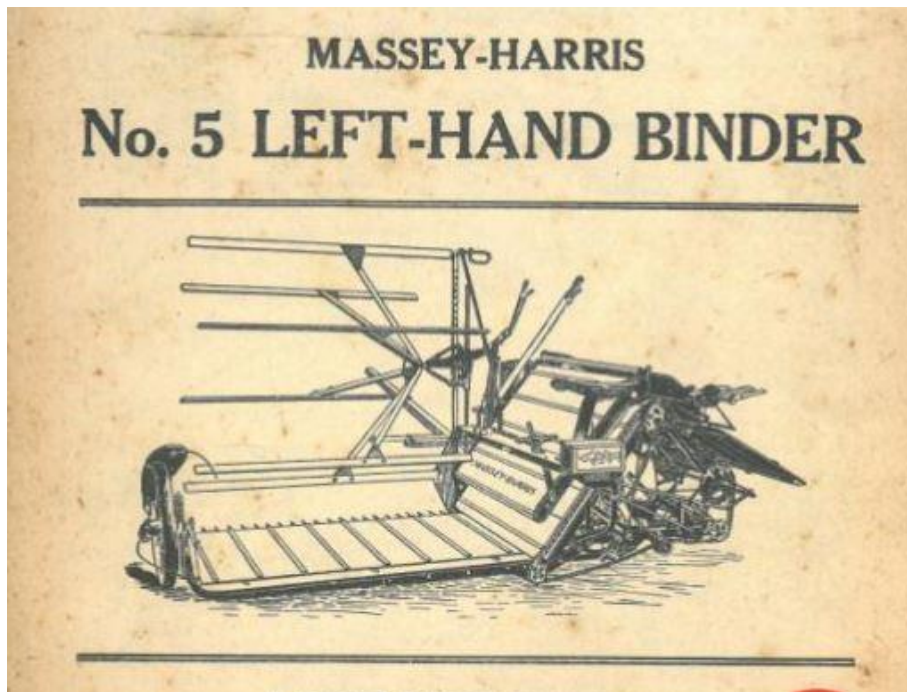


# Charles Dawkins

Born 1870.

Autobiographical life story.

Available online at [www.livesretold.co.uk](http://www.livesretold.co.uk)



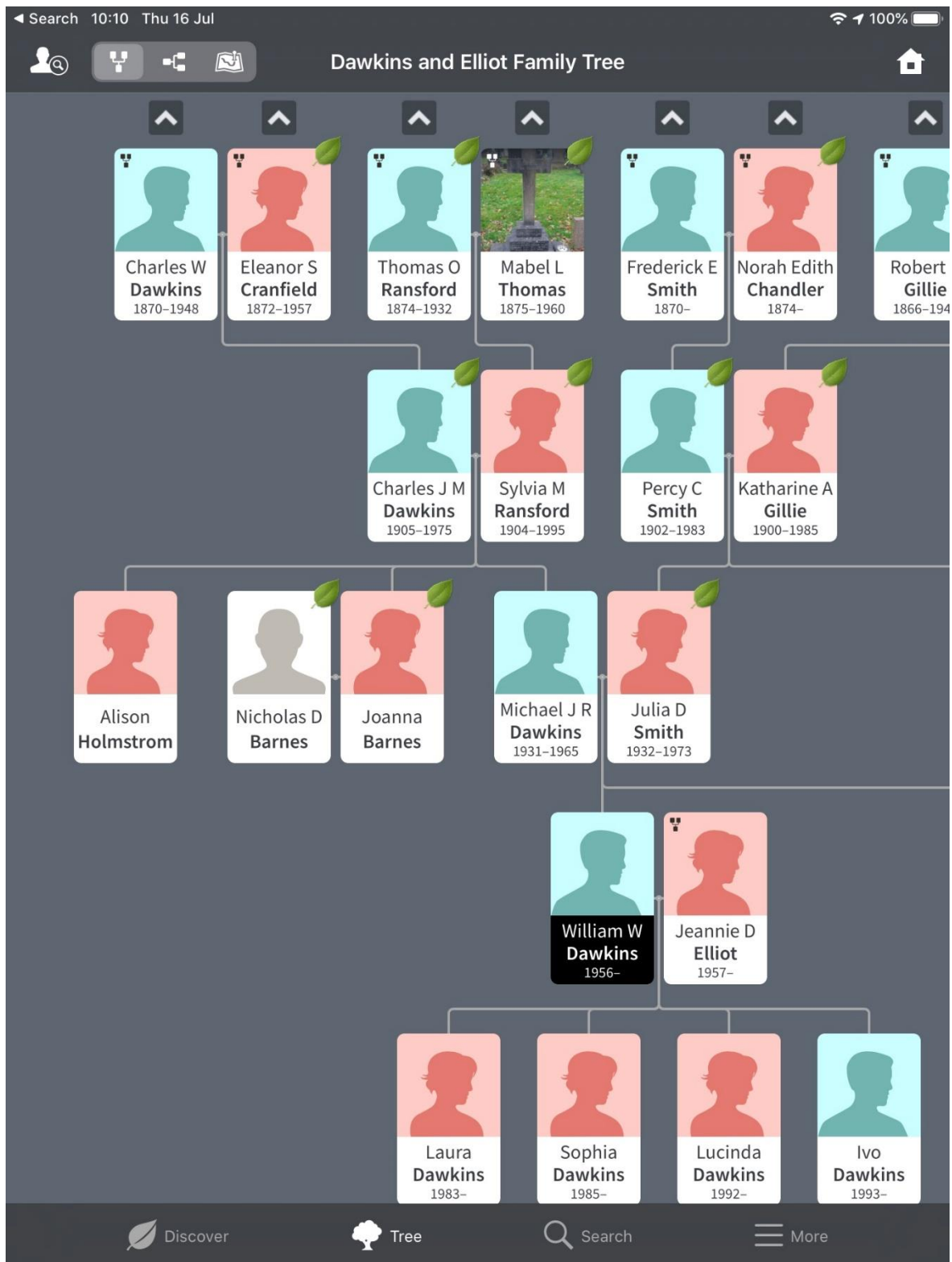
Charles Dawkins left school at 12, joined the Massey Harris Company (later to become Massey Ferguson) in 1886 at the age of 16. He rose to lead its operations in Europe for 20 years.

## Contents

1. Ancestors
2. A Wayward Father
3. My Mother and her 12 Siblings
4. My Brothers and Sister
5. Myself
6. A Distinguished Son

*This life story was contributed to the Lives Retold website by William Dawkins, great grandson of Charles William Dawkins.*

*This extract from the Dawkins family tree shows the connections between Charles Dawkins and his great grandson William Dawkins, who contributed this life story to the Lives Retold website.*



# 1. Ancestors

*For the information of my son Jack (Charles John Massey Dawkins):*

My grandfather – where born, maiden name of whom married, where married, I do not know. His name was Frederick. What brothers or sisters I am not sure, but I have an impression I was once told there were two, a Herbert and a William. I also believe his father lived at Stapleford Abbots in Essex, but although I have been there I never had the curiosity to inspect the local churchyard. I contented myself with looking at the village stocks, and visualising my ancestors getting what was due to them. My great grandfather was a farmer or farm worker.



Map of Stapleford Abbots in 1874.

When I knew my grandfather, he lived at Rose Cottage, Summerhill Road, Tottenham, where he kept a newsagent shop, and did boot repairs. My grandmother died when 36, and was buried in a graveyard attached to a Wesleyan Chapel opposite Bruce Grove Station, but that Chapel and graveyard were demolished, and an ironmongers (Wilson's) took their place. Where the remains from the graveyard were removed to I do not know.

But previous to Tottenham, he must have lived at Romford, for my father is said to have been born there on December 9<sup>th</sup> either 1836 or 1837. And he must have been passably comfortable financially, for my father had an education much above the average of those days for the lower middle classes. He was probably in trade as a boot-maker. Where my grandfather was buried I am not sure, but I think the Tottenham Cemetery. He was 77 when he died.

He had two sons, William and Samuel, and a daughter Hetty by his first wife. And a daughter Mary Jane by his second. William was my father. Samuel lived to be over 80, having two daughters. Hetty married a man named Hardy. Mary Jane died a spinster.

I spent three years of my childhood with my grandfather, young as I was, in the newspaper end of the shop. All I can remember of him was – very religious, and music daft. He was for ever scraping hymns on his cello. He certainly had no musical talent. His daughter, Mary Jane, earned a bare living as a music teacher.

Samuel's daughters were Bessie and Annie. Bessie married a man Hammet, died young, leaving one son named Sydney. I have lost all trace of Hammet. Annie married a man named Young, and had six sons and a daughter. She is I believe still living but where I don't know.

Hetty Hardy and one daughter, Hetty Harriet. That daughter married a man by name Whatley, still lives, is well to do, has two sons and a daughter. My sister Janie keeps in touch with her.

But all the foregoing are very distant relatives, and you are never likely to come in touch with them.

---

## 2. A Wayward Father

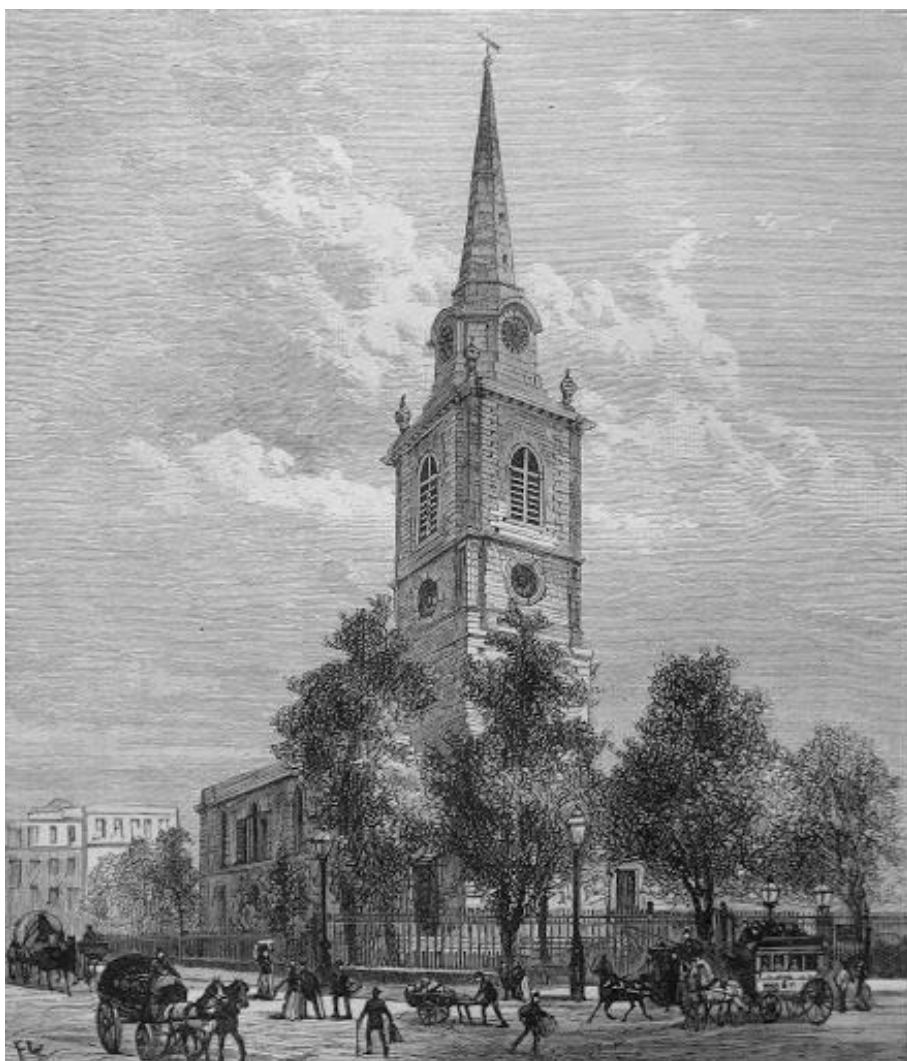
My father – William by name, no second Christian name. The best I can say of him is that he had magnificent constitution, never ailing, and never needed medical help till he was struck down by apoplexy when 72. He is buried somewhere in Bournemouth, as he was on holiday there when struck down. He was of imposing presence, spoke well, and his handwriting and letters shewed he was well educated. He tried to live above his station, keeping pace with his fellow Freemasons, and meddling with politics.

He had a Post Office job in charge of a letter sorting gang, but he drank, and after several warnings was dismissed. From then on, he lost grip, and my mother had to be the family earner and manager. She borrowed money from her sisters and ran a succession of stationer's shops. And, despite the impracticable habits of my father (twice leading to financial collapse, including the selling up of my mother's shop so she had to start again from nothing) she stood by him to the end. But when my elder brother and I were old enough to tackle him, he mended his ways materially.

About that time, my mother opened a laundry, and we helped with boot repairing. That laundry was such a success that my mother was able to retire, leaving my sister in charge. Later it had to be sold so Janie could nurse my mother in her last years. My brother Fred and I made allowance for the keep of my father, from the time we brought him to reasonable ways. I have rather understated the burden on my mother, and her memory is very dear to me for her fortitude and forbearance, all for the sake of her children.

---

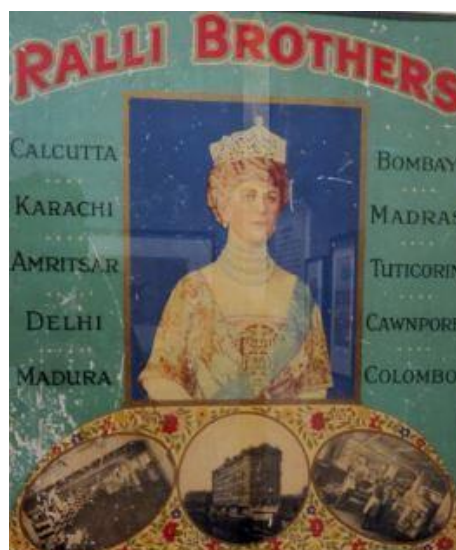
### 3. My Mother and her Twelve Siblings



St. Botolph Parish Church, Aldersgate.

My parents were married at St. Botolph Parish Church, Aldersgate, on 16 June 1866. Regd No 363. Both 29. There were five children, Fred, a sister who died in childhood, myself, Percy, and Janie. My mother was born in Silkstone, Peniston, Yorkshire on Mar 25 1837. Her father was a farmer, George Turner, who had 13 children, of whom I never met but my mother, and her sisters Sarah and Mary. Her mother's maiden name was Harrop. My mother's Christian name was Hannah, but she went through life known as Harriet, because of an aunt Harriet Harrop, who wished that.

My mother and the two sisters I have named when they reached 18 were in turn sent up to London to be trained as lady's maids. As such, my mother had but one post with the Ralli family, very wealthy Greek merchants, with whom she travelled on the



Continent quite a bit. She died when 77, and was buried in the Twickenham Council Cemetery. I would like you to keep her grave up.

As there were 12 brothers and sisters, there must be a very considerable number of cousins whom I have never met, saving one, a Mrs. Osborne. And I know nothing about them, saving the Frosts.

Of the sisters mentioned that I have met, one Sarah married a captain in the merchant service named Northard. He retired from the sea when in the early forties, and took a pub, the 'Red Lion' at Potters Street, Harlow (right). They had no children, she dying at 74 and leaving you incidentally £100.

Mary also married a sea captain by name Frost. She had as children – Ernest, dropped out of sight after a row with his father, Sydney, a marine engineer retired still living (Bristol) with no children, Frank still living with several children two of whom Vera and Alma you have met, Gus died young unmarried, Espercy now dead married to a man Pearse by whom one son, and Richard, a master mariner, married, no children. This sister Mary died in the forties, liver trouble. Your aunt Janie can give information about this tribe of cousins if ever you want.



## 4. My Brothers and Sister

My brothers – The elder, George Frederick, led a very hectic life, sensuality and high living being the predominant notes. He made a foolish marriage, to a widow named Knight who had already had four children. She was many years older than he. He had four children by her, Frederick Clifton who won the M.C. in the last war, but was killed at Passchendaele, Dorothy, Marjorie, and Victor Harrop who lost a leg in the war. Victor now lives at 14b Gore Vale Avenue, Toronto, has a boy and a girl. Frederick Clifton married a Southend bank manager's daughter (I think the name was Cuthbert), had four days of married life only; his widow married again.



Grave of Lieut. Frederick Clifton Dawkins MC, in Twickenham Cemetery. He died at Passchendaele in 1917 at the age of 26.

My brother Fred took but a light view of his marriage responsibilities, had many liaisons and some illegitimate children, and finally separated from his wife. Dorothy, if you wish, can give you her version. Although at one time quite wealthy, he did nothing for his children. He loved to do everything in a big way, swank, show and make believe; be he was able, held a good post, retired from it, became a 'financier', i.e. a stock exchange gambler, made at one time much money, but ultimately came down with a bad crash and died penniless, dependent on Kenneth and Ken's half brother Fragnall.

For many years Fred lived with a Mrs Fragnall, who had been divorced as result of her folly for Fred. She had one legitimate child, and by Fred had Kenneth. She died worth over £7,000, all of which had been given her by Fred. Ken lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the states, having married an American girl, daughter of a wealthy doctor. He is clean cut, intelligent, and will make a fine man. His wife does not know of his history, and mustn't learn it from any of us.



Fred died at 66, pneumonia, but really a used up life. He had been bankrupt, paying less than two shillings in the pound, and that is all I got out of £1,400 I had lent him. But his business ability was remarkable, and but for his high living and utter disregard for the rights of others, could have risen high. Before he retired he was accountant to a big gold and mining concern for the greater part of his life. The Kenneth mentioned is known as Kenneth Dawkins, Fred and the mother having lived as Mr and Mrs Dawkins, and Kenneth so baptised.

The other brother, Percy Herbert, was a simple minded, easy going, unambitious, guileless creature, easily influenced, and quite content with a modest way of life. He fell for a calf love, a married domestic servant, separated from her husband, and Irish girl named Collins. Percy wanted to marry her, not knowing of the woman's marriage, but she insisted on their merely living together as Mr and Mrs Collins. They had several children, of course illegitimate. To get away from her, he joined the Imperial Yeomanry in that name, and was two years in South Africa.



The Imperial Yeomanry was a volunteer mounted force of the British Army that mainly saw action during the Second Boer War.

Percy contributed the legal dues for his children till each became sixteen. Where the woman and the children are I don't know. When he came back from South Africa he married Tessa and had one son who died of diabetes during an influenza attack when about 30. He stuck to the name Collins, and married Tessa in that name, his discharge papers being a handicap to his getting employment in any other. Later, on money I lent him, or rather gave him, he went into business as a coal and fuel dealer, making a bare living. He died of heart failure at 65.

My sister Esmeralda Janie married a Frank Robinson, who died a few years back. No children.

## 5. Myself




Named Charles after the husband of my mother's sister Mary, and William after the husband of her sister Sarah. Born 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1870, and christened at a Church in the Roman Road. Married 30<sup>th</sup> April 1901 at the Snells Park Congregational Church, Tottenham.

From the age of six, in some form or another I was helping to aid the family income, paper delivering, shop attending, and what not. Before I was quite 13, I got a junior clerk's job with a firm Henry Pease. Later I was with a firm Birnbaum, macintosh dealers, and later a firm Crosthwaite, iron founders. That I lost through illness, and on recovery I got a post with the Massey Company. I was then not 17. Mr Fred I Massey had just arrived here to open up the Massey business, and I was his first helper until her resigned. As the business grew, all incomers were under me. I succeeded him in his post in 1906 and held it till 1926, when I retired.

Fred I Massey was one of the purest minded men I have every met. Not religious, far from it, but his moral standard was such that he would have nothing to do with a man who once shewed moral laxity. He influenced my life naturally. Whatever I am morally I owe to him. I named you after him, not he Massey firm. He was an American, not Canadian, and was only a nephew of the then Massey head.

But from my earliest days, I had something of my mother's practical spirit. If I earned five shillings, and that was my first weekly wage, I saved out of it. From then till I retired, I never spent as much as I had earned during the year. Cautious economy, having as incentive the desire to take my leisure and play at the end of my life instead of my boyhood, seeing that my boyhood had neither. It led me, while I still worked by day for the Massey Co., to take evening work with William Gowers, as he then was. Ultimately, when I found the strain of two jobs too much for me, Gowers wanted me to drop business and take up medicine. He offered me a room in his house, time for study and hospital work etc. and £200 p.a. So he must have thought I was worth while helping. Gowers and I corresponded (in shorthand) for many years after. He paid me the highest compliment any man has paid me in saying that I 'Had the faculty of brushing aside non essentials and diving down into the causes of things. Medicine wants men like you'.

**Right for the Job**



*This heavy crop of wheat is easily handled by the Massey-Harris Tractor and 10-foot cut Massey-Harris Power Drive Binder.*

**IN EFFICIENCY and durability Massey-Harris Binders have been paramount for nearly fifty years. Unrivalled for reliability, efficient tying, light draught and long life.**

**No. 6 BINDER for Horses or Tractor Draught**

*Send for literature to-day*

**No. 10 Power Drive Binder**

*Recognised as the Leading Tractor Binder*

Driven direct from the Tractor, this Binder operates at a uniform speed regardless of crop conditions or the ground travel. It has the necessary capacity for the longest straw and, being specially designed for tractor work, will stand up under conditions that would be impossible for the horse-drawn machine converted to tractor use. Has the strongest frame and table, and the most powerful chain drive.

Equally efficient in light or heavy crops

**MASSEY - HARRIS**

associated with BLACKSTONE  
Head Office: Trafford Park, Manchester

---

ALSO AT STAMFORD AND LONDON

The No.6 Binder from the Massey company could be pulled by horses or tractor.

Such schooling as I had was – first, the Wesleyan day school in the old church opposite Bruce Grove; then the Hampden Gurney, a Church of England school off Seymour Place. But I left school at 12. Thereafter till I was 21 or so, I attended evening schools such as the Birkbeck. Nothing specific, but Gowers had told me that wise man learned a little of everything, so that he need never display utter ignorance on any subject.

When I retired, I thought I had secured what I had been aiming for, rest and peace. I had over £25,000 put by, and pension of \$3,000 p.a. But I had not expected the financial collapse, which caused over half of my capital to disappear, and my pension to be cut to \$1,200. However, I have kept my health fairly well; better than I might have hoped for after so strenuous a life. I have managed since, but it has not

enabled me to get all I had wanted out of life, and I shall not be able to do what I had hoped for you when I pass out; but you can't complain if you measure up to what has been spent on your education and subsequent assistance. There are a good many things I would have handled differently had I the chance again; still on balance life has been pretty good to me, especially in the support and comfort of your mother.

All this will enable you to construct a family tree if you want to, of the Dawkins side of your ancestry. You will find nothing to be proud of, except perhaps in your father, mother, and my mother. I am telling your mother she ought to write a similar account of her connections. As in these days the question of Jewish mixture in one's blood seems to come into account, I can reassure you: there is none on my side or your mother's. Also, there is no family taint of sickness, a clean bill of health all along the line, and that's something. Health is after all the best heritage, and that looks like being all we can leave you in these times of financial uncertainty.

But I'm not gone yet, so I won't get valedictory.

---

## 6. A Distinguished Son

*Charles Dawkins' son Charles John Massey Dawkins (known as Jack), to whom this life story was addressed, read medicine at Emmanuel College Cambridge. He became a distinguished anaesthetist who pioneered new techniques, notably the epidural. The following obituaries are extracted, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the British Medical Journal of 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1975.*

Dr. C.J. Massey Dawkins, until his retirement senior consultant anaesthetist to University College Hospital, died on 8 August. He was 70.

Charles John Massey Dawkins was born on 3 July 1905 and educated at Mill Hill School; Emmanuel College Cambridge; and the Middlesex Hospital, from which he qualified in 1929 and which he then served as resident anaesthetist. Like most of his contemporaries who were later to specialize in anaesthesia, he started as a general practitioner in London, with his wife as partner.

As his interest in anaesthesia developed he gradually came to devote the whole of his time to it and was appointed to the honorary consultant staff of Hampstead General Hospital and in 1941 to University College Hospital. During his career he worked at other hospitals in the London area, including Paddington Green Children's Hospital, Queen Mary's Hospital for the East End, the Royal Free Hospital, and Manor House Hospital. In 1936 he proceeded M.D. and took the diploma in anaesthetics becoming a foundation Fellow of the new Faculty of Anaesthetists of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1948.



His other distinctions included honorary membership of the Finnish Society of Anaesthetists and honorary membership of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland. He was at the time of his death president of the Section of Anaesthetics of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Massey Dawkins was a most competent and sought after anaesthetist, but he was best known as the pioneer in Britain of epidural analgesia, writing his first paper on this subject in 1945. Not only did he introduce the method, but he continued throughout his career to be an enthusiastic advocate of its use, initially in surgery and gynaecology, later in obstetrics. He was also a warm supporter of the use of epidural analgesia in the relief of postoperative pain. In addition to advocating these technical innovations, Massey Dawkins held strong and independent views on the safety and usefulness of a number of agents used in modern anaesthesia, and was not sure that some of these were an improvement on the agents they have displaced.

He was a knowledgeable and keen yachtsman and sailed from his country home at Bradwell-Juxta-Mare in Essex, where he was also an enthusiastic gardener. Music

and reading gave him great pleasure. A much loved husband, parent, and grandparent, he was deeply devoted to his family. Massey Dawkins was an enthusiastic teacher and combined clinical keenness and expertise with warm friendliness towards his residents, so that many of them became his lifelong friends. He was basically of a retiring disposition, but was a very humane man who will be missed by an unusually large circle of friends and acquaintances. He is survived by his wife Sylvia and by their two daughters, one of whom is also a doctor. His only son, Michael, a paediatric pathologist and biochemist died after an acute illness 10 years ago. – J.A.L.

G.C.S writes: The passing of Jack Dawkins is a loss to medicine, a blow to anaesthesia, and deep bereavement to his family and many friends. His is the credit for having introduced the practice of epidural nerve block, and since he first described it he devoted himself wholeheartedly for over a quarter of a century to furthering the recognition of its value. He was a man of stark integrity; as a teacher he was patient and painstakingly lucid; as a colleague he was loyalty personified; and it was as a friend that one could appreciate the true warmth of his character. His kindness to his patients and his single minded devotion to their welfare were exemplary. For him his responsibility did not terminate at the finish of the operation but continued with daily visits, adjusting the epidural drips, giving the necessary top-up, and thus turning his patients into his friends with whom he forged a mutual rapport. In the giving of an epidural nerve block his technical virtuosity was a sheer delight to watch, though it left the onlooker with an uneasy sense that here was a technical finesse that it would be virtually impossible to equal.

A perfectionist himself, he had no use for self-satisfaction or complacency in anyone else, be he surgeon or anaesthetist. A quietly spoken but pithy aside would have an instantly deflating effect. Yet he had an irresistibly puckish sense of humour and possessed that hallmark of the truly modest man; he delighted in telling stories against himself. To be a co-author with him was an exhilarating experience. Differences of opinion would be fiercely argued, but never was there a cross or a bitter word. Himself a devoted and loving family man, he was not unacquainted with deep personal sorrow; yet he rose above it with a noble fortitude, seeming to become even more gentle, considerate, and kind.

His memorial is the vast number of those who undergo major surgery with minimal shock and trauma; in those who pass through the recovery period completely pain-free yet not disoriented with opiates; in those with terminal malignant disease whose last days remain lucid yet pain-free; and in the thousands of women who experience childbirth freed from the curse of Genesis. 'He nothing common did or mean'. He gave warmth to us all, and the world is that much colder for his going.

---