

## The Croziers of Northumberland and Durham

The Croser / Crosier / Crozier family seem to have lived in the area around Newcastle over a number of generations from the seventeenth century, if not earlier. The small village of Wickham, in County Durham lay on the south side of the river Tyne. The Wickham registries contain numerous Crosers / Crosiers / Croziers, whose births, christenings, marriages and burials appear in church records over more than 200 years between about 1580 and 1800.

In February 1709 a John Croser married Rosamund Foster in Wickham and it seems likely that this was the start of the use of the name "Foster" as a first name in the family over subsequent generations? A son born in 1714 was named Foster Croser and he seems to have been the first to carry this name, which crops up repeatedly over many generations that followed. John himself was probably born around 1686 (there is a baptismal date of 16<sup>th</sup> May that year) and his father was another John Croser (B 1652). His mother may have been Ann Bewley, but this is not certain? This John Crosier (married to Ann Bewley) has ancestry dating back into the sixteenth century - his father having been Robert (born 1619), who was married to Margaret Watson and his grandfather another Robert (B abt. 1587), whose wife was Elizabeth Thompson.

Rosamund was baptised on 29 Sep 1689 in Wickham. In her christening record her family name was spelled "Foster", but the marriage record gives it as "Forster". This variation in spelling of the name is a recurring theme - see below.

Wickham was at that time a fairly small village 3 miles west of Gateshead, lying to the south of the River Tyne, close to Newcastle upon Tyne. Situated on high ground overlooking the River Tyne and Newcastle, Wickham was a pleasant rural community with a population of about 3000 people. The local parish church was St. Mary the Virgin. A strong Wesleyan Methodist tradition emerged in the area, which ties in with the Methodist allegiance of later generations of the family in the nineteenth century. Originally a farming community Wickham came to depend more and more on coal mining from the sixteenth century onwards. It seems likely that the many families of Crosers / Crosiers who lived in and around the area were miners from the late seventeenth century if not earlier. These families were likely to have been interrelated, though their genealogy has not been researched in detail.

At least eight children of John and Rosamund are recorded, having been born over a period of some twenty years - between about 1713 and 1732. No John appears amongst them, but it is possible that some are not recorded in the International Genealogical Index? A generation later a John Crosier (reportedly born around 1729?), whose wife was named Sarah, and who also lived in Wickham, Durham is recorded as having three children named Foster (1759), James (1761) and Rosamund (1763). Whether this John is a son of the earlier John and his wife Rosamund is unclear, but the use of the names Foster and Rosamund for their children is somewhat suggestive?

At any rate Foster, born in 1759, was probably the father of another Foster (or Forster) - christened at All Saints, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, England on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1787. In the christening record this latter "Forster" is recorded as being the son of "Forster Crosier", and it is likely that he was the same Foster born in 1759, mentioned earlier?

The surname Crozier seems to have achieved its "z" in the 1830s - apparently a new minister arrived in the parish and told the family that the correct spelling should be "Crozier" and from then forwards they seem to have adopted this form of the name?

The recurrence of the unusual first name Foster, coupled with the fact that many of the Crosers / Crosiers lived in and around Whickham, Durham during the early and mid eighteenth century, is moderately compelling evidence that the later generations of Croziers are descended from the same family? In some sources it appears as Forster - possibly a phonetic spelling based on the "Geordie" pronunciation? My mother's uncle carried the name and at that stage it was certainly "Foster", rather than "Forster" (though even he appears in the 1891 census as Forster). Her grandfather Richard Crozier's brother's name appears variously as Foster and as Forster in different sources. A first cousin of Richard and Foster was Foster Harrison (listed as a coal miner in the 1881 census), whose mother, Hannah was an elder sister of Foster Crozier (b 1818). Foster born 1787 appears in the 1851 Durham census as Foster Crozier but the baptismal record appears as Forster Crosier, with his father being listed also as Forster. The earlier baptismal record (1759) however gives the name as Foster Crosier.

Foster / Forster, who was born / baptised in 1787, was a coal miner. He was born in Ouseburn, Northumberland (an area of Newcastle on Tyne). He married Hannah Ould in 1807 at Longbenton in Northumberland (a coal mining village) and died in 1859, being about 72 at that time. His wife died in 1847. There were eleven children of the marriage, of whom at least seven reached adult life. The four sons who survived beyond childhood were all coal miners. Another son called Foster (born October 1811) died in early childhood (a burial record at Longbenton Church records his death in May 1813 aged 18 months) and a second Foster followed after a few years (born 1818). This latter Foster (christened in Longbenton Church on July 19, 1818) married Margaret Lowrie on January 8, 1838 in Longbenton Parish Church and is our direct ancestor.

William, Jonathan and Elias, along with Foster, all worked in the mines. Jonathan appears to have died in a mining accident in April 1841 (pit explosion at Bigge's Pit, Willington) - being then aged 20 and described as a "putter" (Putter's employment consisted in pushing or dragging the coal from the workings to the passages in which horses could be employed..).

In the 1841 census Foster and Margaret were living at Willington and Foster was recorded as a coal miner. At that time their first two sons (Thomas, aged 3, and Foster, an infant) were with them. There were three sons and a daughter of the marriage - Thomas (born around 1838 - who probably died in early childhood), Foster (born 1841), Mary (born 1843) and Richard (born 1845).

Foster died on May 20, 1846, at Chester-Le-Street, Durham, following a mine accident - "pit firing from his candle". He apparently survived for eight days after the accident? The accident was said to have happened at Felton Colliery, which was in the Newcastle area. However Chester-Le-Street is close to the village of Pelton Fell, where another colliery existed and the 1851 and 1861 censuses show Margaret Crozier (widow) and her children all living at Pelton Fell, in a miner's cottage, and it seems likely that it was at the Pelton (rather than Felton) mine that Foster met his tragic fate? Probably the local community would have rallied to the support of his widow and young children and allowed them to stay on in the village?

By the time of the 1851 census Foster, aged 10, was already working as a coal miner and ten years later, at the 1861 census, both he and Richard were in the mine, with their sister working as a dressmaker.

Subsequent to the 1861 census, but before the next census in 1871, the two boys (Foster and Richard) both left the mines and trained as ministers in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The elder brother, Foster married Hannah Hart Robinson in 1869 and appears in the 1871 census with her and with a daughter - though his wife, Hannah (and the daughter, Margaret) seem to have died soon after, as they do not appear later and he re-married in 1875. By the time of the 1881 census several other children had appeared. There were five children (most of them by the second marriage - to Mary Wooley) all born between 1872 and 1884.

Richard married Elizabeth Greener Hallimond in September 1873 in Auckland, County Durham. She was the daughter of John Hallimond (b 1820, Sedgfield, Durham) and Jane Greener (b 1818). According to my mother John Hallimond was a mine owner / manager, but the census data tells a different story. He first appears in the 1841 census, in the Auckland district of Durham, being described as a "journeyman blacksmith". By 1861 he is documented as an "enginewright" at a colliery - presumably responsible for looking after the engine machinery? Later (1881) he is labelled as a colliery engineer (much the same one suspects - though perhaps a more senior role?).

Like the surname "Crozier", which was variously spelt as Crosier and Croser, the Hallimond family seem to have had various different spellings of their name. John Hallimond's father was apparently Robert Halliman, born 1792 in Sedgfield, Durham. Robert's father was named John Hallyman, who was christened in 1758 in Sedgfield, Durham and married Sarah Garbut in Skelton, Yorks in 1784. His father, William Halliman was born in 1729 in Segefield - the son of another William Halliman who was probably born around the year 1700?

Richard Crozier, my great grandfather, was born in Leasingthorne, Durham. This was the site of another coal mine, which was opened in 1836. Very probably his father, Foster Crozier was working at this pit at the time of his birth. His elder brother was born at Wallsend, Northumberland four years earlier, while their sister, Mary was born at Willington, which is closely adjacent. Their mother, Margaret was also born at Wallsend. There were several pits in the area, including Wallsend Colliery, Bigge's Pit at Willington (where Jonathan Crozier was killed in 1841) and Willington Colliery itself, which was opened in 1840. Presumably Foster was working at one of these mines during the early 1840s, before probably moving to Leasingthorne and later Pelton, Durham?

Margaret Crozier was listed as a "pauper" in the 1851 census and what became of her later is unknown. She appears in the 1861 census, still living in a cottage at Pelton Fell (though in a different row) but thereafter no record seems to exist. Maybe she re-married or perhaps she died?

Likewise no later record has been found of her daughter, Mary Crozier - who was working as a dressmaker in 1861, being then aged 18.

Richard Crozier was living in Hexham, Northumberland at the time of the 1871 census, being by then labelled as a Wesleyan Methodist Minister. By 1891 the family were living in Rochester, Kent. According to the obituary of his son, WP Crozier, they lived in Oldham and in Bury, Lancashire during his early childhood - probably during the 1880s. WP himself went to Manchester Grammar School and may have started there before the family moved to Kent, having been 12 in 1891?

By 1901 the family were living in Maidstone, Kent. The census shows WP as being at home at the time of the census, then aged 21 and a student at Oxford University, where he subsequently obtained a first class honours degree. WP became a schoolmaster after finishing university, but rapidly moved on to journalism, joining the Manchester Guardian in 1903 and rising to become its editor after the premature death of Ted Scott in 1932.

The life of Richard Crozier after 1901 is incompletely documented. In 1912, when he corresponded with WC Willoughby about the possible marriage of his son John Hallimond to Doris Willoughby, he was living in Great Malvern. He continued as a Wesleyan Methodist minister all his life, surviving to the age of 94 and dying in 1939. My mother remembered him as a formidable old man - rigid and unforgiving. The eldest of the Crozier boys - another Foster, who was his father's favourite and reputedly a very able young man, had died of Tuberculosis at the age of 25. Richard Crozier was deeply affected by this loss and seems to have become somewhat embittered. His attitude to his second son, my grandfather, John was apparently harsh and intimidating. John Crozier seems to have been a rather diffident and uncertain young man and was probably overawed by his puritanical and disciplinarian father. He was educated at a boarding school for the sons of Methodist Ministers, at Kingswood, Bristol. Subsequently he trained as a teacher at Westminster Teacher Training College. As a young man John suffered major mood swings with episodes of rage and severe depression. His father wanted him to join the ministry and John went to southern Africa with this in mind. There he decided to join a mission school for native (Bantu) children in South Africa, near Vryberg, as a school teacher. While working in the school he met and developed a strong friendship with the principal's daughter, Doris Willoughby. The Principal was uneasy about the relationship, because of John's personality and mood swings. He approached his (John Crozier's) father to seek his views on a possible marriage and the response was cautious, though not unsupportive of his son.

Rev Willoughby was unhappy to sanction the marriage immediately and corresponded with other family members and individuals who had known John Crozier earlier. He encouraged John to leave Tiger Kloof and find work elsewhere for a year or two before settling down. In 1914 John applied for, and was appointed as, principal of a mission school in Barkley West. In due course, in December 1914, the couple were married in a joint ceremony at which Doris's brother Godfrey married Medora (Dora) Woods. The wedding photograph shows John and Doris sitting alongside Godfrey and Dora, with Rev Willoughby and his wife standing at the rear. The others present in this photograph are not identified, although the moustached man in the front row adjacent to John Crozier (probably his "best man"?) is also shown in a separate picture of the staff of the Tiger Kloof native school and was probably a fellow teacher at the school.

In November 1915 Agnes was born at Barkley West. John was evidently well liked and respected during his period as principal at Barkley West but, after Rev Willoughby retired as principal around 1916, he elected to return to Tiger Kloof, where Muriel was born on Boxing Day (Dec 26<sup>th</sup>) 1918. During the children's early years Agnes at least was taken on at least one trip into Bechuanaland to visit the capital Palapye, where she was presented to the great chief, Khama - to whom William Willoughby had acted as secretary and official guide nearly a quarter of a century earlier when he (Khama) and two other Bantu chiefs (Sebele and Bathoen) had visited England to petition the government in order to keep their country free from the influence of Cecil Rhodes.

By around 1920 however John Crozier's health was causing concern and he was becoming increasingly anxious and unhappy - a problem that my mother attributed at

least in part to the unsympathetic scrutiny that he received from his own father, now aged 75. Medical advice was that he should retire from teaching and go home and he brought the family, including his two young daughters, back to England in 1923.

Later that year they travelled to the USA to visit WC Willoughby and his wife, now settled at Hartford, Connecticut - where Willoughby had been appointed as Professor of African Missions at the Hartford Seminary. They stayed there for a few months and did some travelling in the USA and Canada, before returning to England at the end of the year.

In the months that followed the two girls were left in a boarding house in Brighton with the proprietor, Mrs Poland - an old friend of Rev Willoughby's wife. John and Doris travelled around England visiting friends and relatives for a few months, but had to cut their travelling short when the children contracted Chicken Pox and needed to leave the boarding house as Mrs Poland was unhappy for them to stay longer in case the other residents were to be infected. Thereafter the family lived for a year or so in London (South Norwood) before renting a bungalow in East Cowes on the Isle of Wight, just up the hill from Osborne House. Two years later (around 1927) the family moved into a semi-detached house in the same area. Both Agnes and Muriel attended the local primary school (East Cowes Primary School) and went on to Newport Grammar School at age 11. They attended the local Wesleyan Methodist Church - twice each Sunday as well as Sunday school (mornings and afternoons). Doris was the Sunday School superintendent. John Crozier was a regular preacher at many Methodist Churches on the island, cycling to each of the many parishes where he was scheduled to preach.

In 1931 the family moved to Birmingham to be close to Doris's parents, who had returned from New England (after WC Willoughby's retirement) and were living at Hall Green (Shaftmoor Road). The Crozier family lived nearby at 50 Cubley Rd. Agnes was accepted at King Edward VI High School, then in New Street, in the centre of the city (it moved out to Edgbaston in 1934). There she finished her schooling before entering the Birmingham Medical School in September 1934. Muriel meanwhile attended Yardley Secondary School, which she much enjoyed, for a year - before she too was accepted into King Edward's. They took an interest in an orphan girl, Dawn who was two years younger than Muriel, who lived in a local orphanage and who became almost a member of the family. Muriel used to refer to her as her 'adopted sister' though this was never officially arranged. After she left the orphanage Dawn lived with them at Cubley Rd. At the beginning of the war Dawn joined the WAAF. She remained in close touch with Muriel and with Doris after the war but eventually, in the 1950s, moved to Rhodesia where she met her future husband, Tom - with whom she later emigrated to Canada.

As an undergraduate Agnes excelled, becoming the President of the Women's Medical Society and playing hockey for the county of Warwickshire. When the King and Queen came to open the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the new medical school in 1938 she was presented to them as the woman president.

The later years of Agnes's medical studies were clouded by her father's increasing psychiatric disturbance. After obtaining her MB ChB in 1939 she worked as a junior doctor in several Birmingham hospitals, including a period at the Children's Hospital and at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital on the Bristol Road (Woodlands Hospital), which suffered a direct hit during a bombing raid while she was working there and had to be evacuated. In late 1940 she was appointed house physician to Prof Kenneth D Wilkinson, one of England's first generation of Cardiologists, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The nickname "George" was given her by KD Wilkinson quite early in their relationship. George was a particularly beautiful Spaniel, which

belonged to a patient, whose melting brown eyes captured his attention and reminded him of someone, though he could not quite put his finger on who that might be. Later, looking across a bed at his house physician, he exclaimed the words "you're George" - and so she was from then on.

Caring for her very disturbed father and working as a junior doctor at the same time was impossible and somewhere around 1941, at which time John's condition was exacerbated by the intense bombing of Birmingham during the early period of the war, with help from KD Wilkinson, she managed to persuade her father to enter hospital as a voluntary patient - in Stafford.

In late 1941, despite a 30 year age difference, she and KD were married. She found herself living in a large Victorian house with plenty of paid help to run it. There were four step children, the elder of whom were only a few years younger than was she.

Typically she rose to this challenge and gained the love and support of all her new family, to whom she became devoted.

Two daughters and a son, born during and early after the second world war, did not prevent her from pursuing her medical career - gaining the MRCP (at that time a very demanding postgraduate diploma) in 1942 and managing to work part time over many of the years that followed. The marriage of her eldest step son and her step daughter and the arrival of their first children in the late 40s and in 1950 were a source of joy and pride to her and to KD. Sadly Ken was to die soon after, in April 1951, leaving her, at 34 years old, a widow.

John Crozier remained in hospital in Stafford from the time of his admission in 1941 for the rest of his life, dying of a cerebral haemorrhage on April 21st 1944, a few days after the sudden death of his younger brother William Percival (WP). My mother felt that his brother's death was the last straw and led to John's cerebral haemorrhage?

Doris Crozier lived on for another ten years or so. She sold the Cubley Road house and for a couple of years lived with her brother Edgar, with whom she bought a farm near Bearley (close to Stratford on Avon). Later they sold the farm and he went into pig farming on his own for a while and then re-married (to his third wife, Kit) and returned to his previous career as a motor journalist with Temple Press in Coventry. Doris moved down to the Ringwood area, where she was close to Muriel, now married to Roy Baker. At this stage of her life Doris lived in a caravan. We used to see her at Christmas and occasionally at other times. To me she seemed very old, with thin white hair that she used to keep under control with a hair net. She was probably less than sixty!

In 1952, after KD's death in the previous April, Agnes moved to Bristol where she became physician in charge of student health and developed an interest in psychotherapy—training as an analytic psychotherapist. Her mother Doris lived with us in Bristol for her last year or two, suffering from Hodgkin's Disease. She was 63 at the time of her death in 1953.

When all Doris's worldly goods were sold and distributed to her two daughters there was enough money for us to take our first overseas holiday - we went skiing early in 1955 in the Swiss Alps. It was a lovely holiday and a great way to remember her.

In 1960 Agnes moved to London and entered full time practice as a psychotherapist. She worked at the London School of Economics, to which she was psychiatric adviser, and at the West London Hospital, as well as in private practice.

In the summer of 1962 we went again to Switzerland, accompanying my mother who was attending a psychiatric conference in Zurich. by which time I was a medical student. Five of us went and the group included another John Crozier, who was the grandson of WP Crozier. My younger sister Elizabeth (Liz) and my niece, Ann Wilkinson, were with us and we had an excellent holiday again, driving through Belgium, Luxembourg and France and into Switzerland, where we stayed in Zurich - camping by the lake. On the return trip we stopped in Paris and did some memorable sightseeing.

We got to see John Crozier and his sister, Rosimund, several times in the late fifties / early sixties and met their parents, Stephen Crozier and his wife, Doris. Stephen died after a subarachnoid haemorrhage in the mid sixties and I remember going to his funeral at which I believe that his two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, were present. It was the only time that I ever met them.

A year or two later we were invited to John's wedding - I think somewhere in the Portsmouth area. We camped on Hayling Island and I caused quite a stir amongst the other campers by emerging from my tent dressed in a morning suit and top hat. John married Alison and they subsequently had twins, but we lost touch and have had no contact since that time. My sister Liz kept in touch for a while with Rosimund, who was about her age - but that contact has also been lost in the decades that followed.

Agnes, after her move to London in 1960, continued to be actively involved with student health and the British Association of Health Services in Higher Education, of which she was president in 1976. She was also a life member of the BMA.

After retirement in 1986 she remained active, doing a postgraduate course in gerontology, and keeping in touch with her psychiatric friends and contacts. In 1991 she went back to Africa for a nostalgic return to her roots. In Botswana she was feted well and met the president and many members of the government—many of them "Old Tigers" (former students of Tiger Kloof).

In later years she suffered a similar problem to that which affected her grandfather, Rev WC Willoughby and her Uncle Edgar, both of whom became incapacitated by fading memory and progressive dementia in the last year or two of their long lives. Her last years were spent in Hove and later Brighton, where she lived in residential accommodation. Muriel visited her in Hove, soon after she moved there, in 1999, but died later that year aged 80. Despite poor memory and increasing frailty however Agnes remained cheerful and good humoured, with a ready smile and a sense of fun, until the last few days. She died on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2005.