

## Charles Thurstan Holland: a genealogical note

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Visitors to the Gallery at the Liverpool Medical Institution may be familiar with the Copthall portrait of Charles Thurstan Holland (1863-1941) which hangs there. (The disconcerting mismatch between the name on the portrait, Thurstan, and the name on the adjacent blurb, Thurston, needs correction, as does the incorrect date of death, 1940, but the former is forgivable, since at least one obituary was also in error as regards the final vowel;<sup>1</sup> the blurb errors almost certainly stem from Shepherd, in his history of the LMI.<sup>2</sup>)

Many will also be familiar, in no small measure due to the writings of Austin Carty,<sup>3,4</sup> with Charles Thurstan Holland's contributions to the development of radiology in Liverpool, beginning in the 1890s.<sup>5,6</sup> He was present on the occasion of the radiological localisation of a bullet in a boy's wrist, described in *The Lancet* in February 1896 by Sir Robert Jones and Oliver Lodge,<sup>7,8</sup> and is remembered in Egyptology circles for his radiograph of a mummy bird in October 1896, initiating the application of radiological studies to ancient antiquities.<sup>9</sup> He produced over 100 publications during his career.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the portrait at LMI, there is a plaque at 43 Rodney Street commemorating Thurstan Holland, and he is buried in Toxteth Park Cemetery.

All this is well known. The purpose of this article is to explore a little of Charles Thurstan Holland's genealogy. Looking at his portrait, I

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, 'Charles Thurston [*sic*] Holland', *Radiology*, 36 (1941), 382.

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Shepherd, *A history of the Liverpool Medical Institution* (Liverpool, LMI, 1979), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> A.T. Carty, 'X-ray centenary 1895-1995. Roentgen's Big Bang: Liverpool's echo', *LMI Transactions and Report*, (1995-6), 18-30.

<sup>4</sup> A. Carty, 'Charles Thurstan Holland: Pioneer of Liverpool Radiology', *The Invisible Light. The Journal of The Radiology History and Heritage Charitable Trust*, 15 (2001), 18-21.

<sup>5</sup> P.H. Whitaker, 'The birth and growth of radiology', *LMI Transactions and Report*, (1961), 21-35.

<sup>6</sup> R. Cope, 'Radiologic history exhibit. Charles Thurstan Holland, 1863-1941', *Radiographics*, 15 (1995), 481-8 [Erratum: 15 (1995), 640].

<sup>7</sup> D. Edwards, 'Oliver Lodge and the first medical uses of X-rays', *Medical Historian*, 2 (1989), 31-40 [at 34].

<sup>8</sup> P. Rowlands, 'Oliver Lodge and the birth of Liverpool radiology', *Medical Historian*, 25 (2015), 3-15 [at 9].

<sup>9</sup> C.T. Holland, 'X-rays in 1896', in A.J. Bruwer (ed.) *Classic descriptions in diagnostic Roentgenology. Volume 1* (Springfield, Ill., Charles C Thomas, 1964), pp 70-84.

have wondered, stimulated by my interests<sup>10,11</sup> in a quite different sphere, whether he might be related to the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865), perhaps best known for her final novel, *Wives and Daughters* (1866). What possible link could there be, it might be reasonably asked, between a novelist resident in and associated with Manchester for much of her adult life, and a radiologist in Liverpool, whose lives overlapped by only 2 years?

Reading the collected letters of Mrs Gaskell,<sup>12,13</sup> there are many references to the Holland family. The maiden name of Elizabeth Gaskell's mother, Elizabeth (1764-1812), was Holland. This extensive family produced a number of doctors, most eminent amongst whom was her cousin Henry Holland (1788-1873), later Sir Henry Holland, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet.<sup>14</sup> There are several medical characters in Gaskell's works, perhaps most notably Dr Gibson in *Wives and Daughters*, some of whom may possibly owe something to these medical relatives.

To be sure, Holland is a common enough surname, so this might not provoke much interest in a possible link, until it is noted that other Gaskell relatives bore the name "Thurstan Holland", namely Henry Thurstan Holland (1825-1914), one of the sons of the aforementioned Sir Henry Holland; and Edward Thurstan Holland (1836-1884), son of Elizabeth's cousin Edward Holland (1806-1875). Edward Thurstan Holland eventually married Elizabeth Gaskell's eldest daughter, Marianne (1834-1920).

Knowing of these Gaskell relatives named "Thurstan Holland", my question now became: how could Charles Thurstan Holland *not* be related to Elizabeth Gaskell? That said, tracing the link did not prove straightforward (for me, at least; a professional genealogist may have worked it out in a much shorter time! Two websites, [www.geni.com](http://www.geni.com) and [www.clement-jones.com](http://www.clement-jones.com), proved particularly helpful in tracing the links in the chain).

Charles Thurstan Holland was born in Bridgwater, Somerset, the son of William Thomas Holland (1834-1899). One website states that "William's great-great-grandfather was the great-great-uncle on her mother's side of Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson (1810-1865) who became

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<sup>10</sup> A.J. Larner, "'A habit of headaches': the neurological case of Elizabeth Gaskell", *Gaskell Journal*, 25 (2011), 97-103.

<sup>11</sup> A.J. Larner, 'Headache in the works of Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865)', *J. Med. Biogr.*, 23 (2015), in press.

<sup>12</sup> J.A.V. Chapple, A. Pollard A (eds.) *The letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, [1966] 1997).

<sup>13</sup> J. Chapple, A. Shelston (eds.) *Further letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, [2000] 2003).

<sup>14</sup> B. Hill, "'More fashionable than scientific". Sir Henry Holland, Bt, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. (1788-1873)', *Practitioner*, 211 (1973), 548-52.

famous as the ‘Manchester novelist’ Elizabeth Gaskell”.<sup>15</sup> To cut a long story short, it would appear that Charles Thurstan Holland and Elizabeth Gaskell share a common ancestor, one John Holland of Mobberley (1656-1712/3). He was the father of sons, John and Thomas, both born in 1690 and possibly twins. John Holland (1690-1770) was the father of Samuel Holland (1734-1816), who was Elizabeth Gaskell’s maternal grandfather. Thomas Holland (1690-1753) initiated a line of Thomas Hollands (born 1725/6, 1760, and 1794), the latter being Thomas Crompton Holland (1794-1861), the father of William Thomas Holland.

Whether Charles Thurstan Holland was ever aware of this distant relationship with an eminent novelist is not, to my knowledge, recorded. Why he should have been named Thurstan is also unknown to me, but it may suggest that the various ramifications of the family remained aware of one another and hence this family name persisted into another generation. The Thurstan name may have been in the Holland family as far back as the 13<sup>th</sup> century (see [www.clement-jones.com](http://www.clement-jones.com)).

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<sup>15</sup> [http://charlesduval.org/william\\_thomas\\_holland](http://charlesduval.org/william_thomas_holland) (accessed 15/11/2014)