

Betsy d 16 April 1913) and Frederick Willetts d 7 February 1899



In
Loving Memory of
FREDERICK WILLETTTS
WHO DIED 7TH FEBRUARY 1899
AGED 77 YEARS
ALSO **BETSY** HIS WIFE,
WHO DIED 16TH APRIL 1913,
AGED 85 YEARS

"RESTING TILL JESUS COMES"



Frederick Willetts, son of William and Hannah Willetts, Nailers, was baptised on 9 June 1822 at Dudley Parish Church. Betsy married Frederick Willetts 14 September 1846 at St. Thomas, Dudley. It appears that they had the same surname prior to marriage. They were possibly cousins.

Mary Willetts, child of Frederick and Betsy Willetts, of Pear Tree Street, was baptised at Reddal Hill, Staffordshire on 14 July 1847. Frederick's occupation is given as Chain Maker.

In the **1861 Census** the family are still living in Pear Tree Street, Rowley Regis, in the West Midlands. Frederick Willetts (39) Chain Maker, born Dudley, Worcs. is the Head, with the others being Betsey (sic) Willetts (34) Chain Maker's Wife, born Rowley Regis, Staffs; Mary Willetts (13) Nail Maker, born Rowley Regis (as were all the following children); Ellen Willetts (12) Nail Maker; Caroline Willetts (10) Nail Maker; Ann M. Willetts (8) Scholar; Hannah Willetts (6) Scholar. *Nail-making was a major cottage or small workshop industry in the Black Country for women at this time. A visit to the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley is recommended.*

Still on Peartree (sic) Street in the **1871 Census** are Frederick Willetts (49); Betsy Willetts (44); Mary Willetts (23); Ann M. Willetts (18) and Hannah Willetts (16). Frederick is still a chain maker, and all the women, including Betsy, are nail makers. They have been joined by three sons: William (9) Scholar; Frederick (5) and Joseph (1).

It was a puzzle where Frederick Willetts was at the time of the **1881 Census**. Living at 28 Pear Tree Lane, Rowley Regis are Roland Tromans (26) Chain Maker, born Dudley, Worcs; Hannah Tromans (26) Nail Maker, born Rowley Regis, Staffs; David Tromans (1) born Rowley Regis; Betsy Willetts (54) Widow (sic) Nail Maker, born Rowley Regis; Mary Green (33) Widow, Nail Maker, born Rowley Regis. *There are other Willetts on the same street: at 18, 22, 23, 24, and round the corner on New Street.*

The **1891 Census** has the Willetts at 49 Cook Street, Barrow. Frederick Willetts (69) General Labourer, born Dudley, Worcestershire shares the household with wife Betsy Willetts (64) born Rowley, Staffs; Mary Green (43) Married, Daughter, Domestic Servant, born Rowley, Staffs; Charles Lofthouse (50) Single, Lodger, Slag? Works Laborer (sic), born Batley, Yorks; Benjamin Willetts (60) Widower, Lodger, Slag? Works Laborer (sic), born Halesowen, Worcestershire; Denis Davis (34) Single, Lodger, Ironworks Laborer (sic) born Ireland; and Thomas Waite (25) Single, Lodger, Steelworks Laborer (sic), born Wellingborough, Northants.

In the **1901 Census** of Barrow at 49 Cook Street are Betsy Willetts (73) Head. Widow, born Netherton, Staffs; Mary Green (53) Daughter, Single (sic), born Dudley, Staffs; James Johnston (25) Single, Boarder, Brass Moulder, born

Netherton, Staffs; Robert Penny (25) Single, Boarder, Fitter (Ship Engineer), born Carlisle, Cumberland; Charles Gilbert (38) Single, Boarder Labourer, Pig Iron Works, born Carlisle, Cumberland; and Peter Devine (53) Single, Boarder, Fireman (Steelworks) born Russia (Naturalised British Subject).

In the **1911 Census** Betsy Willetts (84) Head, Widow, born Staffordshire, is living with wider kin, still at 49 Cook Street, Barrow. Her daughter Mary Green (64) Widow, born Staffordshire is present, as well as Tom Willetts (21) Grandson, Single, Gunshop Labourer, Shipyard, born Barrow; Fred Willetts (18) Grandson, Single, Railmill Labourer, Steelworks, born Barrow; and Peter Divine (sic) (60) Boarder, Single, Labourer (Flue Cleaner), Steelworks, born Ireland. *I wonder which is correct for Peter Devine: born Russia or Ireland?*

Following Frederick Willetts to find him in 1881 provides the answer: he is in Barrow, along with several of his offspring. The **1881 Census** shows that living at 45 Rodney Street are Nathaniel Hickman (31) Engine Driver, Foundry (*NB this could be a stationery engine, rather than a locomotive*), born Rowley Regis, Staffs; Caroline Hickman (30) (*i.e. Frederick & Betsy's daughter*) born Rowley Regis; Myrah Hickman (6) Daughter, born Rowley Regis; James Corbridge (32) Married, Boarder, Engine Fitter, born Sheffield, Yorks; John Shaw (36) Single, Boarder, Sawyer, born Barrow, Lancs; Frederick Willetts (16) Boarder, Crane Driver, born Rowley Regis, Staffs; Frederick Willetts (55) Visitor, Chain Maker, born Rowley Regis, Staffs; Joseph Willetts (11) Visitor, Scholar, born Rowley Regis; and Betsy Willetts (8) Daughter (sic – she is likely to be Frederick Snr's daughter, and Nathaniel's Visitor), Scholar, born Rowley Regis,

No-one is certain why Edward Sankey took photographs of graves in the period 1910-1920 or later. Were they advertising the skills of his friend William Hull, or later Hull and Fairbairn? Were they to be made into postcards that the bereaved family could send to members who were not able to attend the funeral?

The historic photograph is from the Sankey Family Photographic Collection, courtesy of Cumbria Archives.