

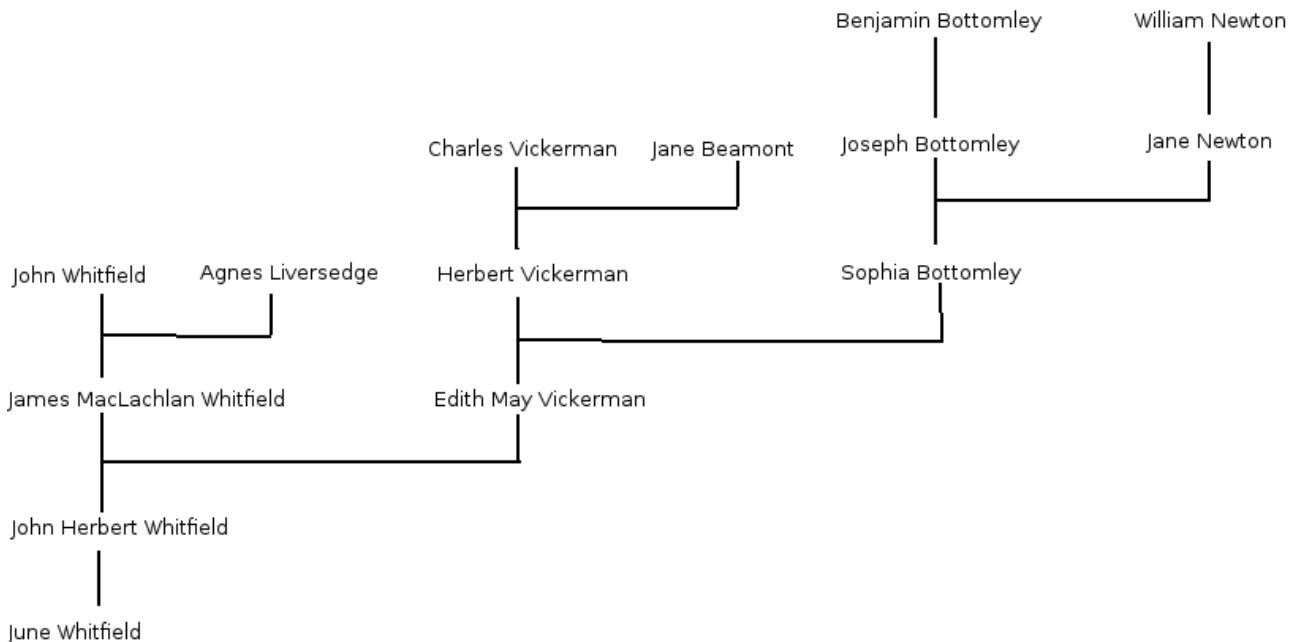
June Whitfield's Holmfirth Ancestry

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The late [June Whitfield](#) may well have been the only regular member of the Last of the Summer Wine cast to have had a family link to Holmfirth.

It's widely known that she was related to the Whitfields who owned the eponymous piano dealing business at the top of Ramsden St in Huddersfield. This business was founded by John Whitfield, a Scottish draper who settled in Huddersfield and married an Agnes Liversedge in Huddersfield in the first quarter of 1865. I haven't traced Agnes's ancestry but Liversedge is a West Riding name so she was likely to have been relatively local in origin and was described as being from Huddersfield in the census returns. John's occupation was a draper in the 1881 census but a piano dealer in 1891.

One of John and Agnes's children was James McLachlan Whitfield who was June's grandfather. He married Edith May Vickerman in Leeds in the third quarter of 1893 and their son John Herbert Whitfield was born the second quarter of the next year in Huddersfield. John Herbert's Christian names were evidently inherited from his grandfathers as Edith May was the daughter of Herbert Vickerman who was a commercial traveller living in Leeds in 1891. Herbert was born in Honley in the first quarter of 1849 to Charles Vickerman and his wife Jane Beaumont.



Herbert Vickerman's wife (and Edith May's mother) was Sophia Bottomley and it's via Sophia that we find the Holmfirth connection. Sophia was one of the later of at least nine children of Joseph Bottomley and his wife Jane Newton. Both came from the Colne Valley but settled in Holmfirth at Bridge Fold which is where the foundry and cricket club are today.

The Bottomleys first came to the Colne Valley in the early 1700s, probably from Scammonden. Joseph was one of the fourth generation, the son of Benjamin Bottomley. He was baptised at Linthwaite on 17 Aug 1801. Several of his siblings and their children were in the plastering trade, often combining this with another trade such as painting or, in one case, being a publican. It's likely

at least his father and possibly others of earlier generations in the trade were also plasterers. Possibly the move to Holmfirth was to avoid competition with the rest of the family.

Jane Newton was probably the child recorded as Jenny at her baptism on 28 Jul 1809. Her father was William Newton who married a Betty Casson at Almondbury on 13 Feb 1804 (Almondbury was the parish church for part of the Colne Valley at that time). I cannot find William's origins. He may have been related to the Newtons of Stagwood Hill and Netherthong but so far no connection has been established. However as the textile business started to develop new families moved into our valleys at this time so it's quite possible he might have come from somewhere else such as Saddleworth or Glossop and had a much more remote connection with the Holmfirth Newtons. The Cassons had also arrived in the area a couple of generations earlier but some of their marital connections were with older families from the area including Kaye and Sykes.

Joseph Bottomley and Jane Newton were married at Almondbury on 25 Oct 1827. Their first child, Mary, was born in Slaithwaite in 1829 but the remainder were born in Holmfirth, Sophia in 1847. Joseph founded another dynasty of plasterers extending at least into the C20th. Joseph's extensive family means that there are quite a number of cousins, of some degree, of June Whitfield in the Holmfirth area including myself.

Would June Whitfield have known of this Holmfirth connection? Almost certainly. A story I heard was that she was to have been a subject on *Who do you think you are?* and turned up to a preliminary meeting with a large box of documents. When asked what it was she replied it was her family history. She'd been working on it for years. WDTYA's producers like to surprise their subjects. The project was dropped. A pity as I'd have liked to have seen if they could have got the Newton line back a few more generations.