

Charles Walter HOPGOOD (1878-1954)

Charles Walter HOPGOOD, son of Thomas Allen HOPGOOD (c. 1846-c. 1925) and Alice RAINBIRT (c. 1849-), was born on 26 April 1878 in Stamford Hill, London.^{1,2} He appeared in the census in 1881 at Shot Tar Wharf, Lambeth, London in Lambeth, London - 3, living with parents Thomas (35, wharf manager) and Alice (31), brother Leonard (1) and grandmother Mary HURRELL (55, bricklayers wife) [place believed to be 'Shot Tower Wharf' in Lambeth, where his father was the wharf manager, used for making lead shot and balls up till the 1960s].³ Charles appeared in the census in 1891 at Magdalen Street, St Botolph in Colchester, Essex - 12, scholar, living with parents Thomas A (45, restaurant keeper) and Alice (41), brother Leonard R (11, scholar), and boarders Leonard O'BAILEY (22, cabinet maker) and Hebert WOODWARD (18, gardener).⁴ On 16 June 1898 Charles lived at The Waveney Hotel in Diss, Norfolk - The Waveney Hotel as named in Leonard Hopgood's military service record as the residence of Thomas Allen [father], Alice [mother] and Charles Walter [brother] appears to have several names. It is also seen as 'Waveney Temperance Hotel' and 'Coffee Tavern'. The building is now the 'Happy Palace' chinese restaurant on St. Nicholas Street. The hotel is named in "Hawes' Hand Book to Temperance Hotels" by C. W. Hawes, published in 1888. Charles and **Ellen Elizabeth SIMPSON** had marriage banns published on 5 March 1905 in Diss - other dates were 12.03.1905 and 19.03.1905.⁵ Charles married Ellen Elizabeth SIMPSON on 24 April 1905 in Colchester - married at Christ Church with St. Mary-At-The-Walls, Colchester; grooms father a refreshment house keeper; reg: Colchester Essex.^{6,7} In 1906 the Electoral Register showed him living at St. Nicholas Street, Diss - an occupation voter living in a tenement.⁸ Charles appeared in the census in 1911 at Victoria Road, Diss in Diss - 32, tailor and outfitter dealer, living with wife Ellen Elizabeth (33) and children James William (4), Thomas Charles (3) and Constance Ellen (1), and general domestic servant Rose Anna HAWES (16).⁹ In 1915 the Electoral Register showed him living at 93 Victoria Road, Diss - an occupation voter.¹⁰ Charles appeared in the census in 1921 - Depwade, Norfolk; Ellen Elizabeth, James William and 2 others are also on this record. In 1926 the Electoral Register showed him living at Market Place, Diss - by occupation.¹¹ Charles was recorded on the 1939 Register living at 15 Market Place in Diss - mens clothier, b. 26.04.1878.² Charles died on 25 May 1954 - age 76, reg. Depwade Norfolk.¹² On 28 May 1954 there was a newspaper report:

Diss Express, 28 May 1954, page 4

MR. C. W. HOPGOOD

(DISS)

One of the best known and most highly respected men in Diss, Mr. Charles Walter Hopgood, died at his home, Louie Lane, on Sunday morning [23.05.1954], at the age of 76 years.

Mr. Hopgood, who was born in London, moved with his parents to Colchester, where he became a reporter on a local newspaper. Owing to deafness he had to give up this work and entered the wholesale clothing trade as a cutter. His family came to Diss in 1896 to the Coffee Tavern, retiring in 1914. In 1902 Mr. Hopgood commenced business as a tailor and outfitter in St. Nicholas Street, removing to Mere Street in 1905, and to the Market Place in 1924. He retired in February 1946 and the business is now carried on by his son.

In his younger days Mr. Hopgood was a keen cricketer and footballer, played for Diss F.C. and Diss Cricket Club and was often in demand to play in the many teams which used to play games at many of the country houses in the locality. He was an ardent golfer and was for many years a member of Diss Golf Club and had served as captain. Gardening was one of his hobbies and for many years he served on the committee of the Diss Horticultural Society. During the war he served as an air raid warden and carried out the duties in a most conscientious manner.

Some years ago, with two or three old Diss friends, who predeceased him, he used to visit the Continent and he delighted in telling of their adventures, humorous and otherwise.

The cremation, which was private, was at Ipswich on Wednesday, the Rev. E.H.O. Bennett officiating.

Charles had his estate probated on 16 June 1954 in Norwich, Norfolk - "HOPGOOD Charles Walter of Louie-lane Diss Norfolk died 23 May 1954 Probate Norwich 16 June to Ellen Elizabeth Hopgood widow. Effects £4157 14s. 5d."¹³ On 24 March 2007 there was a newspaper report:

Eastern Daily Press - March 24, 2007

From frock coats to lounge suits, generations of Hopgoods have dressed the gentlemen of south Norfolk in the finest fashions of the day.

As they measured, cut and stitched at their outfitters in Diss Market Place, they watched the town grow and ponies and carts give way to motor cars and bustle.

While supermarkets and department stores have chipped away at small stores elsewhere, Hopgoods weathered the

storm, serving its customers for 107 years - from the end of the Victorian era to the present day.

But that is all set to change on March 31.

For proprietor Richard Hopgood has decided to retire and the premises have been sold to new owners, who do not wish to continue the family business.

It marks the end of an era - the closure of the last of five independent men's outfitters in the town.

As a former district councillor, Mr Hopgood was more than a tailor - he was a listening ear to his clients, helping with problems as well as sartorial choices.

He said: "My great-grandparents came to Diss in about 1885 and ran the Waveney Temperance Hotel, which is now a Chinese restaurant opposite the Corn Hall, bringing with them their family. My grandfather Walter Hopgood was a cockney, born in the parish of Bow Bells. He came to Diss, having worked in various tailoring outfits, and set up his own business in 1900 at the back of the hotel."

"He didn't count the first two years though, because he didn't have a proper shop until he moved to Crown Street, now St Nicholas Street, in 1902."

The fledgling business faced stiff opposition, but Walter's hard work paid off. Eight years later, he moved to better premises in the main shopping centre in Mere Street, where Woolworth's store now stands."

Mr. Hopgood said: "Grandfather banked at Barclays and used to walk past this shop, which was a derelict site. He bought it from Barclays, who had foreclosed on a mortgage in 1923, and my father Billy and the two other children slept on camp beds at the back of the shop."

It proved a good investment. The shop is in a prime location and was valued at more than £400,000 when Mr Hopgood put it up for sale two years ago.

He was born in 1946 - the year after his father took over the firm - but was at first reluctant to follow in his footsteps. He said: "My inclination was to join the army, but I agreed to go into the company for a six months' trial. It was said by several people that I would never stick it and they were absolutely right - I've only been around for 44 years."

"My 21st birthday present was a third share in the business and when I took over the major share in 1973, my father became the junior partner!"

Although not a professional tailor, Mr Hopgood received excellent training in the key techniques. When the local economy took a downturn in the 1980s and 1990s, his sewing skills saved the firm from going under.

"We went through a bad period like many shops, as had my grandfather in the great depression. I was able to use my skill at sewing to get us through, as people were very pleased to have things mended. I've made curtains, cushions, skirts, a Union flag jacket for the conductor of an orchestra going on tour to Germany - everything from a bikini to a tent," he said.

"The bikini was for a lady who wanted one copied in a certain fabric she had bought, and the tent was for someone who had designed a prototype and wanted to see if it worked - and it did."

Ellen Elizabeth SIMPSON, daughter of James SIMPSON (-), was born on 20 January 1878 in Colchester.^{2,14} She appeared in the census in 1881 at Factory Lane in Colchester - 3, scholar, living with uncle James CUTHBERT (29, workman at waterworks) and aunt Elizabeth CUTHBERT (24), and lodger Anne CHISNALL (21, tailoress).¹⁵ Ellen appeared in the census in 1891 at Roman Road in Colchester - 13, scholar, living with uncle James CUTHBERT (39, fitter to water department) and aunt Elizabeth CUTHBERT (32).¹⁶ Ellen appeared in the census in 1901 at 11 St. Marys Road in Colchester - 23, scholar, living with uncle James CUTHBERT (49, iron fitter) and aunt Elizabeth CUTHBERT (41).¹⁷ Ellen appeared in the census in 1911 at Victoria Road, Diss in Diss - 33, living with husband Charles Walter (32, tailor and outfitter dealer) and children James William (4), Thomas Charles (3) and Constance Ellen (1), and general domestic servant Rose Anna HAWES (16).⁹ Ellen appeared in the census in 1921 - Depwade, Norfolk; Charles Walter James William and 2 others are also on this record. Ellen was recorded on the 1939 Register living at 15 Market Place in Diss - unpaid domestic duties, b. 20.01.1878.² Ellen died on 24 June 1959 - reg: Depwade Norfolk.¹⁸ Ellen had her estate probated on 7 September 1959 in Norwich - " HOPGOOD Ellen Elizabeth of Scole Lodge Nursing Home Scole Norfolk widow died 24 June 1959 Probate Norwich 7 September [1959] to James William Hopgood [son] outfitter Constance Ellen Milward [daughter] 2ife of James William Milward) and Richard Ashton Burne solicitor. Effects £5428 17s. 3d."¹⁹ She and Charles Walter HOPGOOD had the following children:

James William HOPGOOD (1906-c. 1976). James was born on 18 August 1906 in Diss.² He appeared in the census in 1911 at Victoria Road, Diss in Diss - 4, living with parents Charles Walter (32, tailor and outfitter dealer) and Ellen Elizabeth Ellen (33), siblings Thomas Charles (3) and Constance Ellen (1), and general domestic servant Rose Anna HAWES (16).⁹ James appeared in the census in 1921 - Depwade, Norfolk; Charles Walter, Ellen Elizabeth and 2 others are also on this record. James was

recorded on the 1939 Register living at 15 Market Place in Diss - A.R.P. instructor, b. 18.08.1906.²
James married **Lilian Dorothea WIGBY** circa 1940. He died circa 1976.

Thomas Charles HOPGOOD (c. 1908-). Thomas was born circa 1908. He appeared in the census in 1911 at Victoria Road, Diss in Diss - 3, living with parents Charles Walter (32, tailor and outfitter dealer) and Ellen Elizabeth Ellen (33), siblings James William (4) and Constance Ellen (1), and general domestic servant Rose Anna HAWES (16).²⁰ Thomas married **Bernice Ethel GEDNY** on 10 September 1936.

Constance Ellen HOPGOOD (c. 1910-). Constance was born circa 1910 in Diss. She appeared in the census in 1911 at Victoria Road, Diss in Diss - 1, living with parents Charles Walter (32, tailor and outfitter dealer) and Ellen Elizabeth Ellen (33), brothers James William (4) and Thomas Charles (3), and general domestic servant Rose Anna HAWES (16).²⁰

Sources

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3. *1881 Census*. RG11 Piece 583 Folio 135 Page 46 Sch 1256. Cit. Date: 1881.
4. *1891 Census*. RG12 Piece 1406 Folio 10 Page 14 Sch 82. Cit. Date: 1891.
5. *PR - Banns*. Diss, Norfolk. Cit. Date: 5 March 1905.
6. *CR Marriage*. 1905 Q2 Colchester Essex Vol 4A Page 1217. Cit. Date: Q2 1905.
7. *PR - Marriage*. Colchester, Essex. Cit. Date: 24 April 1905.
8. *Electoral Register*. Page H19. Cit. Date: 1906.
9. *1911 Census*. RG14PN11446 RG78PN624 RD230 SD2 ED4 SN58. Cit. Date: 1911.
10. *Electoral Register*. Page G11. Cit. Date: 1915.
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12. *CR Death*. 1954 Q2 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 349. Cit. Date: Q2 1954.
13. *Probate Death Index*. 1954 Page 581. Cit. Date: 16 June 1954.
14. *CR Birth*. 1878 Q1 Colchester Essex Vol 4A Page 375. Cit. Date: Q1 1878.
15. *1881 Census*. RG11 Piece 1791 Folio 15 Page 24 Sch 119. Cit. Date: 1881.
16. *1891 Census*. RG12 Piece 1411 Folio 40 Page 8 Sch 53. Cit. Date: 1891.
17. *1901 Census*. RG13 Piece 1707 Folio 33 Page 11 Sch 67. Cit. Date: 1901.
18. *CR Death*. 1959 Q2 Depwade Norfolk Vol 4B Page 373. Cit. Date: Q2 1959.
19. *Probate Death Index*. Norwich, Norfolk. Cit. Date: 7 September 1959.
20. *1911 Census*. RG14PN11446 RG78PN624 RD230 SD2 ED4 SN58. Cit. Date: 1911.