



The family celebrating Charles and Florence Driver's, Q3, Golden Wedding anniversary in 1938.



Back row left to right. Arthur, Charles and Morris holding Frances.

Middle row left to right. Jane holding David, Florence, Betty, Annie, Sally, Mina, Frank, Tom and Kath.

Front row left to right. Nancy, Ben, Florence and Jerry.

Photographed by Archie.

A DRIVER and WEATHERHEAD family history

Silsden, West Yorkshire, England

Tracing the story of two Silsden families, through six generations of change

Written and compiled by Ian Stimson and Kate Mawer

2024

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This work is dedicated by me, Ian Stimson, with utmost gratitude to my late wife Florence Driver. While for a long time I have regarded Silsden and the West Riding with great affection. I am left with a regret that I did not learn more about the Driver and Weatherhead families many years ago.

Kate Mawer dedicates this work to her parents. Tom Driver, who created Kate's first family tree by talking with his aunts in the 1970s and Sheila, who shared Kate's interest and knew all the answers to questions about the family's relations. Tom and Sheila named their Hampshire family home, Cobbydale. Kate now understands the significance of the name.

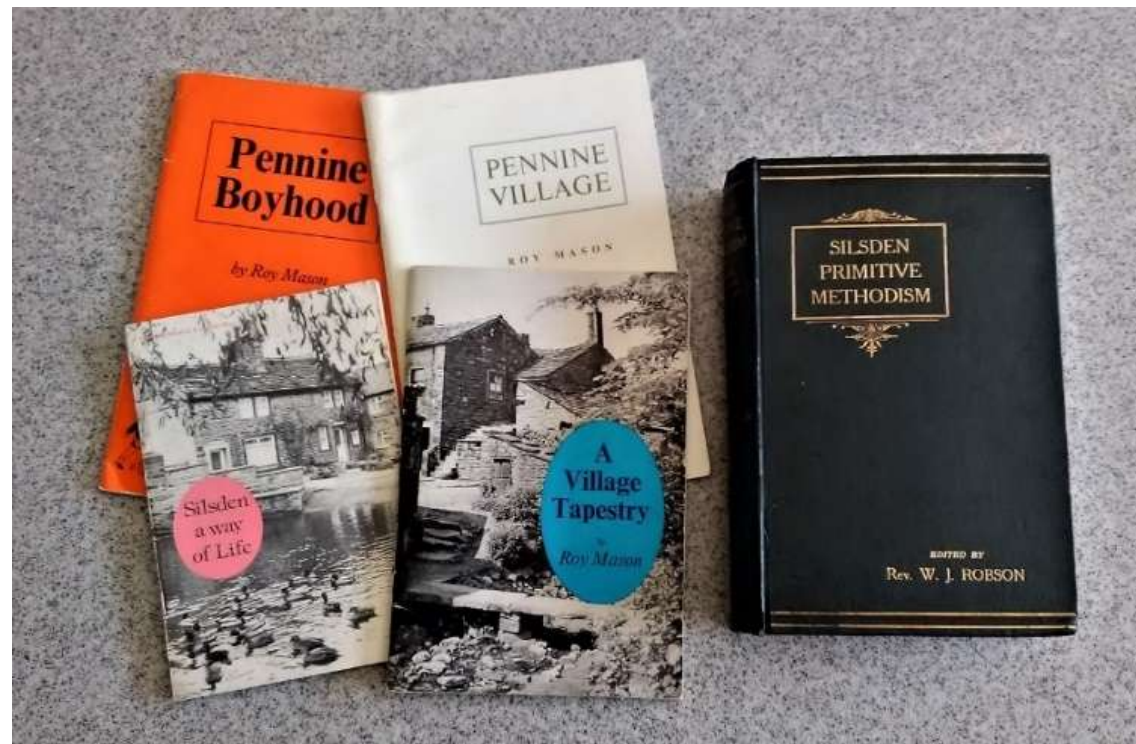
Silsden Nail

Dedicated to Silsden Town by Sam Shendi.
To celebrate the industrial history of nail making.
2011



Throughout the research we have been able to access a variety of Silsden based resources, as acknowledged later.

We are particularly grateful to David Mason, chair of the Silsden Local History Group, for his support, enthusiasm and for access to his depth of knowledge about Silsden as revealed in his monthly news sheets which started early in the Covid 19 lockdown period of 2020.



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Families are full of surprises and ours is no exception.

Why would the King of France be referenced in a Driver will administration document?

Why would a young Silsden man be staying at a pub, 36 miles away from home, on the night of the 1841 census?

Why would a young woman be lying down in a ditch far from home in 1854?

Why would a lady spend £59 in 1920 on buying eggs?

Why would a man be standing in a pulpit with bleeding feet?

Why would Silsden street names include Driver and Weatherhead?

We invite you to read on.

Family Tree chart titles

Driver - Earlier Generations
John Driver & Sarah Glover
John Driver & Grace Bottomley
Charles Driver & Florence Weatherhead
Frederick William Driver & Alice Clark
Henry Ripley Driver & Mary Green
Frank Driver & Elizabeth (Cis) Pilling
Weatherhead - Earlier Generations a
Weatherhead - Earlier Generations b
Ann Weatherhead & Henry Cockshott
Elizabeth Weatherhead & John Booth

Introduction

This Family History traces the Driver and Weatherhead families of Silsden, in West Yorkshire, from the 1600s through to the mid 1900s. Then, to move it forward from the mid 1900s, descendants of the families have participated, enabling the histories to be brought into the 21st century. This history is written with the generations U and V very much in mind, and this will be explained in due course.

The history from the mid 1800s is brought to life by the writings in books, newspapers and letters. It shows the family participating in the events in the village and in some instances their leadership roles. Understanding life in those times is an essential part of visualising the lifestyle of our ancestors.

Silsden is most fortunate to have a history that has inspired so many people to research and record, to photograph and write about, to honour and enthuse so that the essence of Cobbydale is preserved for the future. There appears to be no known agreed origin to the name Cobbydale but it is applied as an alternative name to Silsden and its immediate surroundings. These are in the West Riding of Yorkshire, now known as the County of West Yorkshire. Riding being a corruption of the word thirding. There were three Ridings, West, North and East.

Today, Silsden is a small town nestling under south facing hills that form the northern banks of the broad valley of the River Aire. The river is at 90 metres above sea level, with the land rising to the canal towpath (100m) and the centre of town (110m). Silsden is surrounded by hills that reach about 240 metres at Cringles and Silsden Moor, with the local high spot, Nab End, at 355 metres. Its population, together with its four neighbouring hamlets of Swartha, Brunthwaite, Cringles and Silsden Moor is about 8,000 people, a proportion of whom commute to Skipton, Keighley or further afield. Silsden used to have significant industrial employment in nail making and weaving, but throughout its history farming has been and continues to be an important way of life.

The hills bring numerous small streams from the locally named higher moorlands that form part of the Rumbolds Moor and the much larger Pennine Chain. These feed the Silsden Reservoir, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the Silsden Beck which flows into the River Aire south of the town. The early village expanded into the higher ground largely avoiding the flood plain of the Aire. In the centre of the town Bradley Beck runs into Silsden Beck and it is the special nature of the open Silsden Beck, the central town buildings and old industrial area that in 1980 were designated a conservation area. Silsden Beck is also known as Stakes Beck. This name arose when a weir was created in the Silsden Beck in 1595. This was in order to create a pool with a goit (feed) for the cornmill wheel further downstream. The weir was made using wooden stakes.

It is considered that the original village was located around the confluence of the streams. It is the site of the old Silsden Manor, the original chapel-of-ease and a number of early bridleways and tracks radiated from this area. In 1755 the turnpike that was to pass through Silsden was given parliamentary approval and, while this was a long-distance turnpike from

Blackburn through to Addingham and Cocking End, the local improvements made an important contribution to the development of the village.

The essence of Cobbydale is enhanced by the preservation of interesting and historic names of locations and properties, names that predate the systematic recording in the census files, such as Cat Hole, Hang Goose, Tar Topping (originally Far Topping), Foster Cliff, Throstle Nest, Carr Bog, Woofa Bank, Marchup, Black Pots, to name but a few.

Of special importance in the annals of Silsden is the book *Silsden Primitive Methodism, Historical Records and Reminiscences*, edited in 1910 by Rev W. Robson. Additionally, there are three small books called; *Pennine Village*, *A Village Tapestry* and *Pennine Boyhood*, written by Roy Mason in the 1970s and another, *Silsden a way of Life*, written by Roy Mason and Stan Boardman. A photo of these books is shown adjacent to the acknowledgements.



The Primitive Methodism book is of great value to those who wish to learn about the notable churchmen of Silsden, the nail making and textile industries, some of the customs, the mannerisms of speech and life in the village, especially in the 1800s.

The photographic records made and collected by John Liddle and the research, timeline, papers and records of the Silsden Local History Group, especially the group's series of news sheets currently being produced by David Mason, together with these books, all provide a substantial base from which a family history can be launched.

There are many others, both family and friends, who have provided information that have helped in this Driver and Weatherhead research and our gratitude and heartfelt thanks go to all of them for their interest and contributions.

This family history is an assembly of extracts from the records and writings of very many individuals, relating to the family and to life of the period. Compiling and writing this history has been a journey of learning for both Kate Mawer, my co-researcher and writer, and myself, and in so doing has provided great interest and pleasure.

In writing individual parts of this history, it was inevitable that some duplication occurred. This needed correction but drew attention to the fact that while extracting information for our prime purpose, that of presenting a picture of these Silsden families over a number of generations, there are other pictures that we would be presenting. A variety of them can be extracted such as schooling and the Post Office, each in appendices. While others, such as the changing lives of women and/or men and changes in civic management require the reader to develop the pictures for themselves. Imagine the research as a collection of cubes, each is a picture in itself that requires positioning and manipulating, rather like a pictorial Rubik Cube, to reveal a number of more complex pictures.

Scope of this study

It was originally intended that this family history would relate primarily to two Silsden families, the Drivers and the Weatherheads, who became united by the marriage of Charles Driver and Florence Weatherhead in 1888. It then quickly went back one generation to that of William Driver and Sarah Morris, known in the family as nail makers, primarily because in the family there is a large oil painting of William. However, in the first stages of collecting data, so many historical records of Drivers in Silsden were available that it became clear the scope could and should be considerably widened. The new starting date moved back to the 1600s, at least nine generations ago and eleven pages of family charts were now needed. The project had exploded!

In order to understand the lifestyle and the changes that took place over the roughly 300 years which this history covers, it was decided to have an extensive 'Setting the scene' section. The period of this study coincides with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and the dramatic changes, during that period and subsequently. Parts of the family took leading roles in those changes.

As few as three or four generations ago life was very different when judged by 21st century standards. Those living at that time would no doubt have seen England as a varied and sophisticated society at the forefront of modern living, wondering, as we do, what life would be like for their grandchildren and great grandchildren. Most would have been acutely aware of the enormous gulf between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', but even then, there were civic processes to provide some support for the paupers. The Poor Law act of 1660 is an example of this support.

The Driver tree occupies seven charts and the male line has been followed, not only showing our direct line leading down to the marriage of Charles Driver and Florence Weatherhead, but also listing the siblings, their marriages and their children where this information was readily available. The original church documents may be incomplete, especially in the period

of the Interregnum, 1649-1660, but this has scarcely been apparent during this research.

In reporting the details of each family, it is inevitable that there is little to be reported on most families. However, some of the family, both in the direct line and amongst their siblings, made a name for themselves and records of their achievements exist and are reported. In a few cases, there is so much information that a separate appendix has been written to provide a home for the information. This has also inspired additional research on a few topics and this research is also contained in appendices.

The same process was applied to the Weatherheads but it happened that our family of Weatherheads in Silsden had a high percentage of female offspring and here the Weatherhead surname died out in the first half of the 1900s. Only four charts were needed.

Research sources

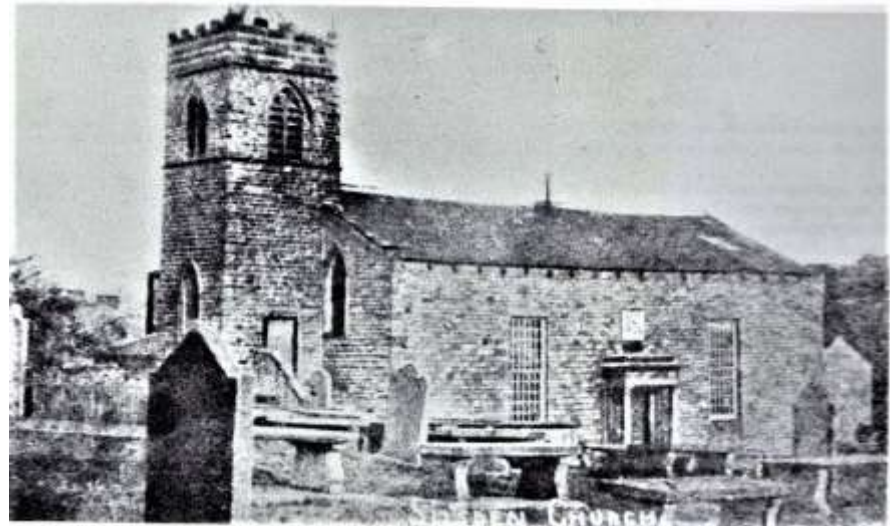
Silsden, an important village from early times and larger than either Keighley or Skipton at the time of the Domesday Great Record of 1086, was in the Parish of Kildwick alongside a number of smaller villages in the area.



The small village of Kildwick is recorded in the Domesday Book as having an Anglo-Saxon church and this became the mother church for a wide area. It was named St Andrews.

Not until 1712 was there a church in Silsden and this was a Chapel of Rest. Consequently, to find the early church records one has to look at the Kildwick parish records. Fortunately, when married at Kildwick, the records provide the location where the individuals were living, such as Silsden.

In 1816 St James Church replaced the 1712 Chapel of Rest in Silsden. It was not authorised to hold marriages until 1843. The church was further updated in 1876.



A transcription of Kildwick and neighbouring parish records, including those of Silsden, was acquired, listing births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials. This transcription, known as the Craven Index (CI), was produced by volunteers and arranged in alphabetical order of surnames and then of first names. Having downloaded all Driver baptism, marriage and burial details for those who lived in Silsden, well over two hundred such records, and having sorted them according to parental names and dates, families were reconstructed. The data available online expanded considerably in recent years and access to this has been invaluable for our research.

Accessing the various indexes took the Driver family back a further generation and hence the Driver family tree started with the marriage of John Driver and Mary Spencer in Addingham in 1721. It indicated that all Silsden Drivers were descended from that one marriage. But then even earlier records were found.

In 1751, by Act of Parliament, the English and Welsh calendar, which had been in use since the time of Julius Caesar, was changed so that it coincided with the calendar introduced in 1582 by Pope Gregory and adopted in Catholic countries and more generally by the mid 1700s. In England and Wales, the start of the new year was brought forward from March 25th to 1st January 1752 causing the old 1751 to be a short year. Then later in 1752 the calendar was adjusted so that Wednesday September 2nd was followed by Thursday 14th September. It is said that some objectors considered they had lost 11 days of their life.

One further source of information were the records of wills and the administration of estates. These records tended to provide corroborative information. The earliest were found in the archives of Silsden Manor. A number of these records are available at the Borthwick Library within the Library of the University of York. A will and an inventory of Sarah Driver were found in the records of the Silsden Manor which enabled the Driver tree to go back one further generation to the late 1600s, into the reign of William and Mary.

Performing the same search of Weatherheads took the starting point for that tree back to 1756 when William Weatherhead married Grace. Unfortunately, her maiden name was not provided. A 1700s and early 1800s Miles and Mary Weatherhead family appear to be unrelated.

While making this search it was interesting to find that the name of Weatherhead, with a few spelling variations, is mainly associated with the north of England counties of Northumberland, Yorkshire and Durham. In Yorkshire, Horton in Ribblesdale, Kirkby Malham, Arncliffe and Silsden, amongst others, all have records of Weatherheads.

The name of Driver is much more prolific. There are many Drivers in Keighley and others in the neighbouring villages of Kildwick, Carleton and Cowling but they appear not to have become entangled with those in Silsden. There are plenty of Drivers in other part of Yorkshire and indeed throughout England.

In producing the trees there is uncertainty especially in the 1700s and early 1800s. Early records were not always of the same format. Some show births and baptisms while others show only one of them. Burials seem to be recorded and occasionally the date of death is provided, but other information such as age, son or daughter of, wife or husband of, profession, is inconsistent. Baptism typically took place within a few months of birth, but one case is recorded in Silsden of baptism at the age of 'about 30', he was a school master.

In September 1837 the registration of births, marriages and deaths became a legal requirement. Fortunately, from the 1500s, the Church of England required each parish to make baptismal, marriage and burial records, and annually, to forward a copy to the Bishop's Diocesan Registry. These are known as Bishop's Transcripts. They are therefore a valuable duplicate of parish records and serve as a primary source where parish records have not survived.

The first census to provide inhabitants' names was in 1841. The census day was always a Sunday and the head of each household was provided with a schedule sheet and told to record everyone who 'abode therein the preceding Night'. The sheets were subsequently collected and transcribed into a census book. It is this data that is available to the public, the original sheets have been destroyed.

The 1841 census included ages. There were instructions to round certain peoples' ages which were often misunderstood and wrongly applied, so the ages in this census may not be accurate.

The 1851 and subsequent censuses have included a statement of the relationship of each person to the head of each household, and hence, on

the whole, families can reliably be assembled. This does not include any children who were born and died in the ten-year periods between the censuses.

It was while studying the family of Thomas Driver (born 1821) and transcribing the 1891 census book of Silsden for FreeCen that an error in that census book was found. It has omitted one line of 'Where Born' and the subsequent dittos have copied the wrong place of birth for three Silsden families. It was presumably at the stage of transcribing that the mistake was made.

Dates are an essential guide but when more than one candidate and marriage is recorded within a short period it is not certain that the events have been accurately allocated. Births and baptisms tend to be adequately defined, marriages reasonably so, but death data can lead to the wrong individual being terminated. Having worked on this over many months it is hoped that the trees in this family history are correct.

As will be mentioned in more detail below, in 1649 Silsden was almost entirely owned by Lady Anne Clifford of Skipton Castle, with land being leased to farmers, and in some cases sub-leased. One local area was Howden Park, on the south eastern edge of Silsden, which had been used as a hunting park by the Cliffords. This land was being de-parked and farmed by several families. One family living there were the Steel family. Having read the online, A History of the Steel Family in Silsden and Merseyside, by Tom Steel, it became clear that there would be an 1800s link between the Steel family, the Weatherhead family and the Red Lion hotel in Silsden.

The manorial records relating to The Township of Silsden within the Skipton Castle Estates are not readily accessible and the Call Books (record of lettings by the Estate) and other manorial records have not been searched.

In moving into the 1850s photography became available. It was not until the mid to late 1880s that cameras were available in quantity to the public.

This opened a new medium for use in family history. Old photos have been provided by the families for use in this history. As one might expect there are photos without names and a few of these have been included for general interest.

As you might guess there are numerous other sources that have provided useful and perhaps vital guidance, and maps are a prime example. These are not as numerous as one might think but when accompanied by tithe records and census data some of the mist has been removed from the mystery. In late Victorian times when local boards and councils were established and schooling became mandatory formal records were made. These, together with local directories, newspaper articles, letters, electoral roles, business and tax records, have provided further insight.

The history has now come within the scope of the living descendants of the four Driver boys who married and had children. These were the families of Charles Driver and Florence Weatherhead, Frederick Driver and Alice Clark, Henry Driver and Mary Green, and Frank Driver and Elizabeth Pilling. Each of these families has been encouraged to provide contributions about their grandparents, parents, themselves and their own families.

Family Tree framework

The Driver and Weatherhead trees have been represented in eleven PowerPoint charts, three identified as Earlier Generations Master Charts and a further eight providing a place to show the broader family, the direct line and their siblings. The aim has been to follow all the male Drivers up to the 1911 census, and in a few cases up to 1940.

You may find it helpful to look at the Driver Earlier Generations Master Chart when reading the following explanation. The charts of both Driver and Weatherhead families are on pages 9 to 19.

Forenames tend to be repeated through succeeding generations and it becomes essential to know to which John Driver, of ten in this history, reference is being made, and to which generation he belongs.

Generations are identified by alphabetical letter commencing with S (for self) of the person creating the tree. Additionally, a number has been added that relates to the position of the person, as shown on the Earlier Generations Master Chart, starting from the left. For example, William Driver P3.

That serves well for the direct line of the family, i.e. William and Sarah's family, but in this history siblings and their children have also been included. The Driver Earlier Generations Master Chart does not show the children of William's brothers and sisters. They are shown on the additional six charts and are identified in a different manner. Samuel Driver, P1, will have children identified as P1+ and grandchildren as P1++.

The Earlier Generations Master Charts start at generations J or K and present parents, followed by their children in order of descending age. Only where we have something to report is a narrative number allocated. Narrative numbers are shown on the charts as superscripts after the surname.

The Driver chart, but not Weatherhead, becomes complicated because there are a large number of male children and the Family History intent is to include them and their descendants, necessitating the two additional charts; pink and green. So, generation N has two Driver families, both of whom will have narratives. The first is Henry Driver and Judith Smith, narrative 4. The second, John Driver and Ann Cockshott is unexpectedly numbered narrative 6. This is because Henry and Judith are not the direct line and we complete the non-direct line before returning to continue the direct line. Only one narrative, number 5, was needed to complete the non-direct line.

This approach becomes more apparent in generation O when William and Mary Sawley are narrative 7 and looking at the pink chart, John Driver and Sarah Glover, numbers 8 through to 12 are needed to complete this part of the non-direct line. William's younger siblings then take numbers 13 and 14.

Although in generation Q Charles Driver and Florence Weatherhead are strictly the only direct line, we are treating all the children of Charles, Frederick, Henry and Frank as being direct line. This is also the place on the Driver Earlier Generations Master Chart where the layout changes from horizontal to vertical. It was deemed best to keep the four brothers together in consecutive narratives and then to launch upon each of their families in turn.

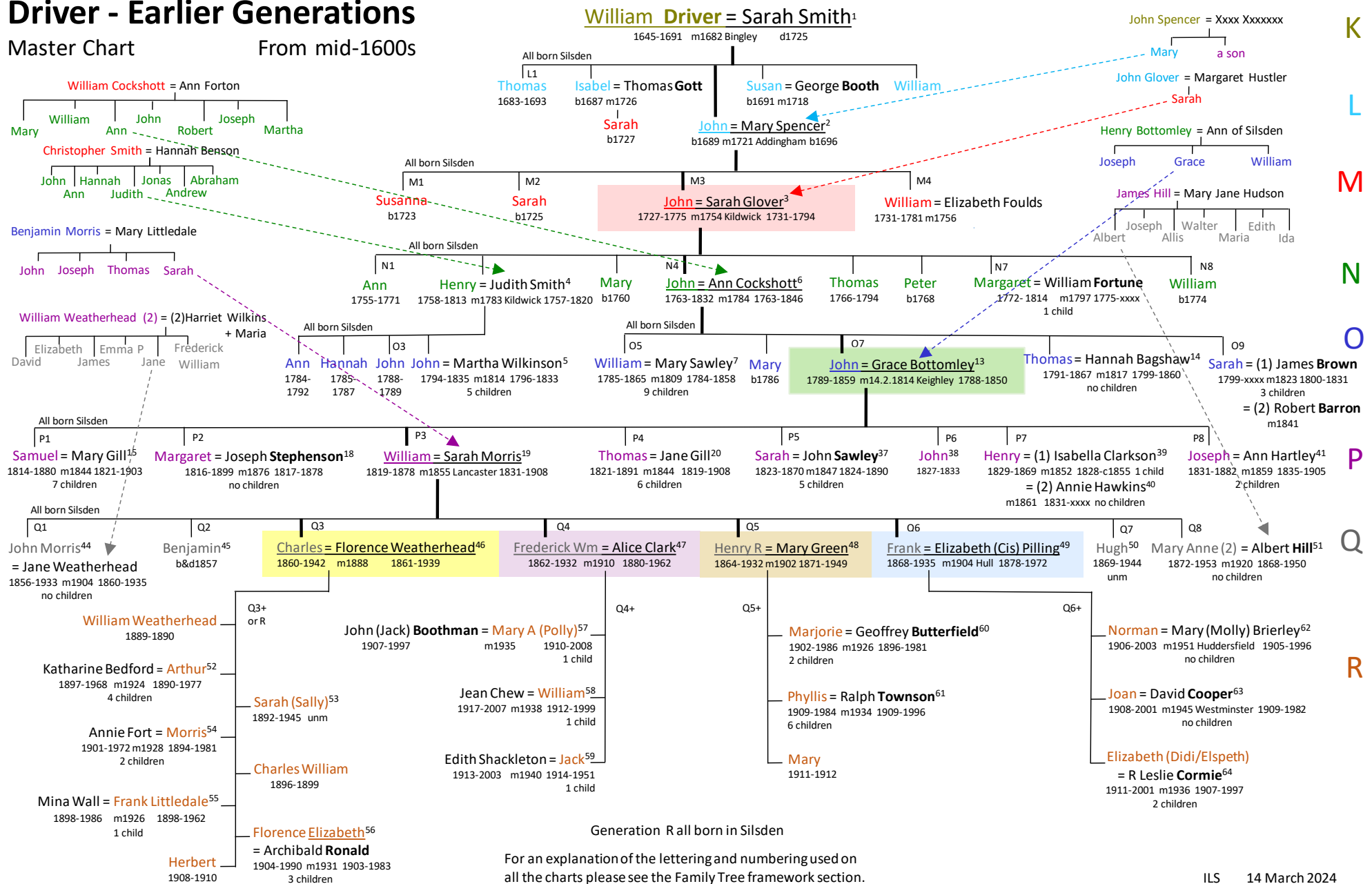
Throughout the Weatherhead chart the narratives of each sibling's family, other than the direct line, are completed before moving on.

Also appreciate that generation S narratives include memory-based information as well as evidence-based history.

On one occasion we were unable to place a Peter Driver. In the 1832 opening pages of the register of the Earl of Thanet Odd Fellows Lodge there is mention of a Peter Driver of Silsden, born in 1803. However, this Peter's baptism records cannot be found. Living in Keighley for much of his life his place of birth in the 1851 and 1861 censuses was given as Kildwick and Silsden.

Master Chart

From mid-1600s

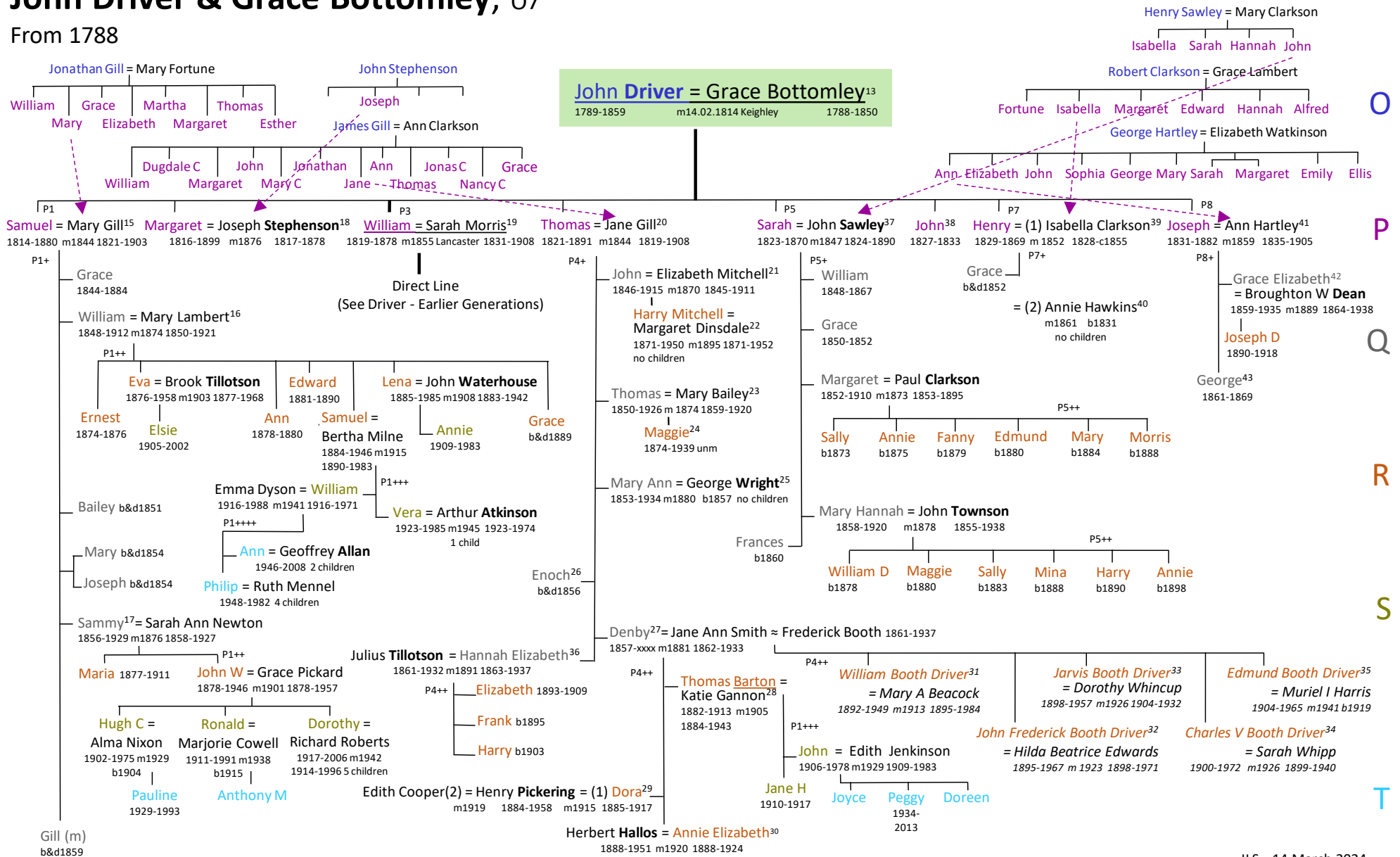


From 1727



John Driver & Grace Bottomley, 07

From 1788



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P

Q



S

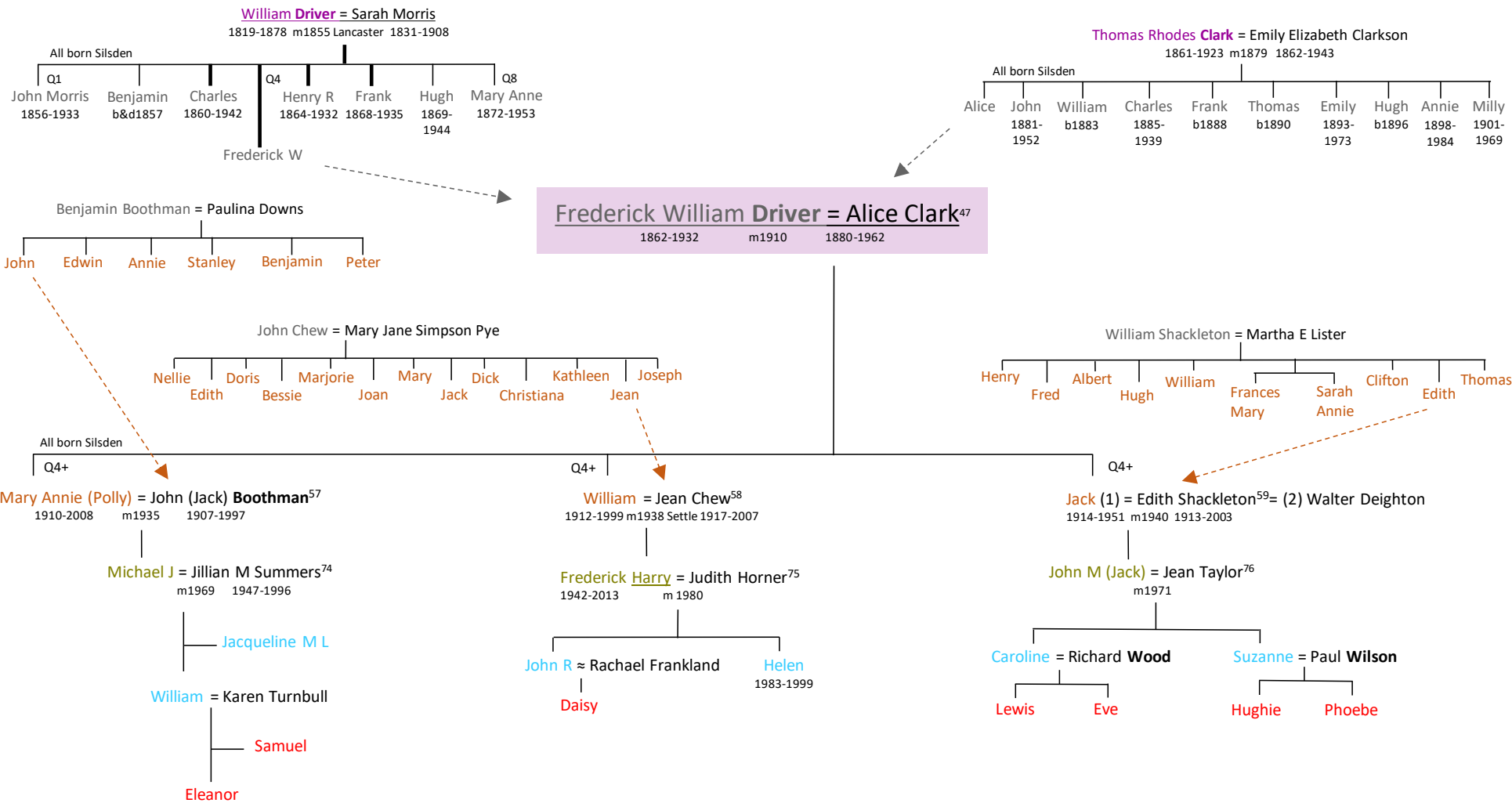
T

U

V

Frederick William Driver & Alice Clark, Q4

From 1819



P

Q

R

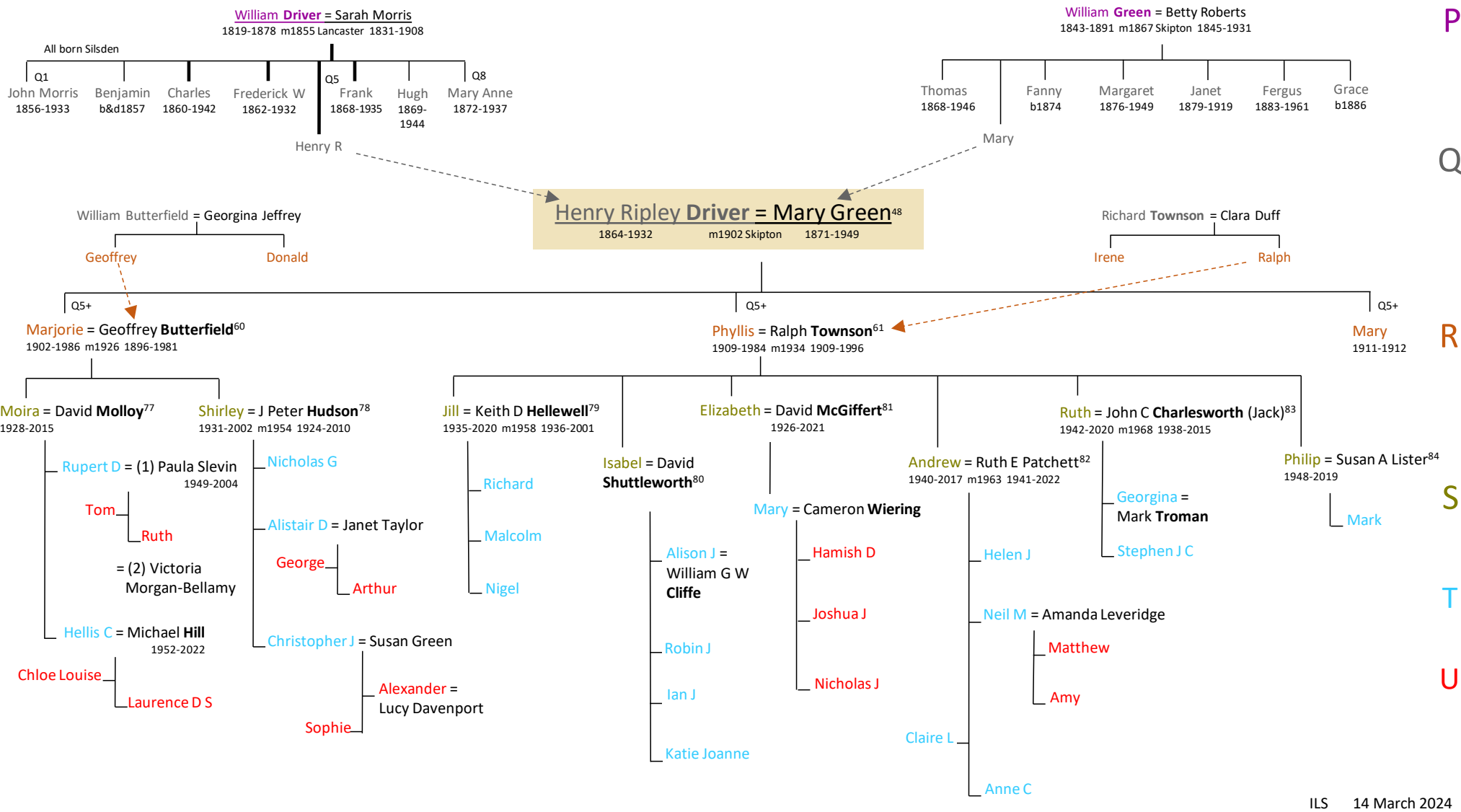
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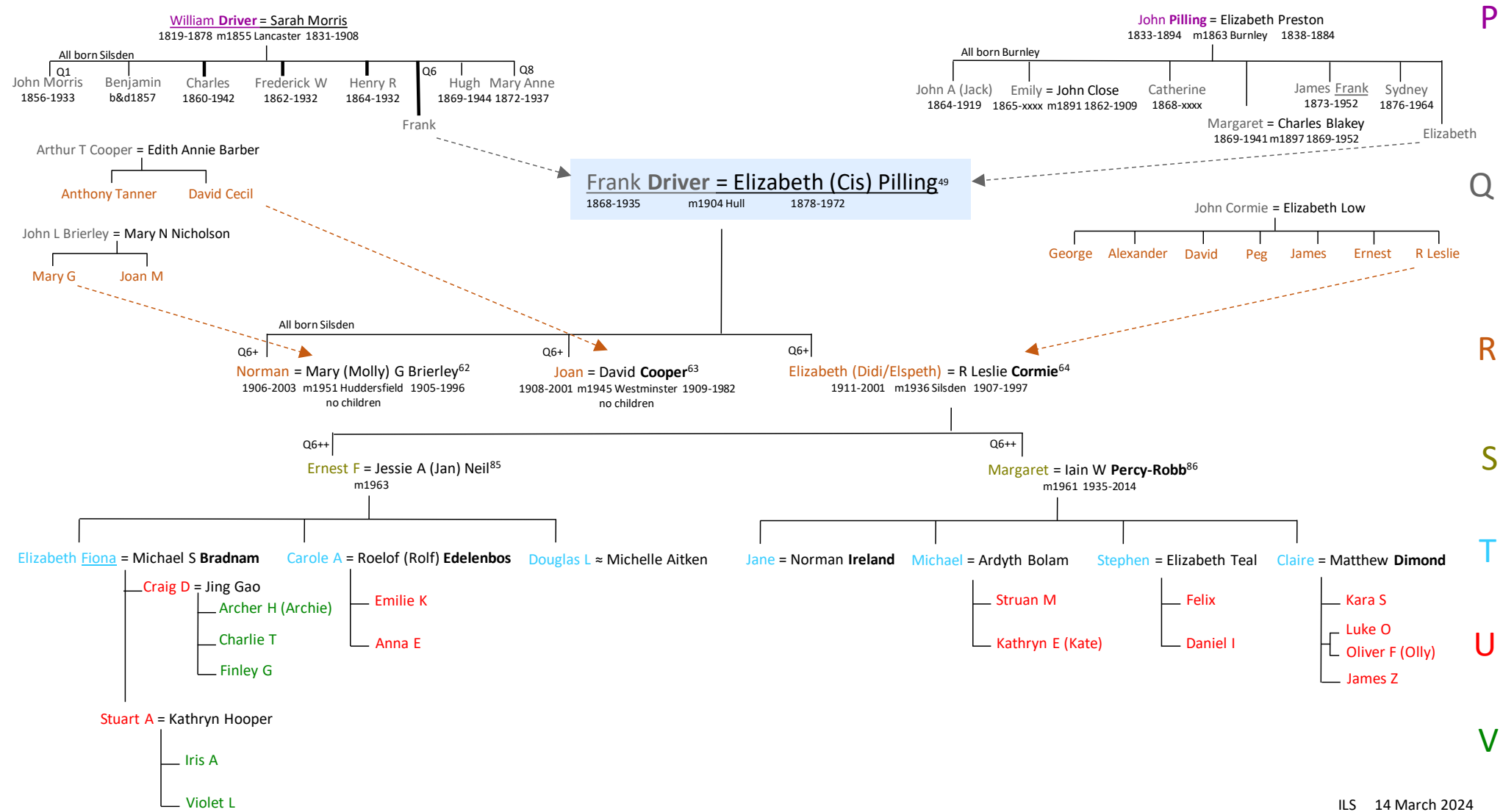
Henry Ripley Driver & Mary Green, Q5

From 1819



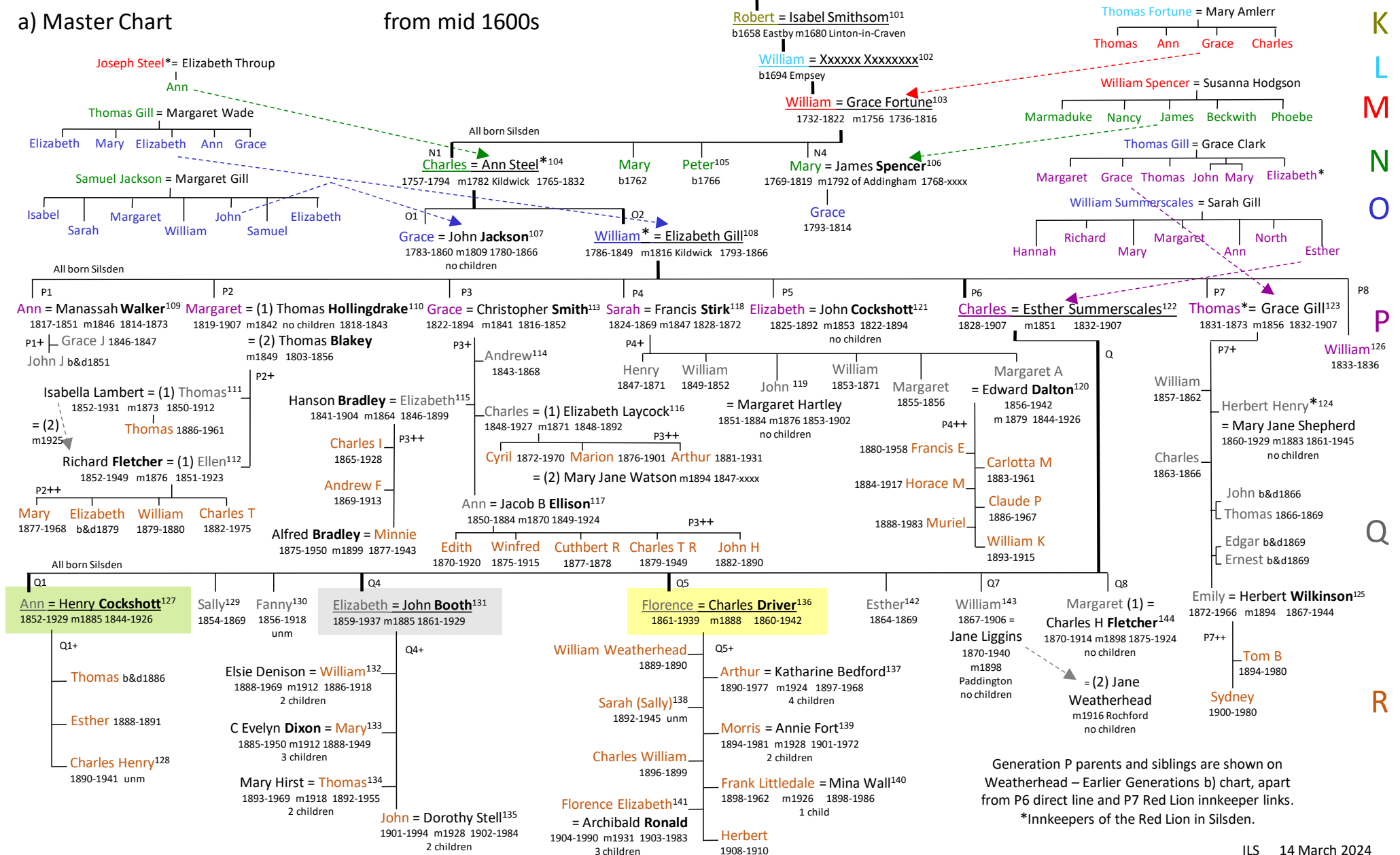
Frank Driver & Elizabeth Pilling, Q6

From 1819



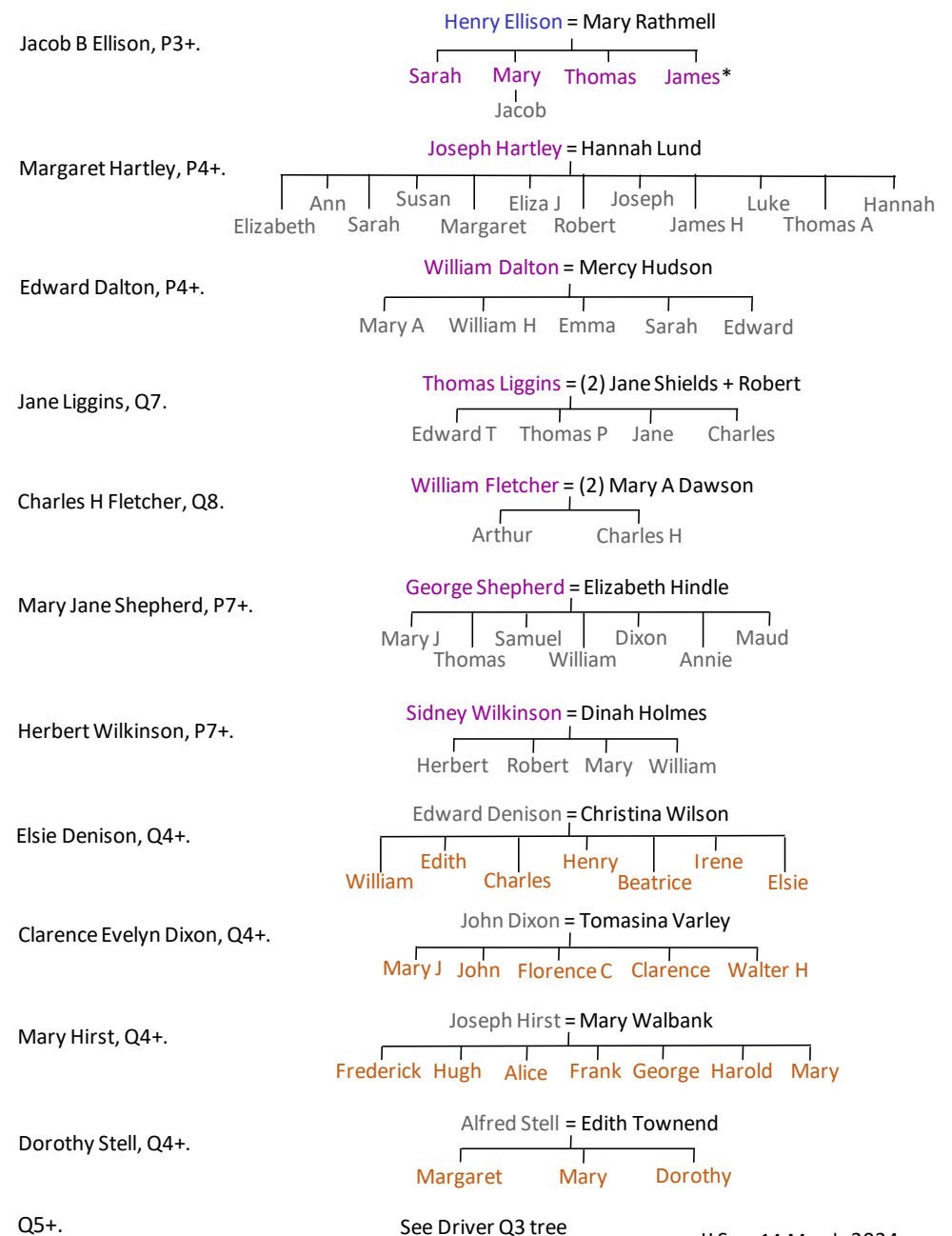
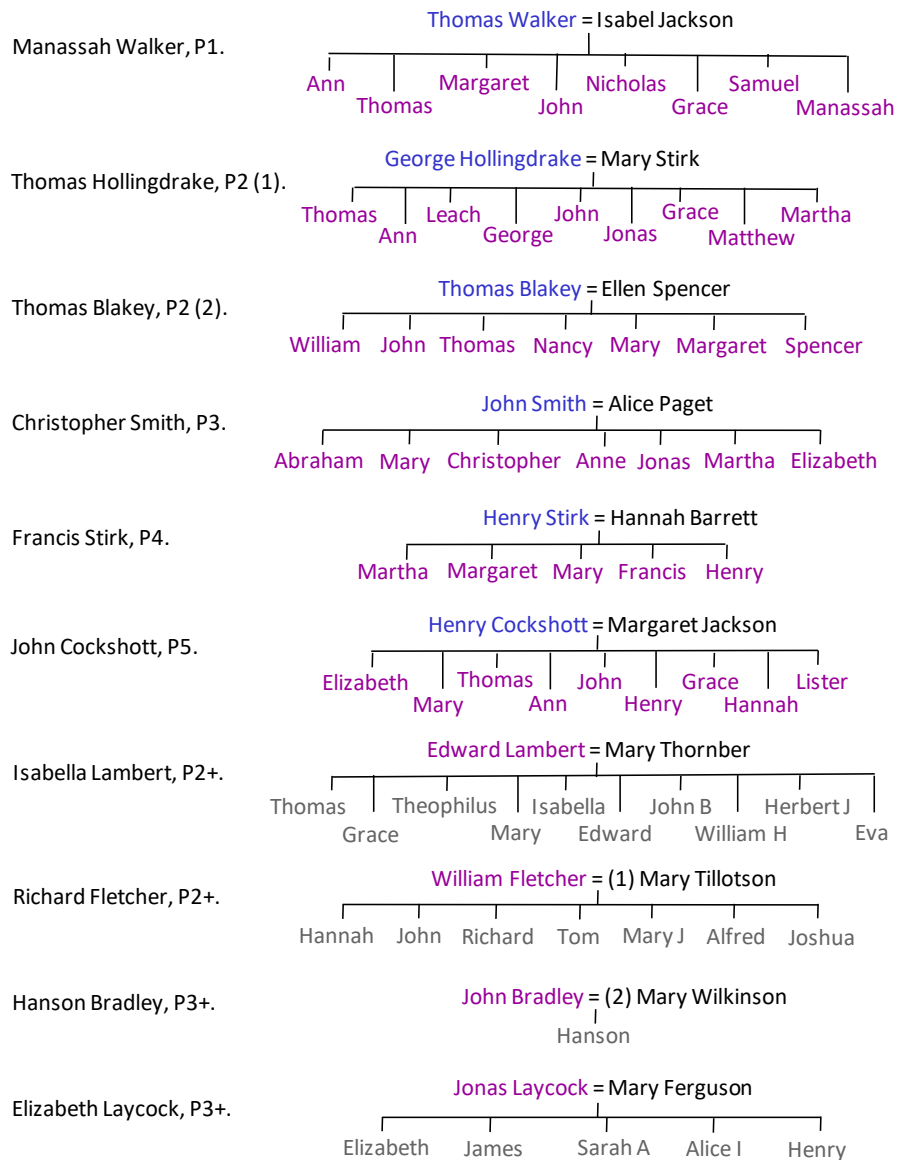
Thomas Weatherhead

from mid 1600s



Weatherhead - Earlier Generations

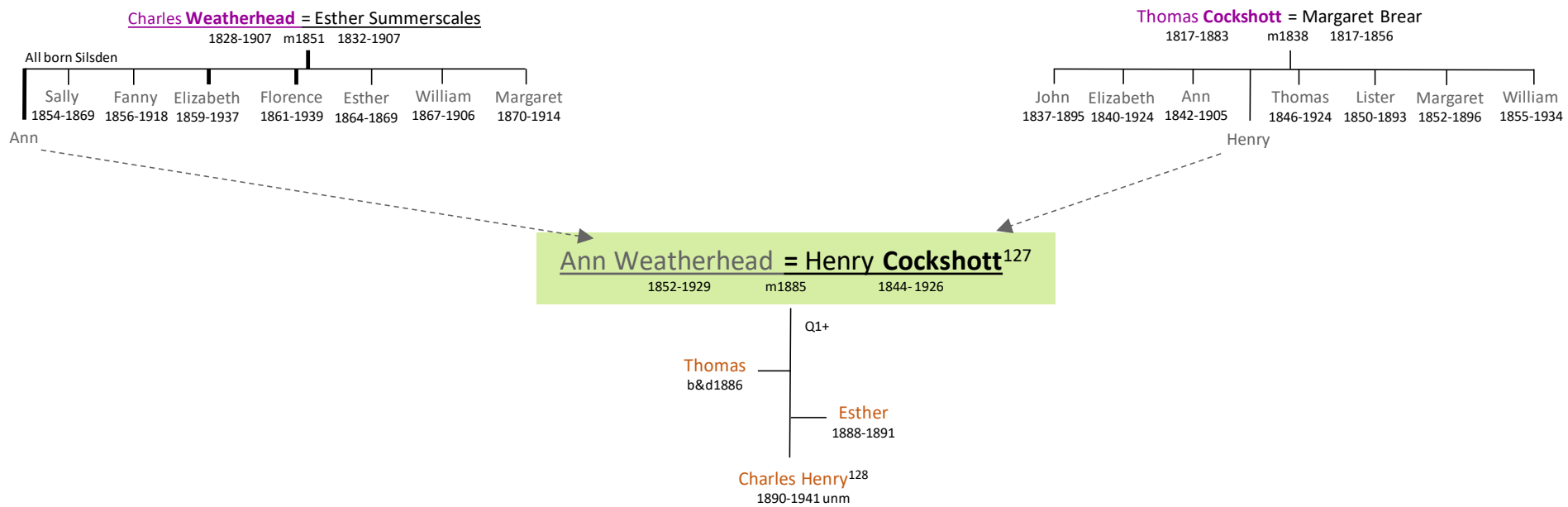
b) Additional Parents and Siblings



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Ann Weatherhead & Henry Cockshott, Q1

From 1817



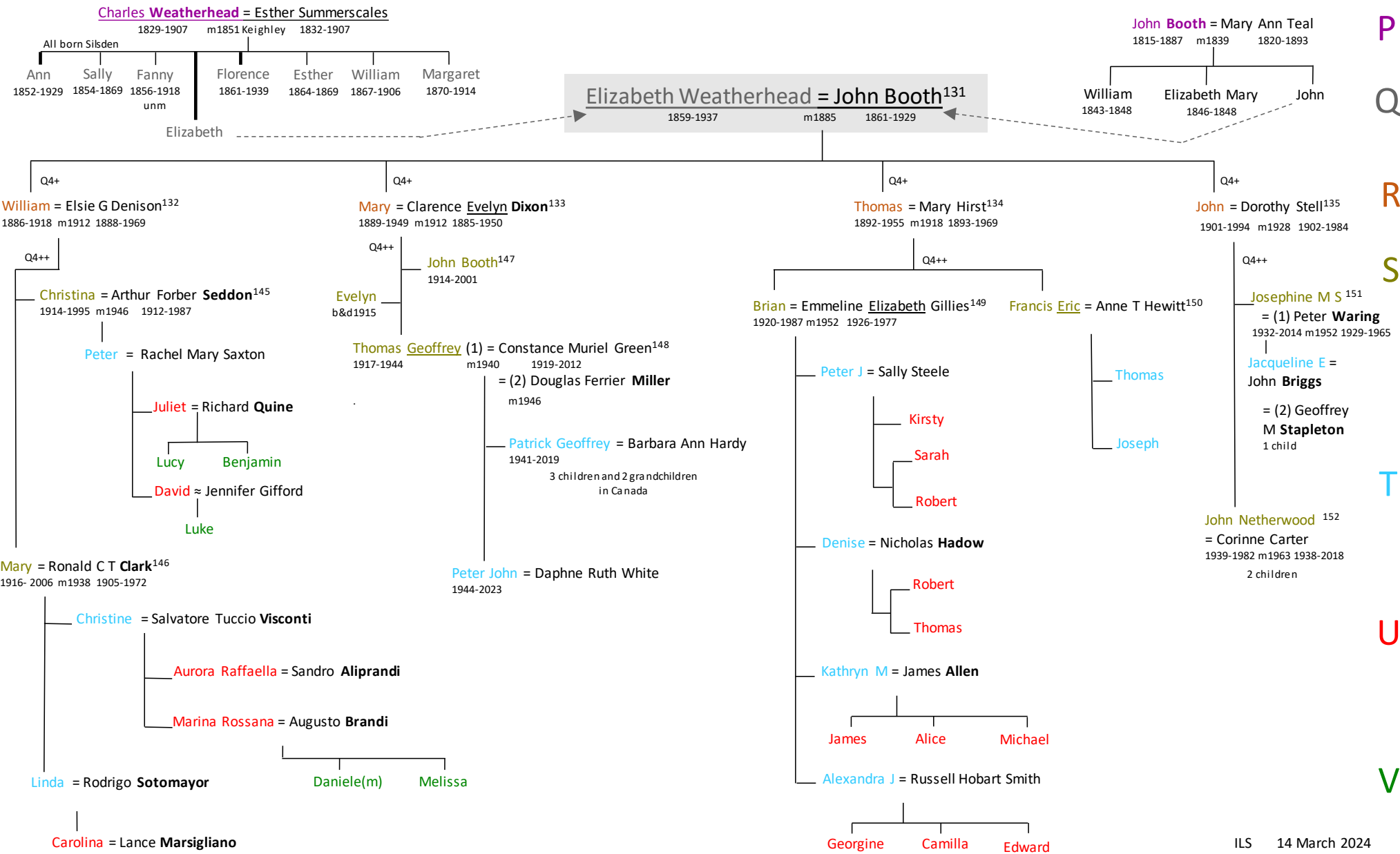
P

Q

R

Elizabeth Weatherhead & John Booth, Q4

From 1815



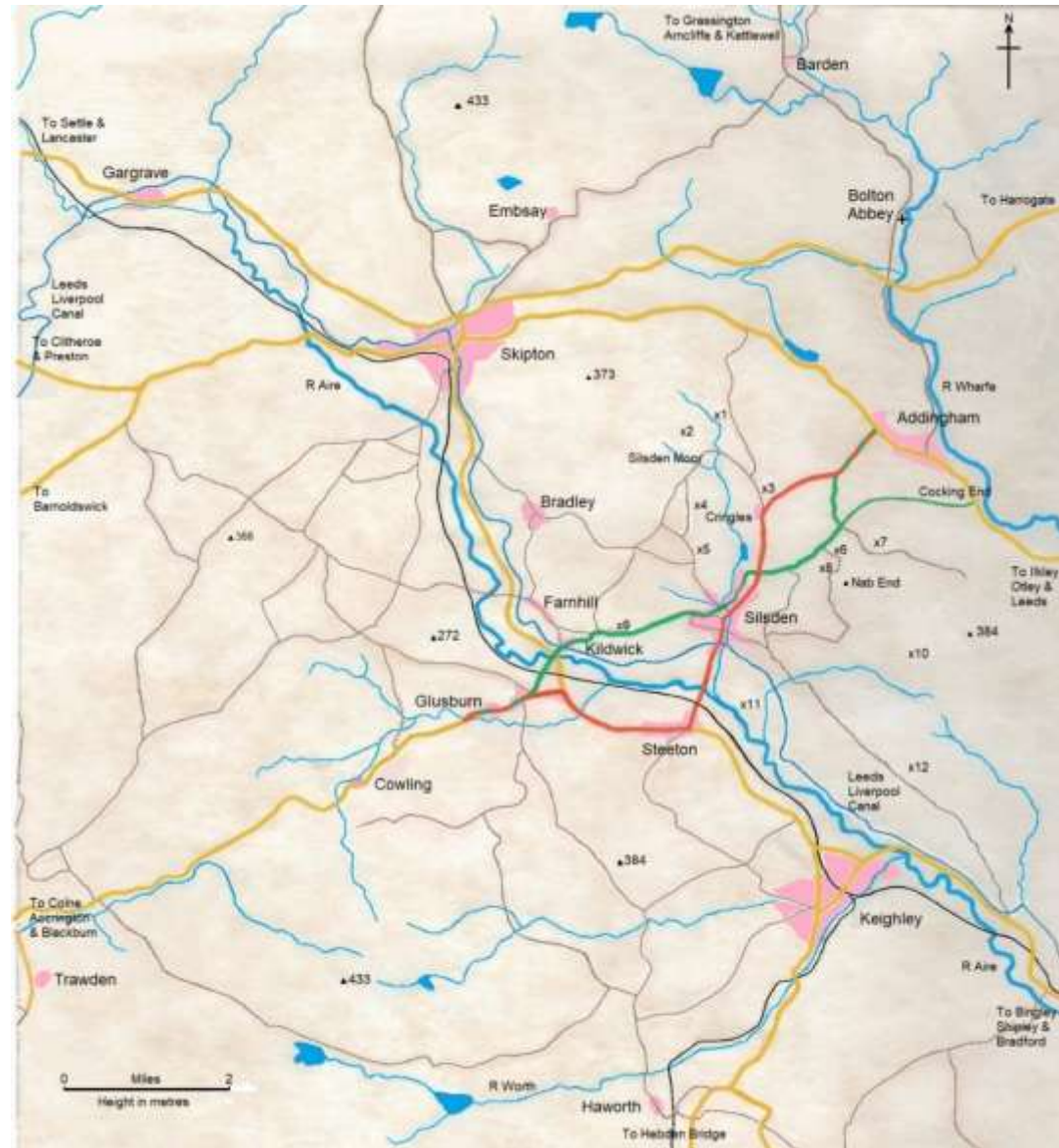
Map 1

Silsden and surrounding area, late 1900s

Key

Turnpike Phase 1	
Phase 2	
Main roads	
Other roads	
Railways	
Canal	
Rivers and Reservoirs	

- x1 Moorcock Hall
- x2 Carr Bog
- x3 Marchup
- x4 Foster Cliff
- x5 Hay Hills
- x6 Hang Goose
- x7 Scarghyll
- x8 Moorfield
- x9 Grange Hall, Kildwick
- x10 Black Pots
- x11 Howden House
- x12 Coal mine at Rivock Edge.



Map 2

Some road locations in Silsden.

Note the **road number**, follow that **red arrow** until it meets its relevant **red dot**.



	
Skipton Road	1
Bradley Road	2
Highfield Lane	3
Bridge Street	4
Chapel Street	5
North Street	6
Pickard Lane	7
Bolton Road	8
Brown Bank	9

	
Bolton Terrace	10
Driver Terrace	11
Wesley Place	12
Kirkgate	13
Aire View	14
St John Street (Caleb St)	15
Elliott Street	16
Weatherhead Place	17
Howden Road	18
(Coal Pit Lane)	18
Sykes Lane	19
Keighley Road	20