

ODFHS Boatfamilies - 2023 Updates

(Canal Family 1 except where indicated)

Update V168 - 11.12.2023

New Total: 61,818 people

No New Names

Main Increases: Parker +33; Wilding +21; Morton +16; Lunt +11; Culshaw, Parkinson +9; Ashcroft, Draper +8; Holford, Lamb +6

We have added the family of Burney boatman Robert Parker and Martha (nee Alderson) whose son Robert married Jane Morton, a waterman's daughter from Northwich, in 1863. Some of their descendants worked on the Rochdale Canal.

Other increases are in families related to the Ashcrofts of Preston, who figure in Janet Rigby's book 'Life on the Lancaster Canal' (Landy Publishing, 2006). And small increases in other West Lancashire boatfamilies have resulted from continuing revision of the site to include details from the 1921 and 1939 censuses.

Update V167 - 18.11.2023

New Total: 61,580

No New Names

Main Increases: Mills +47; Dale +28; Edwards +13; Holford +12

An 1860 court report of the prosecution of nine Cheshire boatmen for breaking through Pickering's Lock on the River Weaver has been added to our Media/Documents section. Thanks go to Tom Potter for alerting us to this case.

Five of the captains involved, four of them related, are recorded on this site and their families have been revised - particularly that of John Mills and Mary Gresty of Northwich, whose son John, b1811, was one of the defendants. The related family of ship's carpenters descended from Thomas Dale b1795 has been developed, as has that of waterman William Holford whose wife's nephew Charles Cowley, b1809, was another defendant.

Update V166 - 7.11.2023

New Total: 61,431 people

New Name: Niblock 21

Main Increases: Hunt +76; Duncan +20; Rees +10; Roberts +7

A grim report on the murder of his wife by William Worthington in 1874 has been added to our Media/Documents section. He was hanged in Kirkdale Prison, Liverpool and thanks go to Jean Ellis for uncovering this story, also for providing further details of her Parr family.

Our main increase is in the Hunt family of Mersey boatmen based in Birkenhead, containing five generations of Isaacs, originally from Northwich. The Rees, Duncan and Roberts increases are connected, as is our new name: Anthony Niblock, a Scottish mariner, married Sarah Elizabeth Hunt in 1874 and their sons worked on the Liverpool ferries and at Cammell Laird's shipyard.

Update V165 – 25.10.2023**New Total:** 61,211 people**No New Names****Main Increases:** Wrench +12; Lawson +11; Helsby +7

We have been able to add details of Harold Thompson of Blackburn, thanks to a historic feature in Clogs & Gansey, newsletter of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Society - including the curious origin of the name of his mother-in-law's pub, the Who Would O' Thowt It.

Thanks go to Jean Ellis for helping correct the identity of the John Parr killed in action 1917, Flanders, as John b1879 Bispham Green, not his brother John Thomas b1880 Lathom as we previously had it.

Revision of the Lawson family of Burscough boatmen continues. And we have added two Runcorn families, one descended from William Wrench, a sailmaker, the other from James Helsby, a ship's carpenter whose daughter married John Owen Rees (a new family in Update V164).

Update V164 - 17.10.2023**New Total:** 61,153 people**New Name:** Rees, 33**Main Increases:** Bostock +34; Furfie +9

Thanks go to Tony Bostock for details of his family of watermen descended from James Bostock and Fanny Carter of Northwich, whose son James, b1797, was Harbour Master at Runcorn, and whose daughter Jane married waterman Samuel Vernon in 1815. A granddaughter Fanny, b1840, married another Harbour Master, John Lear Rees, son of Owen Rees whose family of watermen was new to us.

We have expanded the family of another Northwich waterman, Thomas Furfie b1837. And we are grateful to Keith Hose for correcting the identity of the head of our large Lawson family of Burscough boatmen from John to Robert Lawson, who married Jane Swift in Churchtown, Southport, in 1775.

Update V163 - 28.9.2023**New total:** 60,002 people**No New Names****Main Increases:** Dutton +28; Forshaw +5; Ashton +4; Sant +3

We have added the family of William Dutton (b 1842) a Cheshire joiner and waterman of Anderton, who married Mary Sant of Frodsham, apparently unconnected to the Middlewich Sants already on our site but linked through their son George to the Cartwrights and Cavanaghs of Runcorn.

A major revision of our main Forshaw family of Burscough boatmen, incorporating data from the 1921 and 1939 censuses, has led to consequential small increases in related groups. We are grateful to Simon Todd for alerting us to an anomaly in our records.

Update V162 - 1.9.2023**New Total:** 60,926 people**No New Names****Main Increases:** Risley +12, Goodier +10; Sharples +9; Postles, Rothwell +4

We have discovered another member of the Rothwell boatfamily of Burscough - James, born on his father's barge at Adlington in 1877. He married Sarah Ellen Culshaw in 1903 and son Matthew was also a boatman.

Increases among Cheshire watermen include George James Risley of Appleton, near Warrington, who married Eleanor Hussey, a boatman's daughter from Preston Brook. We have added the family of William Goodier, also of Appleton, who married Alice Sharples from Worsley, Salford, in 1855. Her brothers James and Abel were watermen, and James's daughter Ann Sharples married Joseph Postles, a lock tender on the Manchester Ship Canal.

We have corrected the identity of the Ellen Carrington who married Burscough boatman Miles Lamb in 1918: she was b1893 daughter of William Carrington and Mary Prescott, not b1901 daughter of William Carrington and Ellen Robinson, who was unmarried in the 1921 census.

Update V161 - 13.8.2023

New Total: 60,807

New Name: Gatley 16

Main Increases: Goodier +34; Webb +31; Williams +11

We have added the family of Cheshire waterman William Webb, who was born before his mother Mary (already on our site) married George Ogden in 1828. Five of William's sons were watermen, and in 1912 his granddaughter Martha Ann Webb married in Sankey Chapel George Alfred Goodier, from a family of Runcorn watermen previously unknown to us.

These Goodiers had family links to another Runcorn waterman Charles Williams (b1844 Lymm) whose family we have developed along with that of his father-in law, Joseph Gatley of Eccles, who has provided new surname in our lists.

Update V160 - 5.8.2023

New Total: 60,655 people

No New Names

Main Increases: Abram +17; Malley/Mailey +6

We have reworked the extended families headed by James Abram and Alice Leatherbarrow who married in 1765 at St Cuthbert, North Meols, and James Abram and Grace Gill who married in 1787 at St Peter, Liverpool. The latter James had a nephew Henry (1797-1849) and thanks go to Denise Probert of Melbourne for alerting us to his career as a Canal Company bookkeeper in the Liverpool office. His daughter Adelaide emigrated to Australia in the 1850s and Denise has provided detailed family records.

The 1921 census records have allowed us to expand the Malley family of Wigan boatmen and miners, whose spelling variations eventually settled on Mailey around the turn of the century. And we are again grateful to Keith Hose for further birth and death dates in the Lowe family of Wigan and Blackburn.

Update V159 – 24.07.2023

New Total: 60,602 people

No New Names

Main Increases: Yates +22; Curzon +21; Holden +14; Lee +11; Dutton, Lightfoot +10; Evans, Grimshaw +9

Most increases come in Cheshire families based in Runcorn, Widnes and Frodsham, often by adding details from the 1921 and 1939 censuses. Likewise the Grimshaws of Wigan/Shevington, descended from Joseph b1859 who married Alice Carrington, daughter of Burscough boatman Jonathan Carrington and Mary Jackson.

We are grateful to several regular correspondents for detailed help with their own families, including: Andy

Barnes (Glovers), Keith Hose (Lowes) and Robert Tinsley (Harrisons headed by Matthew b1758 Bradford, who moved to Lathom); also to Janet Thorpe for separating the families of two same-name couples married in Ormskirk, John Wignall and Alice Farrington in 1825 and John Wignall and Alice Williamson in 1827.

Update V158 - 19.06.2023

New Total: 60,347 people

New Name: Chatterley 28

Main Increases: Barlow +11; Webster +4

Our new family is headed by Simpson Chatterley of Stoke on Trent who moved to Wigan where he fathered four boatmen, and whose eldest daughter Elizabeth married a local boatman, Thomes Webster, in 1827. The link to our main tree comes through Simpson's grandson Job, a coal miner born in 1820 who married Alice Glover of Burscough, whose family was already on our site.

We have also added James Barlow of Halsall who in 1855 married Margaret Baldwin of Wigan, from the large family headed by Thomas Baldwin, a Burscough boatman, and Margaret Georgeson. The 1921 census has provided further updates among their descendants.

Update V157 - 8.6.2023

New Total: 60,264

New Names: Cusworth 36, Rock 20, Pyatt +15

Main Increases: Wood +40; Hodgson +14; Wilburn +11; Yates +10; Coates, Jones, Roberts +9; Todd +6

The unusual description of 'paramour' appears in the 1871 census for Abeline Richards, nee Hickmans, partner of Wolverhampton boatman John Wood, who apparently never married. He is connected to our new families descended from Midlands watermen George Cusworth, b1830 Birmingham, John Rock, b 1822 Brierley Hill, and John Pyatt, b 1812 Wombourne, who in turn are linked to boatfamilies already on our site including some (Coates, Hodgson and Pawson) of Knottingley, Hull and Goole.

We are grateful to Gillian Herridge for providing family records of her great-grandfather Christopher Jones, a Liverpool boatman whose 1868 baptismal name was Christmas.

Update V156 - 15.5.2023

New Total: 59,991 people

New Name: Belfield/Bellfield, 24

Main Increases: Wilburn +34; Moore +17; Done +16; Wells +12; Robinson +11

Our new family is descended from Staffordshire waterman Isaac Belfield, whose sons and grandsons moved to Cheshire and married local boatmen's daughters, one of which was Elizabeth Robinson, b1857, daughter of Henry Robinson of Scarisbrick who had also moved to Runcorn.

Another Ormskirk-Cheshire link has emerged with the 1928 marriage, again in Runcorn, of James Alfred Moore and Elizabeth Ann Wylde, granddaughter of Burscough boatman Robert Snape of Halsall. The Dones and Moores we have developed are also Cheshire families.

We have added the family of John Wells b1841, son of Henry Wells and Ellen Baldwin of Lathom; and further help from Steve Leggett has enabled us to extend the Wilburns and related Yorkshire boatfamilies.

Update V155 - 12.4.2023

New Total: 59,781 people

New Name: Battersby, 15

Main Increases: Jones +54; Colclough +25; Condliffe +24; Mason +15; Shaw +14; Dutton +10; Hulse, Pilkington +6

We have developed the families of brothers William, Henry and John Jones of Penketh/Sankey, all born in the 1820s and watermen like their father. The new name Battersby and increases in Duttons, Masons and Shaws are related, and our thanks go to Kate Malleson for passing on her detailed research.

Following the Midwives Roll mention in Update 154, we have found a second registered midwife among our boatfamilies - Jane Pilkington of School Lane, Lathom. Born Martindale in 1848, she married farm labourer Robert Pilkington and in 1911 was school caretaker. Their son Luke was a dredgerman and there are other canal connections in her family.

We are also grateful to Robert Tinsley for amendments to his Harrison family. Other increases are among Cheshire watermen and boatbuilders.

Update V154 - 24.03.23

New total: 59,535 people

No New Names

Main Increases: Porter +16; Hartley, Martland +9; Dutton, Eaton +5

This update includes two grandsons of Samuel Harrison, lock-keeper at Top Locks, Lathom, who invested in the development of Preston Docks by providing a loan to Preston Corporation in the 1880s. They were Robert Martland 1848-1821, a Burscough farmer, and his brother-in-law Charles H R Harrison, 1860-1933, a Preston rate collector. Details are in our Media/Documents section, headed Ribble Navigation Account.

We have also identified one of Lancashire's first enrolled midwives, Ann Alty, wife of boatman Robert Alty. She was born 1850, daughter of boatman William Smith, and is in the 1911 census as a midwife in Haskayne, having been recorded in the 1905 Midwives Roll following a 1902 Act of Parliament.

We continue to be grateful for help via our mailbox from descendants of canal workers listed on our site, recently including Martin Harrison in New Jersey, David Edward Porter and Debi Hodgson.

Update V153 - 26.2.2023

New Total: 59,454 people

Main Increases: Deakin +12; Lamb +8; Wignall +7; Baldwin +6; Gaskell, Marsden, Melling +5; Fyles, Renshaw +4

We have continued adding baptisms of boatmen's children from the ODFHS's recently acquired records of St John the Baptist, Burscough as far as the date of the 1939 census. About 300 of the 1,200 fathers involved had canal-linked occupations and several marriages of couples already on our site were discovered as a result. We are grateful to the Society's Secretary, Pam Richardson, for her transcription.

Thanks also go to Patricia Foggon for expanding her Renshaw family descended from brothers Thomas and John Renshaw, watermen from Baguley, Cheshire

Update V152 - Feb 4 2023

New total: 59,298

No New Names

Main Increases: Buckley +13; Harrison +11; Ashcroft +10; Draper, Forshaw, Twigg +9; Greenwood, Hilton +5

The separate drownings of brothers William and Isaac Bamber within days of each other are recorded in this update. William's body was found in the Canal at Gannow on August 2 1879 and four days later, after returning from his funeral in Burnley, Isaac drowned tragically in a flooded lock at Ince trying to save his baby daughter not knowing that she had already been rescued.

We have expanded the family of the lock-keeper involved, Abel Buckley, and thanks go to the Greenwoods of Standish (related to the Bambers) for the transcript of Isaac's inquest report which appears in our Media/Documents section.

The ODFHS's recently acquired post-1918 baptism records from St John the Baptist, Burscough, have enabled many additions to local boatmen's families, which are gradually being matched against the 1921 and 1939 censuses. It is remarkable how many Burscough boatmen are recorded as 'out of work' in 1921. We have completed the 1923 baptisms and have far to go - if this involves people still living we would be pleased to hear from their families.

Update V151 - 13.1.2023

New Total: 59,139 people

No New Names

Main Increases: Shaw +22; Turton +17; Goddard, Jarvis +12; Deakin +9; Wells +6

Thanks go to new contacts Colin Wells, Terri Grice and Louise Sheridan who have helped develop Burscough boatfamilies including Baldwin, Wells and Deakin. Future local additions can also be expected with the recent addition to the ODFHS Library of post-1918 baptism records at St John the Baptist, Burscough, available to members on the Society's main website.

Our main increase is in the Cheshire family of boatmen descended from John Shaw and Elizabeth Wakefield of Middlewich, one of whose sons married Sarah Ollerhead of Wheelock while his sister married Sarah's brother William Ollerhead.

We have also expanded the Midlands families headed by John Turton b1795 and William Jarvis, connected by the marriage in 1860 of their grandchildren Alice Turton and Thomas Jarvis, whose niece Alice married Staffordshire boatman Joseph Goddard.