

# The Chemist's shop 20 High Street, Gatehouse of Fleet

From around 1873 there has been a chemists or pharmacy at 20 High Street and for the next 100 years or so it was run by just two families.

In 2024 the chemist's shop transferred from Boots the Chemists to Seonaid Anderson.



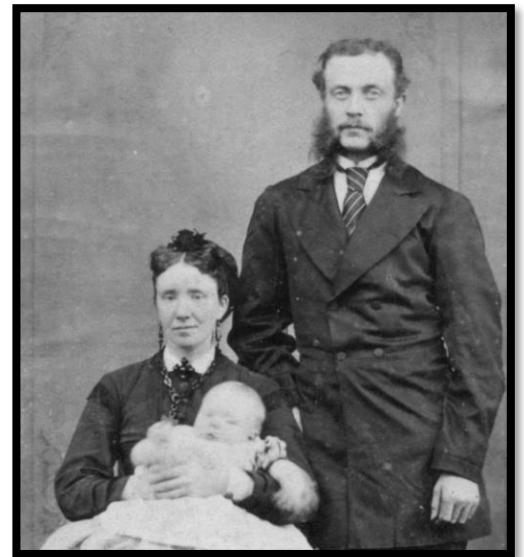
## 1873 – 1884 John Hall was the first 'druggist' known to use the premises.

He bought the property in 1873 but he had been living in Gatehouse since 1851, when the census tells us that he was a druggist, aged 22. So he may have rented the property before he bought it.

John was from Lanark and married his wife Margaret McDonald in Glasgow in 1851. He died in 1884. His widow married Dr James Nicoll Cox in 1887 and moved to Woodlyn on Castramont Road. John Hall & Margaret had a son, Donald, who qualified as a doctor.



c1880 Apothecaries Hall, 20 High Street



c.1878. John & Maggie Hall with baby Donald.

## 1890 - 1924

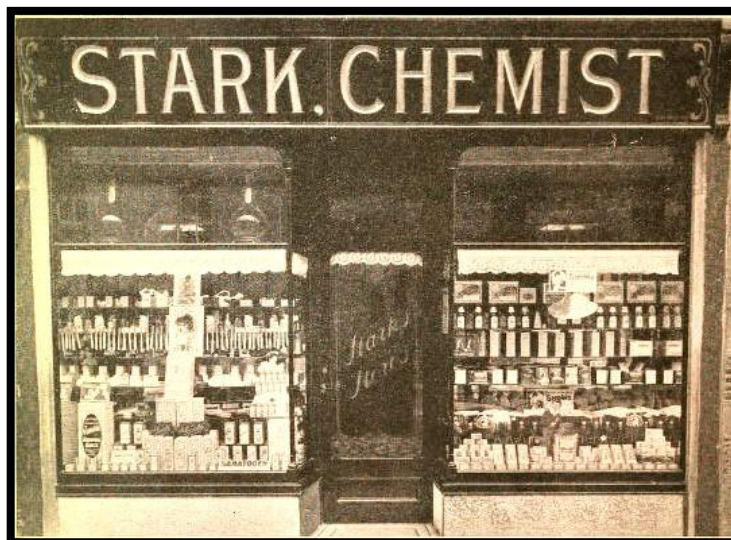
**George Miller Stark**, was a local lad, born in 1865 at Anwoth Schoolmaster's House where his father William was the school teacher. George was the second youngest of seven children. In the mid 1870s the Stark family moved to Skyreburn School House. George qualified as a pharmacist in Edinburgh in 1890 and married Jessie McDade in 1892. He rented the property from the Hall family until he purchased it in 1908. The family lived in the house by the chemist shop (18 High Street).



The **1899** Girthon Valuation Roll says that George Stark was the tenant of a house, shop and powder store which was owned by the trustees of John Hall.

The **1901** Girthon census described George Stark as a shopkeeper, chemist and druggist.

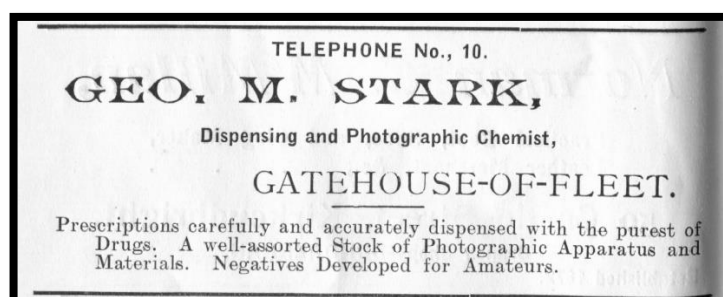
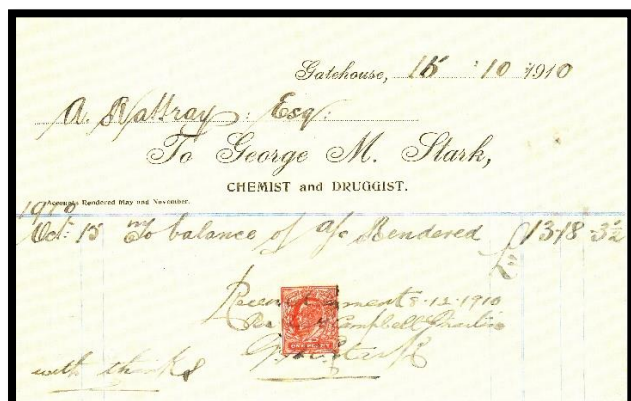
In **1909** this photo of the new shop front featured as part of an advert for the shop fitter.



c.**1910** George & Jessie Stark with children Verna & Ralph.

**1910** Receipt for payment from Arthur Rattray

**1913** Advert ex Stewartry Almanac



In **1924** George died suddenly whilst playing a round of golf on his day off. His daughter **Jessie Vernon Stark**, known as **Verna**, took over running the chemist shop where she had helped and trained with her father for many years, quite unusual for a girl at that time.

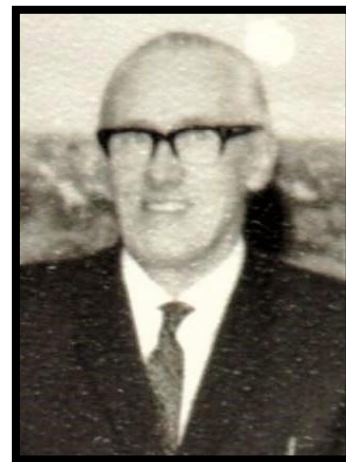
## 1924 - 1969



Verna Edwards (née Stark)

In 1928 Verna married **David A. C. Edwards**, a trained chemist. The couple ran the shop together until they separated. Verna continued to manage the chemists with help from **Bob Graham** and others, including **Helen Veitch**, **Linda Moffat**, and **Betty Hannah** (née McCulloch). The shop even opened on Sunday mornings. Verna Edwards died in 1969.

In the 1921 Anwoth census, Bob was listed as a 15-year old pharmacists assistant.



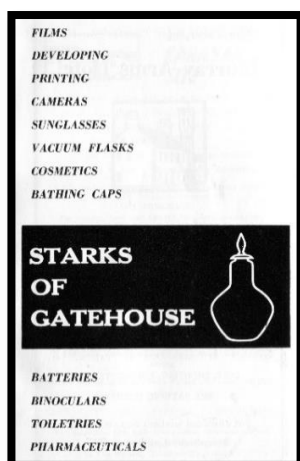
Bob Graham



Starks Bottles

## 1970 – 1989

Although the shop was sold in 1970, it continued to trade as 'Starks of Gatehouse' for a number of years, with different owners. **James L. McCrindle** from Castle Douglas, who had a chemists shop in Kirkcudbright, bought the Gatehouse property and business, and lived at 18 High Street. **Alexander Barnett** was the pharmacist who also dealt with prescriptions from vets. **Bob Graham** and **Betty McCulloch** continued to work for McCrindle, whilst **Sheila Broadfoot** and part-timers **Jessie Scott**, policeman's wife, and **Ruth Kean** also worked there.



In **1973** Hollywood came to Gatehouse when 'The Wickerman' film was made.

The chemist's shop appeared as 'Lennox the Chemist' in the film while number 18 High Street was Dr Ewan's house.

Here, one of the stars, Edward Woodward, is signing autographs outside the chemist's shop.

## 1976 – 1986

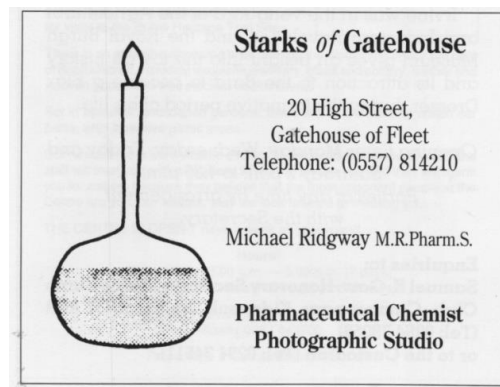
Mrs Janette Orr was the pharmacist and she lived with her family at number 18 High Street.





## 1989 – 2000

**Mike Ridgway** owned the shop in the 1990s and he employed Ruth Hannah, then trained **Donna Veitch**, who worked in the shop for over 25 years. Another local employee was Isabel Baird. The shop began to stock many non-pharmacy items, particularly when **John Gilpin** became the pharmacist



**2000-2005** Pharmacist **Headley Foster** with **Donna Veitch**, **Fiona McIntyre** & **Gillian White**. The chemist was owned by **John Gilpin** at this time.



**2005-2008** Pharmacist **John Lawson**, with **Donna Veitch**, **Susi Briggs** & **Nicola Kelly**. The shop owner was **John Currie**.

**Boots the Chemist** kept the shop from **2008 until 2024**.



It is likely that, at around the time that Boots took over the shop, the house, number 18, was sold separately.

**2024** - Welcome to **Seonaid Anderson**, the new pharmacist in Gatehouse



Thanks to **Donald Tait** for info. and photos relating to the Stark family, and to **Sheila Wallace** and **Donna Veitch**, ex employees of the business, for their memories.