and converting the Biggin. Several memoirs, by his deputy the Rev Stephen Wilson and a number of former pupils, eulogize over the facilities, rooms, and gardens, as well as confirming the excellence of the education in the College. The College was an impressive building, containing a hall (60 x 30x 24 feet), theatre, gymnasium and cloisters in addition to classrooms and living quarters and an excellent library of over 20,000 volumes. Its refectory (60 x 35 x 22 feet) was much admired, built in the Grecian style, with elegant decorations and a huge glass dome which rose to the height of two storeys. Such was Dr Haigh's pride in this room that no one, himself included, was allowed to enter the refectory except in slippers. The classical tradition was kept

by calling rooms after Greek cities. The curriculum included Greek, Latin, French and German (Dr Haigh was an outstanding linguist); algebra, ancient and modern history, geography, penmanship, astronomy, book-keeping, music, drawing, dancing and horse riding. Football was very popular. On Sunday mornings the boys were paraded to the parish church, the Wesleyan Chapel - or taken the lengthy walk to the Congregational Church in Boston Spa!

After 1869, when cholera visited and Dr Haigh died, the College never recovered its popularity, declining and eventually closing. After lying derelict for some years, it was dismantled entirely so that its stone could be used in the rebuilding of Bramham Park around 1907. Even its admired rustic lodge and gateposts disappeared, leaving only the Biggin in its original state.

One of Dr Haigh's improvements, however, did live on, to the great advantage of the village. To light his College and house, he had installed a gas supply, later maximizing his investment by providing gas from his works at the College to the Bramham Consumers' Gas Company, formed in 1860

After presumably completing his education William returned home where he has been located in the 1861 Census, at 1 West Hillary Street, West Ward, Leeds as a 24 year old man, working as a wool sorter.[#]

William has been very difficult to trace in the census returns after 1861. However there is a marriage registration in the Leeds District for 1862 between a William Kay Dixon and Annis Verity which, on following up, confirms that indeed William did marry. According to the marriage certificate he and Annis Verity were married on 21st May 1862 at the Leeds Register Office when he was 25 and his bride was 19 years old. William occupation was listed as Wool Warehouseman, and he was living at home prior to his wedding. Annis was not given an occupation although as we will find out she was working in 1861, she was resident at 35 Burley Lawn, and her father (deceased) had worked as Builder and Contractor.[#] The two witnesses were Thomas Moore and Violet Foster, the latter being a young woman of 16, working as a nursemaid at the Royal Hotel, Kirkgate.^{iv}

I have been able to trace Annis's family prior to her marriage to William. The 1841 census, before Annis was born, has her parents and children living at Town Street, Rothwell, on the southern outskirts of Leeds.^v

James Verity	30	Stone Mason
Elizabeth Verity	30	
Sarah Verity	9	
Gervase Verity	8	
James Verity	6	
Bessy Verity	1	

1851 finds Elizabeth Verity in straitened circumstances - a widow and a Pauper, with an increased number of mouths to feed, including young Annis, whose birth was registered in the Jul-Sep quarter of 1843.^{vi} Elizabeth is still living at Town Street, Rothwell.^{vii}

Elizabeth Verity (W)	41	Pauper	Rothwell
Sarah Verity	19		Rothwell
Jarvis Verity	17	Mason's Labourer	Rothwell
James Verity	16	Mason's Labourer	Rothwell
Bessy Verity	10		Rothwell
Annis Verity	7	Scholar	Rothwell
Jane Ann Verity	6	Scholar	Rothwell
Arabella Verity	4		Rothwell
Joseph Verity	10mos		Rothwell

A Hunslet death registration for the Apr-Jun quarter of 1849 may be that of father James, and if so, Elizabeth would have been pregnant with the youngest child when she was widowed.^{viii}

Checking to see how Elizabeth was faring ten years later finds her, for the 1861 census, living alone at Armitage Yard, Rothwell, working as a Needle Woman.^{ix}

Apart from Annis I have not followed up on any of the children. For the 1861 census Annis was employed in the household of John Scott, at 60 Victoria Road Headingley.^x

John Scott	36	Woollen Cloth Merchant	Donn. Ireland
Harriet Scott	33		Donn. Ireland
John Scott	7	Scholar	Leeds
Mary Scott (Sis)	42		Donn. Ireland
Isabella Scott (Sis)	33		Donn. Ireland
Annis Verity	19	House Servant	Rothwell

Given John Scott's occupation, it is possible that it was through this connection that Annis and William met.

From here on things get a bit tricky in trying to follow William and Annis, neither being found in the 1871 census. So I checked again on Annis's mother who, according to the Ancestry cover sheet, was sharing a house with a family called Piron. However, on checking the census form, it is clear that the transcriber had a problem – and Piron actually is Dixon. This family group was living back at Town Street, Rothwell.^{vi}

Elizabeth Verity (W)	61	Needle Woman	Rothwell
Annis Dixon (Daug) (M)	28	Domestic Servant	Rothwell
Annie (GdDaug)	8	Scholar	Leeds
Alfred V Dixon (GdSon)	6	Scholar	Leeds
Ada E Dixon (GdDaug)	1	Scholar	Leeds

Annis is listed as daughter but, in fact was Elizabeth's daughter-in-law. And from this return we learn that William and Annis had three children by 1871. But where was William and why was Annis working as a domestic servant? Perhaps William was unfit for work because by the 1881 census Annis was a widow, although in the ten year period had borne at least one more child. She and three of her four children were residing with William Armstead at 4 Carlton Lane, Rothwell.^{vii}

Wm Armstead (W)	77	Rope and Twine Maker	Carlton
Annis Dixon (W)	38	Housekeeper	Rothwell
Alfred V Dixon (Boarder)	16	Rope and Twine Maker	Leeds
Ada E Dixon (Boarder)	11	Scholar	Leeds
William A Dixon (Boarder)	4	Scholar	Rothwell

A Wortley death registration for the Jan-Mar quarter of 1880 proved not to be that of William Dixon. It may be, of course, that he and Annis had split up. It is probably no coincidence that Annis had found work with William Armstead, as her son William's middle name was Armstead, according to the birth registration for Hunslet for the 1877 Apr-Jun quarter and confirmed by the birth certificate, authenticated by the mark of the mother Annis Dixon. William Armstead Dixon was born 13th March 1877 at Rothwell. In registering the birth Annis did not nominate a father.^{viii}

I thought this was the end of the line for me as far as Annis was concerned. As Annis Dixon she had not been located in the 1891 census, nor had a death registration been found for her. As a last resort I looked up William Armstead in the 1891 census and, lo and behold, such a person was found, together with his mother Annice Armstead, living at 4 Carlton Lane (Mount of Olive), Rothwell, although since the previous census Annis, who is described as a widow, has only aged by 8 years!^{ix}

Annice Armstead (W)	46	Retired Rope and Twine Maker	Rothwell
William Armstead	14	Solicitor's Clerk	Leeds
Tom Gilles (Lodger)(W)	54	Plumber and Gas Fitter	Leeds

Going back ten years, what was the actual relationship between William Armstead and Annis, when she was his housekeeper, and was he perhaps William Armstead Dixon's father? If both Annis and William abandoned the Dixon name and referred to themselves as Armstead, did William make an honest woman of Annis? I have located a marriage registration for a William Armstead and Annice Dixon for the Oct-Dec quarter of 1882 at Rothwell which, on being followed up, reveals that indeed William Armstead did marry Annice. The marriage certificate records that, at the respective ages of 77 and 40, they were married on 24th December 1882 at the Parish Church, Rothwell. William is described as a widower and a twine maker which was the same occupation as his listed father George Armstead. Annice is described as a 40 year old widow, and the daughter of James Verity, stone mason. The marriage took place after the calling of banns, and the witnesses were Joseph Gibson Verity (who made his mark and who was probably Annis's young brother) and Edwin Whitehead.^x

This would confirm that first husband, William Kay Dixon, probably died sometime before 1874, and also serves to strongly suggest that William Armstead was the father of young William Armstead Dixon. Not surprisingly given William Armstead's age, it was a short lived marriage, because as we have seen, Annis was again a widow by 1891 but this time not as housekeeper but retired from the same occupation that her second husband William Armstead was involved with in 1881. However, I have obtained no record to confirm William Armstead's death but he may be the William Armstead whose death at age 80 was registered at Hunslet for the Oct-Dec quarter of 1884.^{xi}

I have not found Annis in the 1901 census, but I think I have located William (transcribed as Armistead), living with a couple called Berry, again at Carlton Lane, Rothwell.^{xii}

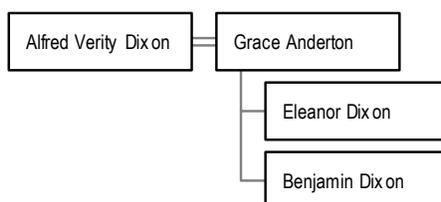
Charles Berry	51	Coal Miner Hewer	Rothwell
Annie Berry	52		Rothwell

As William was recorded as being both a single man and a son-in-law, suggests that both his parents have died by this time and the Berry's have, legally or otherwise, adopted William as their own.

Now this really does seem to be the end of the line for Annis and, until the 1911 census, for William (Dixon) Armstead. I have not followed up on her daughter Annie Dixon because this was such a common name that a search is a problem. However, I have been able to advance somewhat with the other two children, Alfred and Ada.



Alfred Verity Dixon



Until I checked the birth registrations, I did not know that Alfred's middle name was Verity, for his maternal grandmother. He was born in the 1864 Apr-Jun quarter, and the event was registered in the Leeds district.^{xvii} For the 1871 and 1881 census nights he was with his mother and siblings^{xviii} but by the time of the 1891 census Alfred had left home and was a married man living with his wife and baby daughter at 6 Melbourne Street, Rothwell.^{xix}

Alfred V Dixon	26	Gardener	Leeds
Grace Dixon	28		Prescot, Lancashire
Eleanor Dixon	1	Scholar	Roby, Lancashire

Some time after April 1881 Alfred moved to the Liverpool district and that is where his future wife hailed from and where his daughter was born. Again he would have moved, this time back to Leeds, some time after the birth of Eleanor and before the census was taken in April 1891. In 1881 Alfred had been literally 'learning the ropes' from William Armstead. However, by 1891 he had become a gardener.

Alfred married Grace Anderton on 21st April 1889 at St Peter's, Liverpool. There respective ages were 25 and 26 and at the time of the marriage Alfred was listed as living at Vine Street and Grace at St John Street (presumably both close to her parents' house). Grace's father Henry Anderton was a Toolmaker and, interestingly, Alfred's father was in the same business as his son – Gardener. There were two witnesses to the ceremony – an Elias Williams and a Margaret Tweedie who made her mark. The birth of Alfred's and Grace's first child happened very shortly thereafter in the Jul-Sep quarter of the same year.^{xxi} Grace was, in fact, a couple of years older than Alfred, her birth having been registered in the Prescot district for the Oct-Dec quarter of 1862. Her parents were Henry and Mary Anderton, and the family was living at 6 Squires Place, Prescot in April 1871.^{xxii}

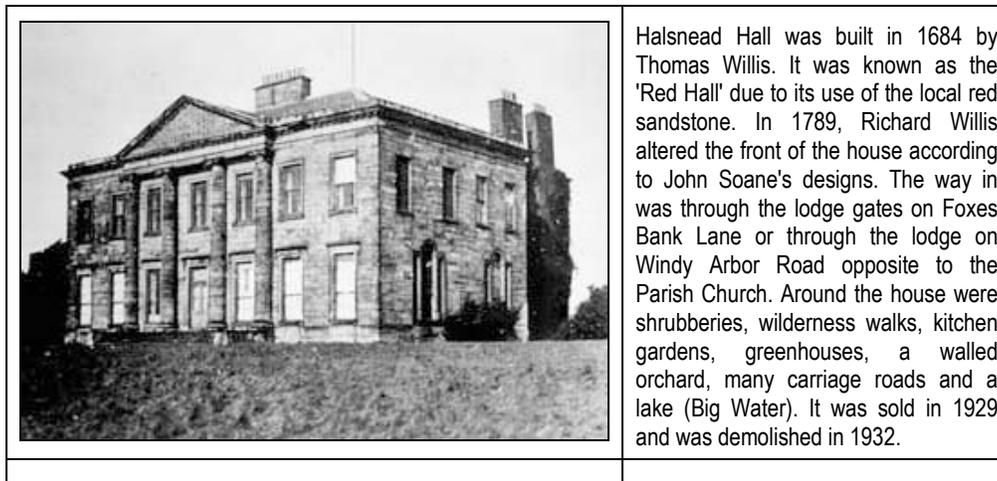
Henry Anderton	40	Watch and Clock Tool Maker	Prescot
Mary Anderton	38		Prescot
Grace Anderton	8	Scholar	Prescot
Benjamin Anderton	7	Scholar	Prescot
Mary Alice Anderton	3	Scholar	Prescot
Annie Anderton	7 mos		Prescot

By the time of the next census Grace had landed herself something of a plumb job, albeit a rather lowly position, within the household of the County Magistrate, the owner of Halsnead Hall, in the village of Whiston, just outside of Prescot.

Henry Rudolph D'Anjin Willis	45	County Magistrate	Feniscowles, Lancashire
Alice Willis	40		Northenden, Cheshire
Georgina Frances D'Anjin Willis	11		Scotland
Richard Atherton D'Anjin Willis	10		Halewood, Lancashire
Eleanor Jane Kyrre	32	Governess	Douglas, Isle of Man
James Symington	73	Gardener	Scotland
Elizabeth Symington	52	Housekeeper	Kendal, Westmoreland
Sarah Nixon	28	Cook	Malpas, Cheshire
Emma Burrins	23	Lady's Maid	Frampton, Dorsetshire

Mary Harrison	26	Laundry Maid	Carlton, Lancashire
Martha Annie Parr	22	Housemaid	Chester
Emily Elizabeth Dennis	18	Housemaid	Liverpool
Mary Brown	20	Schoolroom Maid	Tilly, Shropshire
Grace Anderton	19	Kitchen Maid	Prescot
Agnes Jane Symington (Boarder)	15	Pupil Teacher	Shropshire
Robert Evans	25	Footman	Monmouthshire

The following photograph and text have been sourced via the Internet.^{xxiii}



Halsnead Hall was built in 1684 by Thomas Willis. It was known as the 'Red Hall' due to its use of the local red sandstone. In 1789, Richard Willis altered the front of the house according to John Soane's designs. The way in was through the lodge gates on Foxes Bank Lane or through the lodge on Windy Arbor Road opposite to the Parish Church. Around the house were shrubberies, wilderness walks, kitchen gardens, greenhouses, a walled orchard, many carriage roads and a lake (Big Water). It was sold in 1929 and was demolished in 1932.

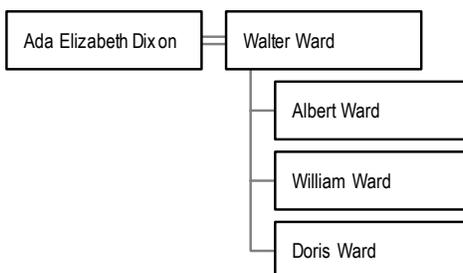
By the time of the 1891 census Alfred and Grace's family had increased by one son – Benjamin, whose birth was registered in the Apr-Jun quarter of 1893 at Hunslet. The family had moved from Rothwell to Cheadle, which by the last late 1900s had developed from a quiet backwater to a well populated township, with many large detached and semi-detached houses or 'villas' having been built to house the wealthier tradespeople who commuted to work by train and later motor-car.

It may have been one of these 'magnates' who had employed Alfred. It is interesting to note that a number of Alfred's immediate neighbours for the 1901 census were employed in the various horticultural positions. Alfred and Grace were living at 22 Ravenoak Road.^{xxiv}

Alfred V Dixon	36	Domestic Gardener	Leeds
Grace Dixon	36		Prescot, Lancashire
Eleanor Dixon	11		Roby, Lancashire
Benjamin Dixon	8		Rothwell



Ada Elizabeth Dixon



A birth registration for Ada Elizabeth Dixon was lodged in the Leeds district in the Oct-Dec quarter of 1869.^{xxv} She was the third known child of William Kay Dixon and Annis, and the second daughter. Like her older brother Alfred, she was with their mother for the 1871 and 1881 census nights^{xxvi}, but also like Alfred she had left home by April 1891 and had married. In fact she was living in the same street at her older brother – at number 8 Melbourne Street, Rothwell.

Walter Ward	21	Coal Miner	Carlton, Yorkshire
Ada E Ward	21		Leeds

There were a number of other people on the same census page also employed in the coal industry, not surprisingly, as Rothwell had a long history of coal mining going back some 600 years. There were many

local pits including the Fanny, the Rose, and Rothwell Water Haigh.^{xxvii}

The couple would have been married for less than one year when the census was taken according a registration in the Wakefield district for the Apr-Jun quarter of 1890. The marriage took place in Christ Church, Lofthouse, a village between the cities of Leeds and Wakefield and close to Rothwell on 3rd May 1890 when both bride and groom were aged twenty and both living in Carlton. Walter, like his father-in-law Joseph Ward was a miner. Ada was listed as a domestic servant. This time the father William Dixon is described as a Band Spinner. Witnessing the event were a Mary Sykes and Ada's brother Alfred Verity Dixon. It may be significant on neither Alfred's nor Ada's marriage certificates was it stated that their father had died – but such a notation was not necessarily added to certificates.^{xxviii}

Ada's young man was a couple of months younger than her, his birth having been registered in the Wakefield district in the Jan-Mar quarter of 1870.^{xxix} He was one of at least seven children born to Joseph and Mary Ward. In 1871, Walter's first census, he was found with his family lodging at the Prince of Wales pub, Carlton. The Sidebottom children may have been Mary Ward's children by an earlier marriage. By the time of the next census the youngest of these has taken on the surname Ward.^{xxx}

Joseph Ward	46	Coal Miner	Ouzelwell Green, Yorkshire
Mary Ward	41		Carlton
John Ward	20	Coal Miner	Carlton
William Ward	19	Coal Miner	Carlton
Ellen Ward	12	Factory Hand	Carlton
Nancy Ward	3	Scholar	Carlton
Walter Ward	1		Carlton
Ann Sidebottom (Dau)	14	Factory Hand	Carlton
Sarah H Sidebottom (Dau)	11	Scholar	Rothwell
Charles Sidebottom (Son)	7	Scholar	Rothwell

The Ward family is still in Carlton, but now in Town Street, ten years later. The eldest children are now in work, with son George following in the trade of his father and Ellen in the bookbinding trade.^{xxxi}

Joseph Ward	66	Coal Miner	Ouzelwell Green, Yorkshire
Mary Ward	51		Carlton
Ellen Ward	22	Match Factory Hand	Carlton
Charles S Ward	17	Coal Miner	Rothwell
Nancy Ward	13		Carlton
Walter Ward	11		Carlton
Jane Ward	8		Carlton

Within seven years of their marriage three children were born to Ada and Walter – Albert in 1892, William in 1895 and Doris in 1897.^{xxxii} The family is together for the 1901 census, still in Melbourne Street, this time at number 13.^{xxxiii}

Walter Ward	31	Coal Miner Hewer	Wakefield
Ada Elizabeth Ward	31	Scholar	Woodhouse, Leeds
Albert Ward	9		Rothwell
William Ward	5		Rothwell
Doris Ward	2		Rothwell

I have tentatively tried to follow this family post-1901 census. A Wakefield death registration for the 1902 Oct-Dec quarter for a Walter Ward has been followed up and tells a sad story. The death certificate records that Walter Ward, a 32 year old male, employed as a bricklayer's labourer of Hallibay(?) Row, Chald Lane, Wakefield died on 27th October 1902 at Clayton's Hospital, Victoria Square, Wakefield. The cause of death was given in some detail as "Septic intoxication from the Bladder following accidental fracture of the Spine through the collapse of a defective scaffold on which he was working in a Malt Kiln. Lived 3 weeks". An inquest into this industrial accident was conducted on 29th October and it is hoped, but not likely, that Walter's employer was duly punished, and/or was made to compensate Walter Ward's family for the loss of their chief breadwinner.^{xxxiv}



ⁱ HO107/1346/2/-F27/p26; HO107/2352/27/p27.

ⁱⁱ RG9/3393/p25.

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- ⁱⁱⁱ Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD 269415.
- ^{iv} RG9/3371/p24.
- ^v HO107/1269/15/p6.
- ^{vi} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{vii} HO107/2316/p5.
- ^{viii} FreeBMD Death Index.
- ^{ix} RG9/3359/p3.
- ^x RG9/3353/p15.
- ^{xi} RG10/4517/p3.
- ^{xii} RG11/4494/p32.
- ^{xiii} Certified copy of Birth Certificate BXCC595030.
- ^{xiv} RG12/3668/p16.
- ^{xv} Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD379494.
- ^{xvi} FreeBMD Death Index.
- ^{xvii} RG13/4199/p18.
- ^{xviii} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{xix} RG10/4517/p3; RG11/4494/p32.
- ^{xx} RG12/3668/p5.
- ^{xxi} FreeBMD Marriage Index; Liverpool:2122LP/82/258; FreeBMD Birth Index; certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD311249.
- ^{xxii} RG10/3861/p2.
- ^{xxiii} <http://history.knowsley.gov.uk>.
- ^{xxiv} RG13/3301/p26.
- ^{xxv} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{xxvi} RG10/4517/p3; RG11/4494/p32.
- ^{xxvii} Coal production stopped on 9th December 1983. In 1995, Leeds City Council and Leeds Groundwork formed a partnership which, together with local residents and community groups, transformed the former colliery into a 50 hectare country park.
- ^{xxviii} FreeBMD Marriage Index; Leeds:CE106/280. The reason for the marriage being registered in the Wakefield district is that Lofthouse is in the Leeds Metropolitan District but with a Wakefield postal address. Certified copy of Marriage Certificate MXD311237.
- ^{xxix} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{xxx} RG10/4630/p17.
- ^{xxxi} RG11/4577/p19. As a Ruling Machine Feeder, Mary would have operated a machine which automatically drew lines on the page – e.g. for exercise books.
- ^{xxxii} FreeBMD Birth Index.
- ^{xxxiii} RG13/4199/p4.
- ^{xxxiv} FreeBMD Death Index; certified copy of Death Certificate DYB587715.