

## A 'Waif and Stray' in Effingham

CHRISTOPHER JOHN HOGGER

*A child born in Marylebone Workhouse in 1880 to an unmarried mother was brought to the attention of the Church of England Central Society for Waifs and Strays when he was aged 5. He was admitted, with the approval of his mother – who was struggling financially – to the Society's first home for boys in Ashdon, Essex. At age 12 he was boarded out to Effingham, this evidently brought about through the action of the Vicar of St Lawrence, Rev Ernest Frederic Bayly. This article describes the child's beginnings and traces the remaining course of his life.*

### The Church of England Central Society for Waifs and Strays

Before and during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century our great cities contained tens of thousands of homeless or unwanted children, living on the streets and begging or stealing to sustain themselves.

Around 1880 a young man named Edward de Montjoie Rudolf resolved to devote the rest of his life to getting unloved children off the streets and into homes where they would receive some love and care. Rudolf had passed the Civil Service examination in 1871 and taken a post at the Office of Works in Whitehall. He had also spent the next ten years developing his interest and knowledge in social, educational and religious affairs. During this period he was Superintendent of the St Anne's Sunday School in Lambeth.

Rudolf cultivated interest among several clergymen in south London in his ideas for helping homeless children. This led to the founding in January 1881 of the Church of England Central Society for Waifs and Strays. Initially it had virtually no assets. Its work began by seeking support for setting up small homes specially for homeless children. In this early period the Society's Secretary was its key founder Rev George Herbert Woolley, one of the clergymen initially inspired by Rudolf.

From 1881 up to 1918 the Society looked after about 22,500 children. In 1946 it became the Church of England Children's Society, known today as simply The Children's Society (Registered Charity 221124).

Rudolf became a clergyman in 1898 and served as Secretary of the Society until 1919. He also co-founded the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. He died in 1933, aged 81.

### The All Saints Home for Boys

The Society's first home for boys arose from the efforts of Rev Dr Henry Barclay Swete. In 1885, while Rector of All Saints Parish in Ashdon near Saffron Walden, Essex, he made available a pair of thatched cottages, furnished at his own expense, with associated land containing a playground and gardens, sufficient for 6 boys. He had sought the Society's approval for this enterprise in 1883.

A few years later, as the Society's requirement for housing intensified, Rev Swete, by now Professor of Pastoral Theology at King's College Cambridge, paid for an entirely new home to be built in Ashdon, sufficient to accommodate twelve boys. Known as the All Saints Home for Boys, it was opened in September 1890 just as he was departing from Ashdon to take a position elsewhere.



Figure 1 Edward Rudolf, photographed in August 1888.



Figure 2 The All Saints Home for Boys in Ashdon; c1900.



Figure 3 The All Saints Home for Boys in Ashdon; probably early 20<sup>th</sup>C.

### ‘Hidden Lives Revealed’

This is the title of a project that was one of three constituting the Citizenship Past consortium funded by the UK Lottery's New Opportunities Fund established in 1998. The latter fund became merged in 2004 into the Big Lottery Fund (today known as The National Lottery Community Fund) and was formally closed in 2006. The mission of Citizenship Past was to provide insights into British social history and the lives of a vast range of different people, focusing initially on children's homes in the period 1881-1918.

The ‘Hidden Lives Revealed’ project produced an online digital archive developed mostly by The Children's Society through the scanning and transcription of selected case files (a sample of 0.67%) from its total of about 22,500. The archive became online in 2004, presenting 150 case files spanning 1881-1918. It continues to be accessible at [www.hiddenlives.org.uk](http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk). The files as presented there are anonymised by appropriate redactions. The website declares that

‘Hidden Lives Revealed is an educational resource for everyone. Although Hidden Lives Revealed is copyright of The Children Society, you have permission to download, print and repurpose content from the site for educational purposes, providing that you do not sell or redistribute that material.’

Remarkably, one case in the selected sample concerns Effingham. In the Society's original records this is Case 485 dealing with a particular boy who passed through its hands. The associated online case file refers to him only as boy ‘H’. The website's search facility is no longer functional but the case file can be accessed at [www.hiddenlives.org.uk/cases/case485.html](http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/cases/case485.html). It is reproduced in Appendix I.

Although the boy's identity is not disclosed in the online file it is known independently to Effingham Local History Group from its own research. He was Harry Edwards, who was born in 1880 and died in 1963.

### Harry's origins and childhood

Harry was born in Marylebone's workhouse on 15 April 1880 [GRO Ref: Marylebone 1a 579, 1880 (Q2)]. This institution stood in what was then Northumberland Street (but today named Luxborough Street), a little way east of Baker Street. His birth certificate names his mother as Matilda Edwards, a servant living at 12 Titchborne Street, Edgware Road; no details are given about his father. He was baptised in the workhouse on 5 May. His baptism entry gives his abode as the workhouse and again names his mother as Matilda Edwards but does not name his father. Matilda's identity, origins and eventual fate have all proved exceedingly difficult to investigate, almost no information about her being disclosed in the case file. However, recent research has identified a plausible candidate for her, as discussed in Appendix II.

|                                                       |       |     |   |                                    |   |                                                                 |                                  |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Fifteenth<br>April<br>1880<br>Marylebone<br>Workhouse | Harry | Boy | - | Matilda<br>Edwards<br>-<br>Servant | = | M. Edwards<br>Mother<br>12 Titchborne<br>Street<br>Edgware Road | Twenty<br>third<br>April<br>1880 | Henry J<br>Dimes<br>Registrar |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|

Figure 4 Registration of Harry's birth on 15 April 1880.

|                               |       |                 |               |   |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1880<br>5th<br>May<br>No. 243 | Harry | Matilda Edwards | Work<br>house | — | Alfred Brown<br>April 15<br>1880. |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|

Figure 5 Harry's baptism at the Marylebone workhouse; 5 May 1880.

The Religious Creed Register of the workhouse records the dates of admission and discharge of both Matilda and Harry. They were admitted to the lying-in ward there on 15 April, the day when Harry was born, and discharged on 5 May. Matilda's age on admission was given as 32 and Harry was simply ‘born’. Her religion was recorded as the established church and the address from which she had come as 12, ‘Titchbourne’ [sic] Street. This street lies in Paddington's St John district, branching off Connaught Street a little to the west of the southern end of the Edgware Road, and is just under a mile south-west of

the workhouse. The 1881 Census reveals No 12 to have been a small boarding house run by Julia (née Toop) Curtis, wife of a shoemaker Christopher.



Figure 6 A casual poor ward at the Marylebone workhouse; *The Illustrated London News*, 28 September 1867.

On Monday 11 May 1885 an application form 'for the Admission of a Boy', issued by the Church of England Central Society for Waifs and Strays, was completed on behalf of Harry, making the case for him to be admitted to one of the Society's homes. The submitter signed her name on the form as Mary Jenner [slightly unclear] whose address was 37, W... [unclear] Street. It was clear that she knew Matilda and her circumstances well. The form was endorsed as correctly completed by Rev John Anderson of Kingsgate Road in Kilburn, the 'late Rector of Norton-le-Moors'. A transcript of the application form is shown below; it is a corrected version of the one offered by 'Hidden Lives Revealed' which contains many uncertainties and errors.

1. Give the boy's christian name and surname  
H ...
2. State his exact age, and give the date and place of his birth  
April 15<sup>th</sup> 1880 Marylebone Workhouse
3. Is he legitimate?  
No
4. If baptized, state place and date of baptism  
yes at the Workhouse
5. Are his parents living?  
Mother
6. If, however, either or both are dead, state of what disease they died, and give the date of their death  
Father not known

7. *If living, give their exact places of abode, and state how long they have resided there*  
 Mother M ... Gloucester Place  
 Father on a visit
8. *Give the christian names and surnames of his parents (in full) and state their ages*  
 Mother M ...  
 Father H ...
9. *What was or is the nature of the father's occupation and the amount of his weekly earnings? Give the name and address of his present or last employer*  
 Not known
10. *What was or is the nature of the mother's occupation and the amount of her weekly earnings? Give the name and address of her present or last employer*  
 Mother's help £20 a year Mrs B ... White Rock, Hastings
11. *Have his parents or guardians ever received parish relief? If so, to what extent?*  
 Only his mother as given above
12. *Give the names, addresses, ages, occupations and earnings (if any) of all his brothers and sisters*  
 name None  
 address None
13. *At what address and with whom is the boy now living?*  
 Mrs J ... Droop Street, Queen's Park Estate
14. *Give in full the names, addresses, ages, occupations and earnings of each living relative the child is known to possess either on the father's or mother's side such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, &c*  
 He has none on either side
15. *State whether any of his relatives are in your judgment in a position to maintain him, or to contribute in any degree to his support*  
 Only his mother & her health is bad
16. *Has he ever been convicted? If so, state the nature of his offence and term of imprisonment*  
 No
17. *Has he ever attended day school? If so, where and for how long?*  
 Goes to Board School in Droop Street
18. *Has he ever attended Sunday School? If so, where and for how long?*  
 St Jude's – several years
19. *Has he ever been in the workhouse? If so, for how long and where?*  
 Only when he was born
20. *Has he any affections of the limbs, joints, skin or eyes which may have the effect of preventing him from entering domestic services?*  
 None
21. *Is he subject to fits? or has he ever had one? If so, state its nature. Is this child subject to incontinence of urine?*  
 No
22. *Is he at present affected with any infectious or contagious disease, or with scrofula requiring medical treatment?*  
 No
23. *Has he had scarlet fever, or whooping cough or measles, or small pox? If not the latter, has he been vaccinated?*  
 Whooping cough & measles
24. *Is his general health good?*  
 Very
25. *Are his parents, grandparents or next of kin, willing to sign an agreement to commit the boy wholly to the care of the Managers of the Home, to obey the rules in force, and to permit the said boy when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the United Kingdom, which may be obtained for him by the Managers?*  
 Yes

*I certify that the foregoing questions have been correctly replied to.*

Name ... A ... M.A.  
 Address ... Kingsgate Road N.W.  
 Incumbent of Late Rector of Norton-le-Moors  
 Date April 27, 1885. Staff

*This page should be filled up with a full and particular account of the boy, his parents, family, &c*

His mother can earn when in good health about £20 a year but for two years past from having had very hard places with invalids where hard work lifting was required she has injured herself internally & been obliged to go under an operation at St Thomas Hospital. She is now better & able to take a situation but the doctors say her health is to [sic – too] uncertain & that she will never really be strong or able to earn ... [sufficiently?] high wages. She is now paying 7/- a week which she finds almost impossible due [to] her state of health. For the future she has nothing certain to look forward to. She is very fond of the child, if the Committee could take the child at a reduction say 3/- or 3/6 a week I am quite sure they would find her regular in her payments & quite to be depended on. I have known her for over seven years & have no hesitation in saying all I do in her favour.

[signed]

Mary Jenner [slightly unclear]

May 11<sup>th</sup> 1885 37, W ... Street

[Notes on the back of the form]

485 1117 H ... Aged 5 Illegitimate Baptised Mother living Father not known no other family

15 June 1885 Received into All Saints Cottage Home Ashdon

5 February 1892 Boarded out at Effingham under the sup. of Miss Teesdale Effingham Cottage Leatherhead

Mother lost sight of – disappeared

... Jan/88 As no payment can be obtained, ... [?] put on Free-list EAB

31 August 1894 Gone to Service

The answers given above to questions 5 and 6 may indicate that nothing was known to Mary about the status of Harry's father; or, they may indicate that the father had died but from a cause unknown. Mary had evidently known Matilda before Harry had been conceived, so may well have known something of the father at that time. We have no further knowledge of 'Mrs B' mentioned in question 10.

Mary stated that Matilda was 'paying 7/- per week' but on expected maximum weekly earnings of about 8/- (ie £20 annually). The 7/- must have been covering her own expenses besides whatever she may have been paying the woman in Droop Street for Harry's board there.

The case file then offers these two short notes:

Dear Mr Wooley [sic]

Here's the enclosed petition if you can help the woman I shall be so glad

Truly

M Jenner [slightly unclear]

May 11<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr Woolley, I send you the papers about M ... [Matilda Edwards] filled up, if you can help her it is a deserving case

Truly

M Jenner [slightly unclear]

Tuesday [presumably 12 May]

Gloucester Place, where Matilda had been living, was just a few hundred yards west of Marylebone Workhouse. The Droop Street school which Harry was attending was in Kensal Green. It still stands today, bearing the name Queen's Park Primary School, and is Grade II Listed.



Figure 7 The Droop Street Boad School in Kensal Green; perhaps early 20<sup>th</sup>C.

A short distance to the east of Droop Street was Lancefield Street in which stood St Jude's Church, built in 1878-79, which is where Harry presumably attended for Sunday School.

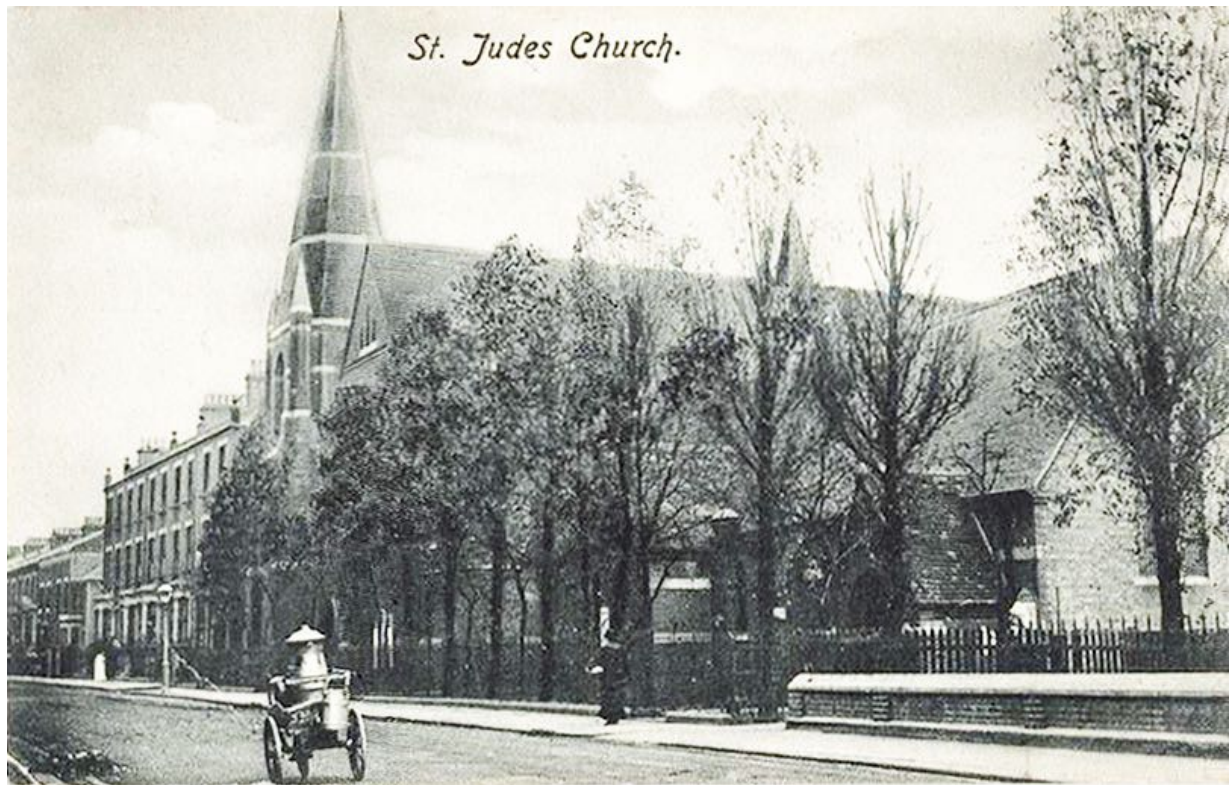


Figure 8 St Jude's Church in Kensal Green; perhaps early 20<sup>th</sup>C.

Two days after the submission of the above application Harry's mother – who had evidently moved to Bushey Heath – wrote a letter, as transcribed below (with a little punctuation added), probably to Mary Jenner:

The Ferns  
Bushey Heath  
Herts  
May 13<sup>th</sup> 85

Dear Madame

according to promise I have written to you to ask you if you have heard from Mr Wooley [sic] with regard to my little H ... I should be so very glad to hear and should be very grateful if they could help me in this matter but as I have not heard any more about it I am afraid perhaps they can do nothing for me. If not I must still struggle on and do my best. I fear I shall not be able to remain here it is such a very hard place they keep so much company and have a good many tennis partys [sic] and I have only a very young servant beside myself so that I have to cook and take the whole of the household arrangements. I do not want to give it up if I can manage it untill [sic] I get something else in view; but if you should hear of a matron's place I should be so very glad and I am sure I could manage the children and it would be a real boon to me. I thank you so much for the kind interests you took in sending me to Mr Wooley [sic] since I shall be so very thankful if he [Harry] is able to go. I think this is all this time. I am thankful to say I am feeling better again just now which is a great comfort for me and now with many grateful thanks I am, Madame

Yours Respectfully,  
M ...

Matilda was evidently the resident cook at The Ferns, a substantial residence on the northern side of Elstree Road, a short distance from its intersection with Bushey Heath's High Street. Today, a residential care home named Heath House stands on its site. By 1891 Matilda was no longer at The Ferns, which was at that time occupied by the family of a solicitor John Emilius Ernest Steigenberger Sharp.

The next item in the case file is a somewhat illegible note, its author and date unknown, apparently requiring that Mrs Jenner be asked if she knows where 'the mother' is living.

As noted earlier, Harry had evidently been accepted for admission to the All Saints Home at Ashdon on 15 June 1885, being accommodated in the newly refurbished cottages. The 1891 Census finds him at age

'10' living in the Home's new premises in Rectory Lane, Ashdon together with ten other inmate boys all described as scholars. The staff there were the matron Annie Wallis, and her assistant (and daughter aged 13) Annie. The matron's son William was also a scholar there. Rev Swete was no longer the Rector of All Saints, that position having been taken over in late 1890 by Rev Daniel Beales Redfarn Banham MA; he was living at the Rectory close to the Home.

### From Ashdon to Effingham

In early 1892 a letter in the case file concerning Harry was sent to Mr Rudolf. The name and address of the sender could not be deciphered by the transcribers of the 'Hidden Lives Revealed' project, but after much difficult research we have since been able to determine these details.

The sender was Mary (née Hart) Raincock, the widow of Hugh Dawson Raincock who had died in August 1881. She was living at the Elizabethan mansion Waltons, part of the extensive Ashdon and Radwinter Estate owned by the remarkable Frances Evelyn 'Daisy' (née Maynard) Greville, Countess of Warwick. The mansion stood about half a mile from the centre of Ashdon village.



Figure 9 Waltons in Ashdon; undated.

Mary's letter to Rudolf read as follows:

Waltons  
Jan<sup>y</sup> 20<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr Rudolf,

I think we have a little boy who will suit the Clergyman very nicely, it is H ..., he has been in the Home some years and is the oldest boy now, he will be 12 in April next, he is one of the best boys in the Ashdon Choir, and very fond of singing, and I think sings earnestly [sic] and has rather a nice voice, but I have very little or no knowledge of music. I know Mr Banham [Rector of All Saints] will be sorry to part with him from the Choir but it seems as though it would be a nice thing for him. He will be missed in the Home as he is useful in the kitchen &c but there are others to take his place. If the Clergyman will take him into his house he might be soon trained as a Page boy, as he has been used to house work.

Believe me

Y<sup>rs</sup> Truly,

M Raincock

I have opened this letter to say if H ... is not needed for a week or two the Matron would have more time to get his things ready, we must get a box made for him and a few little useful articles in the way of

brushes &c &c. I shall not be at home the beginning of next week, but shall be here after next Wednesday.

M R

The clergyman mentioned in the letter is presumed to refer to Rev Ernest Frederic Bayly MA, the Vicar of St Lawrence, Effingham. Mrs Raincock was evidently thinking that Rev Bayly would take Harry into his own home. The Waifs and Strays Society, besides running its own homes, put much work into seeking opportunities for the fostering or boarding-out of the Society's children. In Harry's case we do not know who first took the initiative to explore the possibility of relocating him from Ashdon to Effingham; we know only that such steps were almost always undertaken, or at least facilitated, by clergymen.

The question then arises of what this matter had to do with Mrs Raincock. The answer is to be found in a publication entitled *The Classified List of Child-Saving Institutions* [Reformatory and Refuge Union (publ), London, 1897] in which the entry for the All Saints Home in Ashdon names the 'Honorary Secretary or Correspondent' as 'Mrs Raincock, Waltons, Saffron Walden'. Confirmation of this is provided in a brief obituary published after she died on 8 June 1899, mentioning that: 'Among other charities, she was much interested in the Church of England's Homes for Waifs and Strays, and until lately she held an office connected with the House at Ashdon' [*The Essex Newsman*, 24 June 1899].

The next player appearing in the case file is Miss Ellen Augusta Teesdale of The Cottage near the southern end of The Street in Effingham. Ellen and her sister Julia had taken a 21-year lease on the property on 25 December 1888. In January 1892 Ellen wrote to (we presume) Mr Rudolf as follows:

Effingham Cottage  
Nr Leatherhead

Dear Sir,

Mr Bayly asks me to inform you that we shall be glad to take H ... whose papers I enclose, as our paid case, in the place of G ...

H ... will be boarded out at Mrs R ... she can take him on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> or if his clothes are not ready so soon, on Friday February 5<sup>th</sup>, provided we are informed what train he comes by, & where to meet him?

There is no work at present for him to do here, but I suppose he is to attend School? What Standard is he in?

I am, dear Sir,  
Y<sup>rs</sup> faithfully,  
Ellen A Teesdale

January 25<sup>th</sup> 1892

P.S. The case paper is a very old one. I suppose the boy is in good health & not suffering from any complaint?

In response, Mrs Raincock sent a letter to Mr Rudolf as follows:

Waltons  
Jan<sup>y</sup> 28<sup>th</sup>

Dear Mr Rudolf,

I will see that H ... goes by the train you mention arriving at Liverpool Street 1-35 Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> of Feb<sup>y</sup>. He shall be put in care of the guard. I hope he will give satisfaction to the gentleman. We can take the little boy G ... when he leaves.

Y<sup>rs</sup> faithfully  
M Raincock

H ... is in the 6<sup>th</sup> Standard

In the event, Harry was boarded out on 5 February, according to a note written on the reverse of the original 1885 application form, viz: '5 February 1892 Boarded out at Effingham under the Sup [supervision] of Miss Teesdale Effingham Cottage Leatherhead'. The case file does not tell us who Mrs R ... had been. The 1891 Census for Effingham offers little more than a handful of married women whose surname began with 'R'. One possibility is that she was the wife Agnes (née Lodge) of the village baker William Richards whose home was also in The Street about a hundred yards north of The Cottage. However, his household already accommodated his four children and a servant and it seems unlikely that there would have been room for another child. A more plausible possibility is that Mrs R ... was the wife Amy Lydia (née Cobb) of the stockbroker James Aitchison Ross. This family occupied the much larger house named The Villa on the

Guildford Road, about two hundred yards (by road) from The Cottage, although the gardens were adjacent. In 1891 James and Amy had with them in The Villa their five daughters under the age of 10, a nurse and four servants, but the house may well have been able to also accommodate a young boy.

We do not know what Miss Teesdale's 'supervision' of Harry would have entailed, or to whom – if anyone – she would have been accountable for his welfare. The case file contains no indication that either the All Saints Home or the Society received any feedback from Effingham; Miss Teesdale's above letter is the only document known to have been sent from there. Nor is it known whether Rev Bayly had any further formal involvement for his welfare once Harry had arrived.

The next information we have about Harry comes from the log book of Effingham's National School (later St Lawrence School). The first entry, made by the headmaster Henry Pilling, was this:

8 February 1892          'Admitted Harry Edwards (fifth standard)'

There are four further entries mentioning Harry:

24 January 1893          'Harry Edwards absent without leave'  
 4 May 1894                'Harry Edwards appointed by the Vicar to sweep the school daily'  
 7 September 1894        'Absentees: Harry Edwards, ...'  
 17 September 1894       'Harry Edwards left his name struck off the books'

In the case file another handwritten note on the reverse of the application form reads '31 August 1894 gone to Service'. In this period the minimum school leaving age was 11 and it is not surprising that Harry, now aged 14, had left school to begin work. Whether the Rosses – if it were they – retained any responsibility for him at this still young age is not known, but Mrs Amy Lydia Ross died by her own hand on 5 October 1897, so if indeed he were still at The Villa then he was possibly moved out at this point.

The case file's next item is this letter written by Harry to Miss Teesdale in the period leading up to Christmas 1898. Evidently he has recently moved to a new situation:

c/o Mrs A C  
 Flexford  
 Guildford  
 Surrey

Dear Miss,

Your humble servant H ... takes the opportunity & thinks it his duty to write and let you know how I am getting on, and also to thank you for the many kindnesses you have done for me. I am getting on very well in my new place & I like it very much. The Colonel & Mrs P are very kind to me, the Colonel has given me one suit of clothes since I have been here. Dear Miss I lodge at the farm with Mrs C, & I pay her 11s per week, I have everything done for me, and I am very comfortable. I have joined Puttenham Choir & the Colonel is very pleased, it is rather a long way to walk but I do not mind that. The first few Sundays I felt very lonely but I am alright now. Hodgsden [sic – Hogsden] the gardener & me gets on very well together now. Since I have been in the choir we have had two treats. We went to the Countess's to supper one night. And we went to Barnum & Bailey's show at Aldershot. Wishing you a happy Christmas & again thanking you for your kindness to me I remain

your obedient servant

H ...

[Written across the first page in a different hand is the remark 'Forwarded by Miss Teesdale The Cottage Effingham 2 Jan 1899'].

His phrase 'The Colonel & Mrs P' refers to Colonel Montagu Charles Perreau and his wife Julia (née Teesdale), Ellen Augusta Teesdale's sister, who had married in 1891 [GRO Ref: Dorking 2a 262, 1891 (Q3)]. Since about 1895-96 they had lived at Flexford House in East Flexford, Wanborough parish as shown by the Electoral Registers; they were to remain there until 1917 when Montagu died. Flexford House, which is today Grade II Listed, stands a short distance along East Flexford Lane to the north of the main Guildford-Farnham Road (now the A31 Hogs Back) and there are several 'farm cottages' in its vicinity on that side of the road. Harry may have been lodging in one of these with Mrs Sarah Cox whose husband Albert was a 'carter on farm'. Or, perhaps less probably, he may have been lodging at Wancott in Monks Grove on the opposite side of the main road with a widowed housemaid Mrs Annie E Cornish. Either of these ladies could have been 'Mrs A C'.

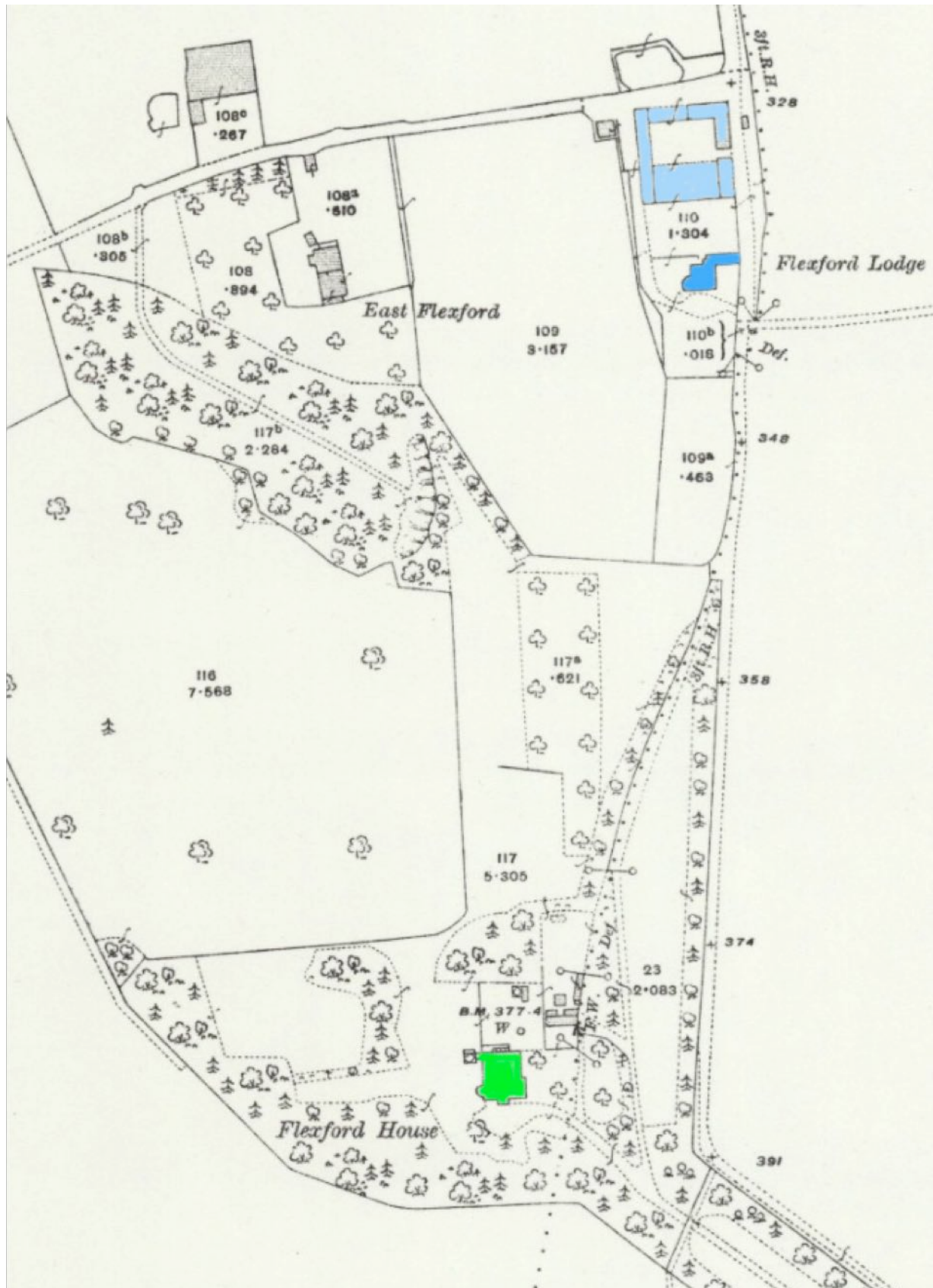


Figure 10 East Flexford in the 1913 OS 25" map, with East Flexford Lane at bottom right; Flexford House is here highlighted in green and Flexford Lodge in blue, with the farm buildings to its north in light blue.

Harry's mention of the gardener refers to Maurice Herbert ('Bertie') Hogsden. The 1901 Census finds Maurice, aged '15' and occupied as a gardener, living in Flexford House among several other servants including a cook, two parlour maids and a coachman; Montagu and Julia were absent – they were boarding at the Windsor Hotel in Victoria Street, Westminster. Maurice had been born in Ashted to Frederick and

Mary Ann (née Brumwell). In 1891 his older sister Marion and first cousin Alice (daughter of Frederick's brother George) had both been living at Crossways in Effingham as servants of spinster sisters Elizabeth Susan and Margaret Young Faris. The Misses Faris had preceded the Teesdale sisters as occupants of The Cottage. By a codicil made in 1893 to her Will, Elizabeth had made provision in particular circumstances for a sum of money to be left to the Waifs and Strays Society. These glimpsed associations indicate that there had been, among all these various parties, commonalities of interest of which we have only a partial understanding.

On 1 March 1900 Harry wrote another letter, this one to Mr Rudolf:

c/o Mrs A C  
Flexford Lodge  
Nr Guildford  
Surrey  
March 1<sup>st</sup> 1900

Sir,

Your humble servant H ... writes to ask you a favour but thinks it first his duty to thank you for the many kindnesses I have received from the Society.

Dear Sir I am wishing to know if I have any relations about alive. I was brought up at All Saints Home Ashdon near Saffron Walden Essex. And that Mrs Sykes of Lyndhurst has for some years taken an interest in me and has advised me writing to you. Sir I have got a good place here in the garden. I went to work at Effingham in the garden and got a 4 years good character. I am in the choir here and have got a good master his name is Colonel P ... and I am 20 next birthday the 15<sup>th</sup> April. Hoping Sir you will be able to give me some information and again thanking you for the many kindnesses I have received I remain

your obedient servant

H ...

Flexford Lodge, where he was apparently now living, stood a short distance north of Flexford House and appears to have been a farm associated with the latter; it had a courtyard bounded on all sides by farm buildings.

In this period there was evidently only one 'Mrs Sykes' living in Lyndhurst, namely Mary (née Molesworth) the widow of Rev William Sykes MA. Her home was named Elcombs. William, who had died in 1893 during a visit with his family to Austria, had served as Chaplain to the Armed Forces and as Military Chaplain to Queen Victoria. At the outbreak of the war in Crimea he had gone out to attend the troops and 'endured great privations and hardships during the severe winter of 1854, but remained at his post and only returned home after the taking of Sebastopol' [*Stockport Advertiser and Guardian*, 15 September 1893]. Mary and her children also lived remarkable lives, deeply immersed in community affairs and charitable works. Mary died in 1918. Appendix III presents obituaries published for both her and William. We do not know how she and Harry had become acquainted nor in what way she had maintained an interest in him: we can imagine many possibilities.

Mr Rudolf sent a typed reply the next day:

2<sup>nd</sup> March 1900

My dear Harry,

I was pleased to receive your letter and to hear how well you are getting on in your situation.

I am exceedingly sorry that I am unable to give you any information as regards your relatives, as both your father and mother were lost sight of very soon after you were received under the Society's care in 1885.

I hope, however, that you will always look on me as being your friend, and I shall at all times be most pleased to do what I can for you.

Believe me,  
Your faithful friend,  
[signed] E de M R

H ...

This would have been disappointing news for Harry. Although it is not certain, we may suppose that he was already aware, at the least, of the name of his mother. He had apparently lived near her until he was aged about five, at which stage she was perhaps no longer able to meet the expense of maintaining him.

The above reply from Mr Rudolf is the last document in the case file.

### Harry in adulthood

When the 1901 Census was taken on 31 March, Harry was aged almost 21. By then he had left Flexford and moved to nearby Puttenham, living in The Street in the household of a farm carter George Cuff. He gave his birthplace as 'Ashston [sic], Essex', seemingly unaware (or no longer remembering or wishing to disclose) that it had been Marylebone workhouse. He was occupied as a domestic gardener.

On 7 September 1907 Harry married Mary (née) Hopkins at Christ Church, Stoke-next-Guildford [GRO Ref: Guildford 2a 200, 1907 (Q3)]. The entry in the marriage register gave his age as 27 and hers as 30. His abode was Grayshott, Hampshire and hers was Stoke. His father was not named whilst her father was named as George Hopkins, a carter. George, born in White Waltham near Maidenhead in about early 1854, had married Matilda (née Thatcher) in 1874 [GRO Ref: Cookham 2c 932, 1874 (Q4)]; they would eventually produce eleven children, including Mary born on 1 April 1878 [GRO Ref: Cookham 2c 405, 1878 (Q2)]. The marriage of Mary and Harry was witnessed by her younger sister Edith and by Cecil William Miller, an agent for Prudential Assurance Ltd and living in Stoke.

The 1911 Census finds Harry living with Mary at Sickle Mill near Haslemere where he was occupied as a gardener. With them was their first child Winifred Ethel, born in Lynchmere, Sussex in 1908 [GRO Ref: Midhurst 2b 267, 1908 (Q1)]. Winifred had been baptised in Fernhurst parish on 19 April 1908, the register giving her parent's abode as New Road in Camelsdale, a little under a mile from Lynchmere; the field for Harry's occupation had been left empty.



Figure 11 Sickle Mill near Haslemere; c1900.

In 1915 a second child was born, Jack Victor [GRO Ref: Hambledon 2a 287, 1915 (Q3)]. He was baptised at St John the Evangelist in Merrow on 29 August 1915. The family was now living in Eastwood Road, Shalford, just north of Bramley, and Harry's occupation was entered as insurance agent. Harry may have taken up this kind of work through the influence of the above-mentioned Cecil William Miller.

Ten days before Christmas in 1917 the family suffered the heartbreak of their daughter Winifred dying aged only 9 [GRO Ref: Hambledon 2a 244, 1917 (Q4)]. Her death certificate states that she died on 15 December at Eastwood Road, the cause certified as 'diphtheria (14 days)'. It describes her as 'the daughter of Harry Edwards a Private in the 13<sup>th</sup> Welsh Battalion No. 54797, Insurance Agent'. The informant, present at the death, was Gertrude H Wileman, also of Eastwood Road. Winifred was buried at the Holy Trinity Church in Bramley on 19 December, her place of abode given as Shalford.

Winifred's death certificate makes it possible to identify Harry, through his regimental number, in the British Army medal index, which holds two cards for him. One records him as a Private with number 22653 in The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment followed by number 54797 in the Welsh Regiment;

he had been awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. The other card refers only to his service in the Welsh Regiment (Depot), noting that he had enlisted on 25 November 1915 and been discharged on 16 May 1919.

| Name.                          | Corps.         | Rank. | Regtl. No. |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------|------------|
| EDWARDS                        | The Queen's R. | Pte   | 22653      |
| Harry                          | Welsh R.       |       | 54797      |
|                                |                |       |            |
|                                |                |       |            |
| Medal.                         | Roll.          | Page. | Remarks.   |
| VICTORY                        | 5/1/104B19     | 7097  |            |
| BRITISH                        |                | a.    |            |
| STAR                           |                |       |            |
|                                |                |       |            |
|                                |                |       |            |
|                                |                |       |            |
|                                |                |       |            |
| Theatre of War first served in |                |       |            |
| Date of entry therein          |                |       |            |

K. 1380

Figure 12 Harry's WW1 medal card.

A second son Frank Leslie was born on 16 February 1920. The online birth index accessible through *Ancestry* and *FreeBMD* omits a particular page-scan from the original GRO index volume covering some of the births of 'Edwards' in this quarter, and so we cannot determine his GRO birth reference. He was baptised at St John the Evangelist, Merrow on 24 April 1920. The family was still in Shalford and Harry was continuing to work as an insurance agent.

The last child born to Harry and Mary was Cyril George born on 20 February 1921 [GRO Ref: Hambledon 2a 332, 1921 (Q1)]. He was baptised at St John the Evangelist, Merrow on 21 March 1921. The family was still in Shalford. On this occasion Harry's occupation was given as 'Army Pensioner & Agent'. The National Archives' surviving pension and war service records for WW1 servicemen appear not to contain any such record for Harry.

The 1921 Census finds the family living at 18 Eastwood Road in Shalford. Harry was employed by Prudential Assurance Co Ltd based in their 'Holborn Bars' building in London. His place of work, however, was given as Horwood in Eastwood Road, perhaps being the name of his house – he had cited the same name in his address in Cyril's baptism entry. Boarding with them was an unmarried policeman Edward Rose.

The National Register 1939 gives the family's address as Horwood in Hullbrook Lane, Shamley Green, indicating that they had moved from Shalford and carried over their house name to the new home. Harry's occupation was given as 'pensioner (war wound)' and ARP warden. Frank was occupied as a hairdresser's shop assistant and Cyril as a 'heavy worker'. Jack had recently married to Frances Stella (née) Travis [GRO Ref: Surrey SW 2a 1304, 1939 (Q2)] and the National Register find them also living in Shamley Green but at Chestnut Cottage; he too was occupied as a heavy worker and general carrier.

Cyril married in 1942 to Violet M (née) Pitts and Frank married in 1947 to Margaret (née) Riley. Both Jack and Frank fathered children but Cyril may not have done.

Harry and Mary remained at Horwood in Hullbrook Lane to the ends of their lives. Harry died on 15 July 1963 [GRO Ref: Surrey SW 5g 704, 1963 (Q3)]. Administration was granted on 9 August to a solicitor John Fergrieve Brown and Harry's effects were valued at £2,331. Mary died on 9 August 1972 [GRO Ref: Surrey SW 5g 1308, 1972 (Q3)]. Probate was granted on 15 September and her effects were valued at £10,392.

## Retrospect

Harry's inauspicious beginnings within the grim walls of the Marylebone workhouse did not prevent him from becoming a creditable school pupil and choir singer, gaining employment, marrying, serving in the Army and raising four children. His good fortune in being admitted firstly to the All Saints Home and then to the care of the Teesdales must have played a strong part in his progress towards successful adulthood.

We do not know much about the life of his mother, even if we identify her as the Matilda Ann Edwards discussed in Appendix II. Whoever she was, it is striking that she evidently allowed herself to become untraceable by Harry once he had departed from her care. She would not have had any difficulty in keeping track of him in his adult life, because the Teesdale sisters Ellen and Julia, known to the Waifs and Strays Society, lived out their last years at The Cottage in Effingham and Harry would almost certainly have maintained occasional contact with them.

Harry's case raises the possibility that other children in the care of the Society had been brought to Effingham at the instigation of Rev Bayly. We do not know yet the significance of the boy named 'G ...' referred to in the exchanges in 1892 between Ellen and Mrs Raincock. It may be that there is more information relating to Effingham in the Society's archives.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: from the website of the 'Hidden Lives Revealed' project, © The Children's Society; photograph created by Samuel A Walker

Figure 2: also from the website of the 'Hidden Lives Revealed' project, © The Children's Society; unknown creator, taken from the Society's magazine *Our Waifs and Strays*, October 1900, p377

Figure 3: from the website of The Dharma Trust at Marpa House (the former All Saints Home for Boys)  
<https://www.marpahouse.org.uk/marpa-house/history/>  
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Figure 4: from the General Register Office

Figure 5: from *Ancestry*

Figure 6: Image © Illustrated London News Group; British Newspaper Archive

Figure 7: from [http://qprland.larsnorlin.se/FromDStreet/qpr\\_myhistory2.html](http://qprland.larsnorlin.se/FromDStreet/qpr_myhistory2.html)

Figure 8: from <https://kr.pinterest.com/pin/771382242399376022/>

Figure 9: scan of original postcard; ELHG archives

Figure 10: Ordnance Survey 25" map – Surrey XXI.2 Revised 1913 Published 1916; National Library of Scotland

Figure 11: by kind permission of The Mills Archive Trust; image STID-10623

Figure 12: from The National Archives, British Army medal index 1914-20, Series WO 372

Figure 13-17: from The Children's Society's online project 'Hidden Lives Revealed'

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our thanks to the Trustees of The Dharma Trust for permitting our use of their photograph shown in Figure 3.

## APPENDIX I

Scans of some of the original documents in Harry's case file

**Church of England Central Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays.**

PRESIDENT:—  
**THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.**

**BOYS' RECEIVING HOUSE:**  
FREDERICK TERRACE, AVELEY ROAD, UPPER CLAPTON, E.

**BOYS' PROPOSED GARDENING AND FARMING HOME.,**  
STANDON, STAFFORDSHIRE.

**GIRLS' RECEIVING HOUSES:**  
BARODA HOUSE, EAST DULWICH, S.E.;  
MARYLEBONE HOME, 14, OLD QUEBEC STREET, W. (CERTIFIED);  
HEADSTONE DRIVE, HARROW, MIDDLESEX;  
MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK;  
ASHURST, KENT, (CERTIFIED);  
FAREHAM, HANTS;  
LEAMINGTON, WARWICKSHIRE.

**OFFICE:—No. 32, CHARING CROSS, LONDON, S.W.**  
*Hon. Sec.—E. de M. RUDOLF, Esq.  
Secretary—Rev. G. HERBERT WOOLLEY.*

**Application for the Admission of a Boy.**

NOTE.—This Form when filled up and certified by a Clergyman of the Church of England, should be returned to  
Rev. G. HERBERT WOOLLEY, Secretary, CHURCH OF ENGLAND CENTRAL SOCIETY FOR PROVIDING HOMES FOR WAIFS AND STRAYS,  
No. 32, Charing Cross, London, S.W.

**QUESTIONS TO BE REPLIED TO.**

|                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                |                                      |      |                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------|
| 1. Give the boy's christian name and surname ... ..                                                                                                                         | <i>H</i>                                                       |                                      |      |                  |
| 2. State his exact age, and give the date and place of his birth ... ..                                                                                                     | <i>April 19<sup>th</sup> 1880 Marylebone Waleham</i>           |                                      |      |                  |
| 3. Is he legitimate? ... ..                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Yes</i>                                                     |                                      |      |                  |
| 4. If baptized, state place and date of baptism ... ..                                                                                                                      | <i>Yes after Waleham</i>                                       |                                      |      |                  |
| 5. Are his parents living? ... ..                                                                                                                                           | <i>Yes</i>                                                     |                                      |      |                  |
| 6. If, however, either or both are dead, state of what disease they died, and give the date of their death.                                                                 | Mother                                                         | <i>Not known</i>                     |      |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                             | Father                                                         | <i>Not known</i>                     |      |                  |
| 7. If living, give their exact places of abode, and state how long they have resided there. ... ..                                                                          | Mother                                                         | <i>He on a visit. Florence Place</i> |      |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                             | Father                                                         | <i>He on a visit.</i>                |      |                  |
| 8. Give the christian names and surnames of his parents (in full) and state their ages ... ..                                                                               | Mother                                                         | <i>Yes</i>                           |      |                  |
|                                                                                                                                                                             | Father                                                         | <i>Yes</i>                           |      |                  |
| 9. What was or is the nature of the father's occupation and the amount of his weekly earnings? ... ..<br>Give the name and address of his present or last employer ... ..   | <i>Not known</i>                                               |                                      |      |                  |
| 10. What was or is the nature of the mother's occupation and the amount of her weekly earnings? ... ..<br>Give the name and address of her present or last employer? ... .. | <i>Mother's help £20 a week<br/>Mrs B. White road Hastings</i> |                                      |      |                  |
| 11. Have his parents or guardians ever received parish relief? If so, to what extent? ... ..                                                                                | <i>Only his mother as given above</i>                          |                                      |      |                  |
| 12. Give the names, addresses, ages, occupations and earnings (if any) of all his brothers and sisters ... ..                                                               | NAME.                                                          | ADDRESS.                             | AGE. | WEEKLY EARNINGS. |
|                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>None</i>                                                    | <i>None</i>                          |      |                  |

\*. Replies to this question must be very full and exact.  
No application can be received without full enquiry as to earnings having been made, and result stated.

Figure 13a Application for Harry's admission to a home for waifs and strays; 1885.

QUESTIONS TO BE REPLIED TO—Continued.

| 13. At what address and with whom is the boy now living? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | DEGREE OF RELATIONSHIP. | NAMES.                            | ADDRESS.          | AGE. | OCCUPATION. | WEEKLY EARNINGS. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------------|------------------|
| 13. At what address and with whom is the boy now living? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         | Mr & Mrs                          | Droghda St. State |      |             |                  |
| 14. Give in full the names, addresses, occupations and earnings of all living relatives the child is known to possess, either on the father's or mother's side, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, &c. No application to this question will be made where the earnings of relatives have been made, and result stated.       |                         | He has none.                      | on either side    |      |             |                  |
| 15. State whether any of his relatives are in your judgment in a position to maintain him, or to contribute in any degree towards his support                                                                                                                                                                                  |                         | only his mother her health is bad |                   |      |             |                  |
| 16. Has he ever been convicted? If so, state the nature of his offence and term of imprisonment ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         | No                                |                   |      |             |                  |
| 17. Has he ever attended day school? If so, where and for how long? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                         | Does attend school in Droghda St. |                   |      |             |                  |
| 18. Has he ever attended Sunday school? If so, where and for how long ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         | St. Jude's - several times        |                   |      |             |                  |
| 19. Has he ever been in the workhouse? If so, for how long and where? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                         | only when he was born             |                   |      |             |                  |
| 20. Has he any afflictions of the limbs, joints, skin or eyes which may have the effect of preventing him from entering domestic service? ...                                                                                                                                                                                  |                         | None                              |                   |      |             |                  |
| 21. Is he subject to fits? or has he ever had one? If so, state its nature ...<br>Is the child subject to incontinence of urine ...                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         | No                                |                   |      |             |                  |
| 22. Is he at present affected with any infectious or contagious disease, or with scrofula, requiring medical treatment? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                         | No                                |                   |      |             |                  |
| 23. Has he had scarlet fever or whooping cough, measles, or small pox? If not the latter, has he been vaccinated? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         | whooping cough measles<br>Dys     |                   |      |             |                  |
| 24. Is his general health good? ...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         | Yes                               |                   |      |             |                  |
| 25. Are his parents, guardians, or next of kin, willing to sign an agreement to commit the boy wholly to the care of the managers of the Home, to obey the rules in force, and to permit the said boy when fully trained to be sent to any situation in the United Kingdom which may be obtained for him by the Committee? ... |                         | Yes                               |                   |      |             |                  |

I certify that the foregoing questions have been correctly replied to.

(Signed,) Name M. A.  
Address Kingsgate Road. N. W.  
Incumbent of Late Parlot of Norton-le-Moors,  
Date April 27. 1885. Staff:

Figure 13b Application for Harry's admission to a home for waifs and strays; 1885.

This page should be filled up with a full and particular account of the boy, his parents, family, &c.

The mother cannot be seen in good health at £20. a per but for two years past from having had very bad plans with invalids whom had been suffering was required. She has injured herself virtually been obliged to undergo an operation at St. Thomas Hospital. She is now in a rather stable situation but her situation is so uncertain that she may never really be strong or able to gain permanently high wages. She is now paying for a week at the friends almost impossible in the state of health for the future she has nothing certain to look forward to. She is very fond of the child if the Committee could take the child at a reduction of 3/6 or 3/6 a week. I am sure she they will find her regular in her payments & quite the depended on. I have become more or less seven years I have no limitation in David's age I do in the same -

Nancy Jones

May 11<sup>th</sup> 1885 37. Whitechapel St.

Figure 13c Application for Harry's admission to a home for waifs and strays; 1885.

The Tiers  
Bushey Heath  
Herts  
May 13. 85

Dear Madam  
according to promise I have  
written to you to ask you  
if you have heard from  
Mr. Woolley with regard to  
my little H. I should  
be so very glad to hear  
and should be very  
grateful if they could  
help me in this matter  
but as I have not heard  
any more about it I am  
afraid perhaps they can  
do nothing for me if not  
I must still struggle  
on and do my best  
I fear I shall not be able

to remain here it is such  
a very hard place they  
keep so much company  
and have a good many  
tennis parties and I have  
only a very young servant  
beside myself so that  
I have to cook and  
take the whole of the  
household arrangements  
I do not want to give  
it up if I can manage  
it until I get something  
else in view but if you  
should hear of a better  
place I should be so very  
glad and I am sure  
I could manage the  
children and it would  
be a real boon to me  
I thank you so much  
for the kind interests

you took in sending me  
to Mr. Woolley and shall  
be so very thankful if he  
is able to go I think this  
is all this time I am  
thankful to say I am  
feeling better again just  
now which is a great comfort  
for me and now  
with many grateful  
thanks I am Madam  
Yours Respectfully  
M

Figure 14 Matilda's letter describing her situation and hopes for Harry; 1885.

Dear Mr Rudolf,  
 I think we have  
 a little boy who will suit  
 the Chappman very nicely,  
 it is <sup>and</sup> <sup>18-1-92</sup> <sup>Jan 20<sup>th</sup></sup> <sup>1892</sup>  
 he has  
 been in the home some years  
 and is the oldest boy now,  
 he will be 12 in April next,  
 he is one of the best boys in  
 the children's choir, and very

fond of singing, and I think  
 sings sweetly and has rather  
 a nice voice, but I have very  
 little or no knowledge of  
 music. I know Mr Bramham  
 with he long to <sup>from the choir</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>be</sup> <sup>with</sup> <sup>him</sup>  
 but it seems as though it  
 would be a nice thing for him  
 he will be missed in the home  
 as he is useful in the kitchen  
 but there are others to take  
 his place. If the Chappman

will take him into his home  
 he might be soon trained as  
 a Page boy, as he has been  
 used to house work —  
 Believe me

We truly  
 In Remembrance

I have opened this letter  
 to say if <sup>it</sup> is  
 not wanted for a week or two,  
 the children would have more  
 time to get his things ready  
 we must get a box made for

him, and a few little useful  
 articles in the way of brushes &c.  
 I shall not be at home the  
 beginning of next week, but  
 shall be here after Wednesday  
 In R.

Figure 15 Mrs Raincock's letter to Mr Rudolf; 1892.

Effingham College  
W. Leatherhead

ans  
26.1.92

Dear Sir,

Mr Bayly asks  
me to inform you that  
we shall be glad to take  
H. whose  
papers I enclose, as  
our paid case, in the  
place of G.  
H. will be

boarded out at Mrs  
R. . He can take  
him on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup>,  
or if his clothes are too  
really so now, on Friday  
February 5<sup>th</sup>, provided  
we are informed what  
train he comes by, & where  
to meet him?

There is no work at  
present for him to do  
here, but I suppose he  
is to attend School?  
What Standard is he in?

I am, Dear Sir,  
Yrs faithfully  
Ellen A. Teesdale

January 25<sup>th</sup> 1892

P.S. The enc. paper is  
a very old one. I suppose  
the boy is in good health  
& not suffering from any  
complaint?

Figure 16 Miss Teesdale's letter to Mr Rudolf; 1892.

485  
 Forwarded by  
 Miss Teesdale  
 The Cottage  
 Effingham  
 29 Jan 1899  
 To Mrs A. B.  
 Fleaford  
 Mr Guildford  
 Surrey  
 Dear Miss  
 Your humble servant  
 takes the  
 opportunity & thinks it  
 his duty to write and  
 let you know ~~how~~ I am  
 getting on, and also to  
 thank you for the many

Kindnesses you have done  
 for me, I am getting on  
 very well in my new  
 place & I like it very  
 much. The Colonel &  
 Mrs P. are very kind  
 to me, the Colonel has  
 given me one suit of  
 clothes since I have been  
 here. Dear Miss I lodge  
 at the farm with Mrs

C., & I pay her 11 per  
 week, & have everything  
 done for me, and I am  
 very comfortable. I have  
 joined Putterham choir  
 & the Colonel is very  
 pleased, it is rather  
 a long way to walk  
 but I do not mind that.  
 The first few Sundays  
 I felt very lonely but  
 I am alright now.

<sup>The gardener</sup>  
 Hodgson & me gets on  
 very well together now.  
 Since I have been in the  
 choir we have had two  
 treats. We went to the  
 Countess's to supper one  
 night. And we went  
 to Barnum & Bailey's show  
 at Aldershot. Wishing you  
 a happy Christmas & again  
 thanking you for your kindness  
 to me I remain your  
 Obedient servant H

Figure 17 Harry's letter to Miss Teesdale; 1899.

## APPENDIX II

*Identification of Harry's mother Matilda*

We trace here the life of a woman named Matilda Ann Edwards – abbreviated hereafter as MAE – and then consider the case for identifying her as the mother of the ‘waif and stray’ Harry Edwards.

**Biographical details of MAE**

MAE was born in Hampshire in 1853 [GRO Ref: Whitchurch 2c 175, 1853 (Q1)] to parents Edward Edwards and Catherine (née Bond) who had married at All Hallows Church in Whitchurch, Hampshire on 15 August 1852 [GRO Ref: Whitchurch 2c 257, 1852 (Q3)]. She was baptised at that same church when aged almost 7, on 25 December 1859, the baptism register giving Edward's occupation as porter. Whitchurch, a small town about 8 miles east of Andover, was Catherine's birthplace whilst Edward's was Shrewsbury.

The 1861 Census finds Edward, Catherine and MAE living in East Street, Epsom at Chapel Cottage, next door to the Calvinist Chapel. This 18<sup>th</sup>C chapel was known originally as Bugby Chapel, referring to its founder William Bugby, and underwent various denominational changes as the years passed, eventually becoming Epsom and District Synagogue in 1954. In 1975 it became a Grade II Listed Building and in 1994 was converted into an office named The Meeting House. Its adjoining cottage had been known originally as Rose Cottage but ceased to be associated with the chapel after 1943, becoming a private dwelling until 1978 when it was demolished. When Edward was living there in 1861 he was occupied as a railway pointsman whilst MAE, aged ‘8’, was attending school.

Catherine died aged ‘39’ in 1868 [GRO Ref: Richmond, S. 2a 167, 1868 (Q2)] and her body was taken back to the place of her birth: she was buried at All Hallows, Whitchurch on 2 May, the register giving her former abode as Richmond in Surrey. On 31 July 1870 Edward remarried [GRO Ref: Kensington 1a 65, 1870 (Q3)] at St Paul's, Hammersmith to Ann (née Croft) (born in Luton, Bedfordshire) with whom he is found in the 1871 Census living at 5, Dunstable Villas near the Sheen Road in Richmond; he was occupied as a railway porter. MAE, who would have been 18, was not living with them and her whereabouts at this time are unknown. She had probably left home to take up employment.

The 1881 Census finds MAE living in Willesden at 2, Snowden Villas in Carlton Road (soon after renamed as Carlton Vale). These premises operated as a small home for unmarried mothers and their babies. The Children's Homes website ([www.childrenshomes.org.uk](http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk)) classes it as a ‘Magdalene Home’ established for receiving ‘first time mothers of illegitimate children’. Admission required the mothers to provide a ‘Queen Charlotte's letter’ (presumably issued by the Queen Charlotte's Hospital in Marylebone Road) and they would remain in the home for a weekly fee of five shillings until ‘ready for service’. In 1881 MAE was occupied as the home's matron. With her were six unmarried women aged between 16 and 26, each a servant of some kind, and six babies all born in the parish of Marylebone and aged between 1 month and 13 months. The surnames of five of the babies matched the surnames of five of the mothers. There was no baby with surname Edwards, although we note that Harry had been born in April 1880.

The 1891 Census finds MAE living in ‘Ceder [sic – Cedar?] Terrace, Harrow Weald in the household of a gardener Joseph Jennings. She was occupied as a monthly nurse and had with her a daughter Daisy Ellen Edwards aged ‘4’ with birthplace Harrow Weald. In this and all her subsequent census entries MAE presented herself as widowed, but there can be little doubt that this was untrue.

Daisy's birth and baptism records render her forename as ‘Daisey’. Her birth certificate [GRO Ref: Hendon 3a 147, 1886 (Q3)] states that she was born on 21 July 1886 at Alma Cottages, Harrow Weald. Her father is named as ‘Edward Edwards’ and her mother as ‘Matilda Edwards formerly Bond’. MAE was evidently falsifying the details of Daisy's parents, utilising details from the names of her own parents. Her mother Catherine had died in 1868, but her father Edward and his second wife Ann were still alive in 1911, living in Richmond, Surrey, so MAE must have calculated that her father would not get to hear about this. She gave her own address as 2, Canning Road in Wealdstone. Daisy was baptised nearly four years later, on 1 June 1890, at Holy Trinity, Wealdstone (north west of London), the register entry naming her father as ‘Edward Edwards’. The latter's occupation was given as butcher, as it had been on Daisy's birth certificate, evidently just another invention on MAE's part.

Living next door to the Jennings family in 1891 were William Jenner, a parish roadsman aged ‘76’, with his wife Lucy (née Bedford) and three unrelated boys as boarders. William and Lucy had produced many children of their own, all of whom were no longer living with them. One of these was Mary Elizabeth Jenner born in Pinner in 1846 [GRO Ref: Hendon 3 22, 1846 (Q4)] and baptised there on 10 January 1847. The GRO birth index also has an entry for a ‘Harriet’ Jenner having exactly the same birth reference, but no evidence has been found to indicate that she was a twin to Mary; instead, it seems more likely that

the two references pertain to just one girl being registered twice on or about the same day, perhaps owing to a change of mind as to how she should be named.

Mary Jenner is a significant link, as will be explained presently, between MAE and the story of Harry Edwards. Born in 1846, she was about 7 years older than MAE. At the time of the 1881 Census Mary was living at 43A, Acacia Road in the St John's Wood Terrace ward of Marylebone. This house was named 'Young Gentlemen's School' in the census schedule. The head of household was a recently widowed Harriet Oliver described as 'Proprietress St John's Wood School'. Living with her were her three daughters and two sons, seven servants and nine boarding scholars; Mary was one of these servants, described as a nurse – an occupation similar to MAE's. She married as 'Harriet Mary Elizabeth' in 1890 to a widowed pianoforte maker Harry Edgar Knapton [GRO Ref: Pancras 1b 265, 1890 (Q2)] and gave her initials as HME in the 1891 Census.

The 1901 Census finds MAE and Daisy Ellen living near to the house Claverley on the Grand Parade of Littlestone-on-Sea, New Romney in Kent. MAE was occupied as a caretaker.

The 1911 Census finds MAE back in Middlesex, being a visitor at 'The Institute', Great Stanmore. This building was the Ernest Bernays Memorial Institute in The Broadway, a community hall that had opened in December 1871. MAE gave her occupation as monthly nurse. The only other person present was the hall's caretaker Amy Jane (née) Kiff. Daisy has not been found in this Census.

The 1921 Census again finds MAE in Great Stanmore, apparently living in Church Road off London Road (strictly, off The Broadway) and occupied only in 'home duties'. Daisy Ellen was with her and occupied as a packer for the Eastman Kodak company whose works stood a few miles away in Headstone Drive, Wealdstone.

The 1939 National Register finds MAE and Daisy still living near on in The Broadway. MAE, described as an invalid, gave her birth date as 31 January 1853. Daisy, described as a housekeeper, gave hers as 21 July 1886.

MAE died aged 93 in 1946 [GRO Ref: Hendon 5f 2, 1946 (Q4)] and Daisy Ellen, still unmarried, five years later [GRO Ref: Hendon 5e 551, 1951 (Q4)], both of them intestate. Daisy was buried at Great Stanmore on 7 December 1951, the register giving her abode as No 1, Wilson Homes, Stanmore.

### **Was MAE Harry's mother?**

'Harry's mother' is here abbreviated as HM. We possess no solid proof that HM was indeed MAE. However, there are several strands of circumstantial evidence that together make the identification at least plausible and, arguably, probable.

#### **1. Consistency of reported ages**

In 1881 MAE reported her age as 32, although it was actually 28. It was unusual for a woman to over-estimate her age in a census return – far more often she would under-report it. Still, there can be little doubt that MAE born in Whitchurch in 1853 was the person who in 1881 gave her birthplace as Whitchurch and her age as 32 – no other Matilda Edwards was birth-registered in or near Whitchurch in the 1840s or 1850s.

Given this, we may take the view that someone who had over-estimated their age in one year would probably have over-estimated it the year before – in 1880 HM had also given her age as 32.

In 1891 MAE again over-estimated her age (as 41) but in all subsequent records her reported ages were entirely accurate.

#### **2. Consistency of abode in early 1880s**

In 1881 MAE was living in Carlton Road. Carlton Road was barely half a mile from Droop Street in which by 1885 the son of unmarried mother HM seems to have been boarding and attending school.

#### **3. Consistency of actual and intended occupation**

In 1881 MAE was occupied as a matron in a small home for unmarried mothers in Carlton Road. It is interesting that, if she had had her own illegitimate baby almost exactly a year previously (April 1880), she had gone to a post helping others in that predicament. In 1885 HM, now living in Bushey Heath, wrote in a letter 'if you should hear of a matron's place I

should be so very glad'. In the May 1885 application it was stated that HM's current or most recent employment was that of Mother's help in White Rock, Hastings.

#### **4. Relationship to Mary Jenner**

HM's principal advocate in 1885 was a woman Mary whose surname, as signed on several letters, bears a strong resemblance to 'Jenner'. In 1881 she was a servant employed as a nurse – the same type of occupation that MAE seems to have had. In 1891 MAE was living in Harrow Weald, just 1-2 miles south of Bushey Heath, next door to the parents (William and Lucy) of a Mary Jenner who in 1881 had been living only about a mile from Marylebone workhouse and a little over a mile from Droop Street.

#### **5. Consistency of abode in the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

By 1911 MAE was living (and remained thereafter) in Great Stanmore, just 2 miles south-east of Bushey Heath where HM had been living in 1892.

If we identify HM as MAE we have to take on board a particular detail she put on her 1911 census return, namely that she had produced four children of whom three had died (the survivor being Daisy Ellen). On this return in which she claimed to be widowed and to have married nearly three decades earlier, she was apparently aiming to create a narrative of legitimacy to account for Daisy Ellen. However, there is no obvious motive for her to have falsely claimed to have also produced three non-surviving children. If she had produced these, was she including Harry among them? At present there does not appear to be any route to investigating this matter further.