

Chapter 58: Royle Drew

My father, Royle Drew, was born in Kirkby on 17 June 1932.¹ I have much less documentary background about dad's early life, and his family, than I do for mum so what is noted here is largely from my own memory and available Internet sources.² His father was also called Charles³ (Charlie) and he worked as a coal miner.⁴ His parents were called Frederick Lewis⁵ and Mary Anne.⁶ The family lived in 29 Alexandra Street, in a house owned by the Coal Board, in what was known as a colliery row. I recall visiting grandma in the house, which still had an outside toilet (although I think at some point it also had an inside bathroom). I recall it having a long garden and dad saying that they kept pigs there. I also recall him saying that they took down the garden fences so the home guard could have drills during the Second World War.

Visiting my great grandparents' grave with my father in 2010



¹ Although Free BMD have this in the next quarter, i.e. to September 1932 which presumably means his birth was registered in July.

² Such as FreeBMD and FindmyPast. I also made a trip to Kirkby with dad in 2010, the year before he died. He wanted to find and visit his grandparents' grave which we managed to do. I have some photographs from that trip.

³ His middle name was Arthur. According to his gravestone, he died on 7 March 1970 aged 69 years, which means he would have been born in 1900 after March 7th. Based on FreeBMD, Charles Arthur Drew was born in Mansfield in the quarter ending June 1900 and he died, in Mansfield, in the quarter ending March 1970. That entry records his date of birth as 16 May 1900. This means he was 69 when he died which ties in with what I recall being told by dad and why dad was particularly happy when he reached his 70th birthday! According to Free BMD, Charles A Drew married Alice Randall in the quarter ending December 1931 in Basford. I have also found details of his baptism at [St John the Evangelist](#), Mansfield on 19 June 1900. At that time, the family's residence was given as 6 Carlton Terr. [I have found a Carlton Street but not Carlton Terrace but see footnote 5]. He also appears in the 1921, 1922 and 1924 electoral registers living at 76 Edward Street in Kirkby with Edgar and Lilian Hufton. I believe this was grandad's sister and her husband. They got married in 1913. He reappears in the 1931 electoral register living at 72 Diamond Avenue with Arthur and Ida Derrick. Grandad had an aunt and a sister called Ida. However, this is probably grandad's sister. Ida Derrick is listed as a linked person in relation to Frederick Lewis Drew in 1922. According to FreeBMD, an Ida Drew married an Arthur F Derrick in Q3 of 1921.

⁴ I have always assumed he worked at Summit Colliery because I know for certain he was a coal miner and he lived in Alexandra Street. But, miners who lived in Kirkby also worked in other collieries. So, it is possible he worked elsewhere. In the 1939 register, he is listed as a Colliery Yard Labourer. This implies he might (at least at that time) have worked [above ground](#).

⁵ According to his gravestone, Frederick Lewis died on 9 December 1921 aged 55. From Free BMD, he is recorded as having died in Basford. According to probate records, he was living at 3 Diamond Avenue at the time of his death and he was a railway engine driver. Probate was granted to Ida Derrick, who I believe was his daughter. His effects were valued at £427 14s 5d. The only Frederick L Drew born in the right period (circa 1866) was born in Weymouth in Q4 1866. His mother's maiden name was Aldon. Frederick Lewis Drew married Mary Ann Nolan in Wandsworth in Q1 1885. I vaguely recollect dad mentioning the name Nolan in discussions about family history although, in this record, her middle name is spelled without an "e". I have found more details of the family in the 1901 and 1911 censuses. In 1901, they were living at 6 Commercial Street Carlton Terrace in Mansfield and by 1911 in Marlborough Road, East Kirkby. The parents were given as Frederick L/Fred Lewis Drew, a railway engine driver, who had been born in Portland, Dorset in 1866 (1864 in the 1911 census) and Mary A Drew, who had been born in Kennington Surrey in 1862 or 1863. They had five children, Percy R (b1888), Lilian Frances (b1891 and working as a boot factory clerk in 1911), Elsie Gladys (b1896 and working as a mantle maker's assistant in 1911), Ida (b1899) and grandad – Charles Arthur (b1900 – 1901 according to 1911 census). I also found details of Frederick having been baptised in Portland on 7 October 1866.

⁶ According to her gravestone, Mary Anne died on 3 September 1915 aged 52. From Free BMD, she is recorded as having died in Nottingham. It appears that her maiden name was Nolan and she married Frederick in 1885 in Wandsworth. Although I believe – based on census records – that she was born in Surrey in 1862 or 1863, I have struggled to find confirmation of this.



Visiting family graves with my father in 2010

Top left – view of his grandparents’ grave Top right – close up of inscription

Middle right – dad at his parents’ grave

Above left – grandma and grandad’s grave Above right – grave of dad’s sister Joyce and her husband Kenneth

I don't know much about my grandfather. I vaguely recall him but he died when I was nine from lung complications of mining.⁷ Dad told me that he had been "a tramp" and he may have been in a workhouse as he was very reluctant to go to hospital when he was ill because it had previously been the workhouse.⁸ He was a stubborn man. Dad told the story of helping grandma getting some benefits after grandad died. The benefits officer said something along the lines that grandma could have got some benefits while grandad had been alive to which grandma replied that that was not the case. The benefits officer said something like, "Mrs Drew, I think I know the benefits system", to which grandma replied "...and I think I knew my husband!!"



Alice and Charlie – my father's parents on my parents' wedding day



Denis (left) was dad's best man when he got married

Dad's mother was called Alice.⁹ Her maiden name was Redfin (or Redfern).¹⁰ She married grandad in 1931 but she had previously been married. She married Charles H Randall in Basford district in the quarter ending December 1919 but he died, aged 33, in the quarter ending December 1929. She had three children from her previous marriage. Eva M was born in Kirkby on 5 April 1920 so was some 12 years older than dad. Joyce was born three years later on 11 May 1923 and Denis J was born five years after that in the quarter ending March 1928. Denis was the closest in age to my dad, around four years older, and he was just over a year old when his father died. I recall that one reason dad was passionate about the benefits provided by the welfare state was that my grandmother was widowed aged around 30, with three young children, and she was not entitled to any benefits because she was "young enough to work". Dad's view was that he never wanted to go back to that.

⁷ And probably smoking.

⁸ This may relate to [Mansfield Community Hospital](#).

⁹ This is the only forename on her gravestone. From the gravestone, she died in April 1989 but the date of death and her age are obscured by flowers! She is buried in New Kingsway cemetery and I found details of her burial online. She died at [Loxley Lodge](#) in Kirkby aged 89 and was buried on 4 May 1989. This means she was born sometime between April 1899 and April 1900. By tracking the date of her death on Free BMD, this gives her date of birth as 2 May 1899 so she died just before her 90th birthday. This date of birth is confirmed in the 1939 register. Free BMD has details of an Alice Redfin born in Nottingham in Q2 1899. From the 1901 and 1911 censuses, it appears that Alice was living with her family at 5 Churchill Street, Nottingham in 1901 and at 16 Prospect Street in Kirkby by 1911. Her father, John (b1871/2 in Twycross, Leicestershire) was said to be a coal miner (hewer) and her mother was called May/Mary (b1873/4 in Griffydham, Leicestershire). She had three brothers, John (b1896), Harold (b1904) and Albert (b1907) and three sisters, Annie Lydia (b1897), Mary Elizabeth (b1902) and Ivy Maud (b1909). By 1911, her brother, John, was working as a grocer's assistant and her sister, Annie, was listed as a "worker tin mnt". From Free BMD, John Redfin married in Basford in Q1 1895. It appears that his wife's maiden name may have been Mary Hurst. It appears that he may have died in 1939.

¹⁰ I vaguely recall dad telling me about this variation in name. Different versions are recorded in Free BMD, e.g. Redfern for Eva's birth and Redfin for Joyce's and Denis'.



Mum's bridesmaids Back – Janet Stark, Maureen Stark, Dorothy Lofthouse, Marilyn Seville Front – Carole Holland, Lynne Evans

By the time mum noticed dad, all his siblings were already married. Eva married John T H Stark in the quarter ending March 1940. By 1952, she had three children, Maureen, born in the quarter ending September 1940¹¹, Nolan, born in the quarter ending December 1941, and Janet, born in the quarter ending December 1944. These names are vaguely familiar and they would have been my cousins. However, we were not close not least because they were 16-20 years older than me. Maureen and Janet were among mum's bridesmaids when she and dad got married.

Joyce had also married during the Second World War, in the quarter ending March 1943. Her husband was called Kenneth Dawn. She had one son, Terry, born in the quarter ending March 1944. He is mentioned in mum's diary in February 1954, when he would have been nine or ten. He went with mum, dad, Margaret Varnam, Ken Roome and Geoffrey Cross to see "Cinderella" at Nottingham Ice Stadium.

Denis married Margaret Holmes in the quarter ending September 1952. Denis and Margaret had children after this period – David C was born in the quarter ending March 1954, John D was born in the quarter ending September 1955, Jill D was born in the quarter ending December 1958 and Heather D in the quarter ending March 1964. David was born in Mansfield with all the others born in Kirkby. I have kept in touch with Jill and Heather¹² sporadically over the years. In recent years, I attended the funeral of their mother and their brother, David, and they both came to mum's funeral in 2019.



Denis and Margaret's wedding. Far left are grandma and grandad Drew

¹¹ Although Free BMD record her mother's name as Ramdall,

¹² As a child/teenager, I remember being a bit confused as we had two family friends/relatives called Jill and Heather. These were also the names of mum's friend's children, Dorothy Lofthouse.

Dad was often asked how he came to have such an unusual first name, Royle. He never really answered except to say that grandma had chosen it and then she and the family (and mum) proceeded to call him Roy! He is almost always referred to as Roy in mum's diary. He was always being asked about the spelling and insisted that the queen spelled it¹³ wrongly! He was naturally delighted by the TV series, the [Royle Family](#). Finally, someone had the spelling correct! When he lived in Birmingham, he formed a singing group with some members of Icknield Male Voice Choir and they were known as "[The Royles](#)".¹⁴

¹³ Royal

¹⁴ Dad would have been delighted to have been described as a "*very good English tenor*"!