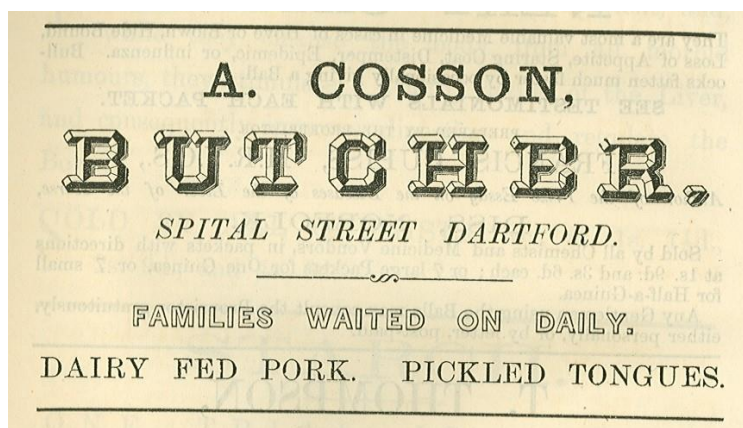


## Albert Cosson (1841-1903) : Butcher and Chairman of Dartford School Board

Albert Cosson was born on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1841 in Chertsey, Surrey. He was the third of six children (four boys and two girls) born to James and Ann Cosson. The family are shown in the 1851 census living in Guildford St, Chertsey. There was James Cosson, aged 41, a carrier, his wife Ann (46) and their children William (14), Albert (10), James (7), Eliza Ann (3) and Amy (1). All were born in Chertsey apart from Ann who was born in Isleworth. Albert's father James died in 1853 aged 43, when Albert was 12.

By 1861, Albert had left home and was learning to be a butcher. The census that year shows him in Twickenham as a butcher's servant, aged 20 in the household of John M Stedwell, a master butcher.

In 1866, Albert married Isabella King at a church in Holborn, London. He was 25 and she was 21, born in Eydon, Northamptonshire. An 1867 directory of Dartford shows him running a butchers shop in Spital Street, Dartford. The 1871 census shows Albert, aged 30, a butcher living at 18 Spital Street with his wife Isabella (26), daughter Helen Isabel (4), George Smewins (25, a butcher's shopman) and Eleanor Bonner (15, a general domestic servant).

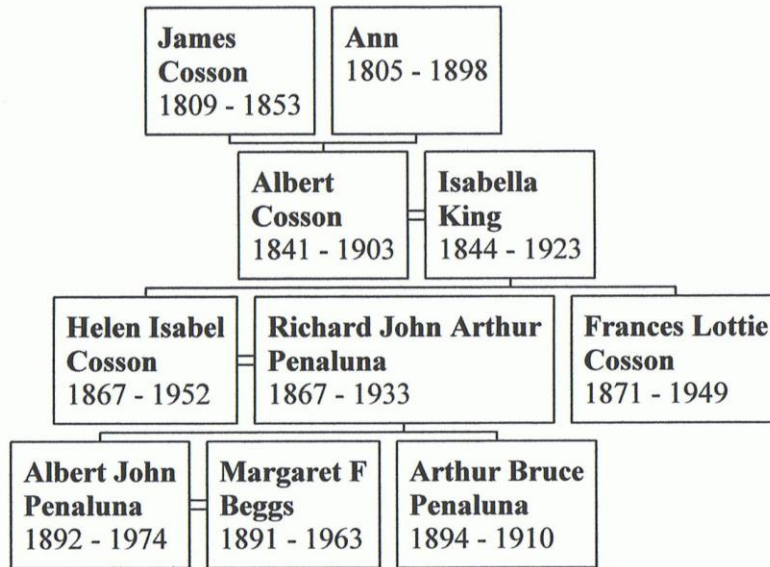


1871 Advert

Albert used to play cricket for Dartford on the Brent<sup>1</sup> – “*whilst not a dashing bat, (he) served the occasional useful position as a stone-waller*”. He had a “*robust, athletic figure*”<sup>3</sup>.

An Act of Parliament was passed in 1870 which required School Boards to be appointed to provide and supervise elementary education. The members were elected every three years and were empowered to levy a rate.<sup>2</sup> The Board supervised the construction of schools in St Albans Road (which opened in 1876), Heath Street (1877), West Hill (1891) and York Road (1901). Albert was a trustee of the Wesleyan (Methodist) church and was one of the managers of the school in Kent Rd that they operated (it opened in 1868). He was also a member of Dartford Schools Board for many years, becoming its Chairman. According to his obituary<sup>1</sup> *..without possessing brilliant gifts, by his sound common sense and assiduous attention to the mastery of details, proved himself a valuable coadjutor in the administration of School Board affairs. His loss will be deeply deplored by his colleagues, with whom he always maintained a most amicable relationship, and whose appreciation was naturally elicited by his sedulous devotion to the duties of his office.*

### *Hourglass Tree of Albert Cosson*



(a more detailed family tree can be found in the Cosson42 database on the RootsWeb WorldConnect Project)

By 1880, Albert had moved to premises at 35 Lowfield Street. He was living there in 1881 when the census lists him as aged 40, a butcher employing one man and one boy. Also at the address were his wife Isabella (36), daughters Helen Isabel (14) and Frances Lottie (9) plus his widowed mother-in-law Hannah King (65, an annuitant). The same people were living at this address in 1891, when Helen's occupation is given as book keeper. The building still exists, now occupied by the New Crystal Kebab House, next to The Two Brewers pub.



35 Lowfield Street (2011)

Helen Cosson (Albert's eldest daughter) married Richard John Arthur Penaluna in 1891. They had two sons, Albert John (b1892) and Arthur Bruce (b1894). Richard (known as John) was a schoolmaster at West Hill School.

In 1901, the household at 35 Lowfield Street consisted of Albert (60, a butcher), Isabella (56) and Frances (29, a book keeper). Albert had a severe attack of influenza that year which "*impaired his constitution*"<sup>3</sup>. He died in 1903 aged 62 and was buried in East Hill Cemetery. His grave is in the west central section of the cemetery, next to the site of the non-conformist mortuary chapel (now demolished) and in an area where other Wesleyans are buried. The inscription reads

*In loving / memory of / ALBERT COSSON / born January 13th 1841, / died March 17th 1903.  
/ Victorious through Christ / Erected by his fellow townsmen in / recognition of his long  
public service / for the good of Dartford, especially / in the cause of elementary education /  
Also / ISABELLA / wife of ALBERT COSSON / born June 23rd 1844 / died Jan 22nd 1923 /  
At rest / And FRANCES LOTTIE COSSON / born 29th September 1871 / died 28th December  
1949 / I have kept the faith*



The grave of Albert Cosson (in East Hill Cemetery)

An obituary<sup>1</sup> read

*By all classes our departed townsman was held in good esteem, and the sympathy of the community generally will attend his widow and family in the irreparable loss of a devoted husband and kind and indulgent parent.*

Probate on Albert's estate was granted to his widow Isabella Cosson. The value was £435, equivalent to about £190,000 now<sup>4</sup>.

Philip Taylor © 2014

[PhilT42LQS@Yahoo.co.uk](mailto:PhilT42LQS@Yahoo.co.uk)

#### References

1. *Death of Mr Albert Cosson* in newspaper (not Dartford Chronicle) clipping dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 1903 in Dartford Library Local Studies Collection.
2. *Dartford Historical Notes* by S K Keyes (1933) p596.
3. *Death of Mr A Cosson*, Dartford Chronicle, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1903.
4. Calculated with respect to average earnings using the website "Measuring Worth"  
[www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/](http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/)