

The Button Files

Newsletter of the Warburton Society

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The Newsletter

Welcome to the fifth issue of **The Button Files**. I prepared three articles for this issue. Then just as I was finishing off the newsletter I got an interesting email containing transcripts of reports in the **Warrington Guardian** concerning the death of a Walter Warburton in a sailing accident on the River Mersey at Warrington in 1912 (just 9 days before the Titanic sank). I have included it as an extra article:

- **Always Turn the Page** is an extract from a book of the same name by David Robinson. The book is about Robinson family history, which includes some Warburton ancestors. The extract concerns those Warburton ancestors who lived in Summerseat, near Bury in Lancashire.
- **Who are Sam Warburton's Ancestors** Sam Warburton was captain of the Wales Rugby Union team that reached the semi-finals of the recent Rugby World Cup in New Zealand. The article describes my research into his ancestors.
- **From Misfit to Hero** is the story of WWII flying ace Wing Commander Adrian Warburton, DSO and bar, DFC and 2 bars, DFC (USA), who was also known as 'mad Warby of Malta'.
- **A Tragic Event** contains the **Warrington Guardian** transcripts referred to above.

Warburton One-Name Study

*I have made the following updates to **The Warburton Website** since the last newsletter:*

1. Changes necessitated by the change of DNA supplier to **Family Tree DNA** were completed. These include an extended Welcome Message aimed at attracting more participants, and information on the **Friends of the Warburton One-Name Study** private group at **Facebook**.
2. The first DNA results from **Family Tree DNA** were added, bringing the total to 25. I have one more ready to add, and another in process.
3. The **Timperley Family** in **Families** has been extended into an **Altrincham Clan**.
4. The **Radcliffe Clan** has been split out from the **Haslingden Clan**.
5. There are changes to several other clans. The running total is now 27 clans and 4 families including a total of 6215 names of which 4028 are Warburtons.
6. I have added two parish resources, Leigh and Winwick. A parish resource contains lists of the Warburton baptisms, marriages, burials, and Monumental Inscriptions for the parish, together with an attempt to group the entries into families, linked across generations where possible.

I notice that the hits counter on the site is approaching 5000.

My next activities will come from the following, ever expanding list. I find I am constantly being redirected by new ideas so I'm not sure what the sequence will be, or if something new will crop up. My constant battle is to at least finish one thing before going onto the next. Incidentally if anyone sees anything they would dearly like to research themselves please shout. I would be happy to include your work on the website. The list does not include DNA activities which are discussed in the next section.

1. My first task is to publish Sam Warburton's ancestors. It is not big enough to be a clan in its own right so will be included in families.
2. When doing the story on Adrian Warburton it uncovered information to add to the Weaverham Clan. Also I realised there is a lot of census information that could be added.

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3. If I do an article on 'Choppy' Warburton for the next newsletter (see **Next Issue**) I should try and document his family.
4. I have been threatening for some time to develop the Haslingden parish resource, in the hopes of resolving some of the issues from the article **A Confusing Family** in issue 3 of **The Button Files**. A recent contact from (the husband of) a descendant of Eva Warburton Proctor makes this more urgent. I did make a start on it a while ago.
5. When I did the Leigh parish recently I found a family that came from Lymm. Some time ago Cathy Warburton sent me a load of stuff on families from in and around Lymm parish, so I think I should give Lymm the treatment before long.
6. The same is true for Warburton parish which is adjacent to both Lymm and Bowdon, and is after all the source of the name. The coverage of parishes in Cheshire by both **FamilySearch** and **FindMyPast** is now so good that it should be possible to work through all the Cheshire parishes in time.
7. Many trails lead to Tottington and the area just north of Bury. There is the Tottington Clan provided by Ann Cooper. A recent DNA participant had origins there, but not linked to the Tottington Clan. The Warbruton family in **Always Turn the Page** also originates there, whilst The Bakers are from close by, and Sam Warburton's family is from Bury. Tottington falls in Bury parish though there are also chapels in the area. The number of Warburtons at Bury is vast so it will be a big task, but it needs to be done soon.
8. The CD of MIs in Altrincham and district, and the fiches when I acquired at the The Guild of One-Name Studies Conference are still awaiting some attention.
9. Each of the parish exercises may result in extensions to existing clans, or even new ones as I proceed.

The DNA Study

The most recent DNA results have not been exciting as there has only been one possible match amongst them. Including one result to be reported, and another due soon there will be 27 results in the study.

Family Tree DNA have regular discounts on tests. There is currently one up to the 31st December 2011 for just \$119 for a 37 marker test. This is the cheapest I have ever seen. Currently my General Fund has sufficient funds for 3 tests at this rate so I am currently hunting for candidates keen to take the opportunity of a free test, so if you know of anyone please let me know.

The ideal candidate for a free test is one who is linked to a clan I don't have a secure profile for. This means I either have no profile, or a single unmatched profile. In the latter case he must be no more closely related than third cousin to the previous participant. I would consider someone with no known link to a current clan provided they had some good knowledge of their Warburton ancestors. Anyone linked to a clan I do have a secure

profile for, or who is descended from a known 'non-paternal event' in the last 200 years would not be a candidate.

Incidentally the reason the General Fund is healthy at the moment is that I eventually managed to get the money back for two tests ordered at DNA Heritage, but not performed. It took a little persuasion from the Small Claims Court. I was very impressed by their on-line system, and the help provided by the Consumer Direct helpline. I would recommend them to anyone in the UK with a similar problem.

Always Turn the Page

Always Turn the Page is a history of a Robinson family from Lancashire. It was written by David Robinson and is available at: http://www.mlfhs.org.uk/articles/article_index.php. I would recommend it to anyone interested in the history and environment of the Lancashire mill towns. The world in which the Robinson family lived and worked was shared by many Warburton families, including that described below, which is the family of David's great grandmother.

Although the William Warburton in the story was born in Tottington, he is not part of the Tottington Clan, and I realise there are many other Tottington families yet to be documented and who may, or may not be closely related to the Tottington Clan. This is an area for future research.

William Robinson and his family moved to Summerseat in Lancashire's Rossendale valley around 1843.

Extract:

Living in Bass Lane the Robinsons would have been neighbours to an important ancestral connection by marriage, the Warburton family, who in both the 1841 and 1851 censuses were also living in Brooksbottom, Summerseat.

The young Robinsons (Martha, John, Esther) and Warburtons (Catherine, Mary, William) would all have attended the Brooksbottom Mixed Primary School together.



Fig. 1 Mixed Primary School Brooksbottom built 1840

John Robinson Kay (owner of Brooksbottom Mill) had built this school in 1840 for all the children of his employees in the village. The original building is a private house today.

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A record of village gratitude exists in a bible inscription: "Presented by the inhabitants of Brooksbottom to Miss Kay of Bass Lane House in grateful remembrance of the many favours conferred by her parents, especially that of erecting a school at Brooksbottom, November 21st 1840."

The Robinson and Warburton families were to be joined in 1852 when Rachel Warburton married Edmund Robinson.

The Warburtons can be traced back to the nearby village of Tottington a short distance south east of Summerseat. Rachel's father, William, in the early 1800s was working as a self employed weaver supplying the mills of Tottington and Kinglees with cloth for use in local calico printing and bleaching mills. With the advent of the power loom in the 1820s William would have struggled for work and income with a 60% unemployment rate and a 50% reduction in wages for self employed weavers. This may well have prompted the Warburtons move to the rebuilt mill at Brooksbottom around 1830.

William had married a Catherine Fleming on 16th June 1816 in Tottington. This is the origin of my great grandfather's middle name (Arthur Fleming Robinson). Catherine's background was quite different from that of her husband in that she was born in a London workhouse, became a pauper's apprentice and was sent to the Lancashire mills at a very young age. Here is what we know about her background.

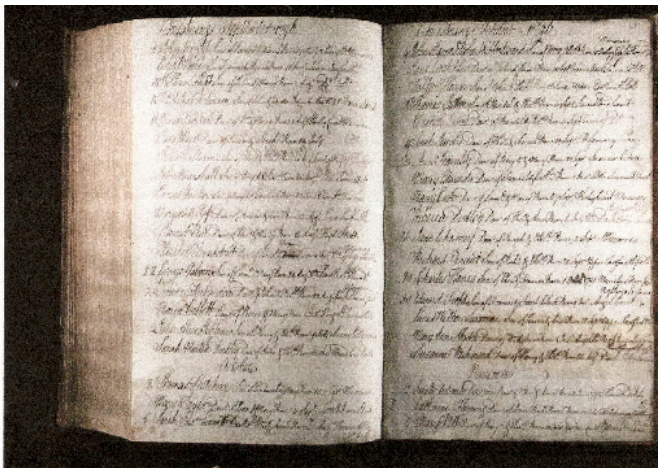


Fig. 2 St. Botolph Parish Record Book for 1796. The birth record of Catherine is one line from the bottom on the right hand page. It is dated as an entry for Nov 2nd 1796 and has a capital "P" in the margin denoting "Pauper". The exact record reads:

"Catherine Fleming, daughter of Ann, baseborn; born Oct 10th 1796 Workhouse, Nightingale Lane." Baseborn refers to illegitimate.

Catherine's mother, Ann Fleming, was under the care of the Poor Parish of Whitechapel when she took a three year apprenticeship in 1791 with a Patrick Dempsey in Cartwright Street, London. After two years of service, Mr. Dempsey returned to Ireland and left Ann destitute once more. On Oct 1796, Catherine was born out of wedlock in a workhouse in Nightingale Lane in the nearby Parish of St. Botolph.

The workhouse in Nightingale Lane was built in 1736 to serve the Middlesex half of the parish and it housed up to 250 people. The only other record is that of 20th January 1797 when her mother, Ann, received 8 pence as funds for nursing care.

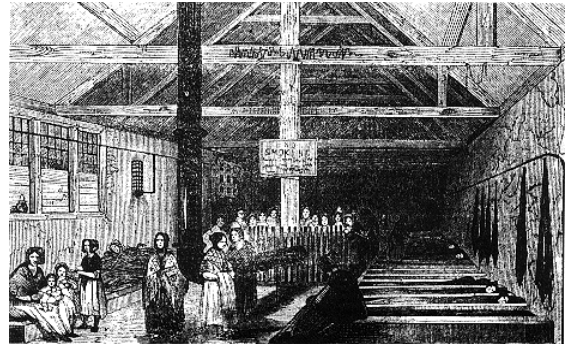


Fig. 3

Typical workhouse setting

Our next record of Catherine is her marriage to William in Tottington in 1816.

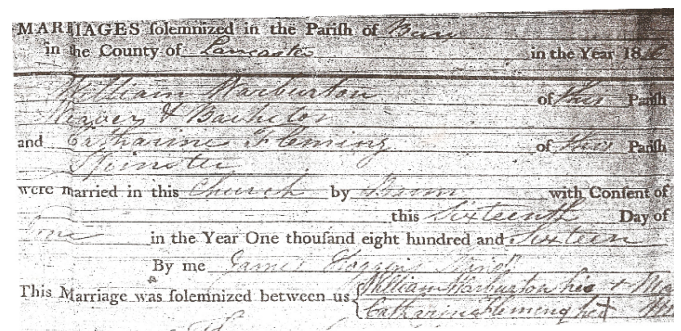


Fig. 4 The marriage Certificate of William Warburton and Catherine Fleming in 1816

Pauper records confirm that outside London the pauper apprentice ages ranged from seven to twelve years old and 50% worked for food, clothes and lodging to age 20 or 21. 75% of poor parish bindings were to masters in manufacturing industries.

Catherine might well have been a Peel Pauper and Summerseat records show that these children made the 200 mile journey from London over several days in carriers' carts and many arrived wearing only the uniform of the charities from which they came.

Pauper Apprentices signed indentures but no real trade was learned and work was largely unskilled. The apprentices were bound for twelve years and there was no guarantee of work after that time.

Assuming that Catherine was unbound when she married at age twenty then she must have commenced work at eight years old. William and Catherine had ten children from 1816 to 1836 and they were all recorded in a wonderful family heirloom, The Warburton Tapestry.

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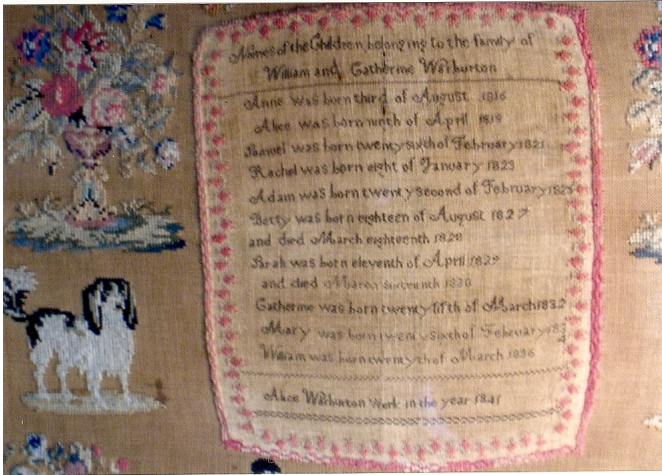


Fig. 5 The Warburton Tapestry 1841. This tapestry was made by Alice in 1841 when she was 25 years old.

Two of the ten children died in infancy, Betty in 1828 at age seven months old and Sarah in 1830 at eleven months old. These tragedies might also have contributed to the Warburtons move from Tottington to Brooksbottom.

By the 1841 census the Warburtons were settled in Brooksbottom with seven children still living at home (Samuel the oldest had left) The four oldest were all working in the mills. By 1851 the family were still living in Brooksbottom with an address of Plain Tree Row. There were still six children at home (Adam had left) with five daughters working in the mill.

William, the youngest child, was recorded as a "pupil teacher" at age 15. This is of interest mainly because of the continued influence of John Robinson Kay on life in Summerseat. He had a tremendous affect on the education of all his community. Starting with funding the Brooksbottom Primary School in 1840 which William Warburton must have greatly benefitted from. By 1846 it had 95 pupils and by 1854 that number had risen to 225.

In 1847 there was a charge of 2 ½ - 4 ½ pence per week scaled according to income.



Fig. 6 Summerseat Methodist Primary School

In 1850 a third of the whole population attended Sunday School and a fairly large library had been built up which by 1860 had over 400 books.

He (John Robinson Kay) built a completely new Methodist Primary School in 1863 and it is still in use today.

Between 1839 and 1849 John Robinson Kay was the instigator of the Wesleyan Fund to provide training for teachers and in 1839 helped found the Westminster Training College in London. In 1843 this nationwide fund commenced training schoolmasters and mistresses at the Glasgow Normal School.

It might well have been through these programs that William Warburton became one of the first of our ancestors to get a full education having a career first as a teacher in Goole, Yorkshire and then in the ministry as Church of England Curate and Vicar in Liverpool, Aintree and Altcar.

The Robinson family also must have benefited from this wonderful educational system in such a small community.

Life for the Robinson and Warburton families in the late 1840s in Summerseat must have seemed like a big improvement from their previous locations of Edenfield and Tottington. England was generally a more settled country. On the political scene the Chartists' power had waned due mainly to better employment and working conditions although their movement would eventually be the start of the trade union movement.

Sir Robert Peel as Home Secretary had introduced the first police force ("Peelers"). Now as Prime Minister he finally instituted his Factory and Reform Acts, both of which improved the lot of the working man. Finally he managed to repeal the Corn Law, which ironically was the main cause of the downfall of his Tory government. There were to be over 40 years of Liberal governments from 1830-1885.



Fig. 7 Sir Robert Peel 1788-1850

On the literary scene Charles Dickens had published David Copperfield in 1849, Charlotte Bronte published Jane Eyre in 1847 and Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights the same year.

Queen Victoria had been on the throne since 1837.

William, Catherine and Alice Warburton eventually left Summerseat, presumably when William retired from the mill. They appear in the 1871 census living together in

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Pendleton, Salford with William, age 77, Catherine, age 75 and daughter Alice unmarried at age 51.



Fig. 8 William & Catherine Warburton. This photo of William and Catherine was probably taken after they moved from Summerseat to Salford.



Fig. 9 Catherine Warburton. This photo of Catherine, which was taken in Rochdale, was likely taken after William's death when Catherine was staying with her daughter, Rachel.

William passed away in 1872 in Salford (aged 79). Catherine passed away in Salford in 1873. Edmund Robinson left Summerseat with his new wife, Rachel Warburton, shortly after their December 1852 marriage.

*(Details of Edmund's later life can be found in **Always Turn the Page**).*

Who are Sam Warbruton's Ancestors?

The Rugby Union World Cup was held in New Zealand recently, and the Welsh team, captained by Sam Kennedy Warburton, did rather well, reaching the semi-final before losing to France. Sam was all over the newspapers, both for his inspired leadership, and the fact he was sent off early in the semi-final for a dangerous tackle.

All this lead me to wonder about Sam's ancestry and this is the story of my investigations. Up to now most of my work has started in the past, either working backwards from the censuses of 1901 or 1911, or working forwards down various lines from a particular starting point. Starting from the present day was a new experience.

I started by finding as much information as possible from stories on the web. I learned that Sam was born in Cardiff of English parents, and he has a twin brother, and older sister. His father was born in London and lived for a while in Birmingham before moving to Cardiff at the age of eight. His mother was born in Leeds though her family has Welsh connections. I was also able to learn Sam's date of birth, and the ages of his parents.

I started with the indexes of birth, marriage, and death registrations on Ancestry as these go up to 2005, much later than the various free sites. The entry for Sam's birth in 1888 gave me his full name of Sam Kennedy Warburton, and his mother's maiden name of Kennedy. Searching for other Warburton births around that date with a mother's maiden name of Kennedy, I found four children including Sam's twin Ben, and his sister Holly who both also have a second name of Kennedy.

Next I looked for Sam's father. I knew his name was Jeremy, and I knew his age. I easily found his marriage to Carolyn Kennedy in Cardiff in 1885, and his birth registered at Willesden in 1958. The latter gave me his mother's maiden name of Reed. I also learned Jeremy has a middle initial of W. Looking for other children with a mother's name of Reed I found three others. Jeremy was second oldest. His older brother was also registered in Willesden, but the other two were registered in Birmingham and Cardiff, fitting neatly with what was reported of Jeremy's early life.

A search for Warburton - Reed marriages revealed only one candidate. Stanley Warburton married Joan M Reed in Bury, Lancashire in 1950. I then found a birth registration for Stanley in 1925 in Bury, and a death registration in 1980 in Cardiff, age 55. The latter also revealed Stanley's middle name of Wilson.

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Stanley's mother's maiden name was Chadwick, and he was the second of four children born in Bury with the same mother's maiden name between 1921 and 1931. However when I looked for Warburton - Chadwick marriages I found two in Bury, Jonathan and Alice, and Richard Harold and Bessie, both in 1914. Both Jonathan and Richard were old enough to appear in censuses so I could determine their ages, and then look for matching death records to determine that both lived to a good age. There were no records to indicate their wives died young either. Both couples were therefore potential parents for Stanley.

As the first of the four children was also Richard Harold his parents seemed obvious, and I decided it was most likely that all four children came from the same marriage. It was easy to understand why a couple married in 1914 would delay their first child to 1921, after WW1, but a delay to 1925 seemed a little long. However, to be sure I sent for Stanley's birth certificate which confirmed Richard Harold, bricklayer of 22 Lord Street, Heaps Bridge, Haywood as his father, but named his mother as Betsy. This meant I could find her birth and death records (1892-1977) having failed to find suitable records for Bessie. I knew from my earlier investigation that Richard was born in 1890 and died in 1973, aged 82.

From this point it was easy to work back through the censuses. In 1911 Richard was already a bricklayer living in Lord Street, lodging at No 3 with Mrs Carman. He was the eighth of nine children of George Thomas Warburton (1853-1901) and Dorothy Haslam (1852-1906) of Liverpool. George Thomas, often just Thomas, married Dorothy at St Peters, Bury in 1873. He was a cotton Spinner and lived for many years in Tinline Street, Bury.

Thomas was the fourth of ten children of William Warburton (1825-1892) and Sarah Ashworth (1825-1904). William and Sarah were married in 1846 at St Mary the Virgin, Bury. The parish record of the marriage names William's father as George. William was originally a cotton weaver but he then went to work in an Iron Foundry where he became a watchman.

I couldn't find William and his father George living together in the 1841 census. At fifteen it would not be unusual for William to be working away from home, but any further progress had to be based on the parish records. William's age is not totally consistent in the census records but they point to his birth being around 1825. I use a combination of FamilySearch and the Lancashire On-line Parish Clerk website to search parish records in Lancashire. These revealed that a William, son of George and Betty was baptised in 1825, on the day after his birth. George was a weaver and they lived in Bell.

There was one other child in the parish record whose parents were George and Betty. This was Dinah who was born in August 1823, and died in November of the same year. Just 2 weeks before Dinah's birth a George Warburton married Betty Hutchinson, again at St Mary the Virgin. It is not unusual for the gap between the wedding and the first child to be well under 9 months, though 2 weeks is cutting it a bit fine. However there are no other marriages between a George and a Betty in the records that come close to fitting so I am fairly confident

this is the correct marriage. George and Betty were living in King Street on Dinah's baptism, and at Blue Bell on her burial.

I assume Bell and Blue Bell are synonymous. I'm not sure exactly what or where this is, as there is a significant thoroughfare in Bury called Bell Lane, and a pub called the Blue Bell on the other side of town. There doesn't appear to be a King Street in modern Bury.

The next task was to find George's birth or baptism. This was a little more complicated as I didn't have an age for him, and his father was not named on his marriage record. The situation is made more complicated by the sheer number of Warburtons who appear in the parish register of St Mary the Virgin at Bury. There were a number of Warburton families living in or around Bury and there are Warburtons in the Parish Registers back to the earliest surviving records from the 1590s. It is likely that new Warburton families were being attracted to the area as the cotton industry grew.

There were several Georges who would be of a suitable age to marry in 1823, but one stood out because his parents were John and Dinah. Dinah was not a common name so it is quite likely that George's daughter was named after his mother. John and Dinah had four children, the eldest being Robert. A Robert, most likely the same Robert, named his son Wilson in 1825. This Wilson can be found in the 1841 census living with John, a cotton weaver, and Betty, and in 1851 living with his grandmother Betty. As there is no evidence of another Wilson, and this Wilson is the correct age, the most obvious explanation is that Betty is John's second wife. Parish records show that Dinah nee Wilson died in 1808. Also in both censuses they are living in Back King Street, which may be near the King Street where George was living in 1823.

It is interesting that Sam's grandfather Stanley had Wilson as his second name. Is this in recognition of Dinah Wilson? It is possible, but it is also possible that there is another, later Wilson connection I haven't found.

As John was living, aged 65, in 1841 but Betty was a widow in 1851 it would seem John died between these dates. The only death registered at Bury that fits his census age is in the first quarter of 1844 aged 70. Ages in the 1851 census were rounded down to the nearest 5 years. Based on this John was born in 1773, or early 1774. There is in fact one baptism at Bury which possibly just fits, assuming the age at death is precise. However, it is possible John was born elsewhere and moved to Bury later. It begins to get just a bit too uncertain at this point so I have not documented beyond John.

So Sam Warburton, captain of Wales, born in Cardiff of English parents, actually has his roots in the textile mills of Bury in Lancashire. I also now live in Wales, though right on the border in Chepstow, having been born in Cheshire. Also my sister married a man from Swansea. My eldest niece was born on the Gower and regards herself Welsh, though her sister was born in Hampshire and considers herself English.

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The Warburton Society

*There are now 146 people in my **Warburton Society** distribution list. This is the first Newsletter not to be distributed by email. Instead you will have received a short email announcing it is available on a website along with previous issues. Hopefully everyone found it OK.*

Friends of the Warburton One-Name Study

***Friends of the Warburton One-Name Study** is a private group I have set up on Facebook. It currently has 21 members (who are also members of the **Warburton Society**). The purpose of the group is to share photographs and ideas. From time to time I leave a comment on what I am up to. I should try and get into a habit of doing that more regularly.*

I encourage you all to join.

To join the Friends you need to be on Facebook. Then just find me, I'm the Ray Warburton who lives in Chepstow, and send me a friend request. I can then add you to the group.

If you have no interest in Facebook per se you don't have to use it for anything else. You don't need to put much in your profile, and you can make it private anyway. Personally I rarely use it apart from the group.

From Misfit to Hero

This is the story of Adrian Warburton (1918-1944). It is based on the book Warburton's War by Tony Spooner, which can be obtained (new or used) from Amazon, and is recommended if you would like the full story of Adrian's life.

Adrian received his secondary education at St Edward's, Oxford where he was a contemporary of Guy Gibson who later led the famous Dam Busters raid of 1943. An earlier pupil was Douglas Bader the legless Battle of Britain fighter ace. Arguably Adrian Warburton's career as a photo reconnaissance pilot exceeded even these great heroes. The reason he never received the same recognition was down to his unconventional approach, difficult character, and place in Coastal Command which was always seen as less glamorous than Bomber and Fighter Commands.

In the Weaverham Clan I have documented Adrian's ancestors back to Peter Warburton of Latchford, in Grappenhall Parish, Cheshire, who married Elizabeth Smith in 1722. The family later moved to Weaverham where they were farmers. However Adrian's great grandfather John broke the mould, becoming a schoolteacher, mainly in Daresbury, though in the 1861 census he is to be found in Frodsham, combining being a schoolmaster with hotel keeping. Two of his four sons entered the medical profession and another was a vicar.

Adrian's grandfather Joseph was a physician in Toxteth Park, Liverpool, where his father Geoffrey was born in 1887. Geoffrey, the youngest of six sons, forged his career in the Navy finishing WW1 as a submarine

Commander with a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) to his name. When Adrian was born in Middlesbrough on March 10th 1918 Geoffrey arranged for him to be christened onboard a submarine in Malta harbour, a prescient act considering Adrian's later career.

Adrian's upbringing seems to have been difficult. His parents did not get on well. His mother, Muriel nee Davidson, of whom he was very fond, was described as having an aristocratic demeanor, but limited intelligence. At first Geoffrey continued his naval career with a number of overseas postings, and Adrian and his older sister Alison spent their time with his grandparents in Bournemouth, or at boarding school. At some point between the wars Geoffrey became the victim of Naval cuts and moved the family to Enfield. He became the manager of the Empire cinema at Shepherd's Bush. This was not an occupation that met with Muriel's view of her station in life, and she began to drink.



Adrian's response to his upbringing was to keep to himself. In his mother's word he "never minded being by himself". Others described him as a loner. At St Edward's he avoided all team games, was often in trouble with authority, and had no close friends apart from one acquaintance who had a shared interest in aircraft. Apart from the 'aeroplane group' Adrian joined none of the schools societies. However, despite refusing to train, he was easily the fastest swimmer in the school. This was because of an immense upper body strength, which also

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meant that no-one tried to wrestle with him more than once. He was of average height with broad shoulders but slim hips. He also had blond hair and blue eyes and was considered handsome.

Adrian left school at 17, but his desire to join the RAF was vetoed by his father who instead arranged for him to be articled with a firm of accountants. Here Adrian's off-beat antics were not approved by the partners although the junior staff welcomed the diversion. On one occasion he decided to use one of the partner's private washroom. The partner returned and caught him. Having been admonished Adrian returned to his office on the floor above, climbed out of the window, down the outside of the building and through an open window into the same washroom and exited past a dumbfounded partner sitting at his desk. Adrian was obviously not suited to a life in accountancy. This and the growing fear of war approaching meant he was eventually able to join the RAF in late 1938.

Adrian completed his flying training, but was only recorded as an average, or even below average flyer. He was considered fit for single engine types only. He was posted to Coastal Command and started torpedo training. However for the next year he did very little flying and spent much of his time on various courses. The flying he did included drogue towing for firing practice. At the height of the Battle of Britain when pilots were being thrown into the battle with very little training, Adrian was on a navigation course in Blackpool.

It would seem that Adrian's problem was taking off and landing, particularly in twin engined aircraft. It was a skill he never fully mastered, though once airborne he became an extremely skillful aviator.

Adrian's problems were not confined to flying. In October 1939, whilst undergoing torpedo training at Gosport, and after the briefest of courtships, Adrian married a barmaid known as Betty of the Bush, The Bush being the Public House where she worked. Her real name was Eileen Mitchell, and she was a very attractive Beauty Queen hopeful. However Adrian seems to have regretted his actions immediately. He was soon posted a few miles away and seems to have ignored his new bride. By September 1940 the only reason he was still married was because Betty's lawyers couldn't find him to serve the divorce papers. Later Adrian always maintained he only married her because he didn't expect to survive the war and he believed someone was entitled to his widow's pension. Strangely though he never informed the RAF of her existence and his parents remained his next of kin throughout. Eventually Betty did become his official widow.

Adrian also seems to have acquired gambling debts. Fortunately in September 1940 his Squadron was tasked with sending a detachment of three planes to Malta to set up a photo reconnaissance unit. The planes were American built Martin Marylands, a twin engined plane with a crew of three. Adrian was assigned to one of the aircraft as navigator, and tasked with planning their journey from England, across enemy occupied Europe to Malta.

The leader of this detachment was Tich Whiteley and Adrian found him the sort of commander who allowed him

to blossom. He relished being given responsibility and trust, whilst at the same time having the freedom to continue his unconventional approach to life. Tich also made arrangements to handle Adrian's debt problems. A portion of his pay was withheld in England and placed in a special account to meet his debts. This worked so well that when he returned to England his debts were cleared and he had a surplus.

Within a few days of arriving in Malta two of the Maryland pilots fell ill. Despite only 35 minutes solo time on twin-engined aircraft, and his designation as fit for single engined planes only, Adrian was given a chance to pilot a Maryland. His first attempts were hair-raising. He completed one landing with wire from the perimeter fence around his rear wheel, whilst his first operational sortie was aborted when the undercarriage lost a wheel due to the violent zigzags that invariably accompanied his take-offs. Despite this Adrian, and more importantly his crew, and his commander, persisted and he was soon flying missions to photograph the Italian fleet in its various ports.

The photos Adrian returned were invariably excellent, often taken from just 50 feet. He soon began to build a reputation. It is said he never failed to return with the pictures he was sent for. In addition the Maryland carried an armament so Adrian would attack any Italian aircraft he came across. By the end of the war he was credited with 9 kills, though most of his later work was done in unarmed Spitfires. On one occasion he was attacking an Italian seaplane which fired back, smashing his cockpit. A bullet struck his harness and entered his chest. Despite the aircraft being on fire Adrian managed to maintain control. However his gunner noticed the plane was flying erratically and enquired what Adrian was doing. 'I'm extracting a bullet from my chest' was the reply.

In all Adrian flew nearly 400 missions during three spells in Malta. At first life was very hard as Malta was besieged and under constant air attack. Food was scarce and it was a constant battle to keep the planes airworthy. In such an environment formality was impossible, and informality allowed Adrian to blossom. He dressed very casually, grew his blond hair long, and seemed to come and go even fly where he pleased. After Tich Whiteley, Adrian had a number of commanders who tolerated his idiosyncrasies as long as he produced results.

Adrian soon managed to find a girlfriend. Christina Ratcliffe was dancing in a cabaret in Valetta when Italy's entry into the war trapped her on the island. She and some of her friends formed a concert party called the 'Whiz Bangs' to entertain the troops. She also volunteered to work as a civilian for the RAF, becoming a plotter in the underground ops room, where she eventually became Assistant to the Controller. She remained in Malta after the war.

Adrian and Christina were a glamorous couple, familiar throughout the island. One consequence of their relationship was that Adrian did not live in the Officer's Mess. This contributed to the continued perception of him as a loner. His fellow officers recognised his courage but found him difficult to get on with. In contrast Adrian's relationship with the ordinary airmen who formed his crew, and serviced his plane was excellent. It was not

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unusual to find him sitting on the hangar floor playing cards with the ground crew.

Adrian justifiably earned the title 'Mad Warby of Malta'. The list of his exploits is long. In the autumn of 1940 the Royal Navy wanted to attack the Italian Navy in the harbour at Tarantino with torpedoes dropped from Swordfish, an old biplane. For this to succeed they needed to know exactly where each ship was moored. During a mission in extremely bad weather Adrian flew in at zero feet whilst his crew noted the names and position of each ship in case the photos didn't come out. When it seemed there was a sixth battleship where only five were expected, Adrian went back, despite heavy anti-aircraft fire, and the crew counted the battle ships aloud to confirm there were only five. They returned with the arial from an enemy ship caught in their tail wheel.

On one occasion while over Tripoli, Adrian noticed a new airfield and went to take a closer look. The Maryland was not a familiar plane and the Italians assumed it was friendly and gave it a green light to land. Adrian accepted the offer and approached as if to land before shooting up the parked aircraft and making his escape. He later repeated the trick on a German airfield in Sicily. However, despite his reputation as 'mad Warby', the risks he took were calculated. It was unlikely he would get away with such a trick again, now the enemy was forewarned, so he never tried it again.

He received, and boasted of receiving, a medal every six months, eventually getting 3 DFCs (Distinguished Flying Cross), two DSOs and a DFC (USA). Many thought he was sure to get a Victoria Cross but he was too unconventional for the taste of the High Command.

In between his spells in Malta, Adrian was posted to Egypt, ostensibly on non-operational duties, though when he was posted to a training unit following his first spell in Malta, he lasted 2 weeks before talking his way into an Egypt based reconnaissance unit. Adrian also used the opportunity of any leave he had to visit his father who was stationed at Haifa. Father and son seem to have got along very well on these visits. The Commander was very proud of his son's exploits.

When Adrian returned to Malta for his third tour in August 1942 he was appointed Squadron Leader of the now expanded reconnaissance squadron. He flew mainly in an unarmed Spitfire, painted sky blue as camouflage. Even much of the armour plating was removed, so Adrian's only defense was superior speed and maneuverability. It is said that on at least one occasion he led an attacking plane such a merry dance it crashed into the sea.

His style did not suit everybody. He seemed to turn up out of the blue and select the aircraft and missions that suited him. On one occasion a pilot was climbing into a Spitfire when Adrian arrived to usurp him, and send him to take Christina for the lunch he had promised her.

He also began making regular disappearances to the Middle East, usually returning with as many goodies he could cram into the cockpit of a Spitfire. These disappearances caused much comment, but he was in fact visiting Middle East HQ. This was an important time

in the war in the Mediterranean. General Montgomery had taken over the 8th Army and was preparing for the battle of El Alamein which began on October 23rd. Operation Torch, the allied invasion of North Africa, began on November 7th. Also planning had begun for the invasion of Sicily, which occurred the following July. It was vital that the reconnaissance effort was co-ordinated with these plans.

Trips to Middle East HQ were often followed by 'Special Flights', usually to photograph the beaches of Sicily. This became a regular task right up to the invasion. During low level missions prior to the invasion, Adrian was given a fighter escort. The escort pilot recounts flying alongside Adrian at 200 feet through a fair amount of flak. As Adrian flew along, cameras whirring, he was smoking a large cigar. In fact he seems to have smoked continuously whenever flying.

During the dark days of the Malta siege Adrian's exploits became a symbol of the island's defiance. It was therefore a great shock when in November 1942 Adrian disappeared. He had been badly shot up and crash landed at Bizerta in North Africa. It was six days before he managed to get himself to Gibraltar, and then back to Malta delivering a new Spitfire. On the way he shot down a Junkers 88 at virtually the same spot where he had been attacked earlier. He returned with the words: 'I'm sorry to be a bit late'. While he was away his promotion to Wing Commander came through.

Events were bringing Adrian into contact with American forces. A reconnaissance detachment arrived in Malta in the spring of 1943 flying P38 Lightnings, which Adrian began to fly. The overall commander of the American reconnaissance forces was Colonel Elliott Roosevelt, son of the US President. He and Adrian became firm friends.

In July 1943 Adrian was invited to the American HQ in Tunis for the 4th of July celebrations. When it was time to return his Spitfire had developed a fault, so he borrowed an old Lightning. Unfortunately it wasn't robust enough for Adrian's take-off style. The plane skidded off the runway and caught fire. Adrian was found sitting on the wing smoking a cigarette. Fortunately he had not strapped himself in and was flown clear. Adrian immediately requested the loan of another Lightning. As the flames of his first plane were still being doused, someone asked an officer on the spot if the pilot got out. 'That's him up there' he answered, pointing at a receding spec in the sky.

The responsibility of running a squadron, and his exposure to the Americans, began to produce a change in Adrian. Although always popular with the ordinary airmen, and having a good relationship with those senior officers who accepted his unconventional ways, he was generally unpopular with his fellow officers. This began to change as he began to adopt a more mature approach. He began to dress more conventionally, and was concerned for the welfare of his men. There were still occasional acts of irresponsibility, like when he returned late to a hut he was sharing and found the door locked. His response was to shoot out the lock.

He was no longer seen as a loner as he became more involved with the squadron. He had moved back into the Mess, though his relationship with Christina remained

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strong. However he was also becoming more of a party animal, and, when away from Malta, something of a womaniser.

Adrian left Malta for the last time in October 1943. After leave in England he returned to North Africa and was placed in command of an Air Reconnaissance Wing being established there. It seems Adrian embarked on this task with energy and success. However on the 26th November, when returning from an evening in the Officer's Club in Tunis, his jeep left the road and he was badly injured, breaking his pelvis. During his ten weeks in hospital he was replaced as commander of the new wing.

It seems Adrian lost patience and discharged himself before the hospital was ready to let him go. He made his way back to England, but the environment was totally different to that in which he thrived in Malta. His friend Elliott Roosevelt was made commander of a new Allied Reconnaissance Wing, and wanted Adrian as his number two. However a combination of his injuries and his reputation meant this didn't happen.

A number of people who met Adrian at this time report he was depressed. He blamed it on the fact his wife had left him for another man, an obvious smokescreen. Eventually he was posted to an American squadron as Liaison Officer on April 1st 1944.

For most men this would have been an opportunity to see out the war in relative safety. However on April 12th Adrian and an American officer flew 2 Lightnings on a mission to photograph the affects of a bombing raid on ball bearing factories in Germany. This was highly irregular. The Squadron Commander was opposed to Adrian flying, and it was only the request of Elliott Roosevelt that persuaded him. Roosevelt seems to have been trying to raise Adrian's spirits. However it is not clear that Adrian had even been cleared as fit to fly following his accident.

The plan was for the two Lightnings to part north of Munich, perform separate missions, and then rendezvous for a flight south to Sardinia. However there is confusion about the rendezvous point, and Adrian was expected at an airfield in Italy. When Adrian failed to make the rendezvous all sorts of theories emerged, he had flown into a glacier in Switzerland, he was trying to get to Malta and Christina, or he had reached Malta and been hidden away.

It was over 50 years before the truth emerged. In 1993 Frank Dorber, inspired by the publication of Warburton's War, determined to try and find Adrian's plane. The situation was complicated because it was an American plane flown by a British pilot on an unofficial mission. However Frank's persistence paid off and in 2002 he learned of an American plane that had been shot down by anti-aircraft fire at 11.45 on April 12th 1944. He arranged for the excavation of the crash site. The event was covered in a documentary for the BBC Timewatch series. It was aired in 2003.

The excavation proved it was Adrian's plane and his remains were recovered. In May 14th 2003 Wing Commander Adrian Warburton, DSO and bar, DFC and two bars, DFC (USA) was buried at Durnbach War Cemetery with full military honours.

A Tragic Event

I received the following email the other day, and thought it worth sharing.

Hi Ray,

I stumbled across your website by chance during my research and was interested to note that you have amongst your "Warburtons of Warrington" a reference to Walter Warburton who died in 1912 at the age of 40. I don't know if you are aware that Walter died at the Ferry Inn at Penketh near Warrington following a tragic sailing accident on the River Mersey.

My son and his wife are the current licensees of the Ferry pub, now called the Ferry Tavern, and over the last year or two we have been researching the history of the pub and it's previous occupants. So I thought you might be interested to read this detailed account of the accident which appeared in the Warrington Guardian in April 1912, if you haven't read it before.

Warrington Guardian, Wednesday 10th April 1912. YACHTING DISASTER NEAR PENKETH. TWO WARRINGTON MEN LOSE THEIR LIVES NARROW ESCAPE OF TWO YOUTHS

The boisterous elements on Saturday served to mark Eastertide and the annual boat race of the Warrington Sailing Club by a sad tragedy in which two married men named Walter Warburton, 40, a rangefitter, 7 Fairclough Avenue, Warrington and James Edward Crookes, 38, a labourer, 41 Lord Nelson Street, Warrington, lost their lives in the River Mersey, the boat in which they were sailing capsizing.

The course of the race was from Cooper's Yard, Widnes, to Bank Quay, Warrington and eight boats competed, the Zennia, the property of Mr. Warburton, being one of them. The owner was accompanied by his two sons, Walter aged 14 and John Henry aged 16 and Mr. Crookes. When the starting signal was given all went well until Zennia, which was the scratch boat, got into midstream. The water was very choppy and half a gale was blowing at the time. Opposite Widnes Marsh, where the Mersey is quite open, Warburton's boat got into difficulties and it was conjectured by those witnessing the race that the crew had too much sail on. The boom was suddenly seen to snap and the top half of the sail fell into the water. The small craft which was an 18 feet racing boat swerved to the right and owing to the weight of the broken mast and sails was dragged over on to one side. Suddenly the boat dived down stern foremost into the river and disappeared. One of the Warrington competing boats, seeing the helpless condition of the Zennia, gallantly threw up their chances in the race and turned back to the rescue. The owner of the ill-fated boat and his eldest son were picked up exhausted and unconscious, while the second son was rescued by a Widnes boat which had been cruising in the vicinity and from which a number of spectators had witnessed the start. The Warrington rescuers conveyed the two elder Warburtons to Fiddler's Ferry, the headquarters of the club, and on the way artificial

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respiration was resorted to but the treatment was only successful in the case of the son, the father dying. The boy John was conveyed to the Mersey Hotel, Widnes, where he was brought round. He received every attention and he was taken home the following day (Sunday) little the worse for his startling escape, although anguished at the loss of his father.



The body of the man Crookes was picked up on the foreshore at Widnes two hours after the accident.

The tragedy caused great consternation amongst the Widnes spectators of whom there were quite a large number. Mr. Warburton had taken part in the races for a number of years and was an experienced yachtsman. The accident was rendered all the more tragic inasmuch as the other boats participating in the race finished the course ignorant of the tragedy that had taken place.

THE INQUEST RESCUED YOUTH'S GRAPHIC STORY

Mr. S. Brighouse and a jury held an inquiry at the Coroner's Court, Warrington, on Tuesday morning, into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of the victims of the disaster.

Evidence of identification was tendered by the widows. Mrs. Warburton said that she heard of the accident at six o'clock on Saturday evening and went to see her husband but was not allowed to do so.

A flatman by the name of Henry Stacey of 31 St. Mary's Road, Widnes, spoke of finding the body of Crookes on a sandbank opposite Messrs. Brock's works, Widnes. He said that having heard of the mishap he borrowed a boat and went in search of the man who it was reported had been drowned. He recovered the body of Crookes at five o'clock in the afternoon.

THE TRAGEDY DESCRIBED BY A SURVIVOR

John Henry Warburton, one of the survivors of the Zennia's crew, gave a graphic account of the accident through which his father and Crookes lost their lives. The crew, he said, consisted of four, his father, his brother, Crookes and himself. The Zennia was the scratch boat. The order to start from Widnes was received at 3 o'clock, the other boats having left at intervals of several minutes. A distance of about two miles had been covered when the accident happened at 3:15 p.m. "We were going well in a strong wind" explained the youth, "when the boom broke about 2½ feet from the mast. Crookes caught hold of the boom with his hands and my father told him to let it go, but he refused. My father told him again and said "My lads are here". Just then a gust of wind capsized the boat and we were all thrown into the water. We all had lifebelts except Crookes and we all assisted to keep him afloat. My father got his arm round Crookes' body and after being half an hour in the water both appeared exhausted and got unconscious. About this time the Red Rose came on the scene and threw a rope to me. I secured it and was dragged on board and was put in the cabin. Soon after, my father was rescued and I could hear him talking and murmuring. My brother Walter was swimming about the stern of the Red Rose when I saw him last and I didn't see him again".

The Coroner.—"How was it Crookes had no lifebelt?" We didn't know he was coming with us.

"Have you sailed in this boat before?" Yes Sir.

"How many times?" Several times.

The youth explained that the Zennia was an 18 feet half decked vessel. The occupants were all on the windward side when the boom broke. Crookes had been in the boat before.

Henry Warburton, commodore of the Warrington Sailing Club, brother of Walter Warburton, who was called to give evidence, said that from what he could gather a gust of wind sent the boom against the mast and the boat capsized. If the sail had been allowed to float the boat would have "righted" herself in the wind.

A chemical labourer named Sutton, of 38 James Street, Widnes, said that Warburton was conveyed to the Ferry Inn, Penketh, Dr. Murray was summoned, and on his arrival he said that the man was dead.

The Coroner said that he used to sail in yachts similar to the Zennia's class and could understand how the accident happened. If Crookes, who evidently was not well conversant with yachting, had allowed the boom to swing out everything would have been alright. The mistake was one which anybody, even an experienced man, might make on the spur of the moment.

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The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deaths were due to accidental causes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RACE

The event took place in half a gale. Six of the eight boats entered lined up for the start. The Edge and Pride failing to put in an appearance. The boats were in sight at Warrington at about 3:30 with Maggie holding a good lead. Rosa Mary crept up nicely when nearing Littletons's Mill, but lost her advantage at the bend of Crosfields Wharf. After rounding the bouy at Walton Arches the Maggies (Captain S Meacock) pulled away and eventually won by about 100 yards. Rosa Mary (Captain J. Smith) was lucky to gain second place. Sadly (Captain A. Warburton) with her ??????? broken, making a bold bid for it. Nina (Captain J. Whittaker) claimed the fourth position. The last boat home was Thelma (Captain H. Warburton). She came in pretty close up, seeing that her topping lift had given way.

FUNERALS OF THE VICTIMS

Affecting ????? were witnessed at the Warrington Cemetery on Thursday afternoon when the families of the victims of the yachting disaster were laid to rest. Great public sympathy has been aroused by the ?????? accident, and this was manifested at the Funerals. The bodies of Warburton and Crookes were interred in separate graves the last rites were watched by a vast crowd sympathisers. A joint service was held in the Anglican Chapel and this was conducted by the Rev. F Vickers who also conducted the services at the graveside. A large number of relatives and friends were present. The Warrington Sailing Club was represented by Messrs. H Warburton, J. Smith and C. Schule. Messrs J. Bennett, W. Knowles and W.H. Small represented the Fiddlers Ferry Sailing Club and the yacht Zone was represented by M.A. Rustage. Messrs C.L. Cox, W. Patterson and W. Warburton were present at Warburtons funeral on behalf of the Richmond Gas Stove and Meter Co, Ltd. Numerous wreaths were received from relatives and friends from the Warrington Sailing Club, Fiddlers Ferry Sailing Club and the Tranmere Sailing Club.

Regards
Bill Mulholland

Next Issue

I plan to publish issue number 6 around June next year. My current ideas for feature articles are:

- The Warburton Haplotypes (previously suggested for this issue)
- Choppy Warburton Long Distance Runner and Trainer of Cycling Champions
- To be decided

As usual my plans are fluid, especially If I receive better submissions or suggestions from members.