

Joseph Livesey
1794-1884
Lancashire, England

File Livesey

JOSEPH WILLIAM LIVESEY – Ref Internet text, the Poor People's Friend.

Joseph Livesey, born in Walton-le-Dale, just to the south of Preston, in 1794 and named after his paternal grandfather Joseph and his maternal grandfather William. Joseph had one brother named William who died in infancy. He had no sisters. Following the death of his parents, John and Jennet Livesey in 1810 from consumption, the family's cotton business was taken on by his grandfather and his uncle Thomas but eventually failed. Joseph, who was orphaned at the age of seven, was brought up by his grandparents and his uncle Thomas who, were, by all accounts a poor family. Joseph followed his grandfather's trade as hand loom weaver. By the age of twenty one Joseph was winding bobbins and eventually became a hand loom weaver. In May 1815 Joseph Livesey married Miss Jane Williams in Liverpool, they rented a cottage in the village of Walton-le-Dale. They had 13 children of which 4 died in infancy. Joseph and Jane were married for 53 years until Jane died in 1868 at the age of 75.

He moved from being a weaver to cheese factor when he purchased two cheeses from a farmer and sold them in portions from a stall in the market. By the 1820's he was printing pamphlets, handbills, and major temperance journals. In 1884 he established the Preston Guardian, the forerunner of the present Lancashire Evening Post.

In 1816 Joseph moved to Preston where he became a celebrated temperance reformer and advocated abstinence from alcoholic drinks. He visited the poor not only in Preston but in the surrounding villages, where he observed that much of the squalor and distress experienced by the poor stemmed from alcohol abuse. In 1832 he set up Temperance Societies which rapidly extended to the rest of the UK and throughout America.

Joseph Livesey died at the age of ninety in 1884 leaving an estate valued at £21,500.

This is a contemporary account of Joseph's funeral:-

About 10,000 people lined the streets to pay their last respects. Flags were flown at half mast from public buildings. Blinds were drawn at almost every house from 13 Bank Parade in Avenham to the Cemetery. Seventeen carriages, including that of the Mayor, followed the hearse. 400 men walked behind.

Magistrates, ministers of all creed, politicians of all opinions, the rich and poor from all parts of the country, gathered in reverent sorrow around his grave, feeling that a ruler, a prince, and a great man had fallen.

WILLIAM & JOHN LIVESEY – Ref "From youth to old age"

2 of Joseph's sons – William and John joined their father in the family business running the Preston Guardian.

JAMES LIVESEY – Ref “From youth to old age”, ImechE catalogue listing.

James was born in 1831 and entered the world of engineering at a very early age when he was taken to see a large cotton mill, his particular interest being the giant steam engine that drove the mill's machinery. He attended school in Preston and by the age of 10 he had become a proficient draughtsman.

At the age of fifteen he started work in the railway workshops of the Caledonian Railway at Glasgow where he was under the care of Mr. Isaac Dodds, one of Stephenson's engineers. He remained at these works for two years, and to get a more varied experience he started a four year apprenticeship at Musgrave & Sons at Bolton. He gained experience in many departments including, the pattern, finishing and erecting shops, also in the boiler shop, the foundry and the smithy shop. All this experience gave him a sound base for his engineering career ahead.

One of the problems being experienced by his father's newspaper was the hand folding of the papers, so James was asked if he could design a folding machine. He was by then in his mid twenties and produced the folding machine which was installed in his father's printing works. This was followed by a second order, which was from the Manchester Guardian. A third machine was produced and exhibited at the Grand Exhibition at Hyde Park in 1851 in connection with the illustrated London News. The folding machine became widely known throughout the newspaper industry all over the country and was a lucrative venture which was to continue.

James's years of training ended at the railway works of Beyer & Peacock in Manchester, who sent him to Belgium to erect and commission two railway engines purchased by the Belgians.

After leaving Beyer & Peacock he was employed by an M Mould who had a contract for a section of the Caledonian Railway and also a contract for the Santander and Altar Railway in Spain, where he was appointed Chief Mechanical Engineer for the construction of the railway. Once the line was completed and the Spanish railway engineers took over, James returned to England to get married to Sarah Whittle in 1858. Two or three days after the ceremony, he received a telegram from Spain to say that the railways Chief Engineer had been killed, and would he please accept the post and return to Spain as soon as possible. He returned with his wife and set up house. His first project for the Railway Company was to adapt an old tobacco factory to build carriages and locomotives. The works had four rail lines for assembly work and a start was made to train local workers.

Whilst in Spain, his first son was born. His full name was Fernando Harry Whitehead Livesey. Because he was born on St Fernando's day the Spanish workers asked for him to be named Fernando, by he was always known as Harry.

After two years in Spain, James and his wife returned to England. Whilst he had been in Spain his folding machine sales had prospered and he made the decision to move the manufacture from an outside contractor and set up his own factory.

James was sent for by Mr. W. H. Smith, the publisher and newspaper agent who gave him an order to furnish a very large room with seven or eight folding machines and a steam engine to drive them. The order included a steam engine and boiler. He was not satisfied with either the engines or boilers then available so he designed his own improved machines.

He also set up business in Manchester as "James Livesey, Engineer and General Agent". As yet he had no agency, this, however, was soon rectified when he obtained the agency from 'The Imperial Tube Company' in Manchester. The agency progressed well and with outside encouragement James set up a London office, and through contacts that he made his business designed a cast iron rail sleeper, which after a series of tests proved so successful that he was given an order for nine thousand tons, this was by no means the last. James continued experimenting and testing tracks and sleepers, gradually refining his design until he achieved the results that he required.

Among the people to whom James was introduced was a Mr. Barker, the Secretary of the Great Southern Railway of Buenos Aires and he was eventually appointed Consulting Engineer to the Railway, at this time only seventy miles long but was to extend to three thousand miles. At about this time the railway expressed interest in changing the current iron rails for steel rails. After an extensive costing exercise, whilst the steel rails were about three times the cost of the iron version, due to the extended life of the steel rails, they were adopted.

At about this time James met Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who was interested in steel manufacture at his works in Pittsburg, which resulted in close cooperation between the two in both the production of steel and the building of railways over a period of many years.

James Livesey sent a copy of the report on the steel rails to Mr. Fleming who was the Canadian Government railway engineer. This resulted in considerable work for James who assisted in the construction of new lines and many extensions to existing lines. Mr. Fleming suggested that James should carry out wide ranging visits to the principal rail companies in the United States and take note of their best features. This tour was made possible with letters of introduction from Andrew Carnegie and Mr. Fleming, and provided James with a huge amount of information which was to prove invaluable for his future work in railway construction.

His next major project was away from railways. James received instructions from Mr. Thomas of Buenos Aires, to design a very large grain elevator and storage to have a capacity of 2000 tons of grain. The silos were to be 40 feet high and 10 feet in diameter. Using James's own words, he described the project as "an altogether interesting and instructive piece of work and in practice gave great satisfaction".

Soon James was back with railways and was appointed to build the Brazilian rail system. This was the first of many appointments which included not just the tracks but the design of locomotives and rolling stock. The work continued in Brazil and spread to Venezuela, Peru and Chile.

The high spot of James Livesey's work in South America was the planning and construction of a railway running from Buenos Aires on the Atlantic coast to Valparaiso on the Pacific coast. The major obstacle was the crossing of the Andes, where the line passed through a tunnel at an altitude of 10,000 feet. This was a project that had defeated many companies prior to this successful venture.

James and his wife had a second child in 1862. He was named Frederick William and in 1898 he was married to Nadine Baird. (Ref: for further details, see the Baird file – Nadine Baird).

At about this time James became very concerned with the high level of disease and subsequent deaths in London. In 1875, James wrote in the Engineering newspaper, the theme of which was "Relating to the sanitary conditions of our houses in relation to the preservation of health, and the individual comfort and well-being of the community". This related to the supply of water and the disposal of sewage. The Times newspaper and others drew the situation to the public attention, and by the time James's recommendations had become standard for all household sanitation, the death rate had been reduced to 30%.

It was not long before James was called in to assist with a railway problem, this time in Costa Rica where the Company was in serious financial trouble with the existing line and their plans for expansion, all of which were sure to gross under estimating of costs and engineering difficulties, all of which James managed to solve.

The level of railway work reached a volume that made it necessary to form a separate company with his son Harry and a Mr. Henderson joining as partners. This left James with time to attend to other projects.

A very major project was the result of Mr. Carnegie recommending that a Mr. Wright, who was the owner of a large iron works in Pennsylvania who wished to go into steel production, should approach James Livesey with a view for him to design and build a new works as an extension to his existing iron works for the production of steel products. Following a tour of the main steel producers in England, and lengthy discussions, Mr. Wright placed the business for the design and supply for all of the machinery and the factory layout with James.

Soon the call of the railways had James back in Spain with the expansion of the West Galician Railway. It was soon realized that this system needed to be linked to the other Spanish railways. For this purpose a company was formed.

The last information that we have was that James formed a limited company for the mining of iron ore called the Triano Ore Company.

James Livesey was 94 years old when he died in 1925.

Sir HARRY LIVESEY K.B.E. & C.B.E.

Harry was born in 1860, whilst his father was working in northern Spain.

In 1886, he joined his father in his railway business and in 1894 Mr. Henderson joined James and Harry, where together they formed another company Livesey Son and Henderson, the well known engineers and contractors, who constructed railways and other public works in many parts of the world.

During the First World War, Harry was appointed Deputy Director of Waterways and Docks, and to a senior position at the Admiralty. In 1918, he was knighted for services to the public. This was followed in 1920 when he was created C.B.E. After James's retirement in 1932, the company was known as Livesey Henderson.

Harry never married and died at age 72.

FREDERICK WILLIAM LIVESEY

William married into the Baird Family when he married Nadine Baird in 1898 at the age of 36. They had two daughters and three sons.

ZOE LIVESEY

Was born in 1900 and in 1932 married Claud Wilkin, there were no children from this marriage. In the 30's, she followed her interest of power boat racing at Poole in Dorset. During World War II, Zoe served in the Fire Service as a driver and attended major fires resulting from air raids on London and many other cities including Southampton. Claud served in the Royal Air Force where he was commissioned and was engaged in ground duties with the barrage balloon defense of London.

JAMES WILLIAM LIVESEY

James was born in 1902; he was married in 1932 to Rita Don and died prematurely in Paris in the mid 1930's.

CHARLES LIVESEY

Born in 1905, Charles trained as an engineer, he married Phayre and they adopted two daughters Xenia and Nadine. During the war, Charles managed a factory manufacturing aircraft components. Two of the items were an exhaust system for night bombers that subdued the engine exhaust flames. The second was the Leigh Light. This was a powerful light mounted under the aircraft used for hunting submarines at night when they would surface to recharge their batteries, and were therefore more vulnerable.

ROBIN LIVESEY

Robin was the youngest in the family born in 1911.

He was training as an engineer at Loughborough College. Having taken part in the Veteran London to Brighton car rally, he was returning and was involved in a fatal car accident in 1932.

DINAH NADINE LIVESEY Ref: the BYRNE file for further details.

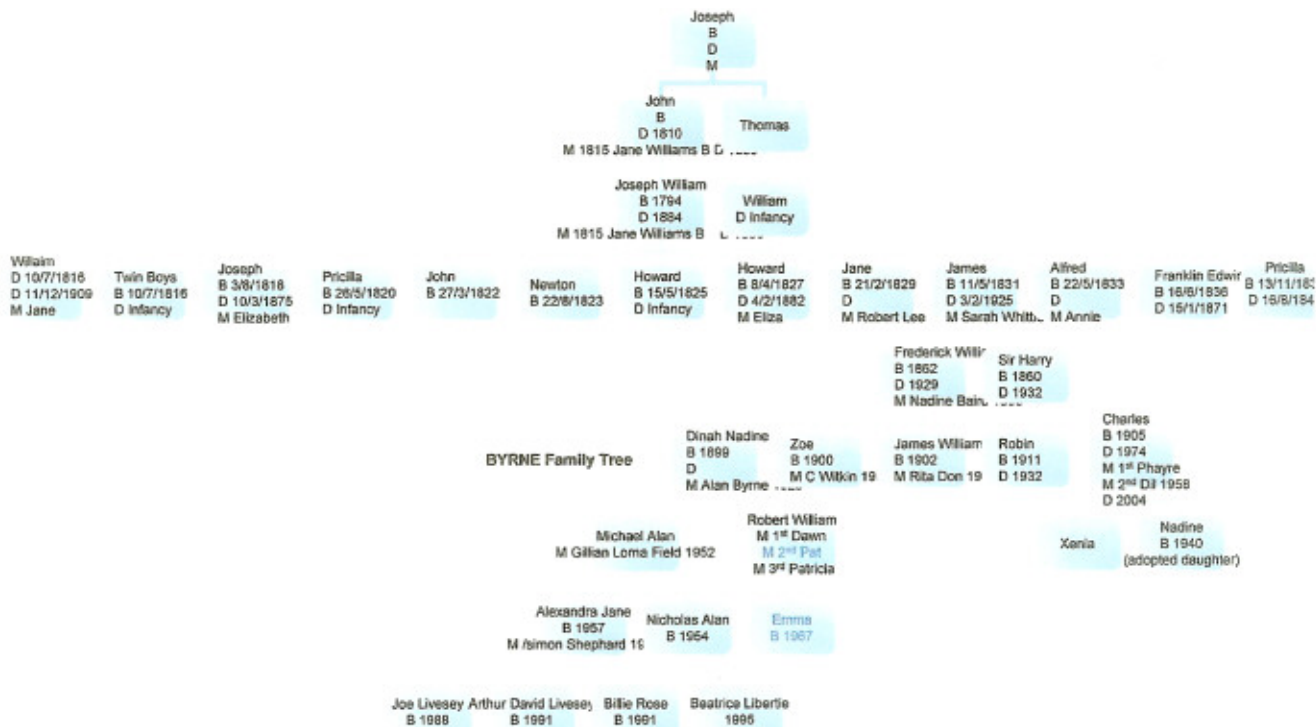
Dinah was born in 1899 and was the eldest member of the family. In 1926, she married Alan Edward Byrne. They had two sons, Michael Alan who born in 1928 and Robert William born in 1934.

Submitted by Michael Byrne, Corneilla de Confluent, a descendant of Joseph Livesey.

If you have additions or corrections to this information or wish to submit your own line of descent from Joseph Livesey of Lancashire, England, please contact:

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Joseph Livesey, Preston, England Founder of the Temperance Movement



Submitted by Michael Alan Byrne, Cornelia de
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