

Harry Bird From 1902

1902

Harry Bird was listed as living at 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road Westminster
He was the proprietor of a Confectioners and Pastry Shop – he was 20 yrs of age



Pastry shop

He had described himself as a publisher of Books on the **1901 Census** whilst he was living with his parents at 18 Esher Street Westminster.

In **1903** he was also registered as **William Bird** proprietor of a Stationers at 133 Praed Street in front of Paddington Station. This is possibly when the name William was first used by him. There were connections with this part of Paddington as Harry's great uncle **Joseph Newton** had been living in Eastbourne Terrace just opposite Praed Street, in his working days he had been a Landscape Gardener and appeared rather affluent. Eastbourne Terrace being described as one of the best streets in the area taking second place only to Westbourne Terrace. Joseph was the brother of Mary Ann Newton, Harry's grandmother. Perhaps the shop was named after another great uncle, William Bird who was a witness at his grandparent's wedding in 1850. Harry's uncle **Joseph Newton Bird** (his father's brother) was obviously named after this great uncle



*Praed Street 1903 showing Harry Bird's shop
Newsagent Stationer & Booksellers*



133 Praed Street today

By **1906** when the first Electoral Roll was published in Westminster there was a George Dunster a **Printers Machine Manager** listed on the premises of 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road together with Harry. George was aged 48 yrs and on the 1901 Census had been living at 74 Enid Street Bermondsey with his widowed father and family. He was there on and off until 1911.

Also registered by 1908 was William Rawlinson aged 50 yrs a **Printer**, he was living at 16 Vincent Square Westminster with his wife Helen on the **1901 Census**. There may have been a printer's workshop or a small publishers attached to 215, more research is needed in this direction. There are stories in the family that he had newspaper kiosks at Victoria & Paddington Stations plus a Herbalist shop. A lot for a chap of 25 the son of a carpenter .



215 Now Demolished

1909 Harry Bird (Stationer) married **Gertrude Mary Goldsmith** of 23 Millbank Street at the Westminster Register Office on 27th July. Gertrude described herself as a **Stationers Assistant** on the **1901 Census**. Her brothers Charles and Tom acquired two shops in Ponsonby Place Westminster numbers 30 and 42, she may have worked in one of these before they became the proprietors around 1922 or at the Praed Street shop. Number 42 was a newsagents and number 30 a tobacconists.

By 1914 the whole of the Goldsmith family had moved to Ponsonby Place, her parents & others at no 69.



30 Ponsonby Place today

Harry & Gertrude gave their residence as 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road on their marriage certificate which was still registered as a Confectioners in the name of Harry Bird. Witnesses to the wedding were Rebecca Bird Harry's mother and Henry Grist. Henry was the same age as Harry he lived in Camberwell and was described as a **Paper Roller** on the Census, which is another indicator that there may have been a connection with printing or newspapers.

Harry Bird was the only person registered on the premises in 1909, no trace of George Dunster or William Rawlinson.



Gertrude as a young lady

Six months after the marriage on 1st February 1910 a baby daughter Thora Gertrude was born. Harry described himself as a Stationer and Newsagent on the certificate. Thora was born at Harry's parents' house 18 Esher Street Westminster.



Corner of Esher St and Vincent St

A second baby was born this time at 215 on 8th October 1911 **Lilian Rebecca**, Harry described himself as a **Master Stationer** on the birth certificate



*Thomas & Rebecca Bird (Harry's parents)
Gertrude Thora & Lilian*

Around this time and certainly before 1912 Harry had met **Dorothy May Powell** formerly **Mazasitisz** with whom he had a relationship until his death in 1950. Family rumour has it that she also worked in one of his shops.



Dorothy Powell Mazasitz

There are no records of a divorce between Harry & Gertrude or a marriage between Harry and Dorothy

When **Gertrude** died on 19th September 1953. Her death certificate states she was the Widow of Harry Bird Hotel Proprietor (retired)

Dorothy died thirty years later on 13th September 1983. The name on her certificate is Dorothy May Powell BIRD, she is described as a Business Proprietress (retired)

Dorothy gave the name **Mzasitz** to five of the children born to her commencing with Norman Edward Alexander on 14th June 1913 at 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road



Norman Edward Alexander Mazasitz

It appears that Harry sent Gertrude, Dorothy and the children away from London to have the next two babies that Dorothy gave birth to. Whilst he remained running his London shops

Florence Gertrude Ellen (Pansy) born 21st July 1914 and then **Ronald Zoemas** 29th August 1916. The two ladies obviously took the other children with them on their travels

Florence was born at 10 Vine Place Brighton one hour away from Victoria on the train. Her birth was registered on the 18th August. World War 1 had broken out on 1st August and Harry had changed his name to **William Wallace** as father on the birth

certificate **Electrical Engineer**. He had been using **William** in his Stationary business since 1903.



Victoria Station

The only **Wallace** ‘connections’ found in the Archives around the time Harry changed his name were:

Wallace News Agency 22 Basinghall St EC (City) *Could have supplied the newspapers*

Wallace Confectioners 368 Harrow Rd (behind Paddington Station and within walking distance of Praed St) *Could have been another shop, it is rumoured he had three*

William Wallace Coffee Rooms 10 New Turn Stile High Holborn *Could have supplied the pastries and cakes*

Harry could have been associated with any of these
No connections with Herbalists found to date



Praed Street and Eastbourne Terrace



*Pansy at 3 months
Photo taken in London*

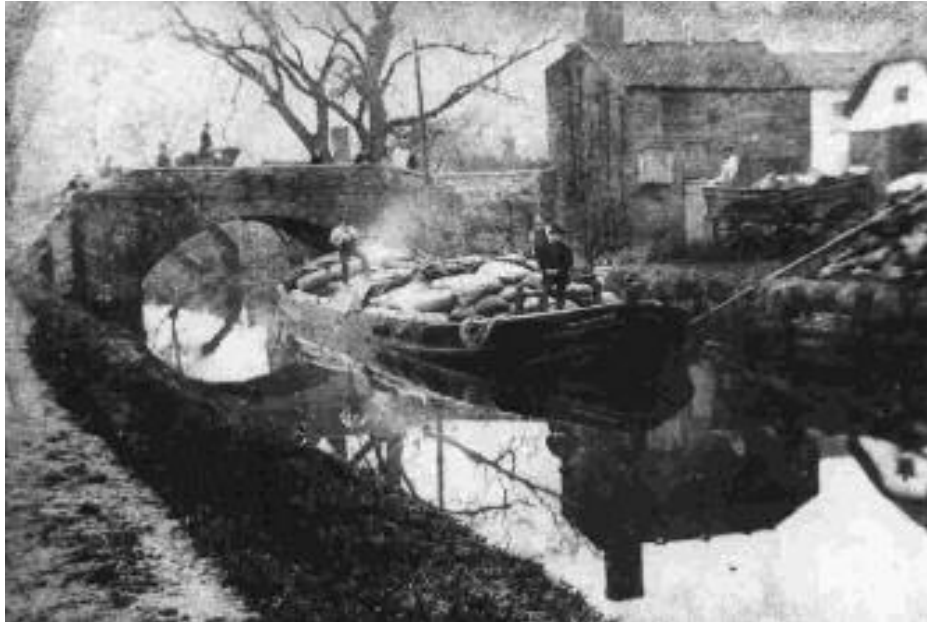
It is reputed that Gertrude delivered all Dorothy's babies
From Pansy's birth Dorothy described herself as Mrs Wallace



*Lilian on Brighton Beach
Possibly at the time of Pansy's birth*

Thomas Bird Harry's father had left Esher Street by the start of the First World War in 1914. He may have returned to Sleaford as he died there on 12th March 1938 at 93 Eastgate. His address was given as 1 Electric Station Road. The informant was his daughter **Jessie Newton Green**.

Electric Station Road backed onto the river Slea.



Behind the Station on the River Slea

Ronald was born on 29th August 1916 at 3 Rose Cottages Station Rd Pinner, North London, again only less than one hour away on the train from Paddington . Harry could have put the family on the Metropolitan Line train almost opposite his shop. His birth wasn't registered until 7th October. Again **William Wallace** as the father this time a **Mechanical Engineer (Munitions)**



Metropolitan Line Station

Through all this **Harry Bird** remained registered as a Confectioners and Pastry shop at 215 VBR until 1916 when conscription came into being. Also at 133 Praed Street until 1919. Booth surveys describe this area as having 'shops of a fair class'. Both businesses had new proprietors by 1919

Members of the Bird family appeared to have been living in Westminster for over fifty years

The area around Vauxhall Bridge Rd was described as mixed and 'shabby' by the Booth surveys. There were a number of shops, restaurants and eating places with drunkenly conduct owned by a large number of Italians. Also a Private Hotel and a quiet parade behind 215 frequented by prostitutes. The Hotel had private rooms and was 'suspicious'. The Peabody Buildings nearby were described as 'gloomy'



Pub opposite 215

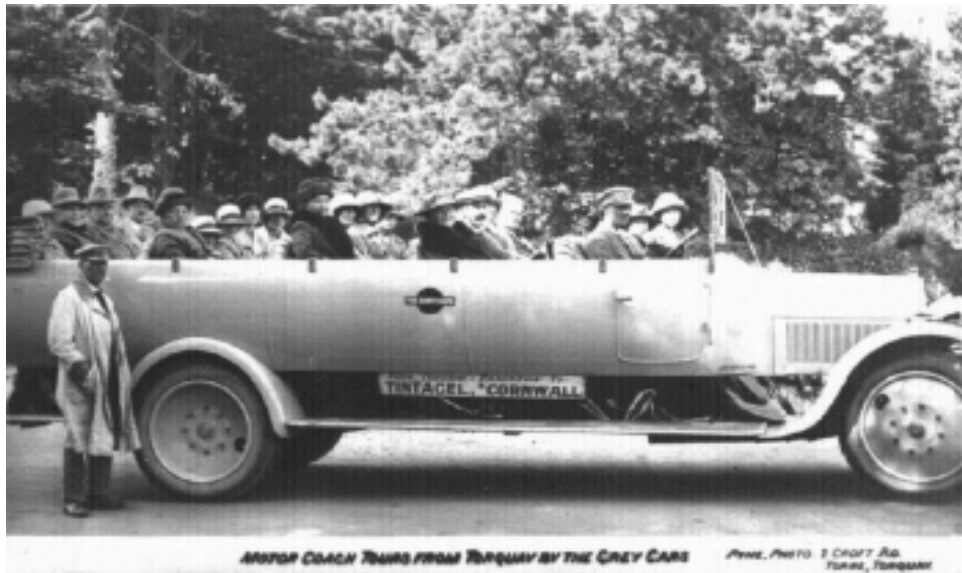
It appears that on or around 1919 the family moved away from London and moved to Southsea where the next baby Rosslyn was born on 16th June. His birth was not registered until 3rd August . Harry again calling himself **William Wallace** an **Electrician**

There were stories of them living on Hayling Island in a railway carriage.

The family moved on again as on 28th September 1919 **Thalia** was born in Cannington near Bridgwater her birth not being registered until 14th November. Father **William Wallace Electrician (journeyman)**

By 1921 the family had settled in Torquay Devon where on 29th March **Dorothy Iris** was born. Her birth was registered on 9th May. This appears to be the last time the Wallace name was used by Harry. Father stated as **Harry Wallace Bird – Conductor on a Motor Bus**. Mother **Dorothy Wallace Bird** formerly **Powell**.

It is said in the family that Harry worked on a motor bus taking holiday makers to and from the station to Hotels and Guest Houses in Torquay ,also on trips along the coast.



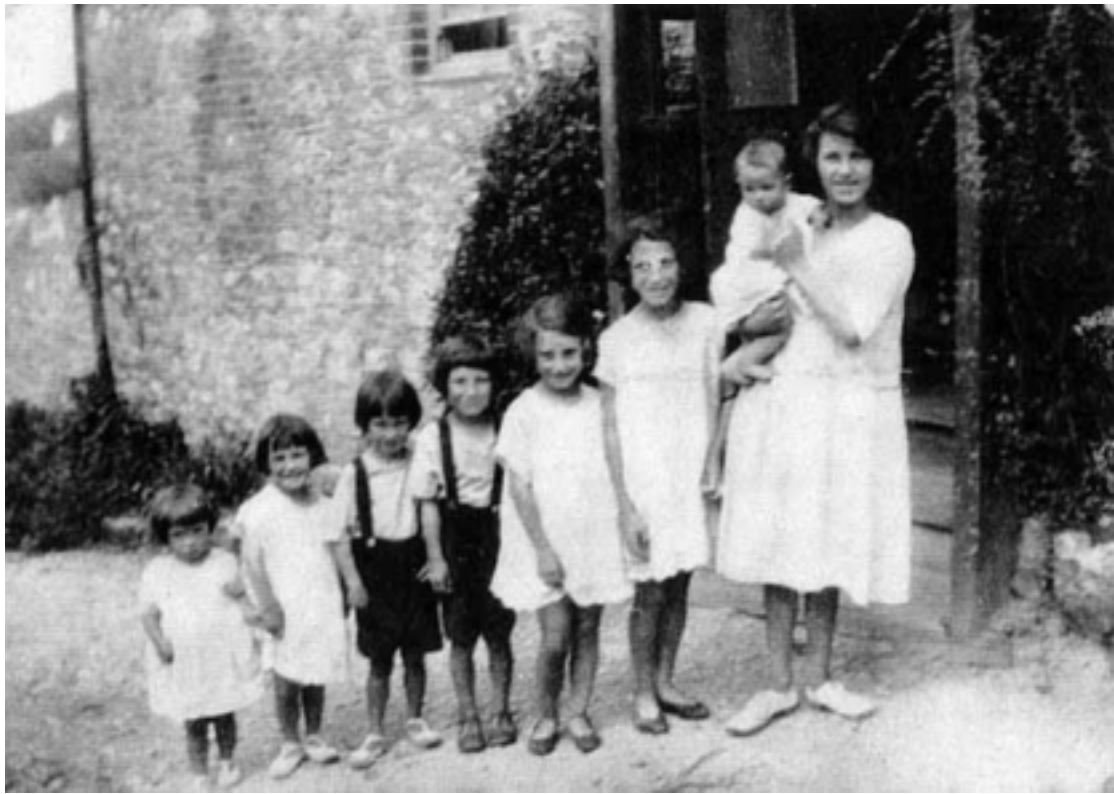
Coach Tours c 1920



Dorothy Iris

On 30th November 1923 the last baby girl was born. On the certificate father **Harry Bird** Booking Clerk at Motor Garage. Mother **Dorothy May Bird formerly Wallace**

The two ladies Gertrude and Dorothy had nine children between them. All fathered by Harry Bird under one name or another



Everyone except Norman

Harry Bird was a Vegetarian Herbalist Spiritualist Socialist and Theosophist. It is unsure whether he influenced his family with these beliefs or they stemmed from his wife Gertrude. The Hotels and Guest Houses he owned offered Vegetarian Cuisine which was most unusual in those days.

Vegetarianism continues in some branches of the family today and all of Harry's grandchildren who lived in and around Torquay attended Knowles Hill School



Knowles Hill School

Harry continued to buy and sell properties and businesses during his time in Torquay. Mainly Hotels Guesthouses and large houses with rented rooms. His last business being a Bakers and Confectioners specialising in Wholemeal bread and delicious cakes and pastries - turning full circle. But during his working life he was also the Cashier at the local Torquay newspaper for many years.



The Bakery Kingskerswell



Speciality Breads

Harry died on 14th August 1950 at Little Meadow Widecombe- in - the -Moor Devon he was 68 yrs of age. He was described as 'a hotelier retired' on the certificate He was preparing to go on holiday with Dorothy to visit his daughter Pansy and his two grandchildren Janice & Alastair.

His wife **Gertrude** was living with Lilian Childs and family in Torquay
She died on 19th September 1953

Dorothy lived on another 30 years until 13th September 1983

