

George Bramwell Rich

A citizen of Cambridge

1930-2020

In February 2022, my daughter and son-in law, Rosalind Griffin and Toby Sibley, bought 26 Springfield Road in Cambridge; they knew that the house was part of a probate estate and that the previous owner had left his estate to charities. After extensive work on the house, they and their daughter Constance (then 13) moved in a year later.

I was interested in the occupations of the early residents of Springfield Road. Censuses from 1881 to 1911 and the 1939 register revealed:

stone mason, carpenters, plumbers, brick layers, plasterer, painters, electrician
cabinet maker, French polisher coal merchant, wood merchant
bakers, butchers pastry cook postmen printers
brewery workers, cellarmen, pub barman, hotel waiter cinema attendant
horse keeper, groom, coachmen motor driver railway goods shunter
tailors, seamstress, dressmaker, tailoress boot/shoe makers
shop assistants (grocery, hosiery, silversmith's), boot shop manager
lodging house keeper domestic servant, housemaid laundresses
head porter university library, assistant coal porter (St John's College), college kitchen clerk, college
bedmaker, university cleaner, college servants
sergeant at mace (borough council)
clerks, insurance agent fruit salesman, nursery salesman
gardeners hay cutter, dairyman, farm workers labourers errand boy

In the 1939 register, the Rich family were living at number 26 – John Spalding Rich, Florence Mary Rich and George Bramwell Rich.

Neighbours told us that it was George Rich who had been the previous owner and occupant; he had been born there and lived there all his life. When the house had been cleared, they had kindly rescued some photographs and his papers, and carefully looked after them. They generously handed these on to me and I have been able to piece together information about George and his family from these and from on-line sources.

What emerged was a picture of a long-lived man, a citizen of Cambridge, and a family rooted in and around the city.

Sue Griffin 2022-24

George Bramwell Rich

George Rich was born at 26 Springfield Road, Cambridge on 19 March 1930. Apart from the time he spent on national service in the RAF in the early 1950s, he lived in the house all his life until shortly before his death at the age of 90.



George was an electrician

George served a five-year apprenticeship as an electrician with The Electric Wiring and Repair Company, Corn Exchange Street, Cambridge from the age of 16 in 1946 until he qualified in 1951, with certification that he had received 'practical instruction in the craft of an electrician in... all classes of installation work for light, power, heating, telephone, etc and general repairs'. He attended Cambridgeshire Technical College and School of Art (one of the educational bodies which later evolved into Anglia Ruskin University).



During this time, he flew model aircraft with Cambridge Model Aeronautical Society at Marshall's Aerodrome (now Cambridge airport).

In the garden at Springfield Road



In the late 1940s and the 1950s, all young men were required to serve in one of the armed services for at least 18 months, but George's national service was deferred while he completed his apprenticeship. He was posted to the RAF; he seems to have completed his service in the UK, being fortunate not to have been caught up in the Korean War (1950-53).

In the RAF in Wiltshire



1953

July 1955



He worked for The Electric Wiring and Repair Company (which later became part of the national chain Lowe and Oliver) for nearly 30 years until 1975 when he became an electrician at Churchill College. He worked at the College for 20 years until his retirement in 1995.



He was presented with a Certificate of Achievement ‘for outstanding accomplishments and service to Churchill College, Cambridge from June 1975 to March 1995’. This was presented by the Master, a mark of the regard in which he was held, and his farewell card was signed by dozens of colleagues, including those in the archives, porter’s lodge, kitchen, and grounds – showing that ‘everyone knew George’.

He lived 25 years in retirement. In his later years, his neighbours helped and supported him in practical ways.

In 1967-8 George earned £933.2s.2d; his starting salary at Churchill was £2,124 pa.

George was a cyclist

George was a keen cyclist, a long-time member of the Cambridge District Association of the Cyclists' Touring Club which he joined in 1954 at the age of 24. He acted as runs secretary for 30 years, planning and organising rides, and he also became Hon. President in 2007, an indication of the value placed on his contribution to the club over many years. The website of the club records his service and fond memories of him [George Rich 1930 - 2020 - CTC Cambridge](#).

He made albums of his many photographs of cycling runs/trips locally throughout Cambridgeshire and to neighbouring counties, as well as tours further afield (London airport, Somerset/Devon/Dorset/Hampshire, Wales, France) in the 1950s and 60s.



An article in the Cambridge Evening News on 18 January 1992 about the club mentioned George and included a photograph of him.



Celebrating his 80th birthday in 2010



With the certificate recognising his 60-year membership of CTC in 2014.

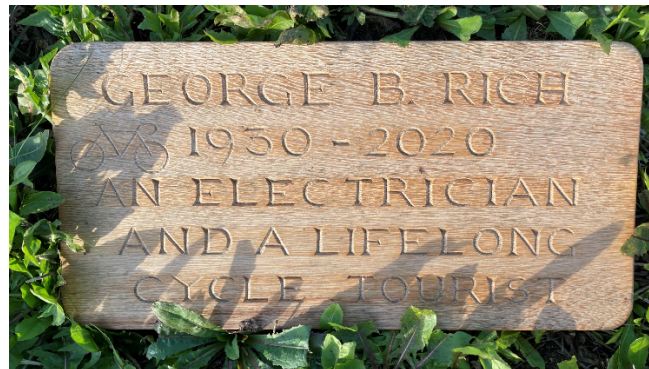
George continued cycling into his 80s, encouraging new members and offering them advice; he always carried maintenance tools so he could fix other people's bikes. He was one of the first people in the club to buy an electric bike.

In the will he made in 1991, he left his 'collection of maps, colour photographs, pedal cycles and accessories' to the Cambridge association. He made several wills, naming the Cyclists' Touring Club as a major beneficiary (along with other charities).

George lived at 26 Springfield Road with his parents until his mother died in 1959 and his father in 1967, continuing to live there alone for 53 years until he moved into the Cambridge Manor Care Home on Milton Road.

He bought the house in October 1959 from the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society for £350 (when average earnings were about £650 a year – compared with about £30,000 in 2022). He told his neighbours that he had never had either a car or a wife – both would have been very expensive.

George died on 11 November 2020, and was buried at the Barton Glebe Woodland Burial Ground.



George's parents were **John Spalding Rich** and **Florence Mary Currington**

John and Florence married on 2 April 1927 and moved into 26 Springfield Road soon afterwards; they lived there for the rest of their lives.



26 Springfield Road. The railings show this was taken before World War 2 when metal like this was collected to make armaments

John Spalding Rich was born on 23 August 1897 at the Crown Inn, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

His parents were John Rich and Phoebe Annie Spalding; his mother died when he was 2, and his father when he was 5. In 1901 when he was 4, he was living with grandparents Thomas and Alice Spalding at The Laundry, Arbury Road, Chesterton. (This laundry, along with a school farm and orchard, was run by the Leys School.)

In 1921 he was in the army (Private 5829443 Suffolk Regiment).

At various times, he was a window cleaner, a news seller, and a general labourer.

He died on 9 November 1967 aged 71 in Chesterton Hospital, leaving George over £4,000. (He had inherited £3,000 from Florence's aunt Alice Beatrice Gawthorp in 1965.)



John about 1950 in the garden at Springfield Road

John December 1955



John's family

John's family were inn keepers; he was born in a pub – the Crown Inn in Jesus Lane. His father, John (George's grandfather), was the publican there as well as a cab proprietor, having previously worked in the Bull Inn as a fly driver, and having grown up in the Traveller's Rest on Huntingdon Road (now the Beefeater restaurant).

Another John Rich (George's great-great uncle) was a publican of the Portland Arms, Milton Road in 1861, and an '100 years ago' article in the Cambridge Evening News 1 November 1980 featured an announcement of his purchase of the Horse and Groom, King Street in 1880. In 1891 and 1901, he held the licence for The Mitre, Bridge Street,

Florence Mary Currington was born on 20 April 1893 in Rampton; her parents were George Currington and Ann.

In 1911 when she was 17, she was living at 20 St Barnabas Road, Cambridge as a housemaid in the household of Harry (an assistant schoolmaster at the Leys School) and Martha Brownsword.

In 1921 when she was 28, she was living in Dunstable and was a Salvation Army officer – an explanation of George's middle name.

She died on 3 June 1959 aged 66; she was buried in Rampton churchyard.



Florence December 1955

Florence's family

Florence's family lived in Rampton; her father, George, was a farm labourer; George and his wife Ann were buried in Rampton churchyard.

She had three younger siblings, William Thomas, Daisy, and Ivy Elizabeth.

William was a fruit grower in Rampton. He and his wife Alice had five children. George left the youngest, his cousin Constance, a small legacy in his will of 2001 (but he outlived her).

Daisy married Frederick Young, a butcher in Rampton, and had a daughter, Doreen, but died when Doreen was 3. Just over a year later, Frederick married Ivy Elizabeth and she raised Doreen as her daughter. In his will of 1991, George left his cousin Doreen 25% of his estate, but she died in 2001.

Ivy Elizabeth was a member of Cottenham Salvation Army for 30 years.

George had no siblings and his father was also an only child. All his cousins on his mother's side were older than him and pre-deceased him.

So, he had no family to inherit his estate or to remember him. But 26 Springfield Road will continue to commemorate his life.

Documents:

George Rich:

Training, qualifications and employment:

National Joint Industrial Council for the Electrical Contracting Industry certificate of registration of juvenile labour 29 October 1946

Letter from Ministry of Labour and National Service re deferment of national service 5 May 1948

Certificates from Union of Educational Institutions (installation, calculations and drawing first class + electro technology second class), and City Guilds (electrical installation work second class) 1950

Letter from the Electric Wiring & Repair Co with certificate of completion of training 7 April 1951

Letters from Churchill College re appointment as electrician in Maintenance Section May 1975; pension prediction 1976; notice of new regulations and conditions of employment 1993.

Wills:

Bill from Ginn & Co for £1.1s.0d 7 November 1959

Bill from Ginn & Co for £3.3s.0d 11 January 1968

Letter from Ginn & Co re codicil 12 July 1972

Copy of will 1978 (half to Cyclists Touring Club, quarter to Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, quarter to cousin Doreen Churchill)

Copy of will 10 September 1991 (half to Cyclists Touring Club, quarter to Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, quarter to cousin Doreen Churchill)

Copy of will December 2001 (equal shares to Cyclists Touring Club, Arthritis and Rheumatism Council and Prostate Cancer Charity; bill from Ginn & Co for £99.87.

Other:

Correspondence from Ginn & C solicitors re purchase of 26 Springfield Road 1959

P60s for 1967/8, 1968/9, 1969/70. 1970/71; income tax codes for 1968/69.

Correspondence with Lowe & Oliver re pension 1972 - 91

Article in Cambridge Evening News about Cambridge branch of Cyclists' Touring Club 18 January 1992

Retirement greetings card from staff of Churchill College

Information from the National Service (RAF) Association November 2007

John Spalding Rich (George's father):

Copy of John S Rich's birth certificate 23 August 1896

Letters to John re army pension 1922

Handwritten list of 'furnishes and utensils' in 26 Springfield Road 19 December 1927

Copy of will dated 7 November 1959

Newspaper cutting announcing John's death 9 November 1967; list of donors to Friends of Chesterton Hospital in his memory – many from inhabitants of Springfield Road

Letter to George from Ginn & co solicitors re his father's estate

John's family:

Black edged memorial card for Phoebe Annie Rich (John's mother) 3 January 1900

Black edged memorial card for John Rich (John S's father) 22 April 1903

Cutting from Cambridge Evening News 1 November 1980 re Cambridge Chronicle and University Journal notice of purchase of the Horse and Groom in 1880 by J Rich (George's great-great uncle).

Florence Mary Currington (George's mother):

National Registration Identity Card 21 June 1943

Letter from an old friend Gertrude Teal making reference to Florence's 'suffering' December 1958

Announcement of her burial at Rampton 3 June 1959

Bills for costs of funeral (£39.12s.0d) and headstone (£27.1s.0d) 1959-60; notice from Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance re death grant of £12.10s0d 6 July 1959; notice from Post Office Savings Bank 1 July 1959

Florence's family:

Black edged notice of burial at Rampton of Daisy Young (Florence's sister) November 1932.

Black edged notice of burial at Rampton of Ann Currington (Florence's mother) July 1936.

Newspaper cutting announcement of death of William Currington (Florence's brother) March 1970.

Newspaper cutting account of funeral of Ivy Elizabeth Young (Florence's sister) with list of mourners (2001)

Letter from Percy Walker solicitor in Hastings re estate of Alice Beatrice Gawthorpe (Florence's aunt); account of estate to John S Rich as residual legatee – total of £4,664.9s.6d of which John received £3,178.10s.4d - 1965

Other information collected from census returns and other resources on-line.