

# “Not a lot of people know that!”

## A Look into Sir Michael Caine’s Ancestry

The actor, Sir Michael Caine, was born Maurice Joseph Micklewhite. Does that surname variant derive from Micklethwaite or from Micklewright? I set out to investigate.

Sir Michael Caine was the eldest son of Maurice Micklewhite and his wife Ellen Burchell, according to civil BMD records on FreeBMD.

Surname First name(s) Mother District Vol Page

### Births Mar 1933 (99%)

Micklewhite Maurice J Burchell [St. Olave](#) 1d [170](#)

Surname First name(s) Spouse District Vol Page

### Marriages Dec 1931 (99%)

Burchell	Ellen F M	Micklewhite	<a href="#">Southwark</a>	1d	<a href="#">124</a>
Hudd	Mary L	Wond	<a href="#">Southwark</a>	1d	<a href="#">124</a>
Micklewhite	Maurice	Burchell	<a href="#">Southwark</a>	1d	<a href="#">124</a>
Wond	Joseph	Hudd	<a href="#">Southwark</a>	1d	<a href="#">124</a>

Looking at the 1911 census, Maurice (senior) shows up as a 12 year old scholar, living at Amicable Row in Southwark with his parents Joseph and Hannah and 4 siblings.

1	Joseph Micklewhite	Head	37	Married	15	8	5	3	Labourer	Walterite	20	Woker	Bromsey London	British
2	Hannah Micklewhite	Wife	34	Married	15	8	5	3					Southwark London	British
3	Joseph Micklewhite	Son	13	Single					School	390		9	Bromsey London	British
4	Maurice Micklewhite	Son	12	Single									Bromsey London	British
5	Henry Micklewhite	Son	6										Walterite London	British
6	Hannah Micklewhite	Son	4										Walterite London	British
7	John Micklewhite	Son	1										Walterite London	British
8	Louisa Micklewhite	Son	4										Walterite London	British
9	Katharine Micklewhite	Son	1										Bromsey London	British
10	George Micklewhite	Son	3										Bromsey London	British

Usefully, Joseph misread the instructions and included on the list names of his children who had died by 1911.

The 1901 census is more problematic. Maurice Micklewhite doesn't show at all initially. By searching for variants of the surname, and using his parents' Christian names, eventually Maurice Nicklewhite son of Joe and Johanna shows up in Southwark – not only is the surname not quite what was expected, but both parents' names are slightly different too.

68	39	So.	1	George Coombs	Head	h.	26	Married	15	8	5	3	Woker	do.	do.
				Madda do.	Wife	h.	25	Married	15	8	5	3	do.	do.	Borough
				George do.	Son	h.	14	Single					do.	do.	Canterbury
				Henry do.	Son	h.	12	Single					do.	do.	
				Madda do.	Daughter	h.	17	Single					do.	do.	Walterite
				Joe Micklewhite	Head	h.	26	Married	15	8	5	3	Woker	do.	Borough
				Johanna do.	Wife	h.	24	Married	15	8	5	3	do.	do.	
				Joseph do.	Son	h.	13	Single					do.	do.	
				Maurice do.	Son	h.	12	Single					do.	do.	
				Callie do.	Daughter	h.	3	Single					do.	do.	Walterite

They are living in Villa St, Newington, with the Coombs family. I have not found any relationship between these families yet.

Maurice (senior) was born in 1899 and died in 1956.

Surname First name(s) District Vol Page Surname First name(s) Age District Vol Page

### Births Mar 1899 (99%)

Micklewhite Maurice [St. Olave](#) 1d [265](#)

### Deaths Mar 1956 (99%)

Micklewhite Maurice 57 [Lambeth](#) 5c [1515](#)

Joseph married Johanna/Hannah Regan in St Saviour Southwark Registration District.

Surname First name(s) District Vol Page

**Marriages Mar 1897** (~99%)

Jones	James	<a href="#">St. Saviour</a>	1d	98
Micklewhite	Joseph	<a href="#">St. Saviour</a>	1d	98
Regan	Hannah	<a href="#">St. Saviour</a>	1d	98
Smith	Esther	<a href="#">St. Saviour</a>	1d	98

Joe/Joseph has an age on the 1901 and 1911 censuses consistent with a birth in 1874/5 – and FreeBMD shows one in March Quarter 1875 in the Registration District of St Saviour Southwark. He died in 1960.

Surname First name(s) District Vol Page

**Births Mar 1875** (~99%)

Micklewhite	Joseph	<a href="#">St. Saviour</a>	1d	37
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Surname First name(s) Age District Vol Page

**Deaths Sep 1960** (~99%)

MICKLEWHITE	Joseph	85	<a href="#">Southwark</a>	5d	493
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Joe Mickelwhite (another variant) aged 16 shows up in Southwark on the 1891 census living with his parents Joseph and Kate at Roberts Place, Clarendon St, which is close to Amicable Row.

42	Roberts Place	1	Joseph Micklewhite	Head	87	36	Book-keeper	x	Greenwich London
			Kate Micklewhite	Wife	82	36	Wash. draman	x	Wimbledon
			Joe Micklewhite	Son			" do "	x	St George Southwark
			Henry Micklewhite	Son			Schooler		" " "

Joseph and Kate/Catherine/Catharine can also be traced in Southwark on the censuses without too much difficulty:

1881 in Henry St Southwark

84			Joseph Micklewhite	Head	Man	40	Carman	Henry Southwark
			Kate	Wife	do	29	Book maker	St. George Woolwich
			Joseph	Son	do	6	Schooler	Henry Southwark
			Henry	Son	do	4	do	do do
			Kate	Wife	do	27	do	do do
			Oliver Spear	Wife	Wife	49	Washer	Med. & Surgeon

1901 in Falstaff Yard, Southwark

131	Falstaff Yd.	1	Joseph Micklewhite	Head	Man	45	Catherin Turner	Waltham	Waltham	Southwark	minded
			Catherine	Wife	Wife	46				do	
			John	Son	Son	16				do	
			Rachel	Daughter	Daughter	8				do	

1911 in Falstaff Yard, Southwark

1	Joseph Micklewhite	Head	55	Waltham							
2	Catherine	Wife	54	Waltham							
3	John	Son	25	Waltham							
4	Rachel	Daughter	22	Waltham							

I still haven't found the marriage for Joseph Micklewhite and Catherine/Kate Turner on FreeBMD, but not all events make it from the local record office to the GRO records. Eventually I found the banns on Ancestry's London parish records in Walworth in 1880, some years later than their son Joseph's age would suggest. Did the marriage actually take place as only the banns have been found?

No \_\_\_\_\_ **Banns of Marriage between**  
*Joseph Micklewhite, Bachelor,*  
*and Catherine Turner,*  
*Spinster, both of this Parish.*  
 Were published, as follows:  
 1st, on Sunday *Feb 1* by *JMB*  
 2d, on Sunday *" 8* by *JMB*  
 3d, on Sunday *" 15* by *JMB*

This elder Joseph shows on the census in 1861, and 1881 to 1911. I haven't yet found him in 1871 – I wonder what variant he goes by – although I did find his brother William in an Industrial School. On the later censuses, his surname is Micklewhite or similar, but on 1861 with his parents George and Emma, he's a Micklethwaite. They're living on Butcher Row in Southwark.

220		Joseph Micklethwaite	Head	Mar	48	House Keeper	Studdens Street
		Emma	Wife	Mar	46		Studdens Street
		George	Son		18		Studdens Street
		William	Son		16		Studdens Street
		Henry	Son		14		Studdens Street

Joseph was born in 1854, and baptised Joseph William (all George's sons had a second name of William except William!) He died in 1915. It appears that he was the one who formalised the change from Micklethwaite (or similar) to Micklewhite.

Surname	First name(s)	District	Vol	Page	Surname	First name(s)	Age	District	Vol	Page
<b>Births Sep 1854</b> (~99%)					<b>Deaths Mar 1915</b> (~99%)					
Micklethwaite	Joseph William	St Geo Sk	1d	140	Micklewhite	Joseph	57	Southwark	1d	51

George and Emma are transcribed on the 1851 census as Michlethwaite.

299	21 Charles St	George Michlethwaite	Head	Mar	36	House Painter	Wick's Highgate
		Emma	Wife	Mar	21		Wick's Highgate
		George	Son		11		Wick's Highgate

They have just the one young child which might suggest a recent marriage. In fact they married in 1859 by which time they already had 3 children – the marriage is on both FreeBMD and the Ancestry London PRs. The latter shows George's full name as George Gilliam Scott Micklethwaite, an unusual use of middle names at this time, and names his father Joseph, a hair dresser.

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.
169	Feb 7 4 1859	George Gilliam Scott Micklethwaite	full	Bachelor	Costler	Waterloo Road	Joseph Micklethwaite	Hair Dresser
		Emma Russell		Spinster			David Russell	Bookbinder

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by \_\_\_\_\_ or after James by me, \_\_\_\_\_

This Marriage was solemnized between us, George G. S. Micklethwaite in the Presence of us, Robt Jones  
Emma Russell Mary Ann Newey

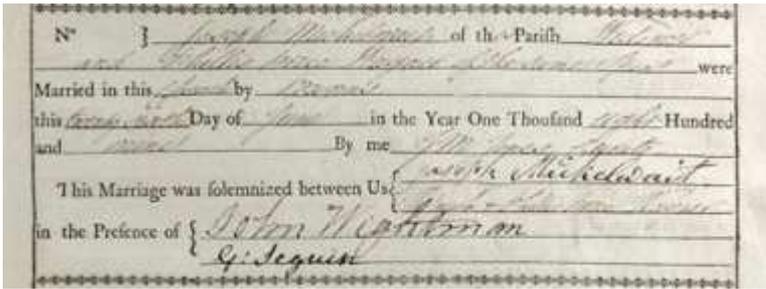
George died in 1869.

Surname	First name(s)	Age	District	Vol	Page
<b>Deaths Sep 1869</b> (~99%)					
Micklethwaite	George	59	St. George S.	1d	99

The London PRs also show the baptism of George Gilliam Scott Micklewait (yet another variant) in 1814 in Hornsey to Joseph and Phillis.

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <u>Hornsey</u> in the County of <u>Middlesex</u> in the Year 18 <u>14</u>						
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
18 14 No. 65.	George Gilliam Scott Micklewait	Joseph	Micklewait	Highgate St. Andrew's Church Hornsey	Bookbinder	J. B. Simpson Curate Hornsey

Joseph and Phillis Price Wagner married at St Bride's Fleet St in 1809, he was a widower.



I think he had previously married Sarah Benson in 1797 at St Martin in the Fields. His parentage remains elusive. One branch of the Micklethwait tree uses St Bride's about a century earlier than Joseph – I will have to wait until the intervening records are made more easily available. Joseph died in 1833.

And that's as far as I can get at the moment. As Sir Michael said in one of his films: "Don't worry lads – I'll think of something".

In his autobiography, Sir Michael says his father was a porter at the Billingsgate fish market, as were his ancestors before him. The censuses neither support nor contradict this. Both Josephs were recorded as dock labourers in the censuses, although the elder Joseph born 1856 is recorded in 1881 as a carman. This occupation is not that dissimilar to his father George, who was an ostler and horsekeeper. Joseph, father of George, was an Innkeeper at George's baptism, although when George married he said his father was a hairdresser. So there is a variety of occupations all through the family.

Joseph and Phillis married North of the River, and their first daughter Emma Ann was baptised at St Clement Danes Westminster in 1810. However, in 1811 Eliza was baptised at St Mary's in Lambeth. The next child, George, as mentioned above, was baptised in Hornsey, then 6 or 7 more children baptised in Lambeth. In 1911 both Josephs were living off Tabard Road in Lambeth.

As I haven't found parents for the Joseph born about 1771, it is not possible to say where Micklethwaites are related to this branch. Indeed, as DNA testing has shown there could be at least 3 different Micklethwaite branches, it would not be sensible for any Micklethwaite to claim a relationship to Sir Michael. On the other hand, most of the Micklewhites in London and the London area can claim descent from Joseph born 1854, so are related to Sir Michael.

As well as the identity of Joseph's parents, 2 other questions have emerged during this research:

- William Stephen Micklewhite married Rebecca Jones in 1817 at St Georges Hannover Sq. He died 1875 aged 84 in Southwark. He is recorded on the 1841, 1851 and 1861 censuses in South London. Is he Joseph's younger brother or a son of Joseph to a marriage before Sarah Benson?
- Phillis Ann Mickelthwaite born 1863 in Southwark married James Hornidge 1907 also Southwark, but doesn't show on any of the censuses. Was she the youngest child of George and Emma, and did Emma remarry (or take another partner) after George died in 1869 so Emma and Phillis are shown under a different surname? I have found no death or marriage for Emma, nor any census record after 1861.

In conclusion, I think I have shown that this Micklewhite branch is a variant of Micklethwaite – as Sir Michael is reputed to say "Not a lot of people know that" – or they didn't until they read this article.

#### Links:

Summary Chart of Sir Michael's line: <http://andymick.magix.net/public/SirMichael-direct2.pdf>

Full chart: <http://andymick.magix.net/public/micks-data/gdr-m5604.pdf>