

= Alfred Lennon =

Alfred " Alf / Freddie " Lennon (14 December 1912 ? 1 April 1976) was the father of English musician John Lennon . He spent many years in an orphanage ? with his sister , Edith ? after his father died . He was known as being very witty and musical throughout his life ? he sang and played the banjo ? but not as being very dependable . Although always known informally as Alf by his family , he later released a record as Freddie Lennon , and was referenced and quoted in newspapers and media under that name .

He married Julia Stanley in 1938 . John was their only child together , but as Alf was often away at sea during World War II , he did not see much of his child during his infancy . During this period , Julia became pregnant with another man 's child . He offered to look after his wife , their child and the expected baby , but Julia rejected the idea . He had very little contact with his son until Beatlemania , when they met again , but later had only intermittent contact with each other . He died in Brighton , where he had gone to live after marrying 19 @-@ year @-@ old Pauline Jones , with whom he had two further children .

= = The Lennon family = =

James Lennon (b . 1829) and Jane McConville (1831 ? 1869) , Alf 's grandparents , moved with their respective families to Liverpool in the 1840s . James and Jane were both from County Down , Ireland , and were married in St. Anthony 's Chapel , Scotland Road , Liverpool , on 29 April 1849 . James was a warehouseman and a cooper at the time . They had seven children together : Elizabeth (b . 1850) , James , John " Jack " , William George , Richard Francis , Joseph (b . 1865) and Edward . Jack Lennon (b . 1855) , a shipping clerk / bookkeeper , the father of Alf Lennon and grandfather to John Winston Lennon .

In 1888 , Jack married Margaret Cowley (from Liverpool) and they had two children : Mary Elizabeth Lennon , and Michael Lennon . Margaret died giving birth to Michael (who also died 15 days later) on 19 August 1892 . Shortly after , Jack began living with Mary " Polly " Maguire in a common @-@ law marriage . In total they had fifteen children , eight of whom died young . In 1901 , Jack , Polly and his daughter , Mary , were living at 3 Lockhart Street , Liverpool . They lived in the Toxteth Park area of Liverpool , and at least five of their children were born there : George Lennon (1905 , in Denton Street) , Herbert Lennon (1908) , Sydney Lennon (1909) , Harold Lennon (1911) and Alfred Lennon (1912) were born at 27 Copperfield Street .

Jack eventually married Polly in 1915 , after they had moved to Elmore Street , Everton . One of the witnesses at the wedding was Polly 's sister , Catherine Seddon . Daughter Edith Lennon was born that year and then Charles (21 November 1918 ? 26 May 2002) . The Lennons moved back to Toxteth Park , and Jack died in 1921 , at 57 Copperfield Street . He is buried in a common and unmarked grave (along with five unknown adults and three children) in the Anfield Cemetery , Liverpool . Polly could not read or write , but was reported to be very humorous and supposedly had psychic abilities . After Jack died , Polly did not have enough money to keep the whole Lennon family together , so she placed two of her children , Alf and Edith , in the Blue Coat School Orphanage . It was situated just around the corner from Newcastle Road (where Julia Stanley lived) . Polly died on 30 January 1949 .

= = = The urban legend = = =

It has often been claimed that his grandfather was a professional singer , a ship 's cook , and that he emigrated to the United States , and that his father , Jack Lennon , became a " refined " British minstrel , who toured America with ' Robertson 's Kentucky Minstrels ' Vaudeville troupe in the late 19th century . It is also claimed that Jack 's first wife was an American who died during childbirth after they had both moved back to Liverpool . This has been proven to be false by checking birth certificates and the 1861 , 1871 and 1901 censuses .

Alfred Lennon (always called ' Alf ' by his family) , was known as being happy @-@ go @-@ lucky

, and " couldn 't resist having a good time " . He had rickets as a child and wore leg braces , which led to his growth being stunted at 5 ' 4 " . In 1927 , he auditioned for a children 's music hall act , Will Murray 's Gang , at the Empire Theatre in Liverpool . Having passed the audition he ran away from the orphanage and joined the show . He travelled with the troupe for a time before being discovered in Glasgow and returned to the orphanage , where he was severely punished . He was known as being always quick with a joke or a witty line , but never held a job for any length of time . When he was 15 years old he left the Bluecoat orphanage and found a job as an office @-@ boy , but preferred to visit Liverpool 's many vaudeville theatres and cinemas , where he knew the usherettes by name . His brother Sydney often lent money to him , after Sydney got a job in a tailor 's shop .

= = Julia Stanley = =

Alf first saw Julia Stanley at the ' Trocadero ' club , a converted cinema on Camden Road , Liverpool . Although he did not speak to her at the time , he later saw Julia again in Sefton Park , where he had gone with a friend to meet girls . Alf , who was dressed in a bowler hat and holding a cigarette holder , saw " this little waif " sitting on a wrought @-@ iron bench . The 14 @-@ year @-@ old Julia said that his hat looked " silly " , to which the 15 @-@ year @-@ old replied that Julia looked " lovely " , and sat down next to her . Julia asked him to take off his hat , so he promptly took it off and threw it straight into the lake .

Alf was a talented musician , and specialised in impersonating Louis Armstrong and Al Jolson . He played the banjo , as did Julia , though neither pursued music professionally (Julia would later teach her son how to play the banjo) . They spent their days together walking around Liverpool and dreaming of what they would do in the future ? like opening a shop , a pub , a cafe , or a club . In March 1930 , he took a job as bellboy on board the Cunard passenger liner SS Montrose . He kept in touch with Julia , writing to her and meeting her whenever he docked in Liverpool . He was later offered a job on a whaling ship for two years ? which could have earned him enough money to buy a house ? but turned it down when he found out that Julia 's father had arranged the job , so as to keep him as far away from Julia as possible .

On 3 December 1938 , 11 years after they had first met , Julia married Alf after proposing to him . They were married in the Bolton Street Register Office , and Julia wrote ' cinema usherette ' on the marriage certificate as her occupation , even though she had never been one . None of Julia 's family were there , but Alf 's brother Sydney acted as a witness . They spent their honeymoon eating at ' Reece 's ' restaurant in Clayton Square (which is where his son would later celebrate after his marriage to Cynthia Powell) , and then went to a cinema . On their wedding night , Julia stayed at the Stanleys ' house and he went back to his rooming house .

Julia 's family did not like Alfred at all : Julia 's father said he was " certainly not middle class , " and Julia 's sister Mimi was particularly opposed to him . Julia 's father demanded that he present something concrete to show that he could financially support Julia , but his only idea was to sign on as a Merchant Navy bellboy on a ship bound for the Mediterranean . He later worked on ocean liners that travelled between the Greek islands , North Africa and the West Indies . He graduated from bellboy to steward during the months he was away , but when he arrived back in Liverpool he moved into the Stanley home in Newcastle Road . He auditioned for local theatre managers as a ' ship 's entertainer ' , but had no success , and went back to sea .

= = = John Lennon = = =

Julia found out that she was pregnant in January 1940 . John Winston Lennon was born on 9 October 1940 , on the second @-@ floor ward of the Oxford Street Maternity Hospital in Liverpool , supposedly during a German air raid in World War II , although it has been confirmed there was no air raid on this date . Alf first saw his son that November when he returned from working as a merchant seaman on troop transports during World War II . He sent regular pay cheques to Julia , who lived with her son at 9 Newcastle Road (the Stanley family 's home) . He occasionally went back to Liverpool , but did not stay long before he was sent off on another ship . The cheques to

Julia stopped when he went absent without leave in 1943 . Neither Julia nor the Merchant Navy knew of his whereabouts . Julia only found out because she stopped receiving her allowance money , and the Navy wrote to her to inform her that they were looking for him .

Julia had started going out to dance halls in 1942 , and met a Welsh soldier named ' Taffy ' Williams who was stationed in the barracks at Mossley Hill . Alf blamed himself for this , as he had written letters telling Julia that because there was a war on , she should go out and enjoy herself . Julia took his advice , and often gave her young son a piece of chocolate or sugar pastry the next morning for breakfast that she had been given the night before . She became pregnant by Williams in late 1944 , though first claiming that she had been raped by an unknown soldier .

When Alf eventually returned to Liverpool on 13 January 1945 , he offered to look after Julia , their son and the expected baby , but Julia rejected the idea . Alf took John to his brother Sydney 's house , in the Liverpool suburb of Maghull , a few months before the birth . The baby girl , Victoria , was subsequently given up for adoption (after intense pressure from Julia 's father and family) to a Norwegian Salvation Army Captain . Julia later met Bobby Dykins and lived with him , but after considerable pressure from Mimi ? who twice contacted Liverpool 's Social Services and complained about the infant sleeping in the same bed as Julia and Dykins ? Julia reluctantly handed the care of her son over to Mimi . According to his brother Charlie , people used to visit the Lennon house in Copperfield Street while Alf was away at sea , offering large sums of money (up to £ 300) if Alf would divorce Julia , but Charlie told them to " get lost " .

In June 1946 , Alf visited Mimi 's house at 251 Menlove Avenue and took his son to Blackpool for a long ' holiday ' ? but secretly intending to emigrate to New Zealand with him . Julia and Dykins found out and followed them to Blackpool , and after a heated argument Alf made the five @-@ year @-@ old boy choose between Julia or him . John chose Alf (twice) and then Julia walked away , but in the end John , crying , followed her . Alf lost contact with the family until Beatlemania , when he and John met again . In 1968 , John Lennon told Hunter Davies that he soon forgot his father , saying , " It was like he was dead . "

= = Later life = =

Alf later told his version of what happened while he was AWOL in 1943 . He claimed that he had sailed from America to Bône , North Africa , but was arrested for stealing one bottle of beer from the ship , consequently serving nine days in a military prison . After his release he became involved in various " shady deals " , and was supposedly rescued from a criminal gang of Arabs . He eventually served on a troopship from North Africa to Italy before finally boarding a ship that was making its way to England , in 1944 . In 1949 , Alf 's career at sea ended when he was sentenced to six months ' imprisonment . He had been drinking when , late at night , he saw a mannequin in a wedding dress in a shop window . He broke the window , picked up the mannequin , and danced with it in the street until he was arrested .

In 1958 , when Alf was working with Charlie Lennon in the Barn Restaurant in Solihull , their brother Sydney sent a newspaper clipping from the Liverpool Echo reporting that Julia had died . A saddened Alf left Solihull for London , but kept in touch with Charlie by phone .

Alf made no real attempt to contact John again until the height of Beatlemania (claiming he did not know who the Beatles were) . He was working as a kitchen porter at the Greyhound Hotel in Hampton , South London , when someone pointed out a photograph of John Lennon in a newspaper and asked whether he was related to John . Alfred and Charlie visited one of the Beatles ' Christmas shows at the Finsbury Park Empire in London . When the Beatles were filming a scene for A Hard Day 's Night in the Scala Theatre in Soho in April 1964 , Alf walked into Brian Epstein 's NEMS office in Argyle Street with a journalist . " I 'm John Lennon 's father " , he explained to the receptionist . When Epstein was informed , he " went into a panic " , and immediately sent a car to bring John to NEMS office . Alf was shabbily dressed , with his unkempt , thinning grey hair greased back . He stuck out his hand , but John did not take it , saying " What do you want ? " . Alf placated John somewhat by saying , " You can 't turn your back on your family , no matter what they 've done . " Their conversation did not last long , as John soon ordered Alf and the journalist out of the NEMS

office . The Beatles ' personal stories were kept out of the newspapers ? by agreement with journalists who were offered exclusive stories in return ? but one day John opened a copy of the Daily Express and saw a photo of his father .

A few weeks later , John 's wife Cynthia opened the door of Kenwood (their home in Weybridge) to see a man who " looked like a tramp " but , alarmingly , with John 's face . Cynthia invited Alf in , and gave him tea and cheese on toast until John came home , which he was expected to do in an hour or so . While waiting , Cynthia offered to cut Alf 's " long , stringy locks " of hair , which he allowed her to do . After waiting for a couple of hours , Alf left . John was annoyed when he came home , and told Cynthia (for the first time) about Alf 's visit to the NEMS office a few weeks earlier . Later he relented slightly and contacted Alf over the next few months , telling Cynthia " Alright , Cyn . He 's a bit ' wacky ' , like me . " After Christmas , in 1965 , John was embarrassed to hear that Alf had made a record : " That 's My Life (My Love and My Home) " , released on 31 December 1965 . John asked Epstein to do anything he could to stop it being released or becoming a hit . The record never made it into the charts . In 1966 " Freddie Lennon " (the name under which Alf recorded) tried again , and issued three singles with the group Loving Kind . These records did not sell well , either . Though the public at large quickly forgot these attempts to cash in on his son 's success with the Beatles , the records do command fairly high prices among collectors of rare records , with " That 's My Life " being worth over £ 50 .

= = = Pauline Jones = = =

Three years after meeting John in the NEMS office , Alf (who was then 56 years old) turned up at Kenwood again , with his fiancée Pauline Jones . Pauline had been an 18 @-@ year @-@ old Exeter University student and a Rolling Stones fan when she met the 54 @-@ year @-@ old Alf in 1966 . Alf and Pauline grew tired of trying to convince Pauline 's mother to allow them to marry , so they eloped and were married in Gretna Green , Scotland . In 1966 , Alf asked John if he could give Pauline a job , so she was hired to help , looking after Julian Lennon and also the piles of fan mail . Pauline spent a few months living at Kenwood in the attic bedroom . Alf and Pauline moved to a flat in Bourne Court , London Road , Patcham (a suburb of Brighton) before moving to Ladies Mile Road , Brighton , in November 1969 . Alf had two sons with Pauline : David Henry Lennon (February 26 , 1969) and Robin Francis Lennon (October 22 , 1973) .

= = Death = =

Late in his life , Alf wrote a manuscript detailing his life story which he bequeathed to John . It was Alf 's attempt to fill in the lost years when he had not been in contact with his son , and to explain that it was Julia , and not Alf , who had broken up their marriage . John later commented : " You know , all he wanted was for me to hear his side of the story , which I hadn 't heard . " By 1976 , Alfred was diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer and Pauline contacted John via Apple Corps to make sure that he was aware that his father was dying . John sent a large bouquet of flowers to the hospital and phoned Alf on his deathbed , apologising for his (John 's) past behaviour . In 1990 , Pauline published a book called Daddy , Come Home , detailing her life with Alf and his meetings with John . Pauline later remarried , and is now known as Pauline Stone .

= = Song sample = =

" In My Life " is John 's song about his youth in Liverpool . Alf replied to this song by releasing the single , " That 's My Life " , b / w ? The Next Time You Feel Important ? , in 1965 .

" That 's My Life " (1965)

" The Next Time You Feel Important "