

Chapter 20
ORAM'S FROM TROWBRIDGE
WILTSHIRE
RICH - BEVERSTOCK - ORAM

Florence Oram - Edgar Metcalfe's wife's ancestors.

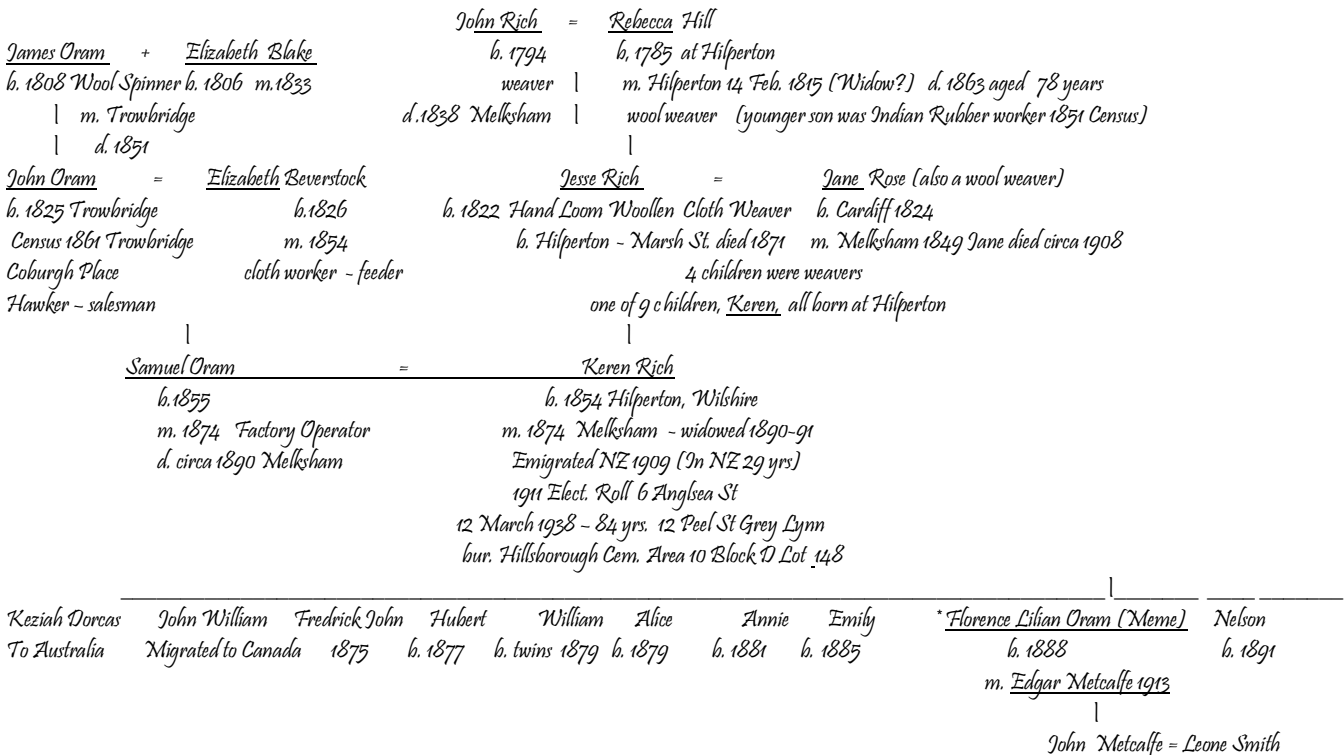


Keren (Rich) Oram.
Circa 1913
Courtesy of Chris Metcalfe

Ancestors of Florence Lilian Oram - RICH and ORAM.

RICH ancestors:

Since the 14th century generations the Rich ancestors were involved in the manufacture of Woollen cloth in the village of Hilperton in Wiltshire. Earlier generations were handloom weavers in their homes until large mills were built in Trowbridge.



1861 Census Trowbridge.

John Oram born 1831 was a Hawker (travelling salesman).

Elizabeth (Beverstock) Oram born 1826 was a Cloth Worker. They were both born in Trowbridge and married in 1874 when Elizabeth was 38. Both the children William born 1850 and Samuel born 1855 went to school. Samuel was your ancestor.

Samuel Oram born 1855 (Woollen Factory Operator from Trowbridge) married Keren Rich.

The ten Oram children were all born in Hilperton, Wiltshire. Samuel Oram died about 1890/1891. It is unknown whether it was a work related accident or if he died of an illness, but Keren Oram found herself suddenly in a precarious position. There was no pension for widows in those days. The older children went to work, but she was able to keep the younger children in school. She was a thrifty hard working lady and a wonderful mother. Kere was the local midwife and would often be released from her job to deliver a baby.

- Keziah Dorcas,
- John William
- Fredrick John
- Hubert
- William
- Alice
- Annie
- Emily
- Florence Lilian
- Nelson

Electoral Roll Trowbridge Parochial Vote

Z1262 Oram KerenTrowbridge ... House ... 27 Duke Street



The Oram family. Circa 1911.
Courtesy of John Metcalfe

On the back of this photograph, which would have been taken in Wiltshire before the family emigrated, Florence had written:
Front row, from left: Annie, Mother Keren, Florence and Emily.

Unfortunately she did not name her brothers. Presumably Nelson is top left and William is possibly 2nd to end, on the right.

Birth order of boys:
John William
Fredrick John
Hubert
William
Nelson

John Metcalfe made some notes for Natalie about the family:
Grandmother Keren Oram nee Rich was born in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, England.
Grandfather (Samuel) died just prior to his family emigrating. This is incorrect - he died just prior to the birth of his youngest child, Nelson.
They had 10 children.
One son migrated to Canada
One sister to Australia
The rest of the family emigrated to New Zealand.

* Florence Oram won a prize on Saturday 11th November 1899, when she was 11 years old, reciting the poem, 'The Cripple Boy.' It would have brought tears to many eyes. Her widowed mother Keren Oram would have been so proud of her daughter and no doubt thought to herself, 'If only her father could see her now he would be so proud.'

THE CRIPPLE BOY

Author unknown.

There stood a lonely cottage once upon a mountain side
And higher still above it rose the summits in their pride
A village in the valley lay, but that was far below
Whence all except the wild goat came weary stepped and slow.

Now a widow owned that lowly hut, she had one only joy,
Alas her care and sorrow too, for he was a crippled boy
He could not climb the mountain path, he could not run and play.
He could not earn the daily bread, for which his mother toiled all day.

Oh mother he would sometimes say, why did God make me so
What use am I, what work is mine, and then the tears would flow
Nay nay my child have patience still, be sure the words are true.
God has a plan for every man, and He has a plan for you.

Now the sound of war was swelling then around that fair free land.
But her son had sworn that on her soil no foeman foot should stand.
The cripple slept, at midnight woke and he knew not why
But a secret impulse led him forth beneath the starry sky.

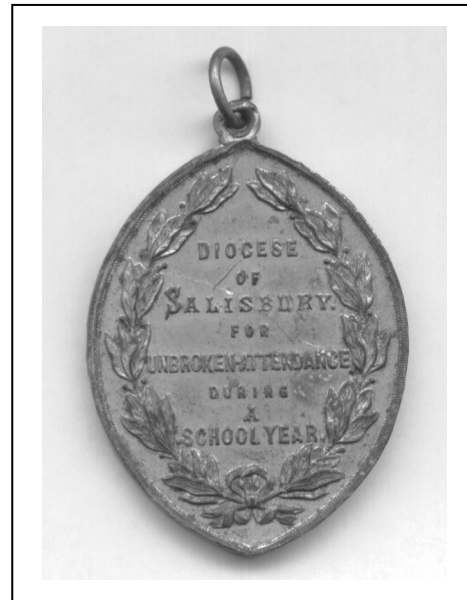
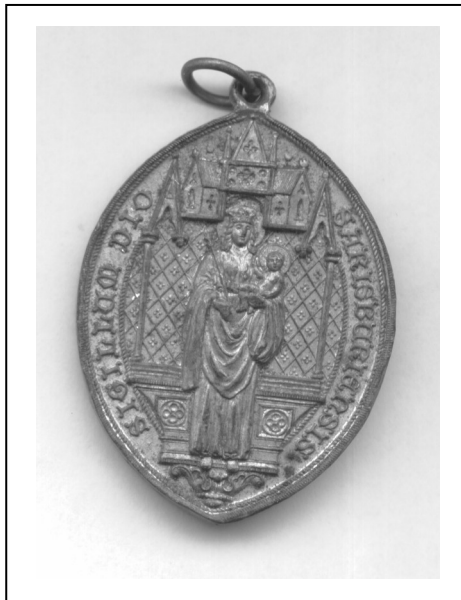
Then led him up he knew not where until at last he stood.
Beside the pile, the signal pile of ready stacked up wood.
There was no sentry at his post, the place was dark and still.
Hush hark see those stealthy men, creeping round the hill.

Now crippled boy there's work for you, your mothers words are true.
God has a plan for every man and this is His for you.
He seized a match in either hand, he had no thought of fear.
One moment and the flames burst forth, they saw them far and near.

They saw it too, those baffled foe's, they knew their chance was ore.
One shot they fired and back they went, down to their camp once more.
But where was he, the feeble child, so meek and yet so brave.
So mean and yet so honoured thus, his native vale to save.

Alas that shot had stretched him low, and on the grass he lay.
With his dauntless heart rejoicing, while his life's blood ebb's away.
They bore him to his home, at last there was triumph in his eye
Oh mother do not weep for me, for I am happy thus to die.

I could not ask for longer life, for I have lived to see.
God has a plan for every man, and he had one for me.



The medal pictured above was inherited by John Metcalfe from his parents, but to whom it originally belonged had been forgotten. The oval medal for unbroken attendance during a school year, was awarded by the Diocese of Salisbury, an Anglican cathedral in Salisbury, England, only 31 miles to Hilperton, so it is more likely to have belonged to Florence Oram, seeing it was in her families possession and that they lived in the right location, but we cannot say for certain without researching the school's attendance Rolls. There is one exactly the same, (see below) but in poor condition, in the Wiltshire museum.



16. WILT-567911 (West Knoyle): A lead-alloy medallion of the Salisbury Cathedral School (The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary), given to a pupil for unbroken attendance during a school year. * As a proviso, the Code stated that 'No child may receive a medal who has not satisfied the head teacher as to his or her cleanliness, tidiness and good conduct throughout the year'. The obverse depicts the Virgin Mary with child and scepter standing in front of an elaborate altar consisting of two pillars topped with crosses which support the cathedral church and is inscribed SIGILLVM DIO SALISBVRGENSIS. The reverse depicts a wreath and is inscribed DIOCESE OF SALISBURY FOR UNBROKEN ATTENDANCE DURING A SCHOOL YEAR.

The medallion is 5mm in length and weighs 27 g. This is the second medallion of its type to be recorded on the PAS database, the first is from Collingbourne Kingston (WILT-CD40DC). The medallion was donated to Salisbury Cathedral by the finder.

Highlights from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in Wiltshire in 2017. Uploaded by Richard Henry. <http://bournemouth.academia.edu/RichardHenry>

RICH ANCESTORS:

John Rich born 1794, was a handloom weaver, but as the woollen Mills opened in Trowbridge he would have found it difficult to make a living. In 1815 he met and married 30 year old Rebecca Hill who was a wool weaver. Because of her age she was probably a widow, but records are scarce and I can't find her previous marriage record, or her maiden name. They were born in the Wiltshire village of Hilperton and lived at Hilperton Marsh. The village lies about two miles to the north-east of Trowbridge and is very low lying. The Kennet and Avon canal has several locks and links the two villages with their rows of mid-17th-century two storied stone rubble weavers cottages, each with an attic, pantiled roof, freestone quoins and dressings. One ground-floor room in each cottage has a large three-light window back and front and there are indications that at one time a loom was fixed in one of the upper rooms. It is likely that they were quite a religious family as their children (except William) all had Biblical names. The quality of hand loomed fabric was superior to the milled cloth at first.

1841 Census: (The person recording the information had creative spelling!)

John Rich aged 47 Hand Loom weaver born 1794 Hilperton Wiltshire

Rebecka Rich aged 55 born 1786 Hilperton Wiltshire

Jessey Rich aged 18 weaver born 1823 Hilperton Wiltshire

Elizabeth Rich aged 16 born 1825 Hilperton Wiltshire

Hannah Rich aged 15 born 1826 Hilperton Wiltshire

William aged 10 born 1831 Hilperton Wiltshire - 1851 weaver

Samuel Rich aged 7 born 1834 Hilperton Wiltshire aged 17 - an Indian Rubber Worker in 1851

1871 Wiltshire Census:

Jesse Rich - Head - 49 years - Woollen Weaver - Born Hilperton 1823

Jane Rich - Wife - 47 years - Woollen Weaver - Born Steeple Ashton 1824

Ann Rich - daughter - 19 years - Woollen Weaver - Born Hilperton 1852

Tabitha Rich - daughter - 18 years - Woollen Weaver - Born Hilperton 1853

Keren Rich - daughter - 17 years - Woollen Weaver - Born Melkshem 1854

John Rich - son - 15 years - Farm Labourer - Born Hilperton 1856

Dorcas Rich - daughter - 13 years - Scholar - Born Hilperton 1858

Jemima Rich - daughter - 9 years - Scholar - Born Hilperton 1862

Elizabeth Rich - daughter - 7 years - Scholar - Born Hilperton 1864 (Woollen Cloth Machine Feeder)

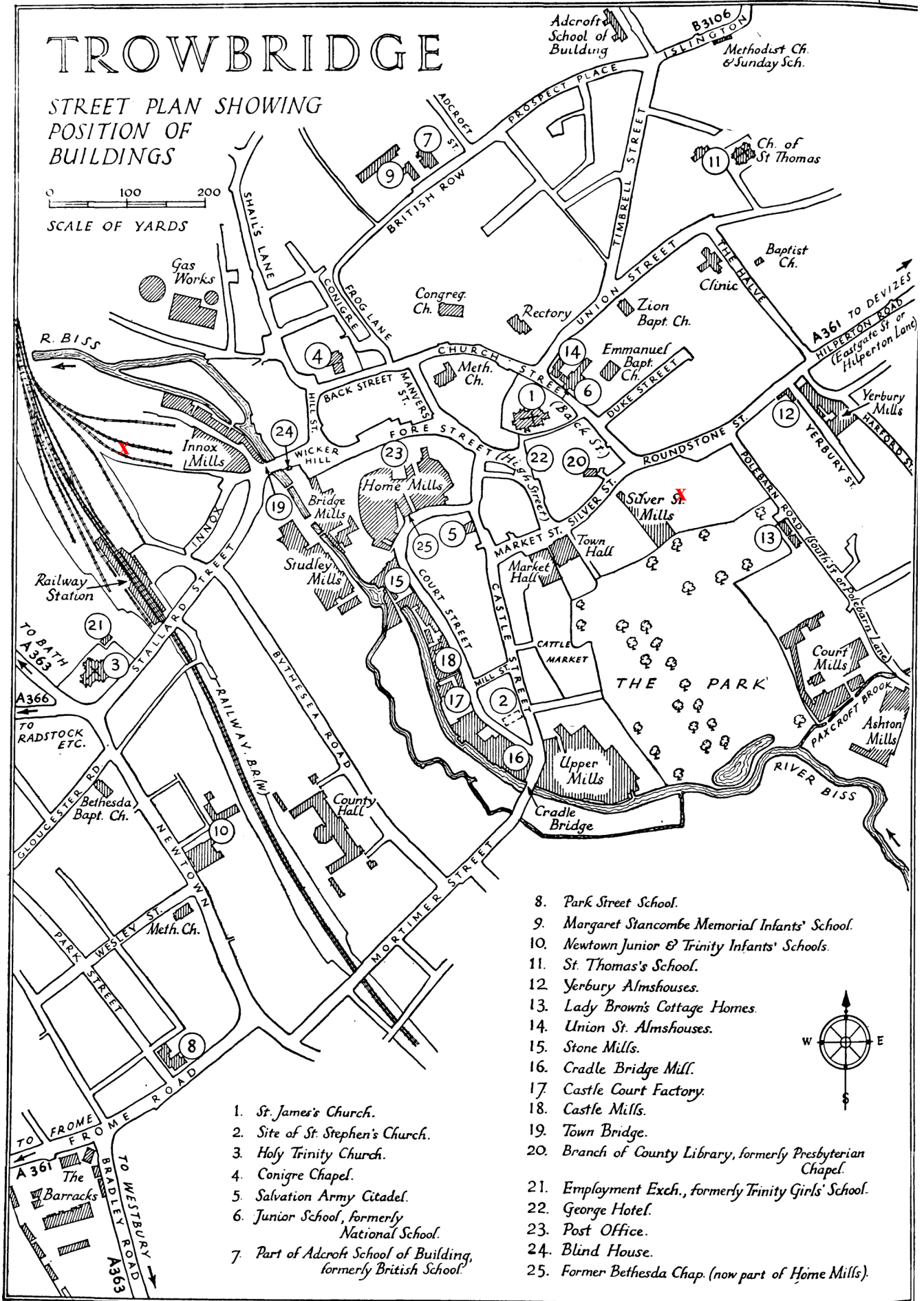
William James Rich - son - 4 years - Scholar - Born Hilperton 1867 (Bakers Boy)

Samuel Jessie Rich - son - 1 year - Born Hilperton 1870

By the 1881 Census Jesse had died and Jane was no longer able to weave, probably because of diminishing eyesight, so to support herself and her young children she worked as a laundress. It would have been hard work for a woman of her age, scrubbing dirty laundry on a ridged wooden scrubbing board, filling a copper with heavy buckets of water, feeding the fire beneath until the water boiled, then lifting steaming washing with a copper stick into a rinsing tub, wringing the clothes through a mangle; rinsing, hanging, starching and ironing clothing all day. She died circa 1908 in her eighties.



Washing was hard work in those days.
WordPress.com



1. St. James's Church.
2. Site of St. Stephen's Church.
3. Holy Trinity Church.
4. Congreg. Chapel.
5. Salvation Army Citadel.
6. Junior School, formerly National School.
7. Part of Adcroft School of Building, formerly British School.

8. Park Street School.
9. Margaret Stancombe Memorial Infants' School.
10. Newtown Junior & Trinity Infants' Schools.
11. St. Thomas's School.
12. Yerbury Almshouses.
13. Lady Brown's Cottage Homes.
14. Union St. Almshouses.
15. Stone Mills.
16. Cradle Bridge Mill.
17. Castle Court Factory.
18. Castle Mills.
19. Town Bridge.
20. Branch of County Library, formerly Presbyterian Chapel.
21. Employment Exch., formerly Trinity Girls' School.
22. George Hotel.
23. Post Office.
24. Blind House.
25. Former Bethesda Chap. (now part of Home Mills).

Left: Map of Trow Bridge showing Mills.
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>

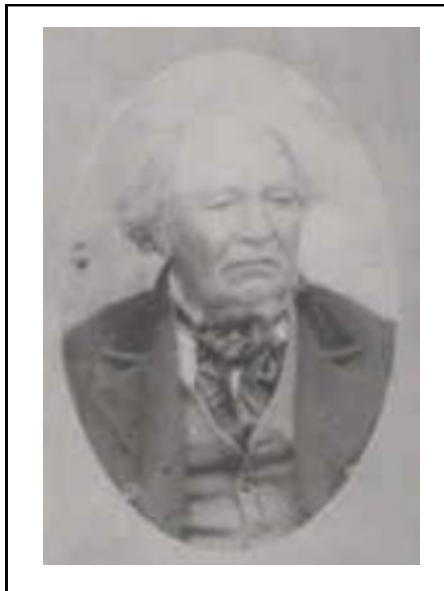
Hilperton Road middle left edge.

SILVER Mills below No. 20 - John Kemp (& Hewitt) owner

INNOX Mills left of No. 24 - John Kemp (& Hewitt) owner

Around 1815 a new road, the present Mortimer Street, Trowbridge was created with two-storey houses, especially for the factory workers. Until 1850, when a stone road bridge was built, the route between the houses and the factories was a wooden footbridge - Cradle Bridge - across the river. The building of the powered factories created a demand for a large labour-force, which meant that many people migrated to the town from the surrounding area. Between 1801 and 1821 the population increased from 5,799 to 9,545, when it was the 80th largest town in England. Wikipedea.

Generations of Rich and Oram families were involved in the textile manufacturing industry from a young age. Many people became ill with respiratory and lung conditions caused by breathing in the fibre dust. The majority of employees were women and children who worked around 12 to 14 hours a day. Tami Metcalfe's Great, great grandfather was John Kemp and he and two of his sons bought Innox and Silver Woollen manufacturing Mills and also had a Dying factory in Trowbridge. Mills gave women the opportunity of employment.



Left: Mill owner Mr. John Kemp Senior born 1813.

Courtesy of the Kemp family.

Tami Metcalfe's great, great, great grandfather.

About 1865 John Kemp a wool dyer, born 1813, moved from Somerset to Trowbridge and with two of his older sons, Edward Denning Kemp, born in 1838, and John Denning Kemp Jr. born in 1843. With investment from their father they formed a partnership with a clothier called Hewitt in Trowbridge, about took the town from a woollen weaving cottage industry to steam driven commercial enterprise. On one occasion in 1878 they exhibited Meltons (a densely woven, felted and brushed fabric) twilled, ribbed, and fancy coatings; beavers. John Wesley preached in the town many times and a chapel, now part of Messrs. KEMP & Hewitt's cloth factory beside the Town Bridge, was erected and opened in 1890.

By 1891 there were about six firms in the town, employing 1,200 persons, mainly manufacturing heavy coatings. The Kemp and Hewitt factories became renown for their fine pin striped trousering and woollen fine suit cloth. The industry was described as flourishing with a good export market. The SILVER Street factory was taken over by the brothers KEMP. In 1950 the factory was still in 1950 occupied by the firm of KEMP & Hewitt with the mill in the INNOX, then in process of rebuilding.

Which one of these factories did Keren Oram (Rich) of Hilperton Marsh, work in as a supervisor? Keren Oram lived very close to St. Mary Magdalene Church at Hilperton Marsh, where Mr John Kemp Jr. and family attended. He donated the Pulpit and a church bell was donated by the local people in memory of the work of Mr. and Mrs. John Kemp. She was also the local midwife and well known in the community.



St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church, Hilperton Marsh.
By Philip Hind.

John Kemp of the Laurels, Victoria Road, donated the carved oak pulpit in 1894.
The new building was opened on 5th October 1889.

Originally, there were no seats, and the congregation had to stand for services. John Kemp Jr. died on holiday to visit family in Victoria Australia, his ashes were interred in St. Mary's Church where his wife Edith was buried 9 years later. The community and Mill workers donated £60 towards a church bell in their memory.

In 1874 when a return of the 'Greater Land Holders of England' was made by authority, two John Kemps, of Trowbridge, had freehold in the county. These are distinguished as 'senior' and 'junior,' and the value of their freehold was then estimated at nearly £700 per annum. The present John Kemp (Jr), of Trowbridge, is senior partner in the firm of Kemp and Hewitt, cloth manufacturers.

It was the practice of Messrs Kemp and Hewitt to treat their staff and families to an enjoyable day out each year. On 3rd September 1887 their more than 200 employees and their families spent the afternoon until dusk at Laurel Villa, the residence of Mr. John Kemp, Jr. dancing, playing cricket, quoits dancing and various other games, while the firm's brass band rendered a capital selection of music. The brass band was formed from amongst the firm's employees and played at many local public events. The extensive gardens and conservatory were thrown open to visitors. They also organised an annual day out to the seaside by special train, lavishly decorated for the occasion was an outstanding event of the summer and donkey races a highlight! One night three donkeys were stolen from their factory! The culprits were caught. The Kemps were a Christian family and there was a strong community spirit amongst their workers and they impacted the lives of many in Trowbridge for the better.

In the 1891 Census, Keren's mother in law, Elizabeth Beverstock was a cloth worker (feeder). Her sister, Mary Beverstock was cook for John Kemp Jr.s' brother Edward, his wife Alice Denning Kemp and their four adult children for over 10 years and the Oram's lived close to the Innox Mill. When Keren Oram immigrated to New Zealand the Mill owner gave her a gift of half a crown, which would be very much in the nature of John Kemp. We can't say it was him for certain, of course.



Laurel Villa, Victoria Rd Trowbridge.

John Kemp Jr. died on holiday while he was visiting family in Victoria Australia, but his ashes were interred in St Mary's Church cemetery in Hilperton. His wife died 9 years later. Her loyal Chauffer attended her funeral. J. D. Todd had been a benefactor of his Will and continued to chauffer Mrs. Kemp until her death.

THE LATE MR JOHN KEMP (Junior)
of The Laurels, 12 Victoria Road Trowbridge,
principal partner of Messrs. Kemp and Hewitt, Ltd., Woollen Manufacturers, Innox and
Silver Street Mills, who died December 28th 1923, aged 82 years.
He left property of the value of £38,802 2/8d. with net personal wealth of £32,296 7s.

The testator left £200 to the British and Foreign Bible Society.
£200 to the Church Missionary Society.
£100 to the Religious Tract Society
£100 to the Trowbridge Cottage Hospital
\$100 to the Salvation Army
£100 to Barnardos Homes
Annuity of £52 to his Cook/Housekeeper Eliza Fox
£250 to his Chauffeur (J.D. Todd)
£100 to Dunn, gardener
£50 to each of his household servants.



Early Motor Vehicle Registration in Wiltshire 1903-1914. By Ian Hicks:
John Kemp Junior's Car Registration: AM-1028 15 May 1907, The Laurels, Trowbridge.
30 horsepower Beeston Humber, touring body, with head Olive; about 1 ton. Private.
* This is the same model car but not Mr. Kemp's actual car.



Innox Mills Trowbridge.
Courtesy of Innox Mills Ltd.

Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser
- Saturday 10 July 1880

GRATIFYING PRESENTATION:-

Upon the return of Mr. & Mrs. Kemp jun. on Monday from their wedding tour, they found awaiting them a handsome present, subscribed for by the employees of Messrs. Hewitt and Kemp, Innox Mill. The present consisted of a dozen plated dessert knives and forks with mother of pearl handle, contained in a case bearing a suitable inscription, a pair of antique brass candle sticks, and an inkstand of similar material. The articles were accompanied by an illuminated address, in which the employees tendered their hearty congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Kemp on their marriage, and wished them in the future, every happiness. The address was signed by about 10 of the foremen of the different departments. The presentation speaks well of the good feeling existing between the masters and workmen at the Innox Mill.

When John Metcalfe was telling me his family history he was unsure if Keren Oram worked in a woollen mill, or cotton mill, but after extensive research I have concluded there were no cotton mills in Trowbridge and all census records of the family's employment show they worked in the woollen industry.

James Oram born 1808 in Trowbridge was a wool spinner and married Elizabeth Blake who was born in Hilperton. They probably worked in their cottage. One of their sons John born in 1826 was your ancestor. Like the Rich family, the Oram family were all involved in the weaving industry.

John Oram, born 1826, was a Hawker (travelling salesman) probably selling the woollen products for the Woollen Mill to shops and markets. His wife Elizabeth (Beverstock) was a Cloth Feeder, feeding textiles through finishing machines, straightening the cloth and positioning the truck of cloth as it enters the machine or feeding it onto brackets to form a bolt. The couple probably met at the woollen mill. The mills gave women the opportunity to work. The children all went home for their midday meal.