

# What's in a Name?

## (1) WG's surname

*The London Gazette* is one of the official journals of record of the British government, and the most important among such official journals in the United Kingdom, in which certain statutory notices are required to be published. The notice below, abstracted from page 2550 of THE LONDON GAZETTE of 6 JUNE, 1947, makes remarkable reading:

NOTICE is hereby given that by a deed poll dated the 7th day of May 1947 and duly enrolled in the Supreme Court of Judicature on the 2nd day of June 1947 WINSTON MAWDSLEY GRAHAM of "Treberan" Perranporth in the county of Cornwall Author a natural born British subject renounced and abandoned the surname of Grime and in lieu of that surname assumed as from the date of that deed the surname of Mawdsley Graham.—Dated the 2nd day of June 1947.  
NALDER and SON, of 7, Pydar Street, Truro,  
Solicitors for the said Winston Mawdsley  
(231) Graham, formerly known as Winston Grime.

Thinking that perhaps I had read *Memoirs of a Private Man* with insufficient care, I went back to that book to find neither confirmation nor refutation, for though WG gives quite detailed information concerning his mother's family, the Mawdsleys, that regarding his father's is frustratingly deficient. No paternal surname is mentioned – most readers will tacitly assume "Graham", just as the author himself did in 1947 after "renouncing and abandoning" Grime.

WG was a keen tennis player in his youth: if you check the British Newspaper Archive you'll find on page three of the *Western Morning News* of 23 August 1928 a column headed "LAWN TENNIS" which records him playing under his birth name of Winston Grime. His brother, a resident of Cornwall named in *Memoirs* only as Cecil, is also referenced (as "Cecil Grime, Esq.") on page seven of *The Cornishman* of 18 January 1945 as a contributor to the Camborne-Redruth Hospital Appeal.

The man who married Jean Williamson on 18 September 1939 signed the register "Winston Grime"<sup>1</sup> (Cecil was both best man<sup>2</sup> and a witness; the second witness was WG's "dearest friend"<sup>3</sup> Fred Harris). Though no Winston Graham is listed in the 1943 Plymouth Area phone book, Perranporth 2209 was the number of Winston Grime.

**CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.**

*Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given*

*The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed*

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday) and SEX.		PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.						
		For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.		Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—			Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7).		
of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who (1) passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in this dwelling and was alive at midnight, or (2) arrived in this dwelling on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere. No one else must be included. (For order of entering names see Examples on back of Schedule.)	State whether "Head," or "Wife," "Son," "Daughter," or other Relative, "Visitor," "Boarder," or "Servant."	Ages of Males.	Ages of Females.		Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one."	Total Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have Died.		
		1.	2.	3.		4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1 Albert Henry Grime	Head	43		Married	15	2	2	0		
2 Annie Grime	Wife	42		Married						
3 Cecil Grime	Son	12								
4 Winston Grime	Son	2								
5 Ellen Grime	Sister-in-law		19	Single						
6 Ellen Moore	Dom. Servant		23	Single						

This is the left-hand half of the relevant page of the 1911 census of England and Wales. The heading has been cut and pasted across so as to be fully visible. Thanks to BF.

Above, further confirmation from the census of 2 April 1911, when young Winston would have been 2 years and 9 months old. The form records him as 2 and his parents Albert Henry (stated to be a "commercial traveller" in the

"grocery" business)<sup>4</sup> and Annie<sup>5</sup> – 13 years married – as 43 and 42 respectively. Other members of the household are Winston's brother Cecil (12), Ann's sister Ellen Mawdsley (39 – occupation: "private means") and 23-year-old servant Ellen Moore.

All this presumably explains why WG was unusually reticent about his date of birth – because, until the 2nd day of June 1947, by which time *Ross Poldark* and *Demelza* were already published, "Winston Graham" was but the pseudonym (whose idea?)<sup>6</sup> of Winston Grime. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that someone who spent so much time productively re-imagining the past should start with his own. But why so coy about it? No word in *Memoirs*? After all, what's in a name?

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## **(2) WG's Christian name**

Though a great many people, places, objects, businesses, institutions and even fictional characters in Britain and beyond have been named after Winston Churchill (1874-1965), WG was among the first, if not the very first. Here's Boris Johnson:

*[By 1964, Churchill's] legacy was everywhere, his very name a meme that spread through all levels of society. In that year, students were already graduating from Churchill College, Cambridge. Communities in Britain were already anointing some of the 430 roads, closes, squares and cul-de-sacs that bear his name to this day. When he left the Commons in 1964, a young John Winston Lennon was celebrating the sale of 1.5 million copies of a record called "I Wanna Hold Your Hand".<sup>7</sup>*

*Lennon had been born in October 1940 – the year of the country's maximum peril and Churchill's supreme leadership. For more than ten years, Churchill had shared the House of Commons with a man who in 1964 became Defence Secretary – Denis Winston Healey [a Labour politician who died in 2015].*

*Healey had been born in 1917 to Churchill fans in Mottingham, south-east London – and he entered the Commons in 1952 with the unique distinction of having been named at birth after a man who was then still serving as Prime Minister, which tells us something about the sheer span of Churchill's life.*

*Can anyone beat Healey's record of being named after Churchill in 1917, when [Churchill] was only forty-two? Step forward Winston Graham, author of the Poldark novels, who was born in Manchester in 1908 – the year Churchill fought the North-west Manchester by-election; the year he entered the cabinet at the age of thirty-three, as President of the Board of Trade, and began his campaign to create Labour Exchanges and end the exploitation of child labour.<sup>8</sup>*

In *Memoirs*, WG confirms and expands on the connection, which reaches back into the nineteenth century:

*In 1899 [my grandfather's cousin, James Mawdsley] stood for Parliament for the double constituency of Oldham as a "Tory Trade Unionist", opposing two Liberals. His running mate was that famous Socialist, Winston Churchill, fighting his first election ... [Although they were defeated], Mr Churchill and Mr Mawdsley remained friends until [James's death in 1902], but by the time I was born Mr Churchill had himself become a Liberal and my mother ... decided it would be a good idea if I bore his name.<sup>9</sup>*

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## **NOTES AND SOURCES**

<sup>1</sup> The Perranzabuloe Parish Register of Marriages that records the wedding (Volume 1900-1940, page 123) is held by Kresen Kernow, Redruth. Here is WG's signature:

When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition
18 Sept.	Winston Grime	31	bachelor
18 39	Jean Mary Williamson	27	spinster

married in the parish church according to the Rites

marriage solemnized in us, { Winston Grime  
Jean Mary Williamson } in the Presence of us,

<sup>2</sup> *The West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, 21 September 1939.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of a Private Man* (Macmillan, 2003), Book One, Chapter Five

<sup>4</sup> On his marriage certificate – see note one above – WG records his late father's occupation as "wholesale chemist"

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the spelling of his mother's Christian name, WG dedicates his first novel to "Ann" but in *Memoirs* writes "Anne". On the census form above, his father records "Annie". Archival records confirm that Ann is correct.

<sup>6</sup> As late as 18 April 1934, just three weeks before *Ward, Lock* accepted his first novel, WG was acting in the self-penned *At Eight O'Clock Precisely* under his real name, Winston Grime (*The Cornish Post and Mining News*, 21 April 1934). The first appearance of "Winston Graham" in the historical record is on the dust jacket of *The House with the Stained Glass Windows* in October 1934 (two earlier surviving letters from publisher to client are addressed to Winston Grime). This suggests – though finally it's impossible to know – that the tweaking of "Grime"

to "Graham" was a pragmatic business decision urged on WG by Ward, Lock in mid-1934.

<sup>7</sup> By the Beatles, of whom Lennon was a member

<sup>8</sup> *The Churchill Factor* by Boris Johnson, Hodder & Stoughton, 2014

<sup>9</sup> *Memoirs*, 1.1; below, the twenty-four-year-old Churchill who in 1899 failed to win over the voters of Oldham:



At the following year's general election, he contested the seat again (though Mawdsley did not) and squeaked home in the Conservative interest by just 222 votes (of more than 51,000 cast), so entering Parliament for the first time. In the 1906

general election, Churchill comfortably took Manchester North West for the Liberals (having switched parties in 1904), but when forced to defend it in 1908 following his elevation to the Cabinet, was defeated again; fifteen days later – seven weeks before the birth of WG – he contested another by-election in Dundee (a Liberal stronghold), and won. This seat he retained until the general election of 1922, when, after finishing only fourth of six candidates, he found himself out of favour once more. Of the twenty-one elections he contested in sixty years, Churchill won sixteen and lost five.

