

## George M Stark, Chemist

From the late 1890s 18/20 High Street was a chemist shop run by the Stark family. Members of the same family continued in the business until the shop was sold in 1970.

### George M. Stark

George Miller Stark was born in 1865 at Anwoth Schoolmaster's House where his father William was the school teacher. William was from Fife and his wife, George's mother, Charlotte Miller, was from Leith. George was the second youngest of seven children.

In the mid 1870s the Stark family moved to Skyreburn School House.

In the 1881 Anwoth census, at Skyreburn Schoolhouse, George was a druggist's apprentice, but by 1891 he had qualified as a chemist. It is not known for certain where George did his training but from the 1870s there was a chemist at 18/20 High Street Gatehouse, run by John Hall, so he may have done his training there. John Hall died in 1884.

In the 1891 Girthon census the house at 18/20 High Street appears to be unoccupied, although the shop might still have been operating. Living in Church Street, Joseph Bennett (17, born Girthon) is described as a chemist's apprentice. He may have worked at the chemist's shop.

George Stark was still living with his parents at Skyreburn but was now listed as a chemist.

George married Jessie McDade from Creetown in 1892 at Girthon. It is likely that they were living at the house by the chemist shop in the High Street from about that date.

In 1898 George and Jessie had a daughter Jessie Vernon Stark, born in Girthon.

In the 1899 Girthon Valuation Roll George M Stark was the tenant of a house, shop and powder magazine owned by the trustees of John Hall.

By 1901 George M Stark (36, born Anwoth) and his wife Jessie (36, born Creetown) were living at 10/12 High Street. They had one child - Jessie V. Stark (2, born Gatehouse). George is described as a shopkeeper, chemist and druggist.

Later in 1901, George and Jessie had a son Ralph Sydney Stark, born in Girthon.

In 1908 George bought 10/12 High Street from the Trustees of John Hall's estate.

1911 census George M Stark (46, born Anwoth) was living at 10/12 High Street with his wife Jessie (46, born Creetown) and 2 children - daughter Jessie Vernon Stark (12, born Girthon) and Ralph Sydney Stark (10, born Girthon). George was a pharmacist.



Also in the 1911 census across the High Street at number 7/9 were George's sisters Barbara (55), Elizabeth (53) and widowed sister Frances Torrance (57) plus a niece Frances Stark (11, born in England). *Frances Stark was the daughter of a brother - John Swainston Stark. She was born in Liverpool in 1900. Her father had died in 1905.*

Barbara and Elizabeth ran a shop selling fancy goods.



George Miller Stark died in 1924 and his daughter Jessie took over running the chemist shop where she had helped and trained with her father for many years.

In 1928 Jessie Vernon Stark married David A. C. Edwards at Girthon. David was a trained chemist.

The couple had two sons. Michael born in 1929, who worked with the BBC and died in 1978 and George, born 1931 who worked abroad - in Polynesia where he married and died.

For a time the shop and house remained the property of widow Jessie Stark with David A.C. Edwards, chemist as her tenant.

Sadly the marriage did not work out and David Edwards left Gatehouse. The couple divorced in 1962.

Apart from the High Street property. Jessie Edwards also owned 'The Crag' a bungalow just outside Gatehouse, near Cardoness Castle, in the 1940/41 Valuation Roll.

Jessie died in 1969 in Dumfries. Her husband David predeceased her.

The shop at 18/20 High Street - 'Stark the Chemist' was sold in 1970 but continued to trade under the same name for a number of years.

**LOOK HERE!**  
— FOR —

**PHARMACEUTICALS**

**FINE CONFECTIONERY**      **TOBACCO AND CIGARETTES**

**SPORTING AMMUNITION**

**DOG AND GAME FOODS**      **FILMS AND CAMERAS**

**RADIO SETS AND REPAIRS**

YOU SHOULD COME TO:

**GEORGE M. STARK**  
(DAVID A. C. EDWARDS, M.P.S.)

**GATEHOUSE-OF-FLEET**  
Telephone No. 210.