

## JAMES FINLEN

### INTRODUCTION

I came across James Finlen when updating some research on Butleigh, a village in Somerset, for my website [www.butleigh.org](http://www.butleigh.org).

The *Western Gazette* newspaper recorded on November 29<sup>th</sup> 1867 that James Finlen had:

"resided (twelve or thirteen years ago [*i.e. circa 1854/5*]) in the neighbouring village of Butleigh for a *considerable time*, being engaged there on the decorations at *Butleigh Court, then newly built* or restored. He addressed *several meetings at Street* on political subjects, causing considerable sensation among those whose stomachs were not strong enough to stand extreme Radicalism. He is (or rather was at the time to which we refer) an *exceedingly fluent speaker*, and was *very far above the average of his fellow working men in intelligence and education.*" [*The italics are mine*]

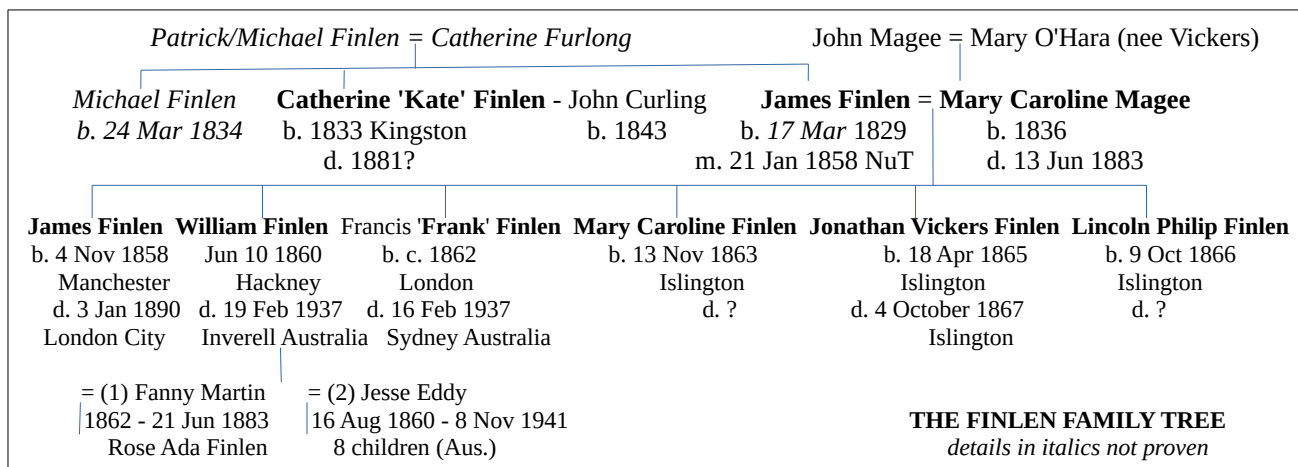
He obviously made a positive impression on people at the time, even on some of those who held diametrically opposed political views to his. Since no actual record exists in Butleigh itself of his presence, I wanted to tie down the dates he might have worked there and began this study by researching his whereabouts in the 1850's from all the sources that I could find - which turned out to be almost entirely from the contemporary newspapers. The earliest mention of his activities, in any records, is in June 1850 and I discovered that from that date there was only one gap in his known whereabouts possibly large enough to fill the '*considerable time*' that he was supposed to be working at Butleigh Court - from early June to Christmas 1851. Newspaper columns, as we all know, are often very inaccurate, and the reporter of the *Western Gazette*, remembering that Finlen had worked in Butleigh, conflated that fact with later visits back to his old haunts that he made during his three lecture tours in May 1853, April 1854 and September 1855. The fact that these visits to the West Country were not centred on the largest towns of Bath, Taunton or Weston, but to the much smaller towns and villages grouped around Butleigh: Kingweston, Street, Glastonbury, Keinton Mandeville, Somerton, Langport, Wells and Shepton, is confirmation that he *did* have a special connection to this local area of Butleigh and Street, a place with which he was familiar and where he had created friends, followers and sympathisers.

In a normal biography one usually begins with the birth and parentage of the person being studied to give a background to their childhood and development, to understand the influences that brought about their subsequent character. With James Finlen we are on uncertain ground until he is around twenty years of age, though he does tell us about his activities during his teenage years. Between the ages of twenty and forty-four we can reconstruct his life from published and other records, but then he fades into obscurity and disappears so entirely that we have no certainty as to when or where he died. Of his six children, only one, William, survived him to have children himself, but William also seems to have had no idea of the date of his father's demise. He married twice and left for Australia in 1885, becoming a successful tailor, where all but the first of his children were born.

Unfortunately, we do not have a painted, drawn or photographic image of James Finlen, though we do have a written description of him as 'a rather tall young man, with bare cheeks, a strong sandy-coloured brush sticking from his chin, and the hair of his head thrown back in a defiant (or arrogant!) kind of way.' This may be because, unlike many of his contemporaries, he did not author any books or try to appeal to the middle or intellectual classes with his message. The antagonistic press referred to him as a 'stump-orator' and indeed he was, much like John Wesley, an enthusiastic, evangelical preacher, but of a political doctrine that was intended to educate working class men and acquaint them of their 'rights'. His audiences were largely illiterate and, like Wesley, he often reached them through open air gatherings numbering hundreds and even thousands. Finlen had obviously read widely, and lectured on topics ranging from ancient history to contemporary British, Empire, Continental and foreign affairs. Other talents he exhibited included reciting parts, even whole plays, taken from Shakespeare, poetry, singing and he even tried his hand as a professional actor on the stage - his voice and delivery must have been exceptional. What he lacked

though, was tact and guile, and beset by personal, family problems, he fell victim to the Press after adopting a sympathetic view towards Irish Republicanism at the wrong moment in history.

## GENEALOGY - THE FINLEN FAMILY TREE



## FINLEN ORIGINS and FAMILY

On the 1851 census James Finlen states that he is 22 years old, London born, and living with Catherine Finlen aged 19, Kingston born, who we subsequently learn, is his sister. They are both unmarried. We know nothing certain of his parents other than that they were Irish. He mentioned them in a speech in November 1868 - "...because I loved the country (Ireland), which was the land of my parents." We have no idea whether he followed his father's occupation, which is unknown. He may well have been boarding out as an apprentice when he began his career, aged 15, as a French polisher. At his marriage in 1858 he stated on the certificate that his father's name was Patrick Finlen [no occupation given and not listed as 'deceased']. There *is* one sole existing record of a James 'Finlen' born in London in 1829 - but his father was called Michael.

The birth of this James was on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1829, and he was subsequently baptised on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1829 at St. Patrick's, Soho Square, the son of Michael Fenlin (sic!) and Catherine Furlong. This was a Catholic baptism. Also at St. Patrick's, Soho, a child Michael Finlan was born March 25<sup>th</sup> 1834, baptised on April 27<sup>th</sup> to a Patrick Finlan and Catherine nee Furlong. These are obviously the same parents, and unless Catherine married two brothers, or her husband used both forenames, a mistake must have occurred when writing out the record. It seems possible that the writer exchanged the forename of the primary supporter, God-father, in 1829, which was Patrick, with the name of the father. However, this second baptism, of a child *called* Michael, may suggest that the father was a Patrick Michael Finlan?

The FINLEN surname is (mis-)spelt in many ways in the existing records: Finlan, Finlen, Finlin, Finlon and yes, even Finlun, then there is Fenlin, Fenlon.... For people with this general surname the commonest spelling is Finlan, and almost every known person in the Victorian period with that surname was of Irish Catholic origin. Finlen is an uncommon spelling, but one which James Finlen adhered to, and used in his signature, though the newspapers sometimes had other ideas and adopted other spellings for him - something common to press reporters in every age!

What happened to his parents? Did one or both parents die? Did the family break up for some other reason? James Finlen in his life wasn't obviously a Catholic, and despite later in life supporting the Irish cause he never claimed to be a Catholic in any speeches or writings. His wife and children were Methodists or Weslyans. None of their children had Church of England baptisms and if they had Weslyan ones, the whereabouts of those baptism records are unknown. Since this birth and baptism of a James Finlen/Fenlin in 1829 in London is the *only* record we have of a James Finlen anywhere in 1829 I feel it *must* be the correct one - so what happened next?

Did the family then, temporarily, go to Kingston in 1832 where they had daughter Catherine [no Catholic records from there seem to have survived] and then return to London by 1834? No birth record for her has been found and she wasn't baptised at St. Patrick's. No trace has so far been found for a marriage between either a Michael or Patrick Finlen to a Catherine Furlong, either in Ireland or England. Several Catherine Furlongs were born in Wexford in the 1790s and one aged '30' was even acquitted at the Old Bailey, Middlesex, of passing a fake banknote in October 1819! I haven't found a Patrick Finlen who might fit the bill as James' father but an Irish Michael Finlan was baptised on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1793 in Laois and Kildare, Dublin, son of Thomas and Mary Finlan. This may be the same Michael Finlon, (born circa 1796) who died on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1841 (Mar Q 2/20 Bethnal Green London) at 'Bethnal Green Lunatic Asylum' of 'Palsy' [probably Parkinson's Disease]. He was buried on 21<sup>st</sup> February at Bunhill burial ground - as a non-conformist, but there is no way to prove it is James Finlen's father. No other member of the family is mentioned on the burial record, nor his marital status, and his age is approximate.

The best confirmation we could find for who James' and Catherine's parents were, would be to find the family on the 1841 census, but to-date they are either absent, or amongst the many 'so far' unreadable entries - the census was written in pencil and much is illegible on microfilm. If they should exist, we are looking for a James aged 11/12 and a Catherine aged 8/9 plus one or more parents and possibly (an)other sibling(s). The fact that just James and his sister were living together in 1851 suggests that the parents had moved away, or they had died.

If Michael/Patrick Finlen had died in 1841, we cannot know what would have happened to his wife and children, assuming that his wife survived. If she had predeceased him the children would have gone into a workhouse or been taken in by another family. The fact that James Finlen was living with his sister in 1851 shows that they remained in touch. A Michael Finlen born circa 1835, who is possibly the above Michael/Patrick Finlan's son, emigrated to the USA in 1865, where he married in 1868. James Finlen contemplated going to America in 1867 - was it to join his 'brother' or was his intention simply to join his 'Fenian' friends there and escape his persecutors? I have found no other trace of the younger Michael Finlen, not on the 1851 census - perhaps he was apprenticed somewhere around 1849, possibly to the Navy which took children as young as 12? If their mother had died pre-1851 it might explain why Catherine (Kate) Finlen ended up living with James. Unfortunately, James' sister Catherine (Kate) never officially married - or at least no marriage has been traced, and we have no record therefore of what forename she might have given her father. Having no birth record for Catherine, the fact that she bore the same forename as the wife of Michael/Patrick 'Fenlin', the probable father of James, is additional confirmation that Patrick and Catherine Finlan were most likely their parents.

James Finlen was a 'French-polisher' by profession, and he tells us, in his own account of himself, that his career began when he was 15 - *Morning Herald* Dec 25<sup>th</sup> 1867. Since he was born in 1829 that would equate to around 1844. His tutor or master may well have been George Hoppey, with whom we know he lived in 1851 [Census] and who was both a French polisher and Chartist. They were so close that Hoppey later adopted Finlen's daughter. It appears that Hoppey had had a son George born in 1841 who was buried Jan 1843 - his only child. James Finlen may well have become his apprentice in 1844 and been regarded by Hoppey as a surrogate son. Like many apprentices he could well have boarded with his master *from this time* - and it may well have been Hoppey who took his education in hand and encouraged him to pursue an interest in Chartist politics. In those circles, not attending church, his Catholicism may well have become redundant, though his vehement anti-priest stance may have been due to a different experience in the church.

From 1850 on we have many sources that help us to compile a picture of James Finlen's extraordinary political and personal life. However, the only other fact we have showing Finlen's political interests that pre-dates 1850 comes in his '*Defence of Himself*' of 1868, - that he had been active in the Chartist movement since 1848. This latter year saw the Kennington Common demonstration which had been attended by tens of thousands of working class people on April 10<sup>th</sup>. He was probably radicalised from around that time and, and with the zeal of youth, finding the

fervour of a cause that clearly sought justice and rights for the downtrodden, he became active in the movement. His unusual skills and abilities enabled him to easily communicate the Chartist ideals to fellow working class audiences, setting him apart from most other Chartist missionaries.

136	Die 2 Aprilis 1829 natus, et die 5 mensis ejusdem 1829 baptizatus fuit Eleonora filia Gulielmi Chamberlain et Joannis olim etiam Chamberlain - Patrimi fuisse Michaeli Molony et Elama Mahan a me Tho. Borgan	Die 10 Junii 1829 natus et die 12 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Cornelius filius Conneli Callaghan et Margarita (olim Hall) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Michaeli Thompson et Elama Callaghan a me J. Heaton	137
Duggan	Die 24 Januarii 1828 natus, et die 5 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Henricus filius Patricii Duggan et Joannis olim Madden conj. Patrimi fuisse Edwardo Pendergry et Bridgetta Moran a me Tho. Borgan	Die 14 Martii 1829 natus et die 17 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Lavizus filius Patricii Connell et Mariae (olim Curran) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Dominico Lead et Elama Ryan a me J. Heaton	Connell
Harley	Die 31 Martii 1829 natus, et die 5 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Catharina filia Thomae Harley et Catharinae olim Butler conj. Patrimi fuisse Gulielmo Nagle et Francisca Woods - a me Tho. Borgan -	Die 9 Aprilis 1829 natus et die 12 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Franciscus filius Thomae et Johanna (olim Ryan) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Bartholomaeo Savage et Maria Smith a me J. Heaton	Josiah
Kenny	Die 7 Aprilis 1829 natus et die 12 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Bartholomaeus filius Joannis et Mariae (olim Mulvaney) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Owen Kenny et Francis Mulvaney a me J. Heaton	Die 8 Martii 1829 natus et die 12 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Joana filia Joannis et Mariae (olim Kelly) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Michaeli Kelly et Joana Kelly a me J. Heaton	Walter
Grogan	Die 8 Aprilis 1829 natus et die 12 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Joannes filius Joannis et Mariae (olim Kelly) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Gulielmo Grogan et Maria Young a me J. Heaton	Die 18 Martii 1829 natus et die 19 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Joannes filius Joannis et Mariae (olim Kelly) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Thomas et Catherine O'Neill a me Ed. Norris m.a.	O'Neill
Fenlin	Die 11 Martii 1829 natus et die 12 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Jacobus filius Michaelis Fenlin et Catharinae (olim Furlong) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Robertus Fenlin et Maria Fenlin a me J. Heaton	Die 15 Aprilis 1829 natus et die 19 Aprilis 1829 baptizatus fuit Michael filius Michaelis Fenlin et Elonora (olim Saunders) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Dionysius O'Carry et Elonora O'Donnell a me Ed. Norris m.a.	Furlong

Birth 17 Mar. Baptism 12 Apr. 1829 of James Fenlin s.o. 'Michael Fenlin' and Catherine nee Furlong

138	Die 15 Aprilis 1834 natus, et die 19 mensis ejusdem baptizatus fuit Michael filius Roberti Fenlin et Mariae (olim Enright) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Joannes Cahill et Francisca Mahan a me Ed. Norris Mps Ap	Die 16 Aprilis 1834 natus et die 27 ejusdem mensis baptizatus fuit Thomas filius Patricii Wignard et Bridgetta (olim Kelly) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Joannes Kelly et Maria Kelly a me Ricardo Chumley	139
Burns	Die 31 Martii 1834 natus et die 19 Aprilis 1834 baptizatus fuit Maria filia Thomae Burns et Annae (olim Malone) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Joannes Burns et Maria Hartnett a me Ed. Norris Mps Ap	Die 17 Aprilis 1834 natus et die 27 ejusdem mensis baptizatus fuit Edwardus filius Joannis Conroy et Catharinae (olim Conroy) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Joannes Conroy et Margarita Conroy a me Ricardo Chumley	Looney
Mulhall	Die 8 Aprilis 1834 natus, et die 19 mensis ejusdem baptizatus fuit Loretta Eliza filia Patricii Mulhall et Margarita (olim Phelan) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse John Hyde et Maria Phelan a me Ed. Norris Mps Ap	Die 13 Aprilis 1834 natus et die 27 ejusdem mensis baptizatus fuit Thomas filius Thomae Offer et Margarita (olim Phelan) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Thomas Offer et Maria Offer a me Ricardo Chumley	Offer
Rawley	Die 14 Aprilis 1834 natus et die 19 Aprilis 1834 baptizatus fuit Catharina filia Samuelis Rawley et Bridgetta (olim Hayes) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Samuel Harris et Maria Harris a me Ed. Norris Mps Ap	Die 25 Martii 1834 natus et die 27 Aprilis 1834 ejusdem mensis baptizatus fuit Michael filius Patricii Finlan et Catharinae (olim Finlan) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Michael Finlan et Maria Finlan a me Ricardo Chumley	Finlan
Clarke	Die 25 Martii 1834 natus et die 19 Aprilis 1834 baptizatus fuit Maria filia Edwardi Clarke et Mariae (olim Donovan) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Edwardus Jordan et Loretta Margarita Hughes a me Ed. Norris Mps Ap	Die 28 Aprilis 1834 natus et die 27 Aprilis 1834 ejusdem mensis baptizatus fuit Jacobus filius Thomae Stack et Mariae (olim Kelly) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Joannes Stack et Maria Stack a me Ricardo Chumley	Stack
Lullivan	Die 17 Aprilis 1834 natus, et die 19 mensis ejusdem baptizatus fuit Dionysius filius Michaelis Lullivan et Hannah (olim Collins) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Dionysius O'Carry et Maria O'Carry a me Ed. Norris M. Ap.	Die 27 Novembris 1833 natus et die 27 Aprilis 1834 baptizatus fuit Thomas filius Dionysii Sullivan et Margarita (olim O'Connell) conj. conjugum. Patrimi fuisse Thomas Sullivan et Bridgetta O'Connell a me Ricardo Chumley	Sullivan

Birth 25 Mar. Baptism 27 Apr. 1834 Michael s.o. Patrick Finlan and Catherine nee Furlong

310	Humble	Michael Finlon	Male	about 45	1841	James Phillips	St. Stephen's	1841
	February			1841	February	in attendance		
	1841					Domestic		

Burial of Michael Finlon aged 45, February 13 1841 The Green, Lunatic Asylum, Bethnal Green

### THE FINLEN TREE

1858. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of St. John in the County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
96	Jan 21 <sup>st</sup>	James Finlon	Sillage	Bachelor	Agent	Egerton Grove, Hulme Manchester	Patrick Finlon	
		Mary Caroline Magee	Sillage	Spinster		This Parish	John Magee	Cheese Monger
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by _____ or after _____ by me,								
James Finlon			Isabella Hunter			G. Hunter		
Mary Caroline Magee			James Watson					
This Marriage was solemnized between us, _____ in the Presence of us, _____								

Marriage of James Finlen and Mary Caroline Magee January 21st 1858 Newcastle-upon-Tyne

**James Finlen** born 17 May 1829 London, son of Patrick (Michael) Fenlin/Finlan and Catherine Furlong, baptised as Catholic 12 April 1829, died post 1889 (unknown when or where).

Married: 21 January 1858 (Mar Q 10B/58 Newcastle upon Tyne) St. Stephen's, **Mary Caroline Magee** born 1836 Newcastle upon Tyne, d.o. John Magee, cheesemonger, and Mary (nee Vickers) O'Hara. [birth/baptism not recorded/found], died June 13<sup>th</sup> 1883 (Jun Q 2a/268 Dartford, Kent)

Children:

46	4 <sup>th</sup> November 1858	James	Boy	James Finlon	Mary Caroline Finlon formerly Magee	Commission Agent	6 Egerton Grove, Stretford Road, Hulme	January 1859	Richard John Forby Registrar
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1) **James** born 4 Nov 1858, 6, Egerton Grove, Stretford Rd., Hulme [1859 (March Q 8C/537 Chorlton)] Manchester, mother Magee. Father 'Commission agent'. Registered 1 Jan 1859 by mother. Died January 3 1890 (Mar Q 1C/16 London City) aged 29, inquest held January 8<sup>th</sup>.

NR	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 1860	William Boy	James Finlon	Mary Caroline Finlon formerly McGee	General Agent	Mary Caroline Finlon Mother 3 Grays Buildings Kingsland	Twenty first July 1860	Wm. Dancoast Registrar
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2) **William** born West Hackney Jun 10<sup>th</sup> 1860 (September Q 1B/311 Hackney) 3, Grays Buildings, Kingsland. Father listed as 'General Agent'. Mother's maiden name **McGee** and she registered the birth on July 21<sup>st</sup> 1860. William died 19 February 1937 at the age of 76 in Inverell, NSW, Australia. William married twice:

1<sup>st</sup> Fanny Martin [born about 1862] on 21 Jun 1883 (Jun Q 3a/163 Brentford) in the Wesleyan Chapel, Ealing. Witnesses were Quisted Fagg, Mary Finlen, Mary Martin and Alice Tickner. William's occupation was tailor and his father given as James Finlen - occupation 'French polisher' - obviously William knew or believed he was still alive. Fanny died on 27<sup>th</sup> Jun 1884 (Jun Q 3a/65 Brentford) and was buried on 1<sup>st</sup> Jul 1884 aged 22 address Windmill Terrace, Chiswick (St. Nicholas). *For certificates see below*

Child: Rose Ada (Finlen) Gilhorne, born 13 Jun 1884 (Jun Q 3a/124 Brentford) Middlesex, died 17 Jun 1966 Australia

2<sup>nd</sup> Jesse Eddy (born 16 August 1860 in New Bridge, Sancreed, Penzance, Cornwall) on Oct 1 1885 (December Q 1a/481 Fulham - as **Finlin**). On the marriage certificate he stated that his father was 'dead'. *Below*

Children [all in Australia]: Florence Jessie (Finlen) Bartle, (21 Jan 1887 - 14 Apr 1953), William Wesley Finlen (24 Jul 1888 - 6 Nov 1941), Mabel Ivy (Finlen) Syrett (1891 - 1972), Vera Hilda (Finlen) Martin (13 Nov 1892 - 21 Sep 1964), Ernest Thomas Finlen (21 Mar 1895 - 25 Mar 1974), Ruby Elva Finlen (7 Apr 1897 - 23 Feb 1993), Frank Hopetoun Finlen (9 Jul 1900 - 24 Mar 1963) and Mona Violet Finlen (b. & d. 12 Apr 1904).

1883. Marriage solemnized at the Wesleyan Chapel in the District of Brentford in the County of Middlesex

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
149	Twentyfirst June 1883	William Finlen	22 years	Bachelor	Sailor	Chiswick	James Finlen	French Polisher
		Fanny Martin	21 years	Spinster	—	Gunnerbury	John Martin (deceased)	Mason

Married in the Wesleyan Chapel according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Wesleyan Methodists by Certificate by me, *P. R. Osborn*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *William Finlen* in the Presence of us, *Quested Fagg* *Mary Martin* *Alth Fickner* *Mary Finlen* *William Jones* *Reastar*

First marriage of William Finlen 21 Jun 1883 to Fanny Martin - father 'alive'

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BURIALS in the Parish of *Chiswick* in the County of *Middlesex* in the year One thousand eight hundred and *Eighty-four*

Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Alfred John Moon</i>	<i>Chiswick Gardens</i>	<i>June 29<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>39 years</i>	<i>R. W. J. Dale</i>
<i>Hannah Calton</i>	<i>Bennet Street</i>	<i>June 29<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>11 months</i>	<i>Certified under 43 &amp; 44 Vict by H. Jackson</i>
<i>Fanny Finlen</i>	<i>Windmill Terrace</i>	<i>July 1<sup>st</sup></i>	<i>22 years</i>	<i>Certified under 43 &amp; 44 Vict by J. Mason</i>

Burial of Fanny Finlen (nee Martin) died 27, buried 29 Jun 1884

1885. Marriage solemnized at *St Peter's Church* in the Parish of *St Peter's* in the County of *Middlesex*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
238	1 October 1885	William Finlin	45	Widower	Sailor	Park Cottage	James Finlin	Seam
		Jane Eddy	45	Spinster	—	Park Cottage	Thomas Hoag Eddy	Seam

Married in the *Church of St Peter* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by *Edward Gray* of after *W. H. Gray* by me, *J. H. Tidmore, Vicar*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *William Finlin* in the Presence of us, *Jane Eddy* *Jane Frances Gray*

Second marriage of William Finlen (Finlin!) October 1 1885, to Jane Eddy - father 'dead'

- 3) Francis 'Frank' Finlen born circa 1862 no birth record traced, died 16 February 1937 at about age 75 in Sydney NSW Australia. Arrived in Sydney NSW on 30 Jul 1912 on TSS Maunganui from Dunedin, NZ as crew.

222	14 November 1863	Mary Caroline	girl	James Finlen	Mary Caroline Finlen	French Polisher	14 Elmore Street Islington	December 1863	J. W. Baker Deputy Registrar
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- 4) Mary Caroline Finlen, born 13 November 1863 (December Q 1b/329 Islington) 14, Elmore St., Islington East, Middlesex. Registered 26 Dec 1863 by father. Mother Magee. Later she becomes Mary Caroline Hoppey after adoption, then Fagg after the death of her adoptive father and her adoptive 'mother's' re-marriage to Quested Fagg (a witness to brother William's first marriage). Death not found.

285	Eighteenth April 1865 Hollingworth Street	Jonathan Vickers Boy	James Finlen	Mary Caroline Finlen formerly Magee	French Polisher	Jos. Finlen Father 9, Hollingworth Street Holloway	Registered May 1865	Registered
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5) **Jonathan Vickers Finlen** b. 18 April 1865 (Jun Q 1b/245 Islington) 9, Hollingworth Street, Holloway, Islington West. Registered by father May 30<sup>th</sup> 1865. Mother Magee. The **Jonathan Finlin** aged 2 of Queens Road Islington who died 4 October, buried 18 Oct 1867 (Dec Q 1B/199 Islington) in the burial ground at Finchley, Parish of St. Mary, Islington. His maternal grandfather was Jonathan Vickers (1766 - 1856), hence the middle name.

312	Fourth October 1867 4, Victoria Terrace Queen's Road	Jonathan Finlen	Male	2 years	Son of James Finlen French Polisher	Jabes. Quinsy Convulsions 10 hours certified	Dr. Lawton in attendance 4 Victoria Terrace Islington	Registered October 1867	Registered
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2898

BURIALS in the Burial Ground at FINCHLEY, for the Parish of St. Mary, Islington, in the County of Middlesex, in the Year 1867				
NAME	ABODE	When Buried.	AGE.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
Robert Hutchinson No. 13435	25 Ashford Street Islington	16 Oct.	73	Dr. Wilkenson
George Edward Morgan No. 13436	104 St. Pauls Road St. Pancras	17 Oct.	15	Dr. Wilkenson
Mahilda Russell No. 13437	Osborn Place Islington	18 Oct.	3 years	Dr. Wilkenson
Samuel Beckett No. 13438	Waltham Islington	18 Oct.	60	Dr. A. Jones
Marion Gochwin No. 13439	Swans Street Islington	18 Oct.	8 years	Dr. A. Jones
Jonathan Finlin No. 13440	Swans Road Islington	18 Oct.	2 years	Dr. A. Jones
Ellen Watts No. 13441	Garden Court Islington	18 Oct.	9 years	Dr. A. Jones
Female infant No. 13442	Home in Highbury Park Islington	18 Oct.	1 day	Dr. A. Jones

Above  
Death certificate of Jonathan Finlen on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1867 at 4, Victoria Terrace, Queen's Road, Islington. From Quinsy? after 10 hours convulsions.

Left  
Burial record of Jonathan Vickers Finlen (Finlin) October 18<sup>th</sup> 1867

411	Ninth October 1866 35, Balls Pond Road	Lincoln Philip Boy	James Finlen	Mary Caroline Finlen formerly Magee	French Polisher	Ch. C. Finlen Mother 35, Balls Pond Road Islington	Registered November 1866	Registered
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6) **Lincoln Philip Finlen** b. 9 Oct 1866 (Dec Q 1B/332 Islington) - birth Registered by mother [Magee], 20 Nov 1866, address 35, Balls Pond Road, Islington East. Almost certainly named after Abraham Lincoln and Paul Revere. He may have died shortly after his birth was registered on November 20<sup>th</sup> - but no death or burial record has been found. More likely to have been adopted or taken into care after his mother was committed to an asylum 45 days later, but if so, his name must have been changed - not so far traced. He would have needed a wet-nurse still. He was the sixth child in just under eight years for Mary Caroline, and she was just 29 years old, and seemingly had to cope almost entirely by herself.

247	Thirteenth June 1883 Metropolitan Imbecile Asylum Darent	Mary Finlen	Female	45 years	Unknown Islington	Paralysis Dietrich's Certified by Dr. G. White L.R.C.P.	Dr. B. Dyer Resident Metropolitan Imbecile Asylum Darent	Registered June 1883	James George Carr Registrar
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Death certificate for Mary (Caroline) Finlen June 13 1883 at Metropolitan Imbecile Asylum, Darent

James Finlen's wife Mary Caroline was admitted into an Asylum on Jan 4<sup>th</sup> 1867, just under three months after their son Lincoln's birth. If Lincoln wasn't already dead, he would have needed a wet-nurse, since he doesn't seem to have accompanied his mother into the asylum. He most likely was adopted or taken into care by the Parish - there is no record of his death or burial, so he probably *did* survive but may have had his name changed. The fifth child, Jonathan who was just 30 months old died on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1867 after ten hours of convulsions. Mary herself died some 16 years later in the Metropolitan Imbecile Asylum [founded 1878], Darenth, on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1883 (Jun Q 2a/268 Dartford, Kent) as Mary Finlan aged '45' - under 'occupation' the certificate states - 'unknown', Islington. Her death was caused by Paralysis Phthisis - paralysis of the spinal cord caused by TB. [ironically, the informant was Dr. T. B. Dyer].

In 1861 James Finlen's sister Kate was still living with him and his wife, but by the time that James's wife Mary was sectioned she lived or lodged independently elsewhere. From October 1867 James seems to have had just his oldest four children to look after. He paid women, probably neighbours, to care for them during the day while he went to work and his sister also seems to have taken them in at times This must have drained James Finlen's resources considerably, and the time he gave to his political activities in the evenings and weekends will have put an extra burden upon the children's carers. The children's upbringing and education must have been seriously neglected and we can assume that mental well-being of their father must have been detrimentally affected too. The family slowly sank into squalor and poverty of the worst kind.

These events and the relevant surviving documents will be dealt with in the sections to come, alongside James Finlen's political exploits, while the Magee/Vickers family history plus the story of what happened to James Finlen's children are given in an appendix. This is not an exhaustive study nor an attempt to place James Finlen accurately as an activist in the political history of the period - I haven't dealt completely with the main people or events with which he became involved. My idea, which began simply, but then expanded, was to try and record his personal travel through life and record some of his activities and speeches. He is certainly a person who played an important role in the Victorian era, but one which ended in tragedy and mystery - he became a forgotten man.

More research might unearth additional facts about his final years, and his children's early lives. There are workhouse records and apprenticeship records, not yet on-line or examined, that possibly hold clues. Without knowing the pseudonym he lived under in the final phase of his life it is doubtful we will ever know for certain exactly when or where he died, though just post-1889 in Lancashire would seem a good bet.

I would like to acknowledge the kind assistance I have received from Andrew Whitehead, historian, lecturer and ex-BBC journalist; Dr. Richard Scully, University of New England, Armdale, NSW, Australia; and Kellie George whose son is a direct descendent of James Finlen. I hope that the latter might be inspired by his ancestor who fought for the causes of justice, equality, freedom and democracy for all, and not be too dispirited by the cost to James Finlen and his family of the unequal struggle that he waged against overwhelming forces in a period that was not yet ready for such progress.

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