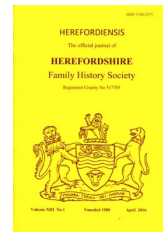


The Tailor Who Changed His Name

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This article was first published in *Herefordiensis*, Vol. XIII, No 7, p 222 (Oct 2017)

Many of us struggle to find individuals in censuses and other documents when you know they should be there. One strategy I use frequently is doing a census search just using first name, birth date and place. In my case, this often throws up examples of bad transcriptions such as Skyome, Skynne and Shyrme.

Things get more complicated when people change their names. This is often when a middle name is used as a first name or a nickname is used. It also happens with male's surnames. This is generally when a boy's mother marries again, or marries for the first time when the boy is born out of wedlock, or when he is adopted by another family. But in one case a grown man could not decide whether he was Arthur Skyrme or Arthur Williams. I had an Arthur Edwin Skyrme in my database, noted as aged 11 in 1851 and 40 in 1881, but whom I couldn't find in the 1861 or 1871 censuses. It was a correspondent who alerted me to the fact that he appeared in these censuses as Arthur Williams. So we have

- 1851 Arthur Skyrme - Widemarsh Street, Hereford. Listed as son of James and Jane - though the entry is unclear, daughter Agnes (who did not exist) crossed out (see image)
- 1861 Arthur Williams - 36 Widemarsh Street, Hereford. Listed as nephew of James and Jane
- 1871 Arthur Williams - Blackmarstone, Hereford. Married to Annie with four Williams children
- 1881 Arthur Skyrme - St Martin's Street, Hereford. Now with six children, all named Skyrme.

James Skyrme	39	M	Tailor - Master
Jane	30	F	Labourer
Arthur	11	M	Tailor's Apprentice

The children of Arthur and his wife Annie (née Jauncey) continued to use the name Skyrme (though five of the eight were registered as Williams). They included well known local architect Herbert William Skyrme who restored Hereford's 14th century Booth Hall Inn in 1921.

Arthur was a tailor as was the James Skyrme listed as his father in the 1851 census. His baptism at St Owen Hereford in 1839 lists his mother as Mary Williams. No father's name was given.

Now it happens that James Skyrme was married to Mary's sister Jane. So we could square the circle that Arthur was indeed both the son and nephew of James if he was the result of a liaison between James and Mary. Or it could be, that his father was someone else, and that James and Jane 'adopted' him by taking him under their wing as a favour to Jane's sister Mary. DNA tests of the true Skyrmes and Williams/Skyrmes may resolve this conundrum.