Rich Man, Poor Man, 
Beggarman, Thief 

The ancestry of my parents 

James Sneyd 
Auckland, 2009
For my parents
on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary,
14th of December, 2009
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Introduction

Genealogy is a somewhat strange beast. Those who love it will spend years trying to find out obscure details of their GGG-grandparents\(^1\), or their second, third, or fourth cousins, and count it time well spent. Others, who don’t, think they’re mad. I’m one of the former. If you’re one of the latter, then bite me. It’s a fascinating study, to find out where you came from, how you came to be where you are, and all the many strands that make up your ancestry. I like to know that some of my ancestors were French Huguenots, that others were English minor landed gentry, while yet others were dirt-poor Scottish miners. I’m ridiculously proud of the fact that I’m a fifth-generation New Zealander, and that at least four of my ancestors were first settlers. It’s fascinating that another ancestor was one of the very early settlers to the east coast of North America. I like to visit places where my ancestors lived and worked, I like to know on what boats they came to New Zealand, and when. I’m not entirely sure why I like to know all this, but I do.

There seem to me to be two quite different kinds of genealogists. Some like to trace all the descendants of a particular ancestor, keeping track of their multiple cousins, and how exactly they are related. I, personally, find this rather dull. I’m not all that interested in knowing about my 6th or 7th cousins around the world. I know I have a lot of them, and that’s quite enough. I’m of the second variety, those who love to trace their ancestry back through the generations, as far as possible\(^2\). Unfortunately, I have not collected a great deal of information about brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles; although such information is rather harder to obtain than the direct line, it can add an enormous amount to our understanding of the family. However, for better or worse, a lot of those details are missing from this book. Maybe someone else will fill in the gaps, educating me in my turn. I hope so.

At any rate, this book is about my ancestors, or as many of them as I can conveniently include. I say “conveniently” because I am much luckier than the majority of genealogists, in that many other relatives have already found out vast amounts of information about the family. A lot of my work was already done, before I even started. Mostly, I have been merely a collector of information, rather than a discoverer. However, there has been an awful lot to be collected, making the job neverending and nontrivial. Because there is so much information, any interested readers are encouraged to refer early and often (like voting) to the Chart For Dummies on page x, which provides an elegant and beautiful summary of the contents of this book. Approximately, anyway, and possibly not very beautifully or elegantly, but never mind.

So, to business. My name is Alfred James Robert Sneyd and I was born in Dunedin, New Zealand, on the 14th of November, 1962\(^3\). Call me James, please. Not Jim. Or Alfred. My mother is Rosalie Helen McPherson (born in Blenheim, NZ, on the 14th of December, 1935) and my father is John Graham Trevelyan Sneyd (born in Auckland, NZ, on the 18th of February, 1935). He’s always called Sam, except by his mother, who always called him Graham, pronounced the poncy English way as Grem. The reasons for this will become clear.

My mother is descended from a number of old New Zealand families. The Neals and Norgroves arrived, respectively, in Nelson and Wellington very early on in New Zealand colonial history, around 1840, and stayed. The Neals were farmers, salt of the earth, very proper. The Norgroves had quite

\(^{1}\text{This means Great-Great-Great-grandparents.}\)

\(^{2}\text{I hasten to reassure the sceptical reader that I’m not part of the lunatic fringe that traces their ancestry back to Moses, through the Egyptian Pharaohs. You see a lot of that. It’s highly entertaining, although of less genealogical value.}\)

\(^{3}\text{Like anybody cares. That’s OK. I shall not reappear until the very end.}\)
a bit more spark, but a lot less money. I suspect they were mostly mad. In some cases I know they were. The McPhersons arrived in Dunedin around 1860 or so, dirt-poor, and remained that way. I suspect they were mostly scoundrels. They came to the gold fields in Central Otago, but never found any gold\(^1\). However, although they might not have had a lot of cash, they did seem to have had a lot of fun. The McPherson sense of humour is well represented by my mother, who does not always behave like a lady.

My father, on the other hand, is descended from quite different sorts of rogues. Richer ones, for a start. His maternal grandfather, James Bond, was the mayor of Hamilton, and his maternal grandmother, Octavia Graham of Edmond Castle, came from a rather wealthy English family from Cumberland. His paternal Sneyd grandparents were, on the other hand, just as low class as my mother’s family. You can imagine the marital result. Everybody on Dad’s side came to New Zealand relatively recently, around the turn of the 20th century, so, as far as New Zealand colonial history goes, they are Johnny-come-lately’s.

Genealogy, like real life, follows the money. Poor people were mostly forgotten as soon as their children were dug into the dirt. Parish records (which started in England after 1538\(^2\)) are an unreliable and difficult source at best, and nonexistent at worst. It is almost impossible to trace, with any accuracy, the ancestry of a poor family past a few generations or so.

Not so for the wealthy. Land ownership had to be known, money had to be tracked, and marriages had to be recorded. There is thus a relative plethora of sources to track the ancestry of those with money. A relative plethora only, of course, as once one goes back a few centuries there is considerable uncertainty about the details of even the wealthiest and best known families. Particularly when it comes to the girls, who were marginally important at best, and then only if they made a good marriage.

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\(^1\)Well, there is a story in that, as it happens, to be told later. All in good time.
\(^2\)They were first introduced by Thomas Cromwell, apparently, but were widely ignored as many thought it was a new way to tax people. It wasn’t until after about 1600 that parish records became widely kept.
Because of this, some of my father’s ancestry can be traced, with pretty good certainty, for 400 years or so, and with all the usual uncertainties back to Charlemagne.\footnote{In Western Europe, one can’t do much better than this. There are many conjectured descents from antiquity, and some interesting possibilities, but none of these is considered reliable (by anybody sensible). As a side note, it’s an interesting fact that, of all the people alive in 1000 AD, only a few hundred, at best, can be shown reliably to have descendants today. Lots more did, obviously (well, probably, not obviously), but we just don’t know the details. As another side note, Charlemagne was at least 40 generations ago (and probably a lot more). This means that every person alive today had, at the time of Charlemagne, at least $2^{40}$ ancestors, which comes to a whopping $10^{12}$ people, give or take a billion or two. Given that the population of Europe at that time was only 15 million or so, it’s not surprising that any particular person pops up in the ancestry. Hence, a descent from Charlemagne is hardly noteworthy.} His grandmother, a Graham of Edmond Castle, had a mother who was a Boileau de Castelnau, through which old Huguenot family the connections wind backwards through the labyrinth of European nobility, into the mists of the Dark Ages. Most of these details shall be ignored here. They are common to so many people, and appear in so many genealogy books already, that I hardly need to cover this ground again.

My mother’s, however, cannot be traced in the same way. At least, not by me. Nobody cared about Scottish miners, London dock workers, or German peasants. The latest financial crisis shows they still don’t. So, if this account seems rather lopsided, I accept no blame.

One question that I’m sure you’re all asking yourself is “How did he find this out, and how can he be sure he’s correct?”. A very good question indeed. Well, two very good questions, to be precise. I’m glad you asked them. The trouble is that so many people don’t ask these questions, ever, and plaster the internet with spurious genealogies, fictitious dates, and imaginary people. They can sound so plausible, they are so deeply believed, and they are such piles of crap. It’s frustrating. Especially when you have to pay for the privilege of reading them. Take ancestry.com, for example. 90% nonsense, 10% accurate, 1% verified, and 0.0001% interesting\footnote{I made those numbers up. So sue me.}. It’s very difficult to establish the facts of who was born where and when. The most recent few generations are (often, but not always) relatively easy, but then things get messy. Misspelled names, badly remembered dates and illegible records are the plague of genealogists, and the further back one goes, the worse it gets. So you can never be sure that you’ve got it right. You can never be certain that the child’s father really was the father (you still can’t), you can never be certain that the dates are correct, and you can never, ever, trust your sources completely\footnote{Even some well known and widely used sources like Lart’s Huguenot Pedigrees [50] have clear errors, with children being born to parents who are not yet themselves born, while other sources such as Burke [15] or Chesnaye-Desbois [21] are so riddled with errors they verge on the unusable. (I use them anyway.) Or so I am told, at least. I’m not expert enough to know this for myself. Mind you, it’s easy to find errors in Burke; I’ve found a few myself.}. All you can do is construct what appears to be a plausible story, consistent with common sense and what sources there are, and cross your fingers.

Here I’ve tried always to follow reasonably reliable sources (listed on page 301). I don’t give the source information for every single fact – that would be unwieldy – but I try to give the general source information. Any interested reader can always refer to my web page (http://www.burningviolin.org-family) where the full source information is given.
Part I

Mummy Dearest
Chapter 1

McPhersons, Clarks and Peddies

My mother was born a McPherson, so that is where we shall start. She was actually only the second generation of McPhersons to be born in New Zealand, although her grandfather had come to New Zealand when young, and her McPherson ancestors had lived in Dunedin, or in Manuka Creek (between Lawrence and Milton), for many years. They were miners, for coal in Scotland and for gold in New Zealand; poor before they came to New Zealand, and poor after.

Arrival in New Zealand; Robert McPherson and Marion Waugh

The first of this McPherson branch to arrive in New Zealand was my mother’s G-grandfather, Robert McPherson (see page 6), who arrived in Port Chalmers on the 5th of October, 1861, on the Robert Henderson, from Clyde. He was accompanied by his wife, Marion Waugh, and five children.\(^1\)

Robert and Marion came to New Zealand from East Stirlingshire, one of the major coal mining areas in Scotland at that time. Robert himself was born in about 1821, in Wallacetown, Ayrshire, now a suburb of the town of Ayr\(^2\). In the early 19th century, Wallacetown was a relatively new arrival, only in existence since about 1760, due to the discovery of coal nearby. True to form, Robert’s father was a coal miner, but I know nothing more about either of his parents, apart from their names (Benjamin McPherson and Janet Smith). At some stage, Robert must have moved east, to the districts of East Stirlingshire, as it was in the parish of Muiravonside (pronounced Moranside) that he married Marion Waugh, in 1847. Marion herself was born in Redding, very close to Muiravonside, and was about 24 when she married Robert. Redding was the site of one of the large Polmont coal mines, so it’s likely that Marion also came from a mining family.

In about four years, around 1851, they had their first son, Benjamin, who was born in New Monkland (a few miles off to the southwest, towards Glasgow), they had a daughter, Margaret, in 1853 at Muiravonside, another daughter, Marion, in 1855 at Stonerig (in Stirlingshire), and another daughter, Janet, in 1860 at Bathgate, West Lothian.\(^3\). The family was obviously moving around a lot; the West Lothian 1861 census lists Robert’s occupation as “brusher in mines”, so we can be pretty confident that he went wherever he could get a job, maybe as an itinerant miner.

The 1840/41 Statistical Account for Stirlingshire has some lovely tidbits. The population of Muiravonside was around 1700, included one insane person under restraint, and three too weak in mind to be employed in labour.\(^4\) Coal mining was clearly a major activity, and the people were poor. However, according to the Reverend James McFarlan, Minister, who wrote this account, “The people are industrious, sober, and kind, especially to other in distress.” Yeah, right. In neighbouring Polmont “The people, on the whole, are orderly and peaceable. Among the colliers, there has been

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\(^1\)According to the shipping list they were all daughters, but they certainly were not. More on this later.

\(^2\)Actually, it’s not so clear. The 1861 census says that Robert was born in Wallacetone, Stirling (a town close to Polmont and Muiravonside in East Stirlingshire), but his death certificate says he was born in Ayrshire. I’ve gone with the Ayrshire Wallacetown.

\(^3\)Another Janet was born in 1857, but died young

\(^4\)Teenagers, obviously.
The McPheersons, Clarks and Peddies.
a perceptible improvement during the last few years – more attention being paid to the education of the young." How nice that must have been.

In May of 1861, Gabriel Read discovered gold in what came to be known as Gabriel’s Gully, in Otago, thus leading to the Central Otago gold rush. Is it a coincidence that Robert and Marion, together with their children, left Scotland on the 11th of July that same year, and went straight to the Otago goldfields? Probably it is. They traveled as assisted passengers (i.e., the provincial government paid for their fare over – the Otago provincial government was a great encourager of Scottish immigration), which seems to indicate that they didn’t just follow the gold trail. And the fact that the whole family came would seem to indicate the same thing. Nevertheless, whatever their original intentions, the gold fields is where they ended up.

They came on the Robert Henderson, famous for her quick passages of around 80 days, the usual time being 100 to 130 days. It was her third voyage from the Clyde to Otago. Thomas Reid, who sailed to Bluff in the Robert Henderson in 1862 left a detailed diary account of the voyage, which makes interesting reading in spots (although mostly rather dull, to be honest). Robert’s and Marion’s experience must have been similar in many respects, with the difference, of course, that Thomas Reid was a rather wealthy young gentleman, while Robert definitely was not. The diary lists day after day of good weather or foul, ship concerts (which poor Thomas didn’t enjoy much), horrible food (with advice to future travellers on what to bring), a lot of sea sickness, and a lot of damp.\(^1\) The 1861 voyage was described in the Otago Witness\(^2\) as follows:

This beautiful Clipper Ship arrived at the Heads on Saturday, at 9, a.m., after one of her usual rapid passages, this being the third voyage she has made from the Clyde to this port with Immigrants. She left the Tail of the Bank on Thursday evening, the 11th July, and experienced fine weather to the Line, which was crossed on the 31st day; the Cape was passed on the 30th, and the Snares was sighted on Friday last, thus occupying 84 days from land to land, and 85 days from port to port. The weather experienced in the South Sea was blustery and changeable, with a good deal of rain and a very low Barometer – on one occasion it went down to 28°, the ship being hove to at the time to a N.E. gale. There was thus no opportunity of testing the high rate of speed of the ship, the greatest distance made during the course of any one week being 1,750 nautical miles. The passengers have been remarkably healthy, the only casualty being the death of one of the females from consumption. This doubtless arises from the excellent arrangements made for their comfort. The utmost harmony has been maintained amongst the passengers, and the conduct of all has been excellent. A series of concerts were given during the fine weather, and amongst other startling novelties a band of Ethiopian Serenaders caused much amusement, both to young and old – the hearty laughter on those occasions doing more good than the contents of the medicine chest. The state of health of the children has been very satisfactory; an extra quantity of farinaceous [sic] food and milk, put on board by the agents, have been found very beneficial. After arrival, Captain Logan, in addition to a valedictory address signed by all the passengers, received a more substantial token of the respect and esteem in which he is held by them in the shape of a purse of sovereigns. Dr. Somerville, the Surgeon, was also presented with an address, marking the kindly feelings created by his uniform attention to the wants of the passengers.

Not all voyages were so uneventful, by any means\(^3\). For those who are interested, on board the Robert Henderson were 29 ploughmen, 19 shepherds, 36 labourers, 2 farmers, 2 wrights, 1 smith, 1 dyer, 2 slaters, 1 shoemaker, 3 painters, 1 grocer, and 25 domestic servants. What a haul for the colony. I have no idea how Robert and Marion McPherson were classified.

\(^1\)One bit that made me giggle was that poor old Thomas was too bashful to bathe on deck, using the fire hose. He preferred to go to the night heads after dark, and have a couple of buckets of water thrown over him. Sounds nasty. I think I’d go for the hose, myself.

\(^2\)Otago Witness, 12th of October, 1861, page 5.

\(^3\)See page 36.
According to the shipping list he and his wife had five daughters with them, but this is certainly untrue, as Benjamin, the eldest son, was on that ship also. That there were at least three other daughters is likely (Margaret, Marion and Janet), but who the fifth child is, or if there was one at all, is unclear.\(^1\) There were also two other families of Waughs on board, and I suspect they were related to Marion. I have no reason to think this, I just do. It was common for extended families to emigrate together.

Questions: Marion Waugh is a real puzzle. I have not been able to find her death certificate, or any record of her in New Zealand apart from her mention on Robert McPherson’s death certificate. Did she live in Dunedin? When and where did she die? Was she related to the Waughs who were on the Robert Henderson also? How many children did she have, and when? According to Robert’s death certificate, at the time of death he had living two sons (45 and 24 years old) and 5 daughters: 50, 43, 40, 29, and 27 years old. Benjamin was obviously the 45-year-old son. However, who was the 50-year-old daughter? This is very unclear. The West Lothian census lists Benjamin as the oldest, then Margaret, then Marion, then Janet. At Robert’s death they would have been approximately 45, 43, 41 and 36. The first three ages match well with the death certificate. But the claimed oldest daughter is a real puzzle. For example, if she was 50 years old in 1895, she would have been born in 1845, two years before Robert and Marion were married. I suspect clerical error. And then, what about the last three children listed? If they were 29, 27 and 24 at the time of Robert’s death, they would have been born when Marion was 42, 44 and 47 respectively. I reckon this is way too old for a woman with her kind of life to have children. But then, if the West Lothian census is correct, and Marion was born in 1828, then she would have been 37, 39 and 42. Just possible, maybe.

The trouble with Robert and Marion is that, once they land in Dunedin, they pretty much disappear. It’s a very good bet that he, at least, headed out to Central Otago to look for gold, but we don’t know this for sure. He was certainly a gold miner for the rest of his life, but he wasn’t very successful, as he appears in two debtors lists, one in 1872, the other in 1869. In both lists he owed £67 for his assisted passage. Clearly he didn’t pay it off in a hurry. It is also possible that he was on the Dunedin electoral roll in 1865/65, although he certainly wasn’t on the roll in 1862. When Robert died in 1895 of pneumonia and chronic bronchitis, he was living in Manuka Creek (a site of one of the major gold mines), and his occupation was listed as miner and gardener.

I know almost nothing about what their children did. When Robert died he had two sons and five daughters living, as this is what his death certificate says (see the question box above). One daughter was called Margaret, another Marion. Marion married John Donaldson on the 24th of July, 1873, probably in Dunedin, and had two daughters, Elizabeth and Amelia. Mum says they were called Ada and Milly, and were a couple of old tricks. They owned the Excelsior Hotel for a while, and at some stage they lived up High St. When over seventy they set up a shirt-making business that went rather well. According to their membership cards in the Otago Settlers Museum they died unmarried.

And that’s all I know about the other children of Robert and Marion.

Benjamin McPherson and Christina Clark

Benjamin, the eldest son, followed in his father’s footsteps, and was a gold miner. His official profession on his death certificate was “Engineer”, but I am quite sure this just meant a mining engineer, which seems to me to be a fancy title for a gold miner.\(^2\) He married Christina Clark in Dunedin, on the 22nd of December, 1887, and seems to have lived there for most of his subsequent

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1 Records are to be distrusted always, even something as simple as a shipping list. I’m sure it wasn’t easy to get all the details correct as everybody rushed to get the hell off that damn ship.

2 Not to mention that I know for sure that he worked for a gold mining company as a dredger in the Kawarau river (see page 9)
Benjamin Binnie was born in 1890, followed by Adam Sprott, Robert Adair (1896), Christina (1899), and Francis Graham (1906).

Benjamin and Christina seem to have been reasonably prosperous in the first few years of their marriage. A photograph of them (page 10) that must have been taken less than ten years before her death shows a well-dressed couple that don’t look like they are starved of cash. However, this didn’t last. Benjamin speculated, Mum thinks, and was most likely an alcoholic. Given Benjamin’s interest in gold, it’s a pretty safe bet that the speculations were in gold mines. At that time in Dunedin there were huge numbers of speculative investments in gold mines, most of which went bellyup quickly. At any rate, they lost all their money and ended up living on the wrong side of the tracks, down by the wharfs. At some stage they lived at Riverton. And close to the Oval in Dunedin, opposite the pub on the south side (Robert Adair, as a child, would take a sandwich and sit under the trees in the Oval).

It must have been not long after their descent into poverty that Christina died, aged only 39, when the family was living at Howard St. She was seven months pregnant when she dropped dead very suddenly. Robert Adair remembered her complaining about a pain in her chest. They found her with little Graham, aged about two, sitting next to her on the floor, crying. The coroner’s report, dated the 12th of May, 1909, reads:

An inquest was held yesterday afternoon by the coroner (Mr. H.Y. Widdowson) touching the death of Christina McPherson aged 39 which occurred suddenly at her residence Howard Street on Monday afternoon 10th May.

Wednesday 12th May.

Dr. Roberts gave evidence as to having known the deceased for last 20 years. She suffered from heart trouble and the cause of death was Syncope due to rupture of the right ventricle of the heart. Benjamin McPherson Husband of the deceased stated last Sunday more particularly she complained about her heart, but was up and about the house on Monday. She cooked the breakfast and attended her household duties as usual. Witness came home from work noon deceased looked ill and witness advised her to go to Dr. She said she would do so this evening, if she felt no better and he went back to work. A little child was left in the house with the wife. The others at school. He was summoned from work at 3.30. His wife lay dead on floor. He believed deceased last consulted a Doctor 2 Years ago. Ben Binnie McPherson. Eldest son of deceased stated that the question of his Mother consulting Dr. about her heart had often been discussed by family. Deceased had always postponed doing so. She was cheerful and otherwise in good health. Witness was brought from work by his Sister on Monday afternoon and finding his Mother on the floor apparently dead, went to bring his Father and then go for Doctor. A Verdict was returned in accordance with the Medical evidence.

Robert Adair said that his father spent his last £60 burying Christina. Christina’s unmarried sister, Aunty Kate, came and looked after the children. Aunty Kate subsequently married and lived in Auckland. She came to Mary-Jane’s christening (my older sister) and Mum has a photograph of her. She died not long after.

The most interesting bit of Benjamin’s life to have survived was a letter written by his son, Robert Adair, to his own brother, Adam. The letter is written on paper with the letterhead of H. Charleston & Co., Manufacturer of Ladies’ and Gents’ Whalebone Hair Brushes, 20th April, 1947. (This is the letterhead of Robert Adair’s Blenheim business, but more on that in due course). The letter reads:

Dear Adam,

1Mum thinks he probably lived in Manuka Creek when he was younger, which is very likely, but there’s no direct evidence for this.

2Why do I think this? Well, we have other photos of Benjamin, taken in 1899 when they already had four children, in which he looks quite a bit younger. Since she died in 1909, this makes this photograph between 1899 and 1909, I reckon.

3The only existing Howard St. in Dunedin is in Macandrew Bay, but Mum is quite positive the family never lived there. She says there used to be a Howard St. on the corner of the Oval.

4Joyce McPherson has the original copy. I took a photograph of this letter in 2008 when I visited Joyce in Christchurch.
Top: A pencil sketch of Benjamin McPherson done by his son, Robert Adair. Bottom: Benjamin McPherson and Christina Clark. I think this photograph was taken between 1899 and 1909.
Top: Benjamin and Queenie playing the fool in typical McPherson style. Bottom: Benjamin and Christina with four children. This must have been taken in 1899, the year that Queenie was born, as that's her as a baby. My grandfather, Robert Adair, is the cheeky little bugger sitting on the right.
With reference to your enquiry regarding the gold claim this lies in the Kawarau river. Dad was working a dredge there & the Directors were working a slinger [?] re the gold. Apparently they had or were putting one over the dad & he also objected to the dirty way they were putting it across the public with the shares.

At this time he broke a false bottom & a white pipe clay came up. In his own words you could see the gold in the clay in the buckets & he picked a nugget worth £3 [?] then off of the lip of a bucket as it passed. He was stubborn as you know & rather than see the directors carry on as they did he immediately worked the dredge off of the gold. The company finally went bankrupt & he said he would damn well lose with them rather than continue under such conditions.

This is the very plan he marked with me sitting in the Kitchen in Howard St. & I treasure it for its memories. Please look at it & return it immediately.¹

The gold lay 10 yds below the old coal pit under the wash Dad said. If ever you get the money, put a dredge on it.

Send me some figures 1 to 10, small & large. I am struggling away valiantly trying to make them. I moulded the others in Plaster. I will send them all back when finished with.

Please do not show this plan to anybody. I think we should keep it a strict secret. Dad did not want it known beyond us.

We break up for term holidays May 9th & would come up with you then if you are not going before.

Regards,

Bert.

Well, well, what a revealing letter this is, accompanied by a real live treasure map (page 13). Not only do we learn that Benjamin was a dredge operator for a gold mining company working on the Kawarau river close to Cromwell, we also see that he was a gold miner at heart, and for the rest of his life had a dream of one day getting back to hit the jackpot. We can also see he was an ornery old bastard. No surprises there, given his progeny.

Benjamin died from “senile myocarditis” on the 20th of November, 1929, aged 79 and was buried in the Southern Cemetery alongside Christina. At the time of his death he was living at 7 Forbury Crescent. He had five living children at the time of his death (4 males, 39, 36, 33 and 23, and 1 female, 30).

Benjamin Binnie. The eldest child, born in June, 1890, died around 1961. He married Mabel Frances Irving on the 3rd of July, 1916, at the Pedrazzis Hotel in Mawheraiti (up the river from Greymouth, on the West Coast). He was a mining engineer, she was a dressmaker (born in Timaru in 1892, the daughter of Robert Leedham Irving, an accountant, and Mary Ann Austin). Mum always called her Auntie May and recounted some very salacious gossip about the actual father of their first child – they had three; Benjamin, Frank and Mick – but I probably shouldn’t repeat this in print. Also according to Mum, he wrote to Auntie May and proposed by saying “Come on over, let’s get married”.

Adam Sprott. I really should know his birth and death dates but I don’t. He married Margaret Gooseman and had a son, Graham, and a daughter, Rona. Rona married a butcher, says Mum, somewhere in South Dunedin. But then after some years she ran off with somebody else, and lived on the West Coast; her father cut her off and never spoke to her again. What a silly bugger. Graham, the son of Adam Sprott, married Joyce Ewart, the famous Joyce McPherson whom I met in Christchurch and who has been such a help to me in finding out stuff about the McPhersons. In return I fixed her range hood; I hope it stayed fixed, but knowing my skills I doubt it.

¹Since this letter was passed down to Adam’s descendants, he obviously didn’t return it to Robert Adair, as requested. Naughty Adam.
Anyway, Graham died from a coronary at his daughter’s wedding reception. The story goes that Glenda, another of the daughters, said to him “If you’d wanted to create a stir, why didn’t you just stand on the table and down trou.” They carted him out to the ambulance, and the last thing he said was “If I’d known this was going to happen, I would have changed my underpants.” He died soon after.

In the second world war he had the same rifle number as his father did in the first world war. Quite a coincidence.

Mum says he was very funny, great repartee, and very slick talker. Lovely man, apparently.

Graham and Joyce had three daughters, Margaret, Glenda and Christina. Margaret died of a bone tumour just before she turned 50, Glenda married a Thomson and her son is Adam Thomson who played last year for the All Blacks (and didn’t do too well; I doubt he’ll get selected again this year) and I don’t know anything more about Christina. Obviously, all I have to do is ask Joyce, but I haven’t done that yet. Naughty me.

Robert Adair. My grandfather, about whom more shortly (page 20).

Christina (Queenie). She was born on the 18th of June, 1899, and died very suddenly in her sleep in her forties. She married Jim Bodie and had two daughters, Mavis and Tui. Mavis married her cousin, Mick McPherson, the son of Benjamin Binnie and Mabel Irving, but died in her 30s of a malignant melanoma. When Mavis died, the grandmother (Mabel, the wife of Benjamin Binnie) looked after the children (about four girls) for a number of years, before they finally went back to their father. Or so says my mother.

Queenie’s other daughter, Tui, was born in the early 1930’s, but died in her 60’s from bowel cancer. She lived for a time in Pauanui and also for a time in Auckland, where she had a shop in Parnell. Mum remembers her as having a real sense of style, and being very smart. She married a Gibson (maybe called Guy) and had two children, Lee and Gray. I don’t know anything more about them.
Francis Graham: The youngest child of Benjamin Binnie and Christina Clark, Francis was born on the 14th of June, 1906, and married Margaret Mary Galloway, who was born on the 6th of March, 1910, in Riverhurst, Saskatchewan, Canada. According to Mum “Francis Graham had no children. He died fairly young (40s) of some sort of motor neurone disease in my early days at Medical School. I remember him as a nice, small, gentle man. Not bolshie like Dad. He worked for a firm of tent and other canvas goods maker in Princes Street. He married Margaret Galloway. (I had 3 Aunty Margarets – this Aunty Margaret, Aunty May, (Ben’s wife), and Aunty Mag (Adam’s wife). Sam stayed with her in Middletom Road the night before our wedding.”

The Clarks

Before I write about Robert Adair, my maternal grandfather, I shall take a somewhat lengthy detour around the family of his mother, Christina Clark, the wife of Benjamin McPherson.

Although Adam Sprott Clark is a fairly unusual combination of names, which makes it a little easier to identify him unambiguously in the records, it was still not until 2009 that I found out very much about him. It was then that someone called Clark Saunders contacted my parents from Winnipeg, saying that he was a descendant of the Clark family and was anybody interested. My parents passed his address to me, and I wrote, to receive in return an enormous amount of information about the family, including old photos and copies of legal documents [22].

The early Clarks

The earliest known ancestor of my Adam Sprott Clark was one John Clark, who, in the 1750s, married Elspeth Allan, who was herself born in 1735.¹ John Clark was from Crichton, a small village just southeast of Edinburgh. There’s a well-known castle there, called (yes, you guessed it) Crichton Castle, and an old collegiate church, established in 1449, to the southwest. I very much doubt that any of my Clarks had anything to do with the castle, although they probably attended the church. They were certainly buried there.

We know almost nothing about John and Elspeth. It’s highly likely they lived in Crichton for all or part of their life, but even that’s only a guess. Her parents were John Allan and Helen Johnstone, but that alone doesn’t help a great deal. We do know that John and Elspeth had a son, George, in 1757, and a son James in 1771, but that’s it.

Their son George Clark was clearly educated to some extent. In 1827, at the age of 70, he could write his own name in a rather stylish manner, as we know from a surviving document. We also know from this same document that he was a joiner – a high-quality carpenter specialising in detailed work such as cabinet making.

George married Christian Sprott (an early form of Christina), which is how the rather strange name Sprott comes into the family, as well as the name Christina. They had at least seven or eight children, and possibly others.

John (1780–1831) became a doctor according to the family tradition. As [22] points out, it would be rather unusual for the son of a joiner to become a real doctor, so it’s most likely he was just a ship’s doctor, which required very little training at all. John certainly served at sea, in a whaling boat, as he brought back as souvenirs a marine telescope, a model of a four-masted ship, and his weighing scales. These were still in the family several years later, although not with John’s direct descendants, as he didn’t have any.

Elspith was baptised on the 20th of June, 1784, but then disappears completely.

William was born in 1786 but died young, when he was only 16, it’s not known from what cause.

Adam. Next, in 1789, came Adam, the father of Adam Sprott and my 3G-grandfather, so I’ll deal with him separately.

¹According to the Crichton parish registers. This is the earliest recorded birth of any Clark ancestor in the records.
Henry, born in 1793, became a surveyor and married a Miss McKane, sister of a certain Martin McKane, whoever he is. They must have done rather well, as later in life they had two oil portraits painted, Henry holding a pair of dividers. These paintings were passed on to Henry’s nephew, George, and to his wife’s brother, so clearly they had no children.

Margaret (1795–1854) married a James Stewart who died of asthma in 1854, aged 60

William, born in 1804, was named after his older brother who had died earlier.

Christian? There is one additional child whom, although not known for sure to be a daughter of George and Christian, is almost certainly so. In 1817, a Christian Clark was married in Crichton to William Langlands. A number of factors point to her being the daughter of George and Christian. Her name, obviously, but also the fact that young George Clark (the son of George and Christian) was assisted in the early stages of his career by a joiner named William Langlands. Easily explainable as his auntie’s husband helping him out, which would make everything tie together nicely.

One reason we care about this (apart from the fact that we are genealogical geeks) is that the son of Christian Clark and William Langlands was another William Langlands (born in 1817) who emigrated to New Zealand and became a prominent politician in Otago. According to the Cyclopedia of New Zealand¹ William Langlands was a Justice of the Peace and held the position of Provincial Engineer and Architect. Just another interesting New Zealand connection.

He would have been Adam Sprott Clark’s first cousin, but I doubt they moved in the same social circles.

Adam Clark

The third son of George Clark and Christian Sprott was Adam Clark; born in 1789 in Pathhead, he became a joiner, like his father. Although we know he was born in 1789, he disappears from the records until the 6th of November, 1827, upon which date he bought a two-storey house in Pathhead, at 110 Main St. Adam, described as a “Joiner in Pathhead”, paid £60 to a labourer called James Montgomery, but also had to pay 12 Scots shillings to the landowner, a William B. Callander, a member of one of the rich families in the district.² The house³ was built in 1776 for a woman named Janet Meek. When he bought the house Adam was eligible for the same privileges as the previous owner, and subject to the same restrictions. He had access to the local stone and lime quarries for repairs to the building, but had to share the cost of maintenance of the mutual gable between his house and the building to the west. He was not allowed to construct any other buildings on the property and was not allowed to leave rubbish lying around.⁴ The purchase document was witnessed by Adam’s father, George.

A year or so later, Adam extended his holdings by buying an adjoining long one-storey building, which had also once belonged to Janet Meek. He paid the previous owner, John Inglis, £110 10s. Inglis (or his agent) met with Adam at the property between 1 and 3 pm on the 29th of December, 1828 (the same year that Adam’s mother, Christian Sprott, died) to give him, according to an old custom, some earth, a stone, and a handful of grass and corn, in token of the transfer of ownership. Four weeks later Adam married Janet Borrowman, the daughter of a ploughman in Pathhead. One presumes that this wedding was not unrelated to the purchase of the house and adjoining workshop.

¹Volume 4. Published in 1905. The Cyclopedia of New Zealand was published in six volumes between 1897 and 1908 by the Cyclopedia Company Ltd. Each volume deals with a region of New Zealand and includes information on local towns and districts, government departments, individuals, businesses, clubs and societies. Individuals could pay to get included, and they wrote their own entries, so it’s easy to imagine what lots of them are like; honesty was in less demand than self-promotion.

²Under the Scottish feu system there is an annual payment in money or in kind in return for the enjoyment of the land. The crown is the first overlord, and land is held of it by crown vassals, but they in their turn may feu their land, as it is called, to others who become their vassals, whilst they themselves are mediate overlords or superiors; this process of sub-infeudation may be repeated to an indefinite extent. Feu is the Scottish version of the English fee.

³Which is still standing according to [22]; I’d love to see it. I’ve been to Edinburgh, but at that time I didn’t know this part of the family history

⁴I could so easily make a remark here about my teenage children, but I shall refrain from doing so.
CHAPTER 1. MCPHERSONS, CLARKS AND PEDDIES

Poor Janet had three children in quick succession (Christian in 1829, George in 1831, and Adam Sprott in 1834) and promptly died. We don’t know when she died exactly; all we do know is that she was dead by 1837, when Adam remarried, to Christian Brydon, from the neighbouring parish of Cranston.

In 1853 Adam made his will, in an attempt to “prevent all disputes and differences amongst them after my death”. He left everything to his wife, but only for her lifetime. On her death, the two-storey house was to go to his elder son, George (described as a joiner in Edinburgh), the neighbouring workshop to Adam Sprott (also described as a joiner in Edinburgh), and a third property, a “dwelling house and yard, in the Village of Pathhead, with the Garden belonging thereto, and Barn and Stable at the back thereof”, to his daughter Christian (“presently servant to James Montgomery Esquire of Lillington, near Leamington”). This third property was likely one Adam had inherited from his father, George the Joiner, who had died in 1836.

Of the three children of Adam and Christian, the younger Christian, or Kirsty as she was called, left home young to become a domestic servant to some family in Leamington, in Warwickshire, down in England. She married a James Turner and had a bunch of children, some of whom are described briefly in [22]. The second child, George, is the main subject of [22] as he is the direct ancestor of Clark Saunders. However, I shall move on quickly to Adam Sprott, my own direct ancestor.

Adam Sprott Clark

Born in Edinburgh in 1837, Adam Sprott learned the joiner trade from his father (presumably) and by the time he was 19 he was working with his brother, George, as a joiner in Edinburgh. However, not long after, he emigrated to Dunedin on the George Canning, in 1857, where he worked as the Chief Engineer on a number of steamers, including the P.S. Geelong, under Captain Boyd.\(^1\) The Geelong was a paddle steamer, subsidised by the Otago Provincial Council to run to Oamaru, Moeraki and Waikouaiti, and James Parker Boyd was its Captain from 1860 to 1863.

Adam Sprott Clark married Janet Christie Peddie (about whom more below) on the 26th of April, 1861, at MacLaggan St., Dunedin, at the house of one of Janet’s older brothers, James. It’s likely that Adam worked with James Peddie in his draper’s shop along Cumberland St. (see page 18), and possibly lived on Cumberland St. until at least 1885.

Adam was about as successful as the McPhersons, and was declared bankrupt on the 14th of August, 1875, according to the Otago Witness. In fact, poor Adam’s iniquities are recorded for posterity in the pages of the Bruce Herald, reporting from Tokomairiro.\(^2\)

The decision of His Honor Mr. Justice Williams recently, in the case of Adam Sprott Clark, a bankrupt, must commend itself to every right-thinking mind as an essentially just one. The particulars of this case are very brief, but they reveal a state of affairs which we would fain hope do not occur often in this Province. In November last the bankrupt was indebted to the extent of £40, against which his assets were £15 10s. The bankrupt entered into a contract with one Pearce for the erection of a house, to cost £250, on land belonging to his wife. The builder was given to understand that the land was the property of the bankrupt, but it would appear that he was misinformed on this point, we presume by the bankrupt himself . . .

His Honor suspended the bankrupt’s discharge for two years, and in doing so used the following forcible language:—“Now, the effect of the bankrupt’s conduct had been this: without paying his debts, he had got improvements made on his wife’s property to the value of £100. His other debts amounted to about £20, and by the course he had taken he proposed to come to this Court to relieve himself of these debts, and at the same time to retain for his wife the benefit of the improvement effected. It was a monstrous thing that a man should use his wife or his wife’s property as machinery to cheat his creditors.

\(^1\) Or possibly Boyce. However, Boyd was a known captain of the Geelong, while Boyce appears nowhere I can find.

\(^2\) November, 1875. The Bruce Herald was published in Milton from 1864 to 1971, making it one of New Zealand’s longest running country newspapers. And I’d never heard of it before.
The order of the Court was that his discharge be suspended for two years.” Although the language used by his Honor is not so ornate as that indulged in by his Honor Judge Ward in Reid’s case, still, it is sufficient to lead us to expect that all dishonest bankrupts will find it no trifling ordeal to obtain their discharge at the hands of Mr. Justice Williams.

So naughty old Adam tried to put a house into his wife’s name and thus get it built for him while he was bankrupt, defrauding the builder in the process. Seems like something people do all the time nowadays. But good old Justice Williams got him, and was clearly awfully proud of himself.

Adam Sprott’s father died sometime between 1857 and 1873, and Adam inherited a property in the village of Pathhead, as described above. In 1885, after a couple of years of to and fro with Scotland, he sold it to a Doctor of Medicine, Archibald Craig, for the sum of £85. Interestingly, Adam Sprott spells his name Clarke in his signature, and is described as living in Cumberland St. I guess the money came in too late to help him with his bankruptcy.

In about 1898, a statement by Adam Sprott on his F98 form (I’m not entirely sure what this form was for, but it contained details of his career, family and arrival in New Zealand) said that he had two sons and two daughters living, two daughters married, and four grandchildren. Three of these four grandchildren must have been the children of Christina Clark and Benjamin McPherson.¹

Adam Sprott died on the 28th of August, 1904, at which time he was living at 61 Union St. His father was listed as Adam Clark, Builder, and his mother’s name was unknown.² At the time of his death he had two surviving sons (aged 40 and 37) and three surviving daughters (aged 34, 26 and 23). Christina (who married Benjamin McPherson; see page 8) was obviously the eldest surviving daughter, but I have no idea who the other children were, or what they did, which is rather a shame. There was an older daughter, Janet Taylor Peddie Clark, born only a year after Janet and Adam were married, but she wasn’t alive in 1900, when her mother died. She may well have died young.

Questions: I need to pull my finger out and track down the children of Adam Sprott Clark and Janet Peddie. It shouldn’t be all that hard to do, and I’ve just been lazy. I’m pretty sure that one of his sons was called Adam Sprott Borrowmay (sic; probably a misreading of Borrowman) Clark, who married Margaret Joyce in 1901 in Dunedin, but I’m not even absolutely certain of that.

The Peddies

Adam Sprott’s future wife, Janet Christie Peddie, born in Stirling in 1838, arrived in Dunedin in December, 1858, on the Gloucester, travelling with her brother George³. Not steerage, oh no. They came out Second Cabin. Very fancy. She was 20, he was 24. According to the arrival notice “… although they met with a severe gale in the Bay of Biscay, at the commencement of the voyage, all allow that during the passage every comfort that a ship can give has been liberally afforded to them.” Most of the arrivals, of which there were more than 100, were “stout, healthy, young people”. Jolly hockey sticks, eh what? Only two deaths, which wasn’t so bad. Even more exciting than the passengers were the two Spanish Merino Rams and the two Cotswold Rams, who get a whole paragraph to themselves. Very proper priorities, giving the sheep more attention than the plebs.

George became a draper in Dunedin, probably in business with his brother James, but didn’t live for long, dying in 1863 of dropsy. Janet, her husband Adam, and her brother George were all

¹Possibly all four of them were, as Christina’s fourth child was born in 1899, and the date of 1898 for the F98 form might not be quite right.

²Well, one supposes that Adam knew it, but I guess nobody asked him in time. Mind you, it wasn’t on his marriage certificate either. It’s tempting to speculate that, since his birth mother died when he was very young, and he was raised by his stepmother, there may be a reason he didn’t tell people his mother’s name. It certainly seems a little strange.

³As well as “6 pkgs. rope, 1 box saddlery, 52 pkgs. wire fencing, 5 chests, 22 half-chests, 1 box tea, 2 cases slate pencils, 1 box wearing apparel, 83 casks beer, 26 casks brandy, 50 drums oil, 30 barrels tar, 50 casks cement, 200 bags salt, 150 tons and 15 hhds. coal, 1110 flooring boards, 5 barrels soap, 1 bag coffee, 1 parcel sheep netting, 2 glass cases plants, 10 cases implements, 1 case seeds, 3 rams, 1 dog, 1 case paperhangings, 16 boxes, 6 bales, 211 cases, 183 casks, 17 qr.-casks, 3 hhds., 10 barrels, 75 kegs, 30 crates, 88 coils, 16 bags, 10 bundles, and 70 packages merchandise.”
buried in the same grave in the Southern Cemetery. She, of course, was buried later, as she didn’t
die until 1900, when she was 62. According to her death certificate, she died of “Bright’s Disease of
Kidney – 6 Years; Uroemie [sic] coma – 48 Hours”\(^1\); the cemetery record merely says she died of
“dropsy”. Bright’s Disease is now known to be an acute or chronic nephritis (it was obviously
chronic in Janet’s case) and can arise from a number of specific causes; we don’t know what the
specific cause was. However, since her brother George also died from “dropsy”, which might well
have been related to a kidney ailment also, not to mention that her daughter Christina died young of
a heart condition, it’s tempting to speculate that something ran in the family.

Their brother James also came out to New Zealand from Stirling, and lived for a time at MacLag-
gan St. in Dunedin. We know this, as Janet and Adam Clark were married there. James lived to the
ripe old age of 83, before finally dying in Auckland in 1913. He married Jean, and had an only
daughter Annie, who married William A. Justice Dutch in Wellington, on the 25th of April, 1901, at
which time James was still living in Dunedin. However, when he got older he must have moved up
to Auckland to be with his daughter, as he died at her home.

James was a draper, most likely in the same shop as his brother George, on Cumberland St. He
and George didn’t start off as drapers, they started out in even more lowly positions, as they were
recorded in a jury list on the 2nd of February, 1861, as a gardener and a clerk respectively. However,
by the time of his death in 1863 George was a draper (according to his burial record), and James
remained a draper for only a short time after that. Presumably, once his brother died he lost heart and
moved on to other things. He was still a draper on the 2nd of October, 1864, but was only “... lately
a draper ...” by the 1st of July in 1865. How do we know this? Well, James and his brother-in-law,
Adam Clark, had a little excitement in 1864, when James’s drapery store was burgled by a certain
William White who had gone on a burglary spree, stealing tools from a house in Anderson’s Bay,
clothes from James Peddie’s drapery store in Cumberland St., blankets and a tent from Black Jack’s
Point\(^2\), a gun and a lamp from Vauxhall Gardens, and a desk and some jewelry from a house in Stuart
St. Quite a haul. According to the *Otago Witness*\(^3\):

James Peddie, lately a draper, carrying on business in Cumberland street, stated that
on the 1st of October, 1864, at eleven o’clock in the forenoon, he locked up his shop
and left all right. He returned to it at about twelve o’clock the same night, when he
observed that the lower sash of a window at the back of the building had been forced
in. Accompanied by his brother-in-law [Adam Sprott Clark], he entered the store and
found that a quantity of his drapery goods were strewed over the floor, and he missed
a quantity of goods which had been hanging on the wall, consisting of Crimean shirts,
one white linen shirt, one cotton shirt, one pair of cotton drawers, one pair of Tweed
trousers, and a number of other articles. He immediately gave information to the police.
He positively identified the pair of Tweed trousers shown him as part of the property
stolen from his store. He knew that the name of the tailor who made them in Glasgow
was stamped on the buttons. He never sold or disposed of these trousers, and he saw
them hanging on the shop wall when he locked it up on the day of the robbery. The good
stolen were valued at £60. He could not swear positively to any of the other articles;
but he identified a large number of the goods shown him as being similar to these which
were stolen from his store.

The poor jury – in defiance of the judge’s summing up – got a little confused and tried to convict
William White not only of stealing the tweed trousers, but also of receiving them as stolen goods.
From himself, presumably. I guess they thought that the more they could get him on, the worse
they could punish him. However, receiving them from himself wasn’t allowed; “In order to sustain
a conviction for receiving, there ought to have been some evidence that the property was in the

\(^1\)Obviously, Uremic coma is meant here, but somebody transcribed it incorrectly. Copies of BDM certificates now come
neatly typed up; somebody reads the original entry and makes their own interpretation. This is a really annoying way to
do it, as all it does is introduce additional errors from idiot transcribers.

\(^2\)Which is, I discovered, right where the Ravensdown fertiliser factory thing is, just at the beginning of the road out to Port
Chalmers. I had no idea this was called Black Jack’s Point. The things one learns.

\(^3\)Otago Witness, 1 July 1865, page 8.
possession of some other person before it came into the possession of the prisoner." Well, quite so. The conviction was quashed.

Interestingly, Cumberland and Gt. King Streets seem to have had drainage problems. James Peddie applied to the council to get his portion of the Great King St. “swamp” reclaimed. His property was probably between Great King St. and Cumberland St. as he had previously asked to have his part of the Cumberland St. “swamp” filled up. It was going to cost £30 and James was only contributing £10 so the council declined.

One intriguing thing about the Peddies is that Janet’s father was called James Peddie, Esq., writer from Stirling. In this context, a writer is an old Scottish word for a lawyer. No wonder he was called an Esq., which is not something you see very commonly in the old records from Dunedin. Well, at least not when you’re looking for McPhersons and assorted other gold miners. None of my McPhersons were called Esq. that’s for sure. The fact that he was a lawyer is consistent with the fact that Janet and George came out Second Cabin. Clearly they had a bit more money than the peons in Steerage. So who was this James Peddie, lawyer, from Stirling, and why did his children emigrate?

This was a bit of mystery to me for many years. I was sure that the ‘Esq.’ and the ‘writer’ meant something, but I couldn’t find out what. Eventually, however, I wrote to the Central Scotland Family History Society to see if they could throw any light on the family, and (to my great surprise and even greater delight) a researcher called Mary replied with a great deal of information. Since it agrees with what I already knew – everywhere it intersects that is, of course – I trust it.

It seems that Janet’s grandfather was another James Peddie, James (i) we’ll call him, a brewery master, who married a Janet Christie in 1796 in Stirling – hence our Janet’s middle name. They had three sons; James (ii), William and Robert.

James (ii) (1797–1865), the eldest, married, first, a Janet Taylor, and had six children with her. All six children were alive at the 1841 census, and living in Broad St., Stirling, where James (ii) ran his lawyer’s business. However, by 1851 two of his daughters, Catherine and Jane, were dead, as was his wife. So in 1854 James (ii) married again, this time to a farmer’s daughter by name of Catherine Graham, who was 50 years old (he was 57). Four years later three of his children, James (iii), George and Janet, left Scotland and emigrated to New Zealand. You do have to wonder why. Was it related to his second marriage? Did they detest the second wife? Did the family fall on hard times? It would be nice to know. His last daughter, Cecilia, remained in Scotland and never married, dying in Edinburgh in 1916, presumably living near her cousins, the children of her uncle Robert.

William (1799 – 1891) became a bookseller in King St., Stirling. He had a son named Edwin (born in 1821) but never married the mother, Janet Haugh. Edwin died unmarried in 1868. William died aged 92 in 1891 at 10 Queen Street, Stirling. In his will William Peddie mentions his brother James’ children in New Zealand; James (iii) Peddie in Dunedin and Janet Peddie (Mrs. Clark) who were both to receive £100 each. (George was dead by this time of course). Cecilia their sister was of independent means which probably her father arranged when he remarried. William also left two nieces £100 each; they were Catherine and Caroline Peddie, children of his brother Robert.

Robert (b. 1802) was a writer, but stopped practising after he took over an ironworks in Edinburgh. He married Maria Denoon Young in 1845 in Edinburgh. She was the author of such gems as The Dawn of the Second Reformation in Spain (1871), Experiences in Christian Life and Work: First Series (1886), The family Protestant: A series of true narratives for families and congregations: in evidence of the work and success of the Jesuits in this kingdom of Great Britain (1882), Prayer and its answer, or, How a believer may know whether his prayer will be answered (1871). I think she might have been religious. Their first two children, a son and daughter, were born in Stirling when Robert was a writer, and another five daughters were born in Edinburgh.

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1 Otago Witness, 11 November, 1865, page 11.
2 For years I thought it meant an author, as in someone who writes books. What a twit.
3 I know of no evidence for a Second Series; the world is grateful.
CHAPTER 1. MCPHERSONS, CLARKS AND PEDDIES

Robert Adair McPherson and Freda Neal

Gummy and Ma, my mother’s parents. I remember them well, although Ma rather better than Gummy; Gummy died when I was about eight, Ma when I was about 31. The sad thing is, of course, that I can only remember them as old people, so although I think I know them, I don’t really. Not at all. Mum knows them a lot better, but then she’s not writing this, I am.

Robert Adair was born in Dunedin on the 8th of June, 1896. When young he was called Bert, and later on was always called Mac. He was never called Robert. His family became poor soon after his birth, and his mother died when he was only thirteen. It’s something that affected him greatly. According to Mum, he always put enormous value on family, and was always patient with his mother-in-law (Kate Norgrove; page 43), even during the extended periods that she lived with them. I’m told that on his death bed he said how much he wished he had had more of a mother.

I know little about his early life, although I’m sure that a lot more could be found out, by asking Mum or by looking through old school records. One thing we do know is that he very nearly drowned when he was 14 or 15. His mother had recently died, Robert felt down, went off to the wharfs for a walk, tried to catch some fish, and promptly fell in. He was rescued, so the story goes, by Bill Potter, a member of the Shackleton expedition. Many years later Robert wrote a story about what happened which is too long to give here, but I include in an appendix instead (page 263).¹ We know from this story that they must have been living close to the wharfs, and so must have moved from Howard St.

He left school at 16 to work as an apprentice patternmaker at Cossens and Blacks (Dunedin) from August 1912 to August 1917. He then worked as a patternmaker at John McGregor & Co. Ltd. (Dunedin) before being laid off in July 1918. Then four months as a patternmaker at J. Sparrow & Sons, Engineers and Ironfounders (Dunedin). All this time he was also attending a part-time course at the Polytech, more correctly known as the Otago Education Board School of Art and Design. He was there from 1914 to 1919, studying Mechanical Drawing, Machine Construction, Light and Shade, and Drawing from the Cast (whatever that means).

When he was 22 he took a break from being a patternmaker in Dunedin and headed off to Christchurch to be a patternmaker there; he first worked for a few months as a patternmaker at Andersons Ltd., but possibly didn’t like that job much, as he left of his own accord and went to work at Booth MacDonald & Co, another Christchurch company, from June to August, 1919. There’s a bit of a gap in his employment records, maybe because he couldn’t find work, but by 1921 he was back in Dunedin, working at Reid & Gray for seven months, as well as for A. & T. Burt, off and on until January 1922.

It seems that Robert was finding it hard to get steady work in Dunedin, so he headed off again, this time to Dannevirk, where he worked as a foreman for Collett & Son, Engineers and Ironfounders, from February 1922 to February 1928, the longest stretch of work he’d had yet in one place. He was a patternmaker mostly, but when patternmaking was slack he helped with erecting and fitting the shop and foundry.

And from there it was off to Marlborough, to teach metalwork at Marlborough College. That’s where he met Freda Neal, whom he married in 1930. She was the Home Economics teacher, 23 years old. He was 34. And she was two months pregnant, ho ho ho. She was married, says Mum, in a pale ice-blue dress, not white at all. Deary me. How the respectable Neals must have cringed.

Robert and Freda lived in Blenheim for quite a few years, until about 1953 or so. They had two daughters; Mum, of course, and her elder sister Valerie. Valerie has always been Auntie to me; not Auntie Valerie, just Auntie. I have an Auntie Heather, and an Auntie Fiona, but only one Auntie. She married an Englishman, Robert Staley, I’m not sure exactly when, and adopted three children, Sam, Susie and Michael. Sam is up Lake Tekapo way, the officer in charge of the Tekapo military training area; Susie is a lawyer in Dunedin; and Michael is a photographer and magazine publisher in Hong Kong. I knew them very well when I was younger, but don’t see them so much nowadays. Auntie and Uncle now live in Lincoln, just out of Christchurch; I don’t see them as much as I ought, which I regret. They have always been very kind to me and my family, and I have always felt close to them.

Anyway, back to Robert and Freda. He made hair brushes out of wood and lots and lots of pieces

¹Mind you, something isn’t right about that story as the dates don’t match.
Robert Adair McPherson. The top photograph is how I remember him, and must have been taken not long before he died. The bottom photograph is him playing silly buggers, pretending to be the captain of a ship. He wasn’t.
Robert Adair McPherson. In the top photograph you can see how his violin is set up back-to-front. The bottom photograph is him with his father, Benjamin.
of split whalebone (for the brush hairs). I had one for years before it finally fell apart. He started a company in Blenheim, called H. Charleston & Co, which was certainly in existence in 1947 (as I have a letter, signed by Bert, on his company letterhead). Harry Charleston did the donkey work in the factory all day, while Bert did the organising and thinking. Plastics were short during the war, and hence the need for the company. They started with wooden combs, but then went on to splitting whalebone; Robert made the machines to do this. The whale bone was obtained from Gilly Perano (a well-known whaling family, down by Tory Channel, or somewhere that Mum can’t exactly remember). The tradename of the brushes was Macarl (a combination of Mac and Charleston.)

They also went on to start a popcorn business which made quite a splash in its time. At the height of the business Macarl was employing 18 people, at three sites around New Zealand, had 50 acres of corn, and were making about 15,000 bags a week. Not only that, but they also collaborated with Freda’s half-brother, Norman Neal (child of John Frederick Neal’s first marriage; see page 43), who was a Professor of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and developed new varieties of popping corn that were better suited to New Zealand conditions. There’s even an entire article on the company and the corn in the New Zealand Journal of Agriculture, in 1951 [29]. Apparently, several varieties of corn were used before Norman and Robert found a good variety, and eventually much of the hybridisation was done in New Zealand, rather than importing the seed from the U.S.A. Mr. J. Broughan, a Blenheim farmer, “. . . showed a truly venturesome spirit in agreeing in 1946 to devote some of his valuable land to this unconventional crop . . . “. In 1947 they planted 4 acres of specially crossed seed and it was such a success that 40 acres were planted in 1948, and 80 planned for 1949. It was obviously a pretty big business. Not even Mum knew this until she found the newspaper clipping and the journal article. Isn’t it cool what you find when you look? Mind you, Mum was well aware of the existence of the popcorn business as, when she was around 10 or so, she had to do “pea rogueing”, i.e., pulling out the weeds, around the hybrid corn on Broughan’s farm out by Woodburn airport.

Macarl must have made a reasonable amount of money, which paid for Robert and Freda’s trip
CHAPTER 1. MCPHERSONS, CLARKS AND PEDDIES

POP CORN: A Marlborough Venture
By S. FREW, Orchard Instructor,
Department of Agriculture, Blenheim.

For many years pop corn has been known in New Zealand, usually as a novelty form of food-stuff made up as an attractive confectionery, sold generally at booths at agricultural and pastoral shows and holiday resorts. Recently, however, the industry has been placed on a more substantial footing, and the production of a suitable corn for this trade, and its subsequent processing, has been the successful venture of a small group of Marlborough farmers and businessmen. The story of this development is interesting and gives a further proof that initiative, painstaking trouble, and confidence of success in new fields are still qualities to be found in New Zealanders.

The production of pop corn in Marlborough was first introduced by Mr. R. A. McPherson of Blenheim, who knowing the tremendous expansion and ramifications of the business in the United States of America, saw possibilities in the development of both the growing and processing of pop corn. He felt that the Marlborough climate was so identical to that of the United States, he decided to grow a small trial crop. In 1948 he obtained his first small sample of good hybrid corn seed from the

HE SOUTHERN CROSS, SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1950.

They make money from putting the pop in corn

You could describe R. McPherson and H. Charleston, of Blenheim, as enterprising businessmen with a sense for giving the right thing a pop! Just now they are specialising in corn—popcorn. After five years of experiment and hard work the result of their efforts can be bought for sixpence. It is known as Macaris popcorn, a combination of the two names.

to the US (in about 1951). They were away for six months, which can’t have been cheap. But the company didn’t last; I have no idea why it folded, but fold it did, leaving Robert and Freda little richer than when they started, or so I suspect. They were certainly not wealthy a few years later, when I was a child.

Robert was a keen musician; I still have his copy of Helmholtz’ book *The Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music*. He took violin lessons while in Dannevirk, but had to travel quite a distance on his motorbike (maybe to Hastings) to get them. He strung his violin around the wrong way, and learned to play back to front, as he’d lost the fingers on his fingering hand. The 3/4 size violin that Mum learned on, that I learned on, that my children learned on, and that my siblings all learned on, was his originally. I’m told it was originally used by his sister Queenie who refused to practise, whereupon she and the violin got thrown down a bank. I believe it.

When I was young we lived at 20 Cliffs Rd., St. Clair (Mum and Dad still do), just down the road from Ma and Gummy, who lived at 150 Ravenswood Road, halfway up the hill, in a house that Gummy had built. It had a huge window looking down the hill and over St. Clair beach. My earliest memory of Dunedin is my fifth birthday, where I got a brown leather satchel for carrying my books to school. I opened the present sitting in front of this window. My strongest memory of Gummy is him sitting in one of the blue chairs in the dining room in Cliffs Rd., with a budgie on his shoulder. I’m not actually sure he ever brought a budgie down, but that’s how I remember it, true or not. He was always very keen on education. According to Mum he claimed that it took two generations to get a family out of poverty, and the way to do it was by education. He believed passionately that Mum should go to Medical School, at a time when very few women did so, and must have been the proudest father at the graduation ceremony. Another vivid memory of him is his death, when Mum cried. I was young enough to wonder why, and old enough to remember.

I want Mum to write a page or two about Gummy, so I can put it in here. Let’s hope I can persuade her to do so. If there’s any justice in the hereafter he’s sitting up there somewhere beside Dad’s mother, needling her and grinning from ear to ear, enjoying every second of her disapproval and foul temper.

Ma. Freda Alice Neal. I remember her a lot better, as she didn’t die until I was 31. I was overseas, living in Los Angeles, when she died, so I missed most of her last years. Her health bothered her a lot and boy did she complain. Not always free with her money. She would collect those free soaps from hotels and airlines and then give them to us kids as Christmas and birthday presents. We thought it was absolutely hilarious, as I remember. But I also remember her making efforts to be kind to us. I’m quite sure she loved us in her own way; she was just unable to show it, I think, or other imperatives got in the way. Dad would tease her about her legs being like those of a plucked chicken. She kind of brought it on herself, telling Dad that he had a figure like an S, which annoyed him. She’s buried in Anderson’s Bay cemetery and I have never visited her grave. That’s rather sad, I suppose.

Ma came from two old New Zealand families, the Neals and the Norgroves (Chapters 2 and 3), both based in Marlborough and Nelson for three generations. Born in Spring Creek at her father’s farm, Burnlea, she attended Marlborough College before going down to Otago University to do a Diploma in Home Science. She stayed at Studholm Hall, and was the youngest in her class. After graduating, she taught up in the North Island for a while (either Napier or Hastings) and then came back to teach Home Economics at Marlborough College, where she met Robert Adair McPherson.

She insisted that we always wash our hands before doing any cooking. “First”, she would say, “wash your hands”. As I remember, we never listened to her. I still can’t cook.¹

Ma’s parents, Kate and John Neal, didn’t approve of Gummy at all. They called him Simpkins. Don’t know why.² In retaliation, Gummy’s father called Freda, Freezer. What a giggle they all must

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¹Part of three fingers of his left hand were gone. He lost his fingers in his father’s workshop, in a circular saw, when he was 13. When he got back to school he got the strap, and the teacher burst all the stitches.
²I suspect my Dad would have had a fit.
³i.e., won’t cook.
⁴I mean, I don’t know where the Simpkins came from. I’m quite sure I know why they didn’t approve. Gummy was boisterous, fierce-tempered, and from a poor family. Everything the Neals were not. Not to mention that he got their little girl pregnant as what he shouldn’t have.
have had. Ma only met Gummy’s father once, because he died shortly after they met, when Ma was 22.

To be honest, to describe Ma I can’t do any better than include a few pages which Mum wrote, in the early 2000’s sometime.

Freda, my mother, must have been happy once. I have an old photograph album with tiny snapshots of her having fun among groups of friends at University, and newspaper cuttings of capping processions. Before that, as a girl, she was a keen horsewoman and champion show jumper, and represented Marlborough at hockey. So she must have had fun then too.

But not when I knew her. Pictures of her laughing face do not gel with the joyless mother I remember. My memories of her begin when she was in her early thirties. She was a devoted mother, capable rather than imaginative, admirably egalitarian and tolerant and even sociable in those early days. She was also kind to her mother. Later, when we moved, my grandmother, disinclined to live away from her only daughter, literally turned up on our doorstep with her bags, and my parents put another bed in the room my sister and I slept in and took her in without hesitation. Freda was not political, not religious, not musical either, but she encouraged my sister and me in our musical activities and sent us along to Sunday School. Although of average height and thin, she came from solid stock and was big-boned. Her big hands were dexterous and she knitted, sewed, even tailored, beautifully. Having studied Home Science (as it was then) at Otago University she was good at all facets of keeping house. “Your mother is a dutiful girl,” my father would often say.

However, duty, a house and two little girls were not enough for her. Books could not fill the gap – she was not a reader – but she was intelligent and I believe bored. She seldom laughed and gradually her thoughts turned inward until hypochondria blossomed into her raison d’être.

My father worried. “Freda’s not a well girl.”

Then a perceptive doctor suggested she get a job and the ‘doctor’s orders’ gave her the courage to flout the convention of the 1940s and return to work, teaching sewing and cooking (baking mostly) at the local High School. She tried to teach me these housewifely skills too at home. When she was baking she’d say to me, “See how I place the butter and then fold the pastry and roll it.” I’d watch impatiently, wanting to do it myself, which wasn’t allowed because I got flour on the ceiling. Then, “Look over my right shoulder, dear,” she’d say as she sewed. It didn’t take – although I still hear her voice as I press every seam on the now rare occasions I sew. She made pretty dresses for my sister and me in the days after the depression when money was still tight then during the shortages of war, and dressed herself smartly too, often from a one-and-sixpenny remnant of material.

Strangely enough her flair didn’t extend to interior decorating. Our house was ‘shop window’ style, although it was possibly the tidiest and cleanest in town. I didn’t play much at home; I made my mess at Diane’s or Beverly’s.

My mother was a good manager and stretched money like nobody I knew. Nothing was wasted. If we couldn’t, despite urging, eat all our dinner she reheated it later. We teased her about the time my sister left an apple core on her dinner plate and Freda accidentally dished it up next day in the lunchtime hash.

Despite her horse-riding and hockey and being brought up on a farm, my mother didn’t like being out of doors. Her beautiful red-gold hair (which didn’t show a trace of grey until she was well into her fifties) and green eyes came with a pale complexion, which burned and freckled easily. But that wasn’t the sole reason. One got grubby outside and Freda liked things clean; the house, the food, me, everything. Picnics were out.
Robert Adair McPherson and Freda Alice Neal.
Robert Adair McPherson and Freda Alice Neal. The two children are Valerie (the larger one) and Rosalie (the smaller one, and my mother).
Being fussy – fastidious my father called it – she loved America where, in the 1950s, she first saw food wrapped in cellophane in supermarkets.

‘Routine’ was my mother’s favourite word. Every morning at seven o’clock on the dot, I would hear her pull up the blinds in her bedroom to begin the set routine of her day. ‘Procrastinate’ came a close second. “Don’t procrastinate. Do it now,” was her mantra. Another favourite saying was, “If it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing well,” and she was meticulous in everything she did. ‘Methodical’ and ‘efficient’ were right up there too in her lexicon and the house ran like clockwork. There was not much leeway for spontaneity and seemingly no desire for fun. Poor Freda. Later, when I married, she despaired of my slovenly habits.

My mother, unlike my father, was even-tempered. She wrote in my childhood autograph book in her fly-away untidy writing – at odds I feel with her passion for order – ‘Dignity and temper are sisters hand in hand. Dignity steps back a pace when temper takes a stand.’ My father shouted and confronted; my mother quietly manipulated. And who won? A stalemate, I think, of hostile dependency.

And yet I don’t know. My father worried about her health and unhappiness and gave her lots of sympathy which she enjoyed. And love? Did they love each other? In my teens I searched anxiously for signs of it, but I’ll never know. She undoubtedly loved my sister and me but was not demonstrative and couldn’t show it; possibly didn’t know how to. And I’m sure she craved love herself but didn’t know how to get it. To give her a hug was like embracing a brick wall and I didn’t try often enough.

Could I have made her happy? Who knows? Doubtless I could have done better. Flowers gave her pleasure and sometimes when I dashed in to see her she would want to show me a particular rose in bloom, but as often as not I’d rush off without looking at it. Gradually, as she got older, and especially after a small stroke which was triggered by over-enthusiastic medication and which left her with disabilities for the last 22 years of her life, the miasma of unhappiness thickened and what had enabled her to run a tight ship before developed into obsessions – hand-washing, food, thriftiness. However, despite her irritating clutch on the pennies in her purse she could dole out lump sums unseen from the bank and I was one grateful recipient.

So what sparked off my mother’s descent into seven shades of despondency? Life should have been plain-sailing for her – my father and sister and I were healthy and happy, we had enough money, she had great talents. Maybe her marriage was even less satisfactory than I knew.

But I do know that life does not submit to such order as she wanted and maybe this was at the root of some of her discontent. I know too that she was profoundly affected by her younger sister’s death. Maybe I, who haven’t experienced it, underestimate the lasting effect of such things – his mother’s early death on my father, her sister’s even earlier death on my mother. She was 19 and home from University. Apparently all the family were staying in Blenheim and her father and mother took turns sitting by her nine-year-old sister’s sick bed in hospital. The day both parents came home together she said she knew her sister had died. It was a full moon that night and ever afterwards she maintained her chronic insomnia was worse on a moonlit night.

My mother just didn’t seem to have the grit for life, and when my father and grandmother died and my sister was living elsewhere, I was the only person to feed her over-riding desire for sympathy. I rationed this, with the gut feeling that too much could destroy what little coping ability she had left and plunge her into worse misery. I believe she lived at least the last half of her life inside out. Instead of directing her thoughts outward and then looking inside herself first for answers to her difficulties, she concentrated on looking inwards and only looked outwards to other people to solve her problems. Whatever, she couldn’t escape the straightjacket of her anxieties and obsessions. A pill, or rather a multitude of pills could, in her mind, cure any problem and the
doctors duly prescribed. She couldn’t recount a consultation with her doctor without an involuntary smile. Anyway, for all her ill health she lived to a ripe if miserable old age.

I did not inherit my mother’s unhappiness; by good luck I am messy and happy. (Yes, I know the rationalization is obvious.) I’ll never really understand her. The best I can claim, with the perspective of time, is a little more insight and compassion, albeit cheap and easy compassion now the problem has gone.

My abiding memory of her is her rare, forced, phony laugh and my failure to make her happy.

What a waste of a life!

Finally, we come to Mum. Born in Blenheim, went to Marlborough College, and lived for many years at 9 Dillon St. when young. (This house was sold around 1952, after Mum’s parents came back from their six-month holiday overseas, and before they went off to teach at Taumarunui). At Marlborough College her father, Robert Adair McPherson was known as old Mac, Mum as young Mac. When she was 16 she stayed with her grandmother Kate when her parents went overseas for a trip for about six months. (This was the trip financed by the popcorn sales.) When they returned it was Mum’s 7th form year, and her parents got jobs at Taumarunui; they had to give up their Marlborough College jobs, I suppose, to take such a long break. So Mum went to boarding school for a year, the nearest place being New Plymouth Girls. Mum didn’t start until after the beginning of the year, and she was the last to leave (from Kate’s home in Blenheim) so there were no suitcases. She put all her stuff in an apple box, tied it up, and went off to boarding school. Sister Valerie was teaching also at Taumarunui; she hated it.

After New Plymouth, Mum went to Dunedin to do Medicine. Her parents came down too, to make sure Mum kept at it. Gummy, as I said before, was dead keen on Mum going through Medical School. Fortunately Mum was too. She decided to do Medicine while Ma and Gummy were on their long overseas trip, and changed all her subjects to match. Ma and Gummy got jobs at Macandrew Intermediate, teaching Home Economics and Metalwork respectively, as at Marlborough College. They also used to go down to Owaka for two days in each week, to teach at the school there.

The family lived in several places in quick succession in Dunedin, as accommodation was very hard to come by, and finally lived in a flat along Forbury Road, just by the corner. Grandmother Kate sold up in Blenheim and came down to join them, and took over the flat in Forbury Rd when the house in Ravenswood Road was all built. That’s where Kate lived when I knew her. When I was a kid I used to play on the roof of the bus shelter, just outside the flat. I remember thinking I was very brave.

Mum married Dad on her birthday, only five days after her final medical examinations. She wasn’t too interested in the wedding details; her sister Valerie chose and bought the material in Auckland, and a neighbour, Mrs. McKinney, chose the pattern and made the dress. Mum and Dad then started work in Auckland, at midnight on the 1st of January, 1960. Mary was born that September. Count the months. Mum was lucky or careful. The wedding announcement in The New Zealand Free Lance, on Wednesday, January 8, 1960, read: “Two doctors recently capped, Dr. Rosalie McPherson and Dr. Graham Trevellyan Sneyd were married in Trinity Methodist Church, Dunedin. Both have accepted positions as house-surgeons at Auckland Hospital.”

And there we shall leave them for now. They can tell their stories themselves a little later (page 259).

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1According to Mum, “Dad had to resign from his job at Marlborough College when he went overseas on holiday because the Headmaster, Bert Insull (Dad called him Bert Insult) would not give him leave of absence. Other precedents had been set and Dad was furious, but they hated each other so it was no wonder Insull took the opportunity to get rid of him. I’ve since learnt (only a couple of years ago at a reunion actually) that Insull was widely regarded as a disaster, so the bad feeling between them may not have been Dad’s fault.”

2I wonder what they thought they could have done, had she not wanted to continue. In my experience, one’s children just do whatever the hell they want, thank you very much.

3I very much doubt she was good.

4Note how the John is missing. I’m betting his mother put that notice in.
Mum. What? You want more details? Well, OK. Top left; Mum on a slide. Like you couldn’t guess that one. Bottom; Mum trying to smell a flower with her eyes. Somewhere in Blenheim. Top right; Mum in uniform, off to New Plymouth Girls for her last year of high school.
Mum. Top; from left to right, Mum, her father, her mother, Kate (her maternal grandmother) and her elder sister Valerie. This looks like it was taken outside the flat in Forbury Road, and so Mum must have been at university then. Bottom left; you have to guess who this one is. Bottom right: Mum and sister Valerie. Neither of them improved.
Chapter 2

The Neals and Buschs

Freda Neal, who appeared in the previous chapter married to Robert McPherson, was the G-granddaughter of William Neal and Amelia Matthews, who came out to New Zealand on the very first colonising boats to Nelson. Her grandfather, Thomas Nelson Neal, was reputedly the first pakeha baby born in Nelson, and the family quickly spread out to the Waimea, and over the hills east to the Wairau valley, Picton and Blenheim, where they remained. The Neals married into the Busch family (who arrived in Nelson in 1844) and the Norgrove family (Chapter 3), who arrived in Wellington in 1841, moving thence to Nelson, Picton and Blenheim. The Neals were sheep farmers and cricket players, and there were (and still are) enormous numbers of them. They bred like rabbits.

The definitive work on the Neal family of Nelson is the book by Brenda Carr, which she published herself in 1998 [19]. Carr is the perfect example of the other kind of genealogist.\(^1\) In her book she traces all the myriad branches of Neals that have descended from Matthew and Amelia; there are lots of them. William and Amelia had thirteen children, just for example, while Thomas Nelson Neal had another dozen or so. At that rate of increase it doesn’t take long before you have a lot of Neals, and Carr’s book has them all; over 400 pages of Neal details, 150 years of them, complete with family photographs and anecdotes (none salacious, unfortunately). I even appear in it.\(^2\)

There is a similar, and equally tome-like, book about the Busch family, called *The Busch Line*\(^3\) [18]. Another 250-odd pages of Busch details this time, photographs and all. I remember when I was finally able to obtain a copy; I was sitting in my office at Auckland University, trawling off-hand through abebooks.com and there it was. Sitting in a shop in Takapuna, just across the bridge from me. I was so excited I rang them up immediately and asked them to put it aside. They did. I left work right then and went to pick it up. In the shop they looked at me rather strangely. I’m guessing that they didn’t understand why a mature adult\(^4\) would get so excited about such a boring book. Inside the front cover is the inscription “1987. To Alan; may you be proud of your origin”. I’m guessing Alan wasn’t particularly, and flogged it off cheap.

Even though both these books make excruciatingly dull reading (well, you can’t actually read them in that sense at all), they are both really impressive pieces of work. Enormous effort went into them both, and I imagine there is very little more to be discovered about the early members of either family. So anybody who is lucky enough to be connected to both of these families has a treasure trove of family information just sitting there waiting to be mined.

New Zealand in the 1830’s had a population of only around 2000 Pakeha. They were scattered over many parts of the country, but by far the greatest concentration was around the Bay of Islands and the Hokianga. They were a problem for Britain. Many of them were British subjects, and demanding the same standards of protection afforded to other British subjects around the world, a

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\(^1\)See the Introduction.
\(^2\)On page 129, for those who care. I remember that Mum and Dad attended some Neal reunion that was part of the writing of Carr’s book, and Dad came away complaining about how many Neals there were in the world, and all very worthy. He didn’t mean this as a compliment, methinks.
\(^3\)Dad has more complaints about this, as well. He is not very polite, my father.
\(^4\)Well, relatively mature compared to my siblings.
feat almost impossible to accomplish without more formal intervention than had previously been the case. It was becoming increasingly clear that Britain was going to have to adopt a much more active policy. Of course, this was in many ways a self-fulfilling prophecy. As people began to believe that Britain was going to intervene and annex New Zealand as a formal colony, the sharks began to gather, thus making the demands for intervention even greater. Anybody who could nip over and ‘buy’ a few thousand acres for a musket did so in a hurry, to stake their claim before the government took over and regularised the matter.\footnote{It is hardly necessary to add that the Maori were not consulted in any significant way. Nor, let me emphasise, was land ever purchased in any meaningful sense of the word. It was, quite simply, stolen from Maori who had necessarily only a very limited understanding of what was coming, or how their ‘sales’ were being interpreted by the Pakeha. Still, the various Neals and Norgroves are, of all people, the least culpable. Fleeing an unjust society in Britain, they can hardly be blamed for thinking more of their own survival and welfare than of Maori rights.}

One of the biggest sharks, it seems to me, was the New Zealand Company. Formed in 1839, its avowed goal was to encourage the colonisation of New Zealand, but in a form particularly suitable for the Directors of the Company. It was the brain child of Edward Gibbon Wakefield who was clearly, for all the laudatory things said about him, a complete scoundrel.\footnote{One of his best-known escapades was the abduction, rape and forced marriage of a fifteen-year-old heiress, for which he was imprisoned in Newgate for three years. Charming.} The goals of the New Zealand Company were dressed up in all kinds of lovely language; the necessary rules for a happy, healthy, Utopia in which latter-day English Lords of the Estate could sit in high indolent style in New Zealand while their imported labourers (all very happy to be there, of course) would work on their plots of land to support them. Of course, you wouldn’t want to let the labourers have too much ability for self-improvement, so the rules tried to prevent this, but you had to let a little of this sort of thing happen or none of the working classes would want to go. And there had to be working classes; the gentry couldn’t possibly work their own land. That sort of thing just wasn’t done. The general plan seemed to be firstly to ‘buy’ as much Maori land as possible in a suitable spot; secondly, to resell this land to people in Britain at an obscene profit\footnote{Just as an example, in 1838 William Wakefield ‘bought’ approximately 20 million acres of land at the northern end of the South Island, paying for it with goods estimated to be worth around £25. The plan was to sell on this land at £1 per acre, or thereabouts, leading to a theoretical profit of around 1 million %. Not bad for a bunch of disinterested capitalists who were only, as they continually assured people, only in it to benefit the British Empire and save England from the scourge of poverty. They were certainly intending to save themselves from the scourge of poverty, this much is clear. It didn’t quite work out that way, of course, as reality interfered.}, thereby paying for the whole exercise; thirdly, to recruit a bunch of willing labourers in Britain; and lastly, to ship them all off to New Zealand where they could work on the land (work and wages guaranteed by the rich settlers) to make estates for the new colonial gentry. It wasn’t quite put in these exact terms, but their underlying goals seem pretty clear.

There was a great deal of urgency. The British government was on the verge of annexing New Zealand as a formal colony, and the New Zealand Company had to get in first. After all, their ‘purchases’ had to be legal under British law, which they wouldn’t be if the Colonial Office got in first and set the rules. Hence the Tory expedition of May, 1839, led by Edward’s brother, William Wakefield. This preliminary expedition had the job of finding a suitable spot for a town, and ‘buying’ as much Maori land as it could. In September of that same year the first five immigrant ships, the *Adelaide*, *Aurora*, *Bengal Merchant*, *Duke of Roxburgh* and *Oriental* left from London; the *Aurora* was the first to arrive in Port Nicholson, on 21 January, 1840, with the others following some weeks later.\footnote{I suppose all this isn’t really directly relevant to the Neals, or even to the Norgroves, who didn’t arrive in Wellington until 1841, but it does set the scene, so bear with me.}

Almost immediately plans were made to send out a second colony, under the command of Arthur Wakefield, another of the Wakefield brothers. Two preliminary ships, the *Will Watch* and the *Whitby* left England on the 27th of April, 1841, with 27 cabin passengers and 77 emigrants, and additional stores were sent on a faster ship, the *Arrow*, which left a few days later, on the 1st of May. The families of the preliminary party followed in the *Lloyds*, which sailed on the 11th of September, while the main immigrant party came in three ships, the *Mary Anne*, *Fifeshire* and *Lord Auckland*, which left around the 24th.

The site of the new colony was to become quite a bone of contention between the New Zealand Company (in the persons of William and Arthur Wakefield), and the crown (in the person of Gover-
nor Hobson, who, only a few months before, had signed the Treaty of Waitangi, investing all rights to purchase Maori land in the crown, not in private companies. Theoretically, the New Zealand Company could only found a colony where Governor Hobson said they were allowed to, and he wasn’t too keen on new, practically independent colonies a long way from his power base in the Bay of Islands. He would much rather they settled up north, in the Mahurangi maybe, or close to Auckland. However, after weeks of negotiation, argument and exploration it was finally agreed that the settlement should be at the site of present-day Nelson. The nearby Waimea valley had about 60,000 acres of land that could probably be farmed; a lot less than what was needed, but Arthur Wakefield was quite confident of finding more in the interior. It was not considered an ideal site, but between the demands of Governor Hobson on the one hand and local Maori on the other, the New Zealand Company was left with very little room to manoeuvre.

As a side note, it’s fascinating to observe (from a distance) the contortions necessary to justify the land purchases, both to the local Maori and to Governor Hobson. In 1839, William Wakefield had ‘purchased’ huge tracts of land in the Nelson and Marlborough areas, as part of the Tory expedition. The difficulty was that the local Maori hadn’t actually been consulted (fancy that!), and all negotiations had been done with Te Rauparaha, who was quite happy to sell off other peoples’ lands as long as he could get a bunch of guns. So when the ships arrived at the site of their new colony at Nelson the local Maori demanded payment for their land, quite rejecting the idea that it had already been sold by Te Rauparaha. The obvious solution, one might think, would be to buy it again; after all, the whole 20 million acres could probably be had for a few guns and blankets. Hardly overpriced. But Arthur Wakefield was not now legally allowed to buy Maori land, since this had been expressly forbidden by the Treaty of Waitangi. Thus, all legal claim to the land had to be based on the 1839 purchases of William Wakefield. Eventually, Arthur Wakefield was able to persuade the local Maori to accept gifts; not for purchase of their land, no, no, not that, purely in the spirit of good will and fellowship, as long as they were then to let the colonists live there.

Arrival in New Zealand; William Neal and Amelia Matthews

William Neal was born in Alton, a town in Hampshire, in June, 1810. His ancestry can be traced for a few generations, as can that of Amelia Matthews, whom he married on the 25th of January, 1834. However, if anything more is known about their ancestors, Brenda Carr doesn’t say, and since I haven’t done any research myself, I can only conclude, with reasonable probability, that they were all poor, leaving nothing but their names in the parish record.

William was a bricklayer, poor and desperate enough to be tempted by the offers from the New Zealand Company, who signed him up for £1 8s a week (14s to Matthew and 14s to Amelia, until she sailed to New Zealand in the Lloyds). He was recruited by Mr. A. Crowley, the Alton agent for the New Zealand Company, who judged William to be “of sound mind, of good character, and willing to work.” William Neal sailed on the Will Watch, which arrived in Port Nicholson on the 8th of September; the Whitby, with Arthur Wakefield on board, arrived ten days later. They must have sat at Port Nicholson twiddling their thumbs for a few weeks while the site for the new colony was discussed, but eventually they set sail again for the South Island, leaving for Tasman Bay on the 30th of September. Another month of exploration followed before the specific site for the colony was decided upon, and it was not until the 4th of November that the three ships arrived at their new home in Nelson.

The first order of the day was to unload the ships and set up the prefabricated barracks that had been packed for the voyage. Once that was done, by the 18th of November, a shilling a day was deducted from every man’s pay, to pay for their provisions. The labourers were then allowed to build, in their own time, places for themselves to live. Typically, they built them with scant regard for the theoretical distribution of allotments, which led to no inconsiderable conflict when the real owners finally arrived. Indeed, right from the very beginning of the settlement, the labourers were,

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1A belief that led to Arthur’s own death a few years later in the Wairau Massacre.
2Brenda Carr’s book shows a copy of their marriage certificate.
3They couldn’t sail to Nelson, of course, because it hadn’t been founded yet.
4Why do I suspect that the value of the daily provisions was much less than a shilling? Must be my cynical nature.
in the words of Ruth Allan [2], “less submissive than their leaders expected.” Quite so. And rightly so.

There must have been enormous worry when the first of the other ships to arrive was not the *Lloyds*, with all their families on board, but the *Fifeshire*, which had left Gravesend three weeks later, arriving in Nelson on the 1st of February, 1842. Next to arrive was the *Mary Ann*, on the 5th of February, and finally the *Lloyds* arrived on the 15th, with Amelia Matthews on board. It cannot have been a happy reunion. This trip of the *Lloyds* is infamous for its utter lack of proper organisation, and a callous disregard for the health and safety of its passengers [12]. No proper provisions were included for the large number of small children, the sanitary facilities were completely inadequate for the number of women and children on board, and the ship’s doctor was incompetent, or worse. To ensure the trip was abusive as well as unhealthy, the ship’s captain, William Green, started sleeping with one of the wives, and allowed his crew members to do the same. One wonders just how many of the wives were forced into such relationships, either out of fear, or from a wish to obtain food for their children. Under the circumstances, they were hardly likely all to be voluntary. The inevitable tragedy followed. A family with whooping cough had been allowed to board the vessel, and the disease ran rampant. Scurvy raised its ugly head but no proper provisions were made to combat it, even when the opportunity presented itself when the vessel put into the Cape of Good Hope, by which time 58 children had already died. Seven more were to die before the *Lloyds* reached New
Zealand.\(^1\)

Amelia Matthews had begun the trip with five children; William was 9, George was 7, Charles was 4, Ellen was 3 and Henry was 1. Another daughter, Sarah Ann, had died previously in 1836. The first to die on board was Ellen, who died on the 20th of September followed by Henry on the 25th, and Charles on the 7th of November. Of her first six children, poor Amelia was left with only two. It cannot have been an entirely happy reunion with William.

Over the next few years the Nelson colonists, in their eternal search for more land, spread out over the Waimea valley, and then headed east over the hills to the Wairau valley, Picton and Blenheim, movements which are mirrored in the movements of the Neal family.

By 1844 William Neal was living at Waimea South (now called Spring Grove; this was to remain his main residence for the rest of his life), with his occupation listed as a sawyer. Waimea South was covered in forests at that time, and one supposes that William Neal, in search of work, went to chop down trees. In 1845 he had been demoted to a simple labourer (i.e., unskilled), but was back to bricklayer in 1859. Almost certainly he did whatever he could to survive, and so these formally listed occupations are unlikely to be accurate descriptions of the actual things he did. This would have been true for all the colonists. No matter their profession back in England, in Nelson they had to eat. In the 1849 Census we see a

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{William Neale [sic]} & \\
\text{Occupation; Bricklayer} & \\
\text{Religion; Church of England} & \\
\text{Children; 6} & \\
3 \text{ males, 1 female – can read and write} & \\
2 \text{ males – cannot read or write} & \\
5 \text{ acres fenced; 5 acres cleared and cultivated, 2 wheat 3 barley; tenant of land. Wood} & \\
\text{house, shingle roof; 5 cattle, 1 pig.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Clearly William was doing a bit of farming as well, at least to generate food for his own family, although he was not yet a landowner. This was to come later. In 1859 he bought section 51 at Richmond, in Waimea East, paying £150 for 50 acres (without any buildings on it).\(^2\) William built a house there, as he was listed as a householder in Richmond in the 1866 Electoral roll.

William and Amelia had thirteen children.

**William** (1833–1865) married Martha Ann Avis in 1857 and they moved out to Marlborough where they had two sons and two daughters, all listed in [19]. One son and one daughter died very young. William died of dropsy only a few years after (in 1865), at the age of only 32, leaving two children, George and Clara. Interestingly, his widow remarried his brother, Edward Neal. Apparently, on his death bed William begged Ted to take care of his wife and children. Martha died in 1912, after having another five children with brother Ted.

**George** (1834–1922), the other survivor, had a lifelong disability resulting from an injury to his knee when he was young. He never married and worked as a bootmaker. He lived for many years with his brother Ted, and was buried in Picton.

**The next four** children, Sarah, Charles, Ellen and Henry, all died young, the later three on board the *Lloyds*, Sarah in Alton where she was born.

**Thomas Nelson** (1842–1924) was the the next son and my GGG-grandfather, so I’ll write more about him shortly.

\(^1\)The New Zealand Company instituted an enquiry which, of course, concluded that the expedition had been provided with all that could possibly have been expected, and that nobody was at fault, the tragedy being the result of Divine Providence, which nobody could have foreseen or prevented. How typical. Arthur Wakefield, to his credit, insisted on a proper investigation, which pointed the finger appropriately.

\(^2\)Brenda Carr’s book is not entirely clear on this point. William may have purchased another section 51, of 50 acres in Clover Road, Brightwater, this time with outbuildings, and for £100. However, I suspect that he only bought one lot of land, and that the accounts are a bit muddled.
Charlotte Anne (1844–1892). She married a sawyer, Henry Bryant, lived at Waima East and had eight children. Or maybe nine. She died when only 47 of “heart disease and paralysis for two years”. Goodness knows what that was.

Edward John (1846–1942). He’s the one who married Martha Ann Avis, his brother’s widow, and had another five children with her. Lots of descendants. Apparently, he met his first GG-granddaughter just before he died.

Francis, or Frank (1848–1911). He married Ellen Walker, and apparently had a sense of humour. Well, for practical jokes, anyway. Lived in Nelson, had a bunch of descendants. Usual story.

Robert (1850–1919). Married Julia Anne Berry and had seven children. Lived in Nelson. The place must have been crawling with Neals.

Frederick (1853–1935). Followed his brothers to Marlborough and there married Mary Alice Jackson (daughter of Captain James Jackson, a well known pioneer and whaler). They had five children.

Charles (1854–1934). He got no schooling, and couldn’t read or write. He went off to Marlborough also, and married Ann Jane Bright. Nine or so children.

I have often wondered whether or not people like William and Amelia were happy with the choice they made. I suspect so. Would it have been possible for a poor bricklayer to end up with his own 50 acre block in England, and for his children to own, as they did in their turn, extensive tracts of land? I doubt it. I suspect that, once the initial hardships were over (and there were certainly many of those, as supply ships failed to arrive, the New Zealand Company went bankrupt, and the colony of Nelson suffered from a drastic shortage of capital), William and Amelia found themselves in a relatively comfortable position, and could have looked forward to a life for their children quite different from their own.

Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch

Thomas Nelson was the first child of William and Sarah to be born in Nelson; he was born nine months and 20 days after the arrival of the Lloyds, and is claimed to have been one of the first pakeha children, if not the first, to be born in Nelson. At the very least there can have been few born sooner, particularly if they were the sons of the initial party, and not the offspring of the sailors on the Lloyds.

He was born in Waimea South, where William was renting a section, and must have spent the early part of his life in learning how to run a farm. On the 6th of July, 1866, Thomas Nelson married Magdalena Louisa Sophia Busch (usually called Selina). She was the fifth daughter of German immigrants about whom more shortly (page 50). The Busch family lived out in Waimea East, in Aniseed Valley, and this is where Thomas and Selina spent their first few years of married life. Probably spurred by the death of William in 1868, Thomas and Selina, with three Clydesdale horses, left Nelson in 1868 to join the settlers heading east over the mountains to the new lands around Picton and Blenheim.

After working on a farm for a few years at Waikawa, close to Picton, in 1872 Thomas and Selina purchased a property, known as Burnlea, at Spring Creek. Initially the purchase was jointly with Thomas’s brother-in-law, William James Kinzett, but on the 20th of July, 1877, Thomas bought Kinzett out to become the sole owner. The property was about 150 acres on the banks of Spring Creek. By 1898, Thomas had done well enough to purchase another 200 acres of the Marshlands estate (between Spring Creek and the sea) and grew a lot of flax on the property, as well as running cows and growing oats and wheat. He and Selina moved out to Marshlands to live, where they
remained for the rest of Thomas’ life (another 26 years or so). His second son, John Frederick (my G-grandfather) stayed on at Burnlea for another 20 years, in partnership with his brother, Frank.

All told, Thomas and Selina had thirteen children,1 of whom twelve survived2 to be photographed with Thomas and Selina on their 50th wedding anniversary. The only exception was the first Mary who was drowned in Spring Creek, in 1877, when she was only 17 months old. Her older brother, Charles, noticed her playing outside in the garden just before midday. Later, Selina asked where she was and a search began. Charles found her in the creek near the house. She had been in the habit of going to the creek to collect water in a tin and must have slipped in and drowned. I remember my G-grandmother Kate (Edith Norgrove) often talking about the little girl who drowned in Spring Creek. This must have been whom she was talking about. It was her husband’s little sister. Actually, in Kate’s stories the girl in Spring Creek was very useful, as she died from a number of different causes, depending on how we were being naughty at the time. She didn’t cut her meat into small pieces and choked, or she went swimming right after eating lunch and drowned from getting cramps; these are the two I remember clearly.

Anyway, just for the record, here they are.

Charles William was born in Aniseed Valley in 1865 but went to Marlborough with his parents. In 1888 he married Agatha Margretha Lankow, the daughter of immigrants who came to Nelson on the Skiold (page 50). They had a bunch of children, as the Neals tended to do, and pages of descendants in Carr’s book [19].

John Frederick. My G-grandfather, so he appears in more detail below.

Amelia Doras was born in 1870, and married John McDonnell, the son of Irish immigrants. They farmed at Tua Marina for a few years before going out to Ikamatua, on the West Coast, later moving up to Gisborne. They ran sheep.

Francis (Frank) was born in Waikawa, and attained the eminent position of dux of Rapaura school. A keen cricket player. He married Lucy Allport (and her sister Clara married Frank’s brother, Albert). He spent his life farming at Seaview, near Rarangi. Lots of descendants.

Thomas. Born in 1874 at Spring Creek, he was a keen rugby player, and married Becky Ann Kerr. They first farmed at Clifford Bay, in the Awatere, but later at a section near Cape Campbell.

Mary Magdalena, who died young as described above.

Mary. The second Mary, named after her recently dead sister of course. She was a ‘first day’ pupil of the Marshlands school in 1891. She married George Woolley of Tua Marina, a flax cutter and scutcher. They purchased land around Tua Marina and farmed it. Seven daughters, five sons – fairly typical.

Ellen Maude. Another ‘first day’ pupil at Marshlands. She married John Wallace Orchard, the son of a surgical instrument maker from Christchurch. John’s father made the first glass top for an operating theatre in Christchurch Public Hospital. They bought land in Kenepuru Sound, using money borrowed from Ellen’s mother, and farmed it. Of course, John went off to the war in 1916 leaving his wife to do all the work. She succeeded very well at it, it seems. He didn’t. He was gassed in the war, and had a nasty cough for the rest of his life. Bunch of children.

Martha Ann was yet another ‘first day’ pupil at Marshlands. She married William James Bright, a flax cutter at Marshlands and had eight children. She died young, when only 48, while feeding her hens. They found her dead beside them, with a half-full basket of eggs. Jim Bright was one of the founding directors of the Koromiko Dairy Company, and later became Chairman of Directors, so he must have done pretty well for himself.

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1 Poor Selina.
2 Lucky Selina.
Albert Henry. He’s the one who married Clara Allport, the sister of his brother’s wife Lucy. Farmed at *Burnlea* and bred pedigree Clydesdale horses. He died when only 49, from a heart attack after a dance at the Band Rotunda in Blenheim.

Edward John. A farmer and flax cutter, he married Winifrid Ivalyne Jellyman\(^1\) and had four sons and a daughter. Keen rugby and cricket player.

Laura Evelyn Mabel. Married Cornelius Peter O’Sullivan, and they milked cows on a property in Redwood Street, Blenheim. Three daughters, two sons, all born in Blenheim.

Monte William James, the youngest, was born in 1892 and grew up at Marshlands. He started off farming at Marshlands, but later bought an orchard near Blenheim where he grew fruit and vegetables. He married Lillian Margaret Taylor, and had six sons. Apparently, he was an excellent sportsman, representing Marlborough in rugby from 1913 to 1928, and in cricket from when he was 17 until he was 53. My word, imagine still representing your province at the age of 53. Not bad.

To accommodate their enormous family, Thomas and Selina built a house with nine bedrooms in Marshlands, and then a second home sometime later, with hot and cold running water, and a water toilet. Thomas was a very keen cricket player, and represented Nelson against Marlborough in what was thought to be the first interprovincial cricket match\(^2\). This must have been before he headed over the hills to Waikawa. His fascination with cricket remained, and 24 members of the Neal family played for the Marshlands club. Indeed, so many Neals played that they made up their own team, and played against Picton. This is another thing my G-grandmother Kate used to talk about; the Neal cricket team. I never knew what she meant before I read Brenda Carr’s book. Interestingly, a number of Neals (Thomas, Robert and Francis) played against William Norgrove, another ancestor, in the 1873 Spring Creek versus Blenheim showdown; an account of this exciting match (in which the Neals were rather undistinguished it must be said) can be found on page 65.

Thomas Nelson’s granddaughter\(^3\), quoted in [18], remembers him as follows\(^4\):

I remember grandfather, Thomas Neal, as a very quiet loving person. He was very deaf. When I was 12, he and Uncle Monte (Thomas’ youngest son) were staying with us for a holiday at St. Omar and grandfather gave me half a crown. I can tell you I thought I was made. I had never owned that much money before. I didn’t have much to do with my grandparents, but grandmother was a very strict woman and always had everyone working.

I remember grandfather bought an overland car when I was 16 (1919). Uncle Monte used to drive it, and he took Mum and I and grandfather for a drive around Spring Creek, and grandfather told me that the land there was selling for ten pounds an acre, which he thought was a very high price.

They first lived in an old house at Marshlands, on their farm there. Uncle Monte and his wife lived in the old house afterwards which has since been burnt. But they built a nice new place with conveniences, hot and cold water and a water lav. on one end of the verandah.

Grandmother was a wonderful worker and tried to make everyone keep up with her. Right up till the time when grandad died she used to milk a couple of cows. She would leave him to get up and light the fire in the range and get the breakfast ready. The morning he died, she went out to his bedroom off the verandah to see why he wasn’t up and found he had died in his sleep.

Apparenty for a year Thomas farmed Burnlea (Spring Creek property) and Marshlands for one harvest together. Between the two farms was the old Ferry Hotel, and he usually

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1. Now that is a real name!
2. It wasn’t. Well, not the first in New Zealand anyway. Maybe it was the first between Nelson and Marlborough.
3. Agatha Violet, daughter of Charles William Neal.
4. Somewhat shortened by me.
stopped on the way home for a drink. Being harvest time and six o’clock closing, it usually went after hours. One night the police came in and were busy taking names and Grandad didn’t see them and being deaf didn’t hear them, so when they took him by the shoulder and said “What’s yours?”, of course his answer was “another long one please”. Thomas liked to go out and shoot pigeons, but being deaf he would take one of the children to point them out to him as he couldn’t hear them.

Lena was not happy if Thomas didn’t turn up after a visit to the hotel, and she often got into the gig and went to get him. One night as they drove home from the hotel, Thomas was smoking his pipe, and a spark fell into Lena’s lap and set her dress alight.

Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch with their children on their Golden Wedding anniversary. In the back row, from left to right, are Edward, Monte, John, Charles, Frank, Albert and Tom. In the front row, left to right, are Martha, Ellen, Thomas, Selina, Millie, Mary and Laura. Copied from [18].

Thomas and Selina celebrated their 40th and 50th wedding anniversaries in great style, surrounded by large numbers of family, before Thomas finally died of heart failure in 1924, closely followed by Selina in 1925. They left 75 grandchildren and 18 G-grandchildren. Not a bad effort. The obituary in the Marlborough Express read:

A very well known and highly respected settler Mr. Thomas Nelson Neal passed away peacefully in his sleep at his residence at Marshlands yesterday morning. He was apparently in his usual robust health on Thursday night but was found dead in bed yesterday morning.

The late Mr. Neal who was one of the first generation of native born New Zealanders was in his 82nd year and was wont to claim that he was one of the first three white children to be born at Nelson. His father was a member of the expeditionary force sent out to Nelson from the old country, and he was joined there later by his wife whom he had left in England. The late Mr. Neal spent his boyhood in a young settlement of Nelson and followed various occupations, chiefly farming. He was prominent in the sporting and athletic field and had the honour of representing Nelson against Marlborough in what was probably the first interprovincial cricket match. In his later years he was a very familiar figure as a spectator on the football fields of Marlborough always taking a keen interest in the national game.
The late Mr. Neal found his way into Wairau in 1868 and for about five years worked on a farm at Waikawa. He then purchased his well known property at Spring Creek. At first he was in partnership with his brother-in-law Mr. W. Kinzett, but Mr. Kinzett later dropped out of the partnership and one of Mr. Neal’s sons now owns his portion of the property. In 1883 the late Mr. Neal purchased a part of the Marshlands estate when it went on the market and a few years later he established his home at Marshlands where he had resided since. Mr. Neal passed over the Maungataupu on the day following the murders there but he knew nothing of the tragedy at the time. The late Mr. Neal enjoyed extraordinary health and in the last fifty years his family do not remember him spending a day in bed. He is survived by Mrs. Neal now in her 75th year and there is a surviving family of seven sons and four daughters, with a total of 75 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren. The sons are: Messrs Charles Wm. Neal, Fabians Valley; John Frederick Neal, ‘Lucknow’, Seddon; Francis Neal, Marshlands; Thomas Neal, Seddon; Albert Henry Neal, Spring Creek; Edward John Neal, Marshlands; Montague William James Neal, Marshlands. The daughters are, Mesdames J. McDonnell, Opotiki; G. Woolley, Tua Marina; J. Orchard, St. Omer, Kenepuru; and the late Mrs C. O’Sullivan, Redwoodtown. Three brothers still living are, Messrs E. Neal, Waikawa Road, Picton; F. Neal, Groveton, and C. Neal in the Poverty Bay District.

After Thomas died his lands at Marshlands and Spring Creek were split up and sold in a number of separate lots. The real estate agents and auctioneers were the same then as now, and waxed lyrical about the many advantages of such wonderful pieces of land. “The auctioneer desires to emphasise the completeness of the residence and confidently asserts that it offers an opportunity of securing a house in the country with all the advantages of a town residence (and none of its disabilities in the shape of heavy rates).” Doesn’t that just sound typical?

\footnote{Note how the girls aren’t even given their own names, but only their husband’s initial! This is just so damned irritating.}
John Frederick Neal and Kate Norgrove

If you recall, Thomas Nelson Neal and Selina Busch had thirteen children, of whom the second son was John Frederick Neal, my G-grandfather. He was born at Waikawa, just after Thomas and Selina had left Aniseed Valley to head east. He was a farmer in Marlborough his entire life; early on he was a keen shearer apparently, and his love of sheep farming was evident throughout his entire life. His first land was his father’s old property, Burnlea, at Spring Creek, which he purchased with his brother Frank in 1898, but in 1918 he sold up to his brother, Albert, and purchased Lucknow, 740 acres of tussock land at Seddon, south across the hills from Blenheim. Burnlea was threatened by floods and John and Kate wanted a bigger place. Lucknow was advertised on Wednesday, and they bought it on Saturday.

John Frederick’s first wife was Marion Eliza Watson, from whom came Uncle Norman of Wisconsin (and popcorn, see page 23) fame, but after she died of pneumonia on the 3rd of July, 1900, he remarried Kate Edith Norgrove, with whom our story is more closely concerned.

Kate was born in Blenheim on the 1st of March, 1882, from a family that had been around Wellington, Picton and Blenheim since 1840, as long as the Neals had been in Nelson. However, they weren’t rich; not like the Neals. Quite the reverse, as we shall see in the next chapter. Kate had very little formal schooling, leaving school when she was only 12 in order to help her parents around the house (she was paid 5s a week). At 16 she also learned dressmaking from Mrs. Bunnicliff. She must have become independent very young, as when she was 16, a pregnant Mrs. Sturtevant paid her passage to Dunedin so that Kate could help her look after her children. Kate was down in Dunedin for another four months – living at Esther Crescent and then at St. Clair – at some later date (that I don’t know) to help Mrs. Sturtevant again; apparently her brother was coming out from England and extra help was needed.

It seems that Kate worked as a housemaid, or lady’s maid, or nanny for much of her early life. By the time she was 24 she was in Spring Creek, teaching at the Rapaura Sunday School and looking after the little girl of a friend, and this is where she met John Frederick, who was also teaching at the Sunday School. Romance blossomed, one imagines, although with Kate it takes quite a stretch for one’s imagination to get there.

For their honeymoon, John and Kate went to Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. As their boat left Wellington, going round Cape Palliser, at the very southernmost tip of the North Island4, the swells were so bad that it stood on its end twice. Kate remembers having her first motor ride in Australia, at Duncan and Fraser’s. It’s typical that she would remember such a thing: she was always very keen on having new things, modern things, fancy things. They paid a sovereign to a salesman for taking them up Mt. Lofty. Hans Busch, that miserly old bugger5, would have had a fit had he known.

On their way back to New Zealand they called at Hobart and Mt. Wellington, before sailing to Bluff and continuing overland, staying at Temuka with Adam Gibson6 so that John could buy a sprayer for his potatoes. Finally, they sailed from Lyttleton to the Picton Ferry, and thence home.

Given the poverty of Kate’s early life, it must have been quite an experience for her.

John and Kate bought their first car, a four-seater, in Spring Creek when Algy was 14 months old; at that time there were only two others.7 It was, we are told, dove grey with a lot of brass, and the cricketers dropped their bats and ran to see the car go past Redwood St. ground. Curtains were

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1The name Lucknow apparently had nothing to do with India, but came from the original purchaser’s exclamation when the land was won in a lottery: “We’re in luck now!” I’m not entirely sure I believe this story, but it’s so corny it might just be true. At any rate I’ve included in an appendix (page 247) a description of Lucknow written by my mother, who stayed there a lot as a child, and loved it greatly.

2Well, it was a friend’s little girl according to what Kate herself told my mother, but I suspect it was more likely to be another sort of housemaid/nanny position. I’m quite sure that Kate did this for whoever paid her, and then tried to save face later in life by calling them her friends.

3Even Mum, who knew her so well, suspected that Kate was more interested in the farm than the man. Who knows, though? She was certainly a good-looking woman, as you can tell from surviving photographs.

4I have no idea why a boat from Wellington to Australia would go around Cape Palliser, but that’s what Kate said.

5And John Frederick’s grandfather, as described in the next section.

6I have no idea at all who Adam Gibson is, but stay with him they did, according to Kate herself.

7For those who care, they belonged to Aberhart, the greengrocers, who had a black Ford, and Dr. Redmond who had a little two-seater.
CHAPTER 2. THE NEALS AND BUSCHS

John Frederick Neal. The top left is him and Kate Norgrove on, one presumes, their wedding day. Bottom left is John Neal and Kate in the middle, Algy on the left and Ranji on the right, with Lucknow in the background.
John Frederick Neal working on the farm.
John Frederick Neal's children, from two marriages. Back row, from left: Marion, Lena, Norman supporting Algy. In front, Freda and Ranji.
pulled aside all the way down Grove Rd. When the children were older, they even had electricity installed in Lucknow!

Kate came late to the good things in life. She remembered the holidays, the cars, the electricity. They were important status symbols, and she would never take them for granted. Not her.

John and Kate’s eldest child was my grandmother, Freda, who married Robert McPherson (see Chapter 1), and they had three other children, Ranji Frederick (1909–2003; named after a famous Indian cricketer, Ranji Singh), Algy Vernon (1911–1984; named after two famous Australian cricketers, Algy Gears and Vernon Ransford), and Nita Allison (1916–1926). All the children were born while the family was living at Burnlea; Freda would have been about 11 when they moved to Lucknow.

I can’t remember ever having met Ranji. He had two daughters, Mavis and Janice, and two wives [19], but I never met any of them, either. Ranji lived all his life farming in Marlborough. When he was 95 he died when his pajamas caught fire from a paper that fell from a log burner. He was discovered later by a relative and died the following day in the Blenheim hospital. I’m sure Mum could tell all kinds of stories about him, but Mum isn’t writing this, and at any rate my goal is not to describe all the side branches but to concentrate on my direct ancestors.

About the only thing I can remember about Uncle Algy is the way he ate leeks in white sauce. I thought they were such disgusting things, absolutely vile, but he sat at Kate’s table in her wee flat along Forbury Rd., slurping them up with great enthusiasm. I just couldn’t understand how he could do it, and remember sitting and watching him, enthralled. Clearly it made a great impression on me. He was a large man, very strong, with a deep voice, sort of burry as I remember. Algy married Helen Gwendoline Halliday, and had two daughters and two sons; Helen, whom I think I met once, married Jack Davis, a farmer at Tarra (Long Acre Farm), and is now retired in Wanaka; Glenis married Tony Aubrey from a farming family at Omarama, and now lives in Nelson; John was the chaplain for the whole of the Defence Force, while his other son, Colin, still works for the Customs Department in the area of Biosecurity (at Christchurch).[1]

The youngest was Nita, who died of septic pneumonia, followed by cardiac failure, when she was only nine years old. I have a copy of a photograph of Nita, on which is written in Kate’s handwriting: “In loving memory of Little Petty who died ninth of June, 1926, aged 9 yrs and 9 mths”. It’s a sad photograph I always think.

It is with Kate that we first intersect my own memories. She died in 1974 when I was almost 12, and for the last few years of her life she lived in a flat by Forbury Corner, close to where we lived in St. Clair. I remember her clearly. My memories of her? Her walking around to our place, probably even in her nineties, always bringing a tin of something as a dinner contribution (she’d rest at the bus stops on the way); always having a cold bath every day; never believing that men landed on the moon (“The paper won’t refuse the ink” I remember her saying); Dad teasing her gently about Billy Graham, I have no idea why; Mum crying when she died; those horrible old hats she used to wear; the musty smell of her tiny flat, which I never liked as a child; helping to clean her kitchen ceiling and walls; Algy eating leeks in white sauce with horrible gusto (see above); being served leeks in white sauce (no comment required). Nothing spectacular really, just the sorts of things that young children remember. Still, I’m lucky to have any memories of her at all, and I treasure the ones I have.

Mum loved Kate deeply, more so than her own mother I think. I’ll leave her to speak for herself.[2]

Grandma Kate, by Rosalie Sneyd (i.e., Mum).

Picture this.

A tall well-made, handsome woman standing very straight with her head thrown back and a little to one side, flanked by her solid farmer husband and two strapping sons (my mother must have been away). They’re standing at the top of wide steps, on the verandah of an imposing villa. Behind the house the hills of the farm in the distance. And there you have my grandmother. Quite a dame.

[1]Thanks to Auntie Valerie for this information about Algy’s sons.
[2]The appendix on Lucknow (page 247) also written by Mum, has a lot to say about Kate also.
Kate Edith Norgrove. The picture on the left was taken by the Otago Daily Times, as I remember, not long before she died. It’s with my sister Elizabeth. The picture on the right is in the garden at 9 Dillon St., Blenheim, (where my mother was brought up) in front of a big oleander tree (according to Auntie).
The first family in the valley to get a set of cutlery; the first to get electricity, the first to get a car. Secure of her status. It wasn’t like that in her childhood when she’d be sent down to the store to ask for food on tick when the money ran out.

Her schooling finished when she was fourteen when she was employed as a nursemaid. Sometime later she taught Sunday School and there met a widower twenty years her senior. He said that if she married him he’d take her to Australia for a honeymoon. I never knew whether it was grandfather or the trip she fancied, or maybe it was his farm. Anyway they married and Kate, having come up in the world, raised her chin and enjoyed it.

Kate had standards. She always looked good, helped by the parcel of outfits that arrived on the farm on approval from Ballantynes in Christchurch each year. A lifelong habit, somewhat annoying in later years if I was waiting for her, was to change her clothes right down to the skin before going out in case she was run over and taken to hospital.

Always smelled good too. Not of perfume (Heaven Forbid!) but of soap from her daily cold bath. I never saw her wear lipstick but as she got older she would powder her ruddy, weatherbeaten nose by flapping a powder puff in that general direction.

I never heard her swear. The worst thing she would say about anyone was to call them a besom. This conjured up cart-loads of evil which was never specified. One up from being a besom was to be ‘common’. I don’t even remember her using the word sex. But having borne four children herself she must have practised it. Perish the thought. Nor did she say ‘pregnant’. In those days a woman may be ‘in the family way’.

Every Sunday she’d go to Church (Anglican, of course) and after the service, as a member of the inner circle, go to the vicarage for tea and cake. There was, I’m sure a social element but nevertheless her faith was firm and she knew she would join her husband and daughter in heaven. Maybe it was this that gave her no fear of death, about which she would talk openly. She didn’t appear to fear anything.

Education had passed her by and she knew it but she did her best to educate herself from the Readers’ Digest, the only book I saw her read. “They say” ushered in the latest wisdom from this, the second holiest book. “They say soap causes cancer”. On the other hand she claimed superior knowledge of some things by virtue of her age. “You don’t get to my age without learning something. Paper never refuses the ink,” she’d say sagely referring to the reports of the moon landing which she never believed. There were also several pronunciations that she stuck to (I think she thought them refined) despite the evidence. Treefoil for tinfoil, remrant for remnant, nasturt-i-um with two hard t’s.

She claimed prescience but always after the event. She wrote ‘lines’ in which I, when quite small, had to put the ‘stops’. She became very deaf in later years and in her reverence for propriety was tortured by the fear that she broke wind audibly. Once again I came to the rescue. “Did you hear that dear?”

No conception of science or my husband’s research. “And what did you discover today?”

Whatever else Kate was, she was certainly strong. Tough of body and of mind. She’d walk miles over the farm with us as children and continued to walk in the city later. She never complained of being miserable; she would have considered it a sign of weakness, although long before my time when her fourth and youngest child died I understand that she didn’t cope with it well. Her home was her castle and work in the house her forte. I can hear her say to herself when she was a little indisposed, “Well, the broom won’t sweep itself, m’lady” and on she’d go. On the morning before she left for her final visit to hospital she cleaned all the outside drains in the block of flats where she lived.

Her house was always light and clean and airy with fresh flowers from the remnants of a once-beautiful garden and a rare calmness. Truly an oasis for me.
She was the best baker I know. Lashings of butter and cream on the farm helped. Her custard tarts are legend. When she was over ninety and living in the city she’d bake them and walk round with them to me if she knew I was having visitors. And they’d always be the worst she’d ever made – “Bad batch of flour, dear” – and delicious.

Good health was something she took for granted and didn’t jeopardise it by going to the doctor.

Tough, ignorant, intolerant, even bigoted, wise, kind, snobbish, stoical, hospitable. All those things at times. But they’re irrelevant to me; overshadowed as they are by the love between us.

The Busch family

Thomas Nelson’s wife, Selina Busch (page 38), had a rather interesting background herself. Her father had come to Auckland on one of two ships from Hamburg, an interesting chapter in the history of the New Zealand Company, which is worth a closer look. The New Zealand Company didn’t just confine itself to recruiting labourers from Britain. It also sent a recruiting officer to Hamburg to try and put together a group to colonise the Chatham Islands. The Company thought that, since the Chathams hadn’t yet been colonised officially by any European power, the field there was wide open. When they discovered what was going on, the Colonial Office promptly declared the purchase of the Chatham Islands illegal, threatened to revoke the Company’s charter and claimed that the Chathams were now formally part of the British Empire. Unfortunately, preparations in Germany were already well advanced, and it was not going to be so easy just to forget the whole idea. So the German organisers were persuaded to divert their settlers to Nelson, and the first of the Hamburg ships, the St. Pauli, left Germany on the 26th of December, 1842. A diary entry from one of the wealthier passengers, the Reverend Wohlers, is telling: “Their courtesy towards one another went a little too far, for although they almost all belonged to the uncultivated classes, they called one another Mr., Madam and Miss. We gave them these titles with pleasure, and this awakened a self respect in them and paved the way to a good understanding.” Clearly, the German serfs (actually, most of this first lot were freemen rather than serfs, as opposed to the second ship) got uppity as soon as they left the dear shores of home.

A second ship, the Skiold from Hamburg, was arranged a year or so after the St. Pauli, leaving Hamburg on the 21st of April, 1844, arriving in Nelson in the 1st of September. Each settler, most of whom were illiterate, had to sign a detailed legal agreement, written in High German of the intricate legal variety – which they could not possibly have understood – agreeing to pay back their own fares (at £17 10s per adult), and agreeing to buy from the expedition ‘benefactor’, Count Rantzau, if they could, 10 to 20 acres of rural land, at £2 5s per acre. Which just happened to be three times what the Count had paid the New Zealand Company for it. No doubt the Count would have been an investment banker had he happened to live in 2008.

Count Rantzau didn’t actually accompany the ships to Nelson, and in fact there were very few wealthy men on those ships. This created difficulties for the German immigrants. Although, according to their contract, they were to be provided with work upon arrival, there was almost nobody who could or would employ them. To make matters worse there was little land available for them, as large tracts of land were occupied by absentee British landlords and thus couldn’t, theoretically, be used. Two of the cabin passengers on the Skiold (i.e., wealthier ones), the Kelling brothers, stepped into the breach. They bought 150 acres and hired as many labourers on this land as they could. The surplus Germans, of which there were many, were shipped off to Australia. A considerable German community arose on the Kelling’s land, initially named Ranzau, after the Count, but later renamed to Hope.

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1 Well, I think it is. If you don’t agree, don’t read it.

2 In lovely German fashion, Beit, the leader of the settlers, a “fat, arrogant man” to quote another of the settlers, tried to give orders to the captain about how to organise the ship. I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall at that meeting.
The Busch family.

On the *Skild* was Hans Heinrich Conrad Busch, my GGG-grandfather. His grandparents had been poor German serfs in Borzen, Mecklenburg¹, tied to the land, unable to move. His parents appear not to have been serfs, as there is record of them working in a number of different places, but they were certainly poor. Hans Heinrich himself was born in Klein Pravtshagen in 1800 and was trained as a mason and a bricklayer. We know he worked at Arpshagen and Reppenhagen, and possibly other places also. In 1830 he married Sophia Christina Dorothea Grebin at the Lutheran church in Klutz; her occupation was listed as housemaid.² Their first two children were born in Arpshagen, and five more at Reppenhagen, where Hans was employed as a bricklayer and a labourer on a large estate. Two of their children died of tuberculosis in Reppenhagen.

Hans Heinrich must have been reasonably successful as he was one of only two steerage passen-

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¹Mecklenburg is in northeastern Germany, north of Berlin and east of Hamburg, on the Baltic coast.
²In the only photograph I’ve ever seen of Sophia (usually called Dorothea) she sits there, mouth drawn in a grim line, looking like a right old battleaxe. She bore 13 children. It’s no wonder she looked like that.
ders on the *Skiold* who had any money of their own (the other was Friedrich Heinrich Tietjen) but I have to admit that he doesn’t sound like a very pleasant man. He settled initially on the Kellings’ land, where he helped to build mud huts for the immigrant Germans, but he clearly drove the Kellings up the wall. Firstly, he had a reputation as a terrible miser; in 1848 the local Lutheran pastor, J.W.C. Heine, complained [18]

[The family of] Hans Busch, are plainly speaking, great misers. They have seven children, who are compelled by the parents to labour night and day on Sundays, as well as in the week, although they already have about eighteen head of cattle and one hundred goats.

These children learn nothing of God and his words, the parents excuse themselves with their own ignorance and for the school they can spare no time.

Obviously, Hans Heinrich was entirely unbothered by his own illiteracy.\(^1\) As Harold Busch points out, Hans’ entire life had probably been a desperate struggle against starvation and destitution and he wasn’t about to give up now, wasting resources by educating his children.

Secondly, he argued continually with the Kellings over his contractual rights. He refused to work for the Kellings, applying instead to Donald Sinclair, the local police magistrate to have his contract cancelled, but refused to leave the Kellings’ land. It would have been difficult for Hans Heinrich to find land of his own to purchase, mind you, so it is possible that his squatting on the Kellings’ land was a matter of necessity rather than of choice. This is certainly supported by a letter the Kelling brothers wrote to Governor Fitzroy on the 12th of September, 1845:

Dear Sirs,

Having heard that our man Busch had been asking for land, we allow us to request you not to refuse him, if it is possible and that he can get it.

The last week’s paper says that we seem to be content here, and that is true we are, but if we could get rid of this man Busch our satisfaction and happiness would be boundless. Mr. Cautley knows how bad and foolish he is.

The section on the river, number 179 is claimed up to 10 acres and these will be taken in the course of some years joyful for the eldest sons of the families there.

We beg you therefore instantly if possible to give to Busch in an other section, as we hear you had a section to divide in small parts near the great place on this side of the hills for the town, we believe that he would like that very well.

He wants first 10 acres and 10 acres more we believe he will go on, as he is very industrious, but only for his own sake and the assistance of his family will aid him.

We beg your pardon, as we give you trouble again, but getting rid of old Busch would spare us so much anger and trouble, that you will excuse us on that account,

We remain, Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Kelling brothers.

So old Busch was being a real pain in the neck to the Kelling brothers, squatting on their land, being unhelpful to others while looking after his own in miserly fashion, turning his family into a source of cheap labour, and trying desperately to buy his own land to set up independently. I’m not sure with whom I sympathise more. By 1849 the Busch family was doing rather well, despite still not having their own land yet. Pastor Heine, from whom I quoted above, took a census of the German mission in 1848, which read:

Close to the Kellings dwells another German, called Hans Busch. Not being able to buy or rent land to his liking, he squats on several unused sections, as the suburban land is

\(^1\)We know he and his wife were illiterate as they signed their wills only with their marks.
still without an owner. His place is near the hills which he calls 'Schonhof' (Beautiful Farm). He arrived with £50.0.0 and has farmed to such good purpose that he is now worth £300.0.0. He has under cultivation about 40 acres, which he cultivates with his wife and eight children, and which produces wheat, barley, rye, potatoes, etc. He has 4 sheep, 23 head of cattle, consisting of cows, bullocks and calves, 183 goats and 9 pigs. Of poultry he has 33 geese, 14 turkeys and 20 chickens.

Hans Heinrich Conrad Busch and his wife, Sophia Christina Dorothea Grebin.

It was not until 1851 that Hans Busch was able to purchase his own land. The New Zealand government finally lost patience with absentee landlords and changed the rules to let settlers purchase unused sections. Hans Busch bought the 45 acres on which he’d been squatting, together with three other blocks, for a total of 142 acres. Harold Busch informs us that the land (Pt. Section 60 in the Lands Register) was "at the top end of White’s Rd., Hope, where the road ends at the foot of the hills. Where the last house on the left now stands is the position of the original Busch mud home."

In 1854, tired of the marginal farming land he had bought close to the Kellings’ estate, Hans Busch bought 165 acres of much better land over the hills to the south, in the Aniseed Valley. Two of his sons, Frederick and John, managed the farm at Ranzau, while Hans and the rest of his family went to live in Aniseed Valley; the farm at Ranzau was later sold, around late 1863.

Frederick later had an argument with old Hans, some argument over money lent but not repaid, and was totally excluded from his parents’ wills. Old Hans must have been a vindictive old bugger as well as a stroppy one. The more one learns about him the less one likes him. Actually, I doubt that Dorothea was much nicer. It’s her will that explicitly excludes Frederick; “excepting my son Frederick Busch who is to take no interest whatever under this my Will”. Hans’ will just doesn’t mention him at all. Instead he left £300 to Hannah, £130 to Hans Heinrich, another £30 each to three other daughters (one being Selina, whom he called Lena), as well as over 100 sheep, some horses and some cattle, divided between his children. Clearly, he didn’t die a poor man.

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1One of these days I will get to Nelson again, to visit all these places.
Following the move to Aniseed Valley, Hans Busch had a long and involved argument with the Roads Board over the road access to Aniseed Valley\(^1\); one had to be constructed, and Hans Busch applied to the Board for money to pay for it. For a start, the initial survey laid down the road over Hans Busch’s land at Hope; he was too miserly to lose land to a mere road, so he nipped out at night and moved the survey pegs. Apparently this wasn’t discovered until too late, which is why the road from Hope to Aniseed Valley still has a very steep section in it.\(^2\) He then kept asking for advance payments from the Road Board to build the road, but doesn’t seem to have done all that much building. Reading between the lines, I’m guessing that he asked for the largest advance payments he could possibly squeeze out of the Board, and then did the absolute minimum of work on the road that he could get away with. When the Road Board then refused to pay him all the contract price, he refused to pay his rates, was taken to court and fined £6. One part of the road lay on his property close to the river, with multiple river crossings, and was prone to flooding. When the Road Board refused to rebuild the road along higher ground, Hans Busch, that cantankerous old bugger, promptly built a barn right across the road. It was on his property, he argued, and he could build a barn just wherever the hell he damn well pleased. Since, by now, other families were settling in Aniseed Valley, and the Road Board therefore really needed a road, this was a problem. Another court battle ensued. Old Hans won, but agreed magnanimously to let foot traffic pass around the barn. The Road Board built another road, on higher ground.

By the time Hans Heinrich died in 1873 he owned 500 acres in the Aniseed Valley; his last request was to be buried on his own land, and he was. Sophia died seven years later, and was buried with him. Their grave, lovingly restored by Harold Busch, can still be seen in Aniseed Valley. There is also a Busch Reserve in Aniseed Valley but I don’t know whether it’s on the site of old Hans’ land or not.

The first six of their children were born in Germany, but only five survived to make the trip in the *Skiold*. Seven more were born in New Zealand, only one of whom died young (although two more died within days of each other in the 1885 cholera epidemic). Just for completeness here are a few more details:

**Christina Maria Sophia** (1830–1903). Born in Germany, she came out to New Zealand with her parents, and married William Berkett in 1852. They first lived in the cob house which her father had built on the Ranzau farm, and were keen gardeners, with a large orchard. Harold Busch [18] says that 120 years later wild hops were still growing on the site of their garden. Cool. In 1863 they bought their own farm at Waimea East, and built a house that Harold Busch stayed at himself; the walls of the upper room were papered with newspapers, most from 1862/1863. Again, cool. Apparently it’s still standing today, and one day I might even get to see it. It seems that William Berkett spent a large amount of time away from home, prospecting for gold, so he was most likely a bit of a loser. At any rate, Christina ran the farm herself, and very well too thank you. They had a bunch of children; the details are in [18].

**Johann Wilhelm August** (1832–1834). The dates say it all. The poor wee fellow didn’t last long.

**Hans Johann Friedrich (Frederick)** (1835–1925). He was the one who tried to persuade old Hans to move to Canterbury, to get better farming land, but Hans wouldn’t budge. But then he and his father had a huge argument over the purchase of some cattle to stock the Aniseed Valley farm. Hans claimed that he gave Frederick £100 to buy some cattle, which were never bought. I wonder what Frederick’s side of the story is. So Frederick and his wife, Sabina Dew, buggered off to Spring Creek, where they reproduced with abandon. They even sent their children to school, possibly the first ever Busch children to receive a formal schooling. In 1877 they all moved down to Canterbury, where Frederick built a grand house *Belgrove*, on his property at Rangiora. From the photo in [18] it looks like a gorgeous old home, and Frederick can’t have been hurting for cash. Clearly not, as by 1909 he was wealthy enough to purchase more than 1400 acres inland from Motunau Island, on the road through to Waikari.

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\(^1\)The actual entries of the Road Board are reproduced in Harold Busch’s book.

\(^2\)I hope this is true, as it’s such a great story.
Johann Joachim Heinrich (John) (1837–1893). In 1857 he married Sarah Streeter, a widow with a young daughter. The daughter burned to death that same year when her nightdress caught fire (page 63). For a while after their marriage John continued to work on his father’s farm; most likely, knowing Hans, he wasn’t given much of an option, and wasn’t paid either. When old Hans moved over the Aniseed Valley John continued to work on the original Ranzau farm, and managed it after his brother Frederick left for Marlborough. John and his brothers Joseph and Harry helped their father construct the road into Aniseed Valley, the same road over which old Hans had such lovely fights with the Road Board. His father, though, was too mean to pay decent wages, so in 1863 John and his family left for Canterbury, walking or riding all the way with a six-month old baby. They weren’t soft, these pioneers. They lived first at Tai Tapu, then at Kaiapoi, then finally at North Loburn, close to Rangiora. Lots of descendants.

Ina Christina (1839–1840). Not much to say here. She didn’t get much of a chance to leave her mark upon the world.

Hans Joachim Christoph (Joseph) (1841–1921). He tried to be a farmer, but had a drinking problem and never succeeded very well. To cap it off he was shot in the chest by an escaped patient from the Mental Home in Nelson whom Joseph had found hiding in the Valley. By way of compensation Joseph was given the use of 100 acres in the Valley, near the top of the hills, where he lived for the rest of his life, keeping a few sheep and pigs. It is said he was fond of music, and was the leader of the Moutere band during the 1890s. He married Martha Mary Higgs first, and Christina Elizabeth Lankow second, and had six children.

Hartwig Christoph Heinrich (Harry) (1843–1903). Harry broke the mould by (a) becoming a fisherman instead of a farmer, and (b) having no children. He did a bit of farming work with his brothers initially, but later went over to Westport to become a fisherman. Then on to New Plymouth, to do more fishing, and finally to the Wairarapa, where he worked as a boat builder. He married Mary Jackson.

Johanna Caroline Wilhelmina (Mina) (1845–1928). She married John Webby and they went up to Taranaki and became dairy farmers. They lived there the rest of their lives and had two children.

Sophia Dora Elisabeth (1847–1929). She married William James Kinzett, a pony express rider between Nelson and the West Coast at the time of the gold rushes, and they farmed at Spring Creek in partnership with Thomas Neal (page 38). One of her sons drowned when only seventeen months old; Sophia was busy working with the flax harvest, and the wee fellow wandered off to the river. In 1883 they returned to Nelson where they bought a farm at Tapawera, where they spent the rest of their lives.

Magdalena Louisa Sophia (Lena) (1849–1925). She married Thomas Nelson Neal and so she’s discussed in a lot more detail above (page 38).

Hans William Henry (1851?–1859?). [18] has the dates wrong, claiming that Hans was born in 1859 and died in 1851, but this would be difficult even for a Busch. I suspect the dates just got reversed.

Hannah Henrietta (Anna) (1853–1885). She married Thomas Murcott a year after her father’s death, and they lived in a house which had been built on land she was given in her father’s will. When this house was destroyed by fire she was badly burnt on the left arm and hand saving her children. In the cholera epidemic of 1885 her husband died on the 24th of April, her daughter Georgina on the 6th of May, her brother Hans on the 15th of May, and then she died herself on the 16th of May. She was 33. Four other children survived.

Hans Heinrich Theodor (1855–1885). He worked on his father’s farm, and then until his mother died in 1880, he continued to work for her. He married Wilhelmina Sophia Elizabeth Kruse,

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1Or so says [18]. I wonder what this Mental Home was. I didn’t realise Nelson ever had one.
another German obviously, and his mother lived with them. I’m guessing a little tension here. Anyway, the cholera outbreak in 1885 got him. Hans and his sister Hannah died, and his wife was left with three young children, and one unborn. She couldn’t manage the farm herself and so applied to the Supreme Court for release from the terms of the Will, so that she could sell the property. She then bought a cottage and fourteen acres at Hope.

I wondered whether William and Amelia Neal were happy with the choice they made to come to New Zealand. We don’t have to wonder about old Hans Busch. Family tradition has it that, when one of his sons tried to persuade him to move to Canterbury to farm better land, he refused to move, saying that he was happy where he was, and much happier than he ever was in Germany. I find this oddly reassuring.
Chapter 3

The Norgroves

And so we come finally to the Norgroves, the last of my maternal branches. Much like the Neals, the Norgroves were among the very earliest settlers to New Zealand; William Norgrove and his wife, Sarah King-Hall (or just Hall, it’s not so clear) came to Wellington in 1841, just one year after the arrival of the Aurora, the first of the New Zealand Company settler ships. The Norgroves moved soon to Nelson and then to Blenheim, mined for gold, set up businesses to do various things, but never made it big. Actually, they seemed to have made it rather small. Kate Norgrove, who married John Frederick Neal (page 43), was the granddaughter of William Norgrove and Sarah Hall, the first settlers.

William and Sarah left many descendants, of whom a number have been particularly helpful to my genealogical researches. In particular I owe a great debt of thanks to Joan McNaught and her daughter, and to Ian Melville, from whom I have learned many things. At one stage Joan McNaught hired a professional genealogist in England to search for Norgrove records, whence comes a lot of our current information. But even this professional was defeated by the complete unimportance of the Norgroves’ English ancestors, and very little is known about them.

Arrival in New Zealand; William Norgrove and Sarah Hall

William Norgrove was born in Ardleigh, Essex, on the 22nd of September, 1813. His parents were called William Norgrove and Hannah Barker, and that is the sum total of everything we know about the England part of William Norgrove’s life. Well, that’s not entirely true. We know he was educated at the Foundation School in Colchester, where he subsequently worked as a plumber and a painter, and that he married Sarah King Hall (or King-Hall) in Bow Church, Middlesex, on the 22nd of September, 1839; William was 26 (they married on his birthday), and Sarah was 21. They met, we are told by their granddaughter, Kate Norgrove, while Sarah was tying up a pig. We know that his family was very poor. His mother, Hannah Norgrove, was on the official list of parish poor in Ardleigh, in 1825. This was when William was only 12, and it may well have been that his father had died by then. Certainly, to have his mother’s name appear but not his father’s would imply this. Funnily enough, William’s parents were married in Colchester (on the 17th of October, 1783 according to the parish records) but William himself was born and baptised in Ardleigh. Possibly William and Hannah Barker were from Colchester originally and moved later to Ardleigh, where poor old Hannah ended up on the poor register. Possible, but by no means certain. Kate Norgrove claimed that William Norgrove’s father had died after being bitten by a rabid dog. She also said that William broke his leg while saving a child from a runaway horse and carriage. He was taken to an inn and whilst recovering, talk came around to ghosts. That night the ‘ghost’ came visiting, and William nearly killed him with his walking stick! It’s not clear how old William was when these things are said to have happened, as Kate never said, but I’m guessing it was before he left England. I could be wrong.

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1Because each parish was legally obliged to look after its poorest members, they didn’t want any interlopers, poor people coming in from foreign parts and sponging off the locals. Sort of like Winston Peters in miniature.
Since he was sent to the Colchester Foundation School we can infer that William was bright enough to be noticed, and thought to be worth educating. Later in life William was clearly a well educated and intelligent man, so the Foundation School must have been effective.

And that really is everything we know about William Norgrove in England. Rather unimpressive, if you think about it.

We are almost as ignorant about his wife, Sarah Hall. Her parents were William King Hall and Anne Pickett, and she had two brothers and five sisters. One of her sisters married a Richard Fowler in New Zealand, and so must have emigrated also. But I say “almost”, for a reason, as we are in the fortunate position of having something that she wrote about herself.¹ From this we learn that she

¹Let me emphasise this, just in case the point has escaped anyone. The things that we write ourselves, at the time, hot off the press so to speak, will, if they survive, be the most precious things in the collections of our genealogically-minded
was married in a silk gown not a bridal dress, at 10 o’clock in the morning, and that her blind little brother Harry was upset that she was marrying, as he wanted to keep her all to herself. We learn that her Granny was a little out of it and didn’t quite understand what was going on, and that it rained just a little bit as they were leaving the church after the ceremony. We learn that she cried when she was married, feeling lonely, but that she hadn’t really wanted a big fuss so she had gone to the church in the coach alone. These details are priceless. My sister Mary will no doubt call them “borese”, but she is wrong; they are priceless.

Anyway, I shouldn’t tell you what’s in the poem, I should just give you the poem. So here it is.

This verse written by Sarah Norgrove (King-Hall) in 1889 to her Family. Blenheim N.Z.

Fifty years ago my children, fifty years ago
Since your Father and I were married in that quaint old Church at Bow
It was on a Sunday morning ten o’clock the time
September the twenty-second eighteen hundred and thirty nine.
I had no bridal dress I wore my best silk gown.
We wished to avoid all fuss I sent to the Church in the coach alone.
There was no one in the Church only your Father my Brother and I
The Clerk had gone for the Parson he was somewhere close by.
I felt so lonely, when the service was over I began to cry.
As we were leaving the Church the minister kindly said goodbye.
When we got out in the road there was a slight sprinkle of rain.
Your Father put me into a coach I was drove to Ilford again

descendants, should we have any. The two poems of Sarah Hall are worth more to me than any number of dry parish records. So that is why I have included the short things that my mother has written. It’s why I have insisted that each of us children contribute their bit about themselves and their family. Because, in later years, these are the things that will be treasured. So stop whining and write your damn bits already.

1Yes, I know the poetry is absolutely dreadful. I don’t care. Anyway, I can hardly complain. The only ‘poetry’ I’ve ever written is an obscene limerick.
It is five miles from Ilford to Bow there was only a little shower
Your Father and Brother walked home in little more than an hour.
My Grandmother came from Church, my Father and others to Chapel had been
I gave her a kiss and said Grandmother look at my ring.
Granny did not know we were married she was eighty old that day
She had walked to Church and back the Church was a mile away
We had a nice large cake made by a cousin of mine
She sent us some apples and grapes and a bottle of home made wine
There was my Father Mother and Granny Cousin Robert your Father and me
All my Sisters and Brothers how very happy were we
My Dear little blind Brother Harry would not shin from my side
He said Sarah, why did you marry? I want you myself and he cried
In the evening by the bright moonlight, we left for our snug little home
With kisses from all and good night.
Our Lord has taken your Father, he has only gone before
I often fancy I see him I hear his steps at the door
He said he was tired and weary so feeble he wanted to go
I remember him young and cheery fifty years ago
When he and I were married in that quaint old Church at Bow.

Questions: This not really a question, more of a false lead that entertained me for a number of years. My G-grandmother, Kate Norgrove, said that her grandmother, Sarah King-Hall, was part of the famous King-Hall family that contributed a line of Admirals to the British Navy. The story was plausible initially, as Sarah was born at the right time, in the right place, and all those things. However, although I looked and I looked, I couldn’t find any evidence that she was actually born into that family. Indeed, all the children of that family are fairly well known, and she wasn’t in it. I was puzzled for a long time by this. Finally, Joan McNaught showed me that Sarah King-Hall was (fairly definitely) born into quite a different family. It’s an interesting thing, though. Did Kate believe this story about being connected to the famous King-Halls? Did she make it up herself, to create some grand relleys for herself? Did her grandmother make it up and tell everybody? I wonder. But I guess I’ll never know.

On the 19th of June, 1841, less than two years after they were married, William and Sarah sailed from Gravesend on the Gertrude, to arrive in Port Nicholson on the 30th October, about a year after the first New Zealand Company ship into Wellington. Once again we are fortunate to have a first-hand account of the landing, written in Sarah’s distinctive poetic style.

This verse written by Sarah Norgrove to her family about her arrival in New Zealand. Ovid the first son died at the age of 18.

On the twentieth day of June, at two o’clock in the morn
Eighteen hundred and forty our first little son was born.
On the twentieth day of June eighteen hundred and forty one
We were in the ship Gertrude, bound for our New Zealand Home.
The voyage was weary and long. we were twenty weeks in the ship
We all landed safe and strong, on the beach at Kaiwawas slap
the second day of November eighteen forty one
we came on shore and commenced to make our new home.
Your Father lighted a fire and boiled fresh water for tea
Our shipmates said what a treat, will you give some to we.
He said you are welcome my friends, mine is a large kettle you see. 
The clearest of water close by enough for you and me. 
When your Father began to unpack saw, hammer and nails
There were some who stood by him and said we ought to have brought they ourselves.
He said mates we must all set to work for our dear little children and wives
You know they must all have food, I feel sure you have brought knives.
They said how funny you be, you have cheered us a bit today
And we will let you see us try to do as you say.
When your Father a table had made, a clean cloth on it I spread.
Our darling had fresh new milk, on the voyage he had feed from my breast
Father said Ovid must learn to eat, Mother must have a rest.
Your Father walked to the town early the very next day
He hired an old mud wara the floor was only clay,
Three rooms – a toitoi thatched roof and rent sixteen shilling per week
A shipmate shared it with us, when it rained how the roof did leak.
No glass where the window should be some calico nailed up tight
Through the crevices came the wind, and some of the bright sunlight.
The Wandi was on Thorndon flat before the winter had gone
We were living on Lambton Quay, where our dear little Oscar was born
He was only nine days old, when a fire broke out on the beach
Father took us onto the Terrace and placed us out of it’s reach.
The fire commenced at midnight, at Loyds the Bakers store
All did their best to put it out, the sea was close to our door
Many houses were burned and shops that were nearly new
It was November the ninth, eighteen hundred and forty two.

So William and Sarah’s first home in New Zealand was a three-room mud wara hut, which cost them 16 shillings a week. Doesn’t sound too comfortable to be honest. However, it’s clear that William and Sarah were energetic and intelligent, and took a leading role among their peers. Indeed, William must have had a keen interest in many things, as in 1849 we find him on the board of the Wellington Mechanics’ Institute. This Institute, or its predecessor at least, was born before the first New Zealand Company ship even sailed to Wellington, when a committee was charged with the duty of making some provision for the “literary, scientific and philanthropic institutions” of the settlers. The settlers put together a rudimentary library and some bits of scientific equipment, and the first meeting in their new home occurred on the 1st of December, 1840, very soon after their arrival. It occurred, appropriately enough, at Barrett’s Hotel, i.e., in a pub. I’m not surprised. Anyway, the initial Port Nicholson Mechanics’ Institute Public School Library went defunct as people didn’t pay their subscriptions, so another attempt was made in 1848 to revive it, under the new name of the Wellington Mechanics’ Institute.

William Norgrove was on the board of this new Institute in 1849, and at a meeting on the 6th of November it was noted that “A drawing class has been ably and usefully conducted by Mr. Norgrove, who has cheerfully devoted a large amount of time and attention to his pupils1. The progress made has been very satisfactory, and already affords very pleasing indications of future utility. Want of suitable accommodation has prevented the formation of other projected classes, but these will no doubt follow the opening of the Hall.” Indeed, I have to admit that I was both surprised and delighted to discover that William’s drawing class is considered to be one of the few successful examples of early adult education in New Zealand.2 I have to wonder what kind of drawing he taught. ‘Linear drawing’ according to the local newspapers which doesn’t sound like it was of the young lady variety, but was it just technical drawing? Certainly, his later career shows that he was a talented painter of all kinds of things, from flags, to coats of arms, to signs. So, as I said, I wonder.

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1 Of whom there were twenty. Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 30 June 1849, Page 71.
2 I kid you not. William has even been mentioned in scholarly articles (to wit, [23] and [24]).
Given his later actions in Nelson and Blenheim, it’s likely that William took an active interest in the affairs of Wellington. We know he was on the electoral roll in the 1840’s, at which time they were living on Thorndon Quay, although that by itself tells us little. I suspect that he cannot have been very successful, as by the early 1850’s William was in the goldfields of Victoria; I know nothing about his time there but it is clear that any success he had there was also marginal at best. I’m not surprised. By January of 1855 he was back in Wellington, just in time for the famous earthquake, the largest ever recorded in New Zealand. My G-grandmother Kate would tell of how the great earthquake broke all the china, and the family had to travel up the hill to get water until her grandfather (i.e., William) made a pump.

It was maybe this earthquake (not to mention the earlier ones of 1848 which wouldn’t have helped) that motivated William and Sarah to leave Wellington. Whatever the reason, by October 1855 the family had moved to Nelson, where William set up a new business in Bridge St., opposite the Wakatu Hotel, as a “Plumber, Glazier, House and Sign Painter”, with the added attractions of “Baths of every description, Pumps, Beer-engines, Water-closets, &c, fixed and repaired. White and Sheet Lead, Zinc, Window Glass (all sizes), Oils and Colours of every description.”

We can trace a lot of his life in the pages of the Nelson and Blenheim newspapers, and it is clear that he was, well, an interesting man one would have to say. Not a reliable one, oh no, but certainly an interesting one; educated, widely read, charismatic, tremendously talented and intelligent, an excellent public speaker and organiser, a born performer, very good at building and making things, but, even with all that, unsuccessful. One has to wonder why. By far the most likely explanation is mental disease. Given that William’s son Oscar was committed to a lunatic asylum, and that one of Oscar’s children, Bertha, committed suicide, it’s a good bet that William had mental troubles of his own. I have no idea what they were, exactly, although one can speculate. Oscar would clearly get manic; it was during one of those bouts that he was committed. Bertha, on the other hand, committed suicide in a fit of depression. Putting this all together, one is tempted to conclude that manic-depression ran in the family, and that William also suffered from it, at least to a certain extent. I speculate, but not without foundation.

It’s fascinating to contrast William Norgrove with the Neals and Buschs we saw in the previous chapter. They were solid farmers, bordering on miserly, uneducated, and every time they appeared in the records they had worked a little harder, bought a little more land, and got a little richer. They are so much the opposite of William it’s funny; every time he appears in the newspapers he’s had another bright idea, painted another sign or flag, appeared in another amateur theatrical, chaired another meeting, made another speech, and got a little poorer.

His time in Nelson, which lasted from 1855 to 1861, is really his life in miniature, or so it seems to me. Great initial success, elected to the Town Board, public performances and meetings, all followed by decline, bankruptcy and flight to Blenheim. Indeed, we see the same kinds of things appearing in the life of his sons as well; inventors, businessmen, entrepreneurs, builders, sailors...and bankrupts.

William was elected to the Board of Town Improvement, he was instrumental in organising the Fire Brigade, he served on the Board of the Nelson Literary and Scientific Institution, he was active in the Agricultural Society (various Miss Norgroves regularly won prizes for their flowers) and he served on the Nelson Local Committee. In particular, he was full of ideas for how to improve Nelson’s water supply. Some of these ideas were even taken up; in 1868, a decade later, when the Nelson Water Works were officially opened, the official speaker said that it was only right that Mr. Norgrove be properly acknowledged as it was all originally his idea. This was a common theme in much of William’s life. He was clearly interested in water, how it flows, how it can be controlled and used. He was an engineer through and through.2

Another of his projects, again connected with water, was the Public Baths. In 1858 William

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1 Actually, one of the first indications of this is his children’s names. Who on earth calls their sons Ovid, Horace and Oscar? This made me believe, many years ago, that our William and Sarah were not an ordinary couple.

2 Just as a side note, I can’t resist quoting a verse from an immortal hymn that was composed by the Bishop to be sung on the occasion of the opening of the Nelson Water Works. To wit: “Praise Him, rivers, lakes, and oceans // Depths unfathomed, air unseen, // Beauteous forms in rest or motion, // Tempering day’s too glittering sheen. // Bow of Heaven! the sky transforming, // Pledge of hope on stormy day; // Silent dew-drops nightly falling // On each blade and grassy spray!” Oh dear.
and a couple of business partners “proposed to erect a BATHING ESTABLISHMENT in Nelson, combining Hot, Cold, Vapour, and Swimming Baths, with all necessary conveniences, both for ladies and gentlemen.” A family ticket was going to cost £2 per annum and a warm bath was 2s. 6d. extra. I’m guessing the project wasn’t a great success, as no more is heard about it. Tickets were being sold at one stage, but it disappears without any further traces.

Amateur theatricals was yet another of William’s interests. In 1857 we find that he performed the part of Colonel Damas in the *Lady of Lyons* (an 1838 romantic drama by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, one of the most popular plays of its time). The theatre critic rather liked William’s performance: “Colonel Damas was rendered by Mr. Norgrove with all that bluff *bonhomie* pertaining to the old soldier, and still with the tact of an actor, that pleased us much.” The play, apparently, was much improved from its first performance, as the actors knew their parts this time, and acted well. As opposed to the previous performance one imagines.

A year later William was calling a public meeting to try and get a proper theatre built in Nelson, “expressly suitable for theatrical performances, concerts, balls, &c.” I don’t think that anything came of this theatre proposal either.

Every so often, when searching through old newspapers, the voice of William can be heard quite clearly (sometimes pleasant, sometimes not), and it is these extracts that tell us, most accurately, the kind of man he was. These, to me, are the real treasures.

Mr. Norgrove said that, like *Marmaduke Magog*¹, it was not often that he spoke in public, but he must beg permission to say a few words on the subject of education. He remembered attending a Chartist meeting about 25 years ago, at which one of the great reasons urged for the passing of the people’s charter was that the Government did not make proper provision for the education of the people [hear, hear]. He remembered that one of the speakers on that occasion had alluded to the mill girls of Manchester, who toiled from morning till night at the mills instead of going to school, and had remarked that the wonder was not that they were bad, but that they were so good [hear]. The same speaker went on to show that without education a people could become neither wise nor good, and that it was the duty of the state to care for the education of the people [hear, hear]. He (Mr. Norgrove) was sorry to find that the question was so mistaken here, and that people forgot that in paying this tax for the support of a scheme of education, they were investing for posterity [hear, hear]. He had seven children, and he should some day be gathered to his fathers and leave a name behind him – it might be an indifferent one, but at all events it would be a name – and it was his earnest desire to see his boys receive a better education, and earn a better name than himself [cheers]. Should parents toil on day after day and leave their children what they considered a competence, without giving them some education to take care of that which, if they were ignorant and uneducated, some plausible scoundrel might come and chouse them out of [hear, hear]? He was sorry to hear no argument on the other side; he wised to see the measure fairly tried, and he had no doubt that some day or other they would all be the better for it [vehement cheering].

You can hear that William cared, really cared, about education. He was less fond of religious bigotry, and the Catholic Church in particular²:

> Mr. Editor, – A letter appeared in Thursday’s *Times* signed “Catholicus”, one paragraph of which applied to myself as a private individual. I have therefore to ask the favor of space for a few lines by way of reply.

> “Catholicus” says my children were educated at the Catholic schools, and asks when did I change. He might have gone further and said I subscribed to building the Church.

¹In an uncomfortable juxtaposition, this theatre announcement appears in the newspaper directly beneath an account of the death of a step-daughter of John Busch (page 55), who was burned to death when her pajamas caught fire.

²Apart, of course, from the announcement that “Beda, the one-legged gymnast is in Blenheim and purposes giving performances at Ewart’s Hall.” You couldn’t make that stuff up.

³Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 21 June, 1856

⁴A parish constable character in a popular 1834 melodrama by John B. Buckstone.

⁵Marlborough Express, 23 October, 1875
My answer is that was my private affair. The funds of the Borough Schools are public property, and for the proper expenditure of which to the public alone am I responsible. As to why I sent my children to the Catholic schools, – I have read that if you go to supper with the Devil, take a long spoon; or, of two evils, choose the least. The Catholic schools at that time were the best in the town; that was my reason. As to when I changed, – I answer that I have not changed; that ever since the so-called Œcumenical Council, and the declaration of the Infallibility Dogma, I find that the Catholic Clergy have been making all over the world strenuous exertions to have a finger in the political pie, to prop a falling Church; hence the troubles in Germany.

I, for one, wish to see all sects and creeds at liberty to follow their own particular views; – favor to none. This it seems does not suit with the dogma which demands a blind unreasoning credulity. Those have ever been my views; I demand the right to think freely, and speak fearlessly, so I say “Watch.” – I am, &c.,

W. Norgrove.

And he really didn’t like the Chinese:¹

**CHINESE IMMIGRATION**

A public meeting was held at the Courthouse, Nelson, on Thursday last, for the purpose of considering “what steps should be taken to prevent any Chinese immigration into the province”; W.L. Wrey, Esq., in the chair.

The Chairman briefly stated the objects of the meeting, and said that it was his impression, that of all the debased people on the face of the earth, none equalled the Chinese in their immoral, wretched, and he might say diabolical habits [hear, hear]; and he thought the people of Nelson were called upon to endeavour to prevent such a race of beings from landing on these shores. He was glad to find by the large attendance that it was a matter in which the inhabitants interested themselves, and he should like to hear the opinion of any one present upon the subject.

[There follows a series of statements from attendees, all vilifying the Chinese in no uncertain terms, and volunteering to be the first on the beaches to take arms against the foul invaders should that prove to be necessary. Then our William had his say.]

Mr. Norgrove, from some experience in Australia², could testify to the filthy and degrading habits of the Chinese in that country. The people in Australia were now very anxious to get rid of these people; and, as prevention was better than cure, he thought that the people of Nelson would be justified in doing all in their power to prevent the contamination to which an influx of the Chinese would expose them [cheers].

[The meeting continued in a similar vein.]

Clearly, William’s rational liberality extended only to Europeans. Not surprising I suppose; in that he was a man of his times. Still, unattractive.

He suffered from rheumatism:³

Sir, – Permit me to thank you for inserting in your journal the information that a cure for rheumatism had been discovered in the shape of caustic ammonia. Having suffered for a long time, and tried nearly every remedy to little purpose, I procured from Dr. Cleghorn’s shop, a small phial of the solution; two drops of which, applied with the point of a camel hair pencil, almost instantly removed the pain. Trusting that all my fellow sufferers will find it equally efficacious. – I am, &c.,

William Norgrove.

¹Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 15 August, 1857
²Remember that William went to the Australian goldfields in the 1850's.
³Marlborough Express, 1 July, 1876
Blenheim, June 30th.

[We may add to the above letter, that we had ocular demonstration of the value of the remedy in Mr. Norgrove’s case, who exhibited the wonderful ease with which he could swing his arm about, that a few days ago was full of pain, and which he could not lift to his head without using the other for the purpose. The remedy in question is very simple, painless, and inexpensive. – Ed. M.E.]

And for cricket fans, it appears that our William Norgrove was a participant in that noble sport. In fact, he even played against the Neals once! And won! Hallelujah! It was on the 26th of April, 1873 that the Spring Creek cricket team challenged the Blenheim team to a match. Not a wise move. A certain Mr. Wix on the Blenheim team was a mean bodyline bowler: “Of the bowling of Mr. Wix we can say but little; we would recommend that gentleman to practice straight bowling, as it was very evident in many cases he mistook the batsmen for the wickets.” Wix took 11 wickets in the match, including the scalps of T. Neal (for 3) and R. Neal (for 0), our old friend Thomas Nelson, and, presumably, his brother Robert. Another Neal brother, Francis, was run out for 1. It cannot be claimed that the Neal brothers distinguished themselves in this particular match. Still, the Spring Creek total was only 38, of which 22 were byes, so the Neal brothers, with 4 runs between them, scored 25% of the runs that came from the bat.

In return, the Blenheim team creamed the Spring Creek bowling. Nasty Mr. Wix made 19, while the inestimable A. Budge made a phenomenal 23, for a total of 103. Our William made 2, not out.

I am sad to relate that Thomas Nelson Neal did even worse in the second innings, with only a single run to his credit, although brothers Robert and Francis did a little better, with 14 and 7 runs respectively. Curiously, a certain W. Barker was stumped and bowled by the nasty Mr. Wix. Is this even possible? I wouldn’t have thought so. One can’t help wondering. Anyway, our William made 3 (not out) in the second innings, and the Blenheim team cruised to a comfortable victory.

But together with the fine speeches, the public meetings, and the grand ideas, were debts. Lots of them, it seems. Already by 1857 William was in court, being required to pay £58.6.10 to a certain Barrett. The judge made a telling remark, that the judgement was for the plaintiff “as in former cases”. Clearly this was not the first time William had been in court for not paying up. Other things went sour as well. William had been elected in 1858 to the Board of the Nelson Literary and Scientific Committee, but in the 1859 election he came in last, with only four votes. Was this an indication that people were getting sick of him? Possibly. It’s hard to be sure. Certainly, at the beginning of 1859 he gave up the struggle in Nelson, and sold up everything to pay his creditors, including the Baths which he had built. It’s not clear what he did then, as it wasn’t for two more years that his family left Nelson. However, on the 15th of May, 1861, he put his wife, seven youngest children, 26 boxes and 14 packages of effects on the schooner City of Nelson, headed to the Wairau, while he and his two eldest boys (Horace and my GG-grandfather, Oscar) walked across the hills. Because of the weather the City of Nelson couldn’t cross the Wairau bar, so they all had to be taken to shore in a whaling boat. That would have been a nasty trip. Crossing the Wairau bar in bad weather, in an open boat with seven young children. Not for the faint-hearted, that’s for sure.

Their first house in Blenheim was on Bradford Quay, where the fire station is now; Blenheim was still very small, with only about 52 houses. Later, in 1864, William and Sarah built a house in Dillon St. According to Joan McNaught the timber for the house was white pine from the Big Bush at Grove town, and rimu from Dalton’s Mill on the Picton Road. The roof was originally covered with shingles, but these were later replaced with iron. Unsurprisingly, given William’s interest in horticulture, it had a beautiful garden; even before the house was built William put up a glasshouse to shelter some cherished grape vines. Seeds were sent from family in England\(^1\) and also grown in the glasshouse. After both William and Sarah were dead, this garden was looked after by two of their daughters, Kate (not my G-grandmother, but her aunt) and Emma. Aunt Emma, as my mother always called her, was blind in her later years, and would navigate around this garden by hooking

\(^{1}\)It’s fascinating to get a glimpse of the fact that either William or Sarah kept in touch with their relatives back in England. I’d love to know who it was.
A photograph and a painting of the Norgrove’s house on Dillon St. According to Joan McNaught: “The coloured painting of Dillon St. was done by an unknown painter and obviously well before my time. The garden was not so extensive or well kept after Aunt Emma lost her sight. A Blenheim friend was visiting and saw the painting hanging and recognised it. The owner had no idea of its background, but once she was told, and that there was still family in Blenheim, it was given to our friend who was asked to give it to family – my Mother and sister. My sister Dorothy Norgrove is in a home in Blenheim and has the painting on the wall of her room there.”
her walking stick over the clothes line. She and her sister Kate operated the Maxwell Road general store, which had been built by their parents around 1884. The store sold groceries and sweets, and its proprietors were known to all as “the fat and the thin Misses Norgrove”. I’m not sure which was which. When her sister Kate died, Emma struggled on in the house until, after living there for over 76 years, she had to move out and live with her nephew Ted Norgrove, in Redwood St. The house was pulled down soon after, in 1941. Aunt Emma lived to the ripe old age of 97, the last 17 of which she was blind. Norgroves lived on the Dillon St. property for over 10 years, until the last of them, William and Sarah’s G-grandson Alf Norgrove, left Blenheim in 1966.

William’s public life in Blenheim followed a similar pattern as in Nelson. He was elected to the local Council (in 1873) where he made many a speech about how best to improve Blenheim’s water supply. His ideas were ignored for years; it wasn’t until 1885 that anything was done about them, by which time William was too old and infirm to attend the meetings. This was noted with regret. He served on the Blenheim Education Board, appeared in many performances of the Literary Society (giving readings of various things mostly, it seems), and was active in the Agricultural Society, as he had been in Nelson. He even invented a novel gate-fastener which was entered into the Marlborough Agricultural Society 1875 Annual Show. It wasn’t generally admired.

Gold was a recurrent interest, for both William and son Oscar. In 1878 William was able to combine his interests in water and gold when he went to the Wakamarina gold field to try and design ways in which the claims could be drained. His interest was a share of the profits; one would suspect there weren’t any if it weren’t for the story that Oscar’s daughter, my G-grandmother Kate, told, of how her father had made £300 in three weeks at Wakamarina. Do we believe her? I’m not entirely sure I do. We don’t even know for sure that William’s visit to Wakamarina had anything to do with Oscar; still, it would be very surprising if it didn’t, so, on balance, I’m willing to allow William at least partial credit for a possible £300 profit.

As he got older, William’s health declined\(^1\) and he stopped attending public meetings. Eventually, on the 18th of June, 1886, he died, leaving behind this obituary in the Marlborough Express:

> It is with sincere regret that we record the death of Mr William Norgrove, an old and respected Wairau settler, which took place at three o’clock on Friday afternoon, at his residence, Maxwell Rd\(^2\). He was in his 73rd year, and the debt of nature was paid through general debility and decay. Mr. Norgrove was born in Ardleigh, Essex, and educated at the Foundation School, Colchester, in which town he afterwards served his time as plumber and painter. Having resolved to emigrate, he landed in Wellington, from the ship Gertrude, on the 31st October, 1841. When the gold fever broke out early in the fifties he went over to Victoria, where he stayed two or three years. On his return to New Zealand he settled for some time at Nelson. Whilst there he was a member of the Town Board, and the first and prime mover in the establishment of water works, a fact which was prominently acknowledged at the inaugural banquet some years ago. Determining to shift his fortunes to Marlborough, Mr. Norgrove arrived in the Wairau in March, 1861, and, at the time of his death, had therefore been a resident amongst us for upwards of 25 years, and a Colonist of upwards of 45 years standing. He formerly occupied the position of a Borough Councillor in Blenheim. Wherever he resided he worked at his trade, adding to it the practice of letter writing and cutting; the Tua Marina Memorial on Massacre Hill being an abiding specimen of his work. During the last three or four years he had been infirm and unable to carry on his business, but it was not till about a fortnight ago that he took to his bed with the last illness from which he never rose again. His familiar figure will be greatly missed from Blenheim. Mr. Norgrove was a man who took an active part in all local improvements and ideas; he was full of information and geniality; and possessed a fund of fertile and ingenious ideas. It will be remembered to his honor that he was remarkable for the breadth, liberality, and

\(^1\)Well, doh, of course it did! What else would you expect? Still, this is the kind of obligatory sentence that people always use.

\(^2\)Yes, it says Maxwell Rd. not Dillon St. The house was on the corner of Maxwell and Dillon, with the garden originally extending south to Stephenson St. and west to Percy St. It was a big section.
tolerance of his opinions. He was married at Ilford Church, Essex, and his widow and seven children – four sons and three daughters – survive him.

After having so much to say about William, it is disappointing that we know so little about Sarah. However, such is the burden of the genealogist; women just don’t appear. She survived William by a few years, and died on the 3rd of March, 1891, leaving an obituary in her turn (in the Marlborough Express):

Another old colonist has passed into the silent land. We refer to Mrs. Norgrove, who breathed her last at her residence, Maxwell Road, early this morning. The deceased, who was the relict of the late William Norgrove, was married at Bow Church, Middlesex in 1839, and with her husband came out to the colony by the ship Gertrude, landing in Wellington on November 1st, 1841. They removed to Nelson in 1855, and afterwards came to the Wairau in May, 1861. Of a kindly and benevolent disposition, though quiet and unobtrusive in her mode of life, the deceased lady was highly esteemed, and perhaps by no one will she be more missed than by the many children of her acquaintance, of whom she was particularly fond, and whom she entertained by many a simple tale. The memory of her many virtues, and her cheerful demeanour amid the later years of an invalid life will be cherished by her numerous friends. She leaves a large family of grown up sons and daughters, to whom we extend our sympathy in their bereavement.

William and Sarah had ten children that I know of.

Ovid Hall (1840–1858). He was born in England and came to New Zealand with Sarah in 1841, at the tender age of 1 or so. He died when he was 18, of what I don’t know. I’d very much like to find out more him. The death notice in the Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 21st of August, 1858, says only that he was the son of W. Norgrove, plumber, and that he was 18 years old.

Oscar Alfred (1842–1907). More on him next, as he’s my GG-grandfather.

Horace (1846–1928). There’s also quite a lot of information about Horace in the following few pages, as he was a business partner of Oscar for a number of years, mostly in the coastal shipping trade.

Gertrude (1846–1913). She married Joe Dempsey, a saddler, on the 26th of April, 1862. By 1889 they were living in Wellington, when one of their sons, Walter Norgrove, married a lady with the rather impressive name of Agnes Ann Amelia Le Couteur. They also had a bunch of other children (seven boys and two girls, according to my G-grandmother, Kate), but I don’t know anything about them. Well, except that the eldest, John, was apparently the manager of Wiseman’s Saddle Shop in Auckland.

One descendant, Gertrude Dempsey, was the author of The Little World of Stewart Island, published in 1964 by A.H. and A.W. Reed, as well as a number of other books about Stewart Island. You can still buy them, although I never have.

Emma (1848–1945). A great gardener, and lived in the house in Dillon St. for many years, even after she became blind in later life. Never married. According to the Nelson Examiner of the 26th of December, 1860, she won a class prize in the 1st Class, while her sister Kate won a class prize in the 4th class. Always good to know these things. She and her sister Kate operated the Maxwell Road general store, which had been built by their parents around 1884. The store sold groceries and sweets.

1This is quite an assumption here. How does the writer know it’s silent? For all we know it might be very noisy. Mind you, if it does exist, I do hope it’s not too noisy. That wouldn’t lend itself to a peaceful eternity.

2Don’t you just love the fact that a widow is called a ‘relict’? I do. Makes me giggle every time.

3Quite at variance with her husband, one imagines.
Walter (1850–1916). He appears with Oscar in the Wainuiomata settlers’ roll. Also, in 1889, according to the Marlborough Express, Walter applied for a patent for scutching and cleaning flax, entitled “The Anti-friction Scutcher and Cleaner”. Sounds painful. He married Hester Gane, or Esther Gain according to G-grandmother Kate, and they had a daughter on the 30th of September, 1882. No name is given, nor any other details.

Kate (1852–1927). With her sister Emma, a proprietor of the Maxwell Road General Store. She was either the fat or the thin Miss Norgrove, but I don’t know which. Never married.

Zoe (1856–1856). Died young. As you can see for yourself without me telling you.


Sydney (1860–1926). Married Nellie Mills, the third daughter of Thomas H. Mills, from Hopai in Pelorus Sound. I don’t know anything else about him.

Oscar Norgrove and Edith Brook

The second son of William and Sarah was Oscar, but he was the oldest to survive into adulthood, the eldest son, Ovid, dying when he was only 18. Oscar was born in 1842, a year or so after his parents arrived in Wellington, and his brother Horace was born four years later. Oscar formed various business partnerships with Horace, and later with another brother Walter, although I have to admit that it’s not always clear which brothers are meant when the Norgrove Bros. are mentioned. Possibly all three of them.

One of the earliest jobs (at least that I know of) that the Norgrove Brothers did was in 1868 (Oscar would have been about 26), when they were contracted to do the painting and paperhanging at Mr. Ewart’s new Hotel. It sounds like they initially followed in their father’s footsteps; I imagine Dad helped out. However, even at this early stage they didn’t restrict themselves to a narrow and blinkered approach, as shown by the fact that they also made fireworks for a Blenheim celebration. (They organised a big fireworks display in May 1868, and made the fireworks themselves, or had them imported.) It seems like they did everything they could get their hands on. However, despite their well-rounded efforts they were as unsuccessful as their father tended to be. On the 21st of November Oscar was charged and fined for obstructing a bailiff. Clearly he hadn’t been paying his debts, somebody sent the bailiffs around to cart away his possessions, and Oscar had a go at him. Dear oh dear.

On the 20th of March, 1868, they also advertised in the Marlborough Express to sell eight sections on Maxwell Road, Blenheim. “The Land is securely Fenced with a live quick hedge, and planted with a choice selection of Fruit and Forest Trees, together with Dwelling House and Vinery, stocked with choice Grapes. A well of excellent water and a stream of water runs through Paddock and Garden.” It is hard to know whether or not this sale was related to the huge Blenheim flood of February, 1868, but it might have been. At any rate, the Norgrove Brothers were seen to play a hero’s role in that flood, as they rowed around saving a number of people. Their career almost came to an untimely end if the account in the papers is to be believed; apparently the Norgrove Brothers were rescuing a boatload of people but got washed away downstream, past the two-story Marlborough Express office and the Literary Institute. They managed to get out of the current when they reached some shoals formed by drays, and thus survived the day, to receive at least two sets of grateful thanks in the following week’s newspaper.

In the 1870s the Norgrove Brothers were heavily involved in the coastal shipping trade. In the late 1860s they built (and Horace sailed) a ketch called the Amatuer, but by 1873 he was sailing the Unity, a vessel that the Norgrove Bros. had built in Picton, the first to have been built there.

On the morning of Saturday last, one of those pleasing events which mark the progressive prosperity of the Province came off in Picton, namely the successful launch of the

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1 I assume that this was selling off parts of the original Dillon St. section, but I have no direct evidence of this.
2 Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, 11 February 1868.
3 From H. Pritchard and H. Honnor, if anybody cares.
Left: the Norgrove Brothers. It looks to me like that is Oscar seated and Horace standing. Right: Edith Brook, possibly taken before her marriage to Oscar Norgrove, although I'm not sure of that.
Top: Oscar and Edith’s four eldest children in what looks to me like a fake Sylvan glade. Edgar is in the middle, with Kate on his right and Bertha on his left. Arthur is sitting down. Bottom: Oscar and Edith Norgrove and their two oldest children, Edgar and Bertha.
first vessel built in Picton proper, and but the second within the precincts of Queen Charlotte Sound;

... The skill and enterprise of Messrs. Norgrove Bros. have thus far been crowned with a well-deserved success and we most heartily wish the gallant little bark a long and prosperous career.

... the general plan of her construction has been similar to that adopted by Messrs. Norgrove in the first schooner they built, the *Amateur*, with such further improvements as experience and careful forethought could suggest.

... Having thus far described her, we have now to state that punctually at the hour appointed the shore dogs were knocked away, and in a few brief moments the labour of seven months was entrusted to the care of Old Ocean, amidst the cheers of the assembled crowd, and took her seat upon the water like a bird. Just as she glided away Miss Norgrove broke the accustomed bottle and named her the *Unity*. She is intended for the general coasting trade, and we hope her spirited builders and owners may long have the pleasure of seeing her “walking the waters like a thing of life”.¹

As captain, Horace was a busy lad, sailing in and out of Wellington, Blenheim, Havelock, Patea, the East Coast, Wanganui, and probably many other places as well. Oscar, with family in tow, must have done an awful lot of sailing also. Oscar’s daughter Kate (my G-grandmother) remembered how her early life revolved around boats; up to Wellington, back to Blenheim, up to Wainuiomata, back to Blenheim again. It is easy to underestimate just how fluid life could be at that time. I have often fallen into the trap of thinking that, because they didn’t have cars and planes and nice paved roads, they must have stayed put most of the time, moving only in desperation, and that not often. Because of this it took me a long time to realise just how much the Norgrove brothers moved around. For example, for many years I was confused because the Norgroves appeared in the Wainuiomata records while I thought they lived in Blenheim. What I didn’t realise was that, to them, it was all closely connected, and they were perfectly happy to zip from one place to the other on a regular basis.

In typical fashion, the Norgrove brothers’ fertile minds were not restricted to traditional shipbuilding channels. On the 20th of May, 1892, a most interesting letter appeared in the Marlborough Express:

Dear Sir:– In your Tuesday’s issue you published an article referring to the new patent for three-keeled ships, and under it a letter from Mr. F. M. Levin, dated May 6th, in which he claims Mr. O. A. Norgrove as the original inventor.² I must ask you for space to state the facts. Twelve years ago I made the first model, and at once saw all the advantages to be derived from ships and steamers being built on those lines. My brother Oscar Alfred Norgrove visited me when I lived in Broadway, about the time I was satisfied with the success of my experiments. As may be expected, I took him into my confidence and showed him all the possibilities, and this is where he first got his ideas. If my brother is asked he will not deny this. I further developed the invention into a submarine steamer, and three years ago I took my crude drawings to the Defence Department with a model of the same. I have now full drawings and specifications that have been laid before the English Admiralty, bearing the stamp of the Agent-General’s office, returned to me with a letter stating that the plans and specifications were not accepted by the Admiralty – that I must construct and demonstrate. Being a poor man those conditions were an impossibility. If there is any claim for the first invention, I claim it against all comers. – I am, &c, Horace Norgrove, Picton, May 18th, 1892.

Well, well, a submarine steamer. It rather boggles the mind how this would work. We see here the fertile Norgrove imagination in full flight, coupled with an almost paranoid determination not to be cheated by anybody.

¹Marlborough Express, 19th of February, 1873.
²Apparently, so says the letter from Mr. Levin, the idea originally came to Oscar Norgrove after he observed the flight of the albatross. I have to admit the connection between an albatross and a three-keeled ship is not immediately apparent to me.
However, three-keeled ships and submarine steamers notwithstanding, in 1874 the Norgrove Bros. went bankrupt and dissolved their partnership. Horace continued sailing the coastal trade, and opened a fish curing works in Blenheim in partnership with the Whiting Brothers; Horace married Caroline Eliza Whiting and had two boys and four girls. One of the girls, Eliza, died in 1876, aged 5 weeks, and his eldest son, Horace, may also have died young. The other son, Harold, survived to become a market gardener in Auckland, or so my G-grandmother Kate said. By 1886 the fish curing works was worth £4,000, had six permanent employees and produced around 10,000 cases of fish annually.

Horace appears many times in court records of the day as he was a remarkably litigious man, always suing or being sued over money paid or not paid, conditions fulfilled or not fulfilled. In a typical case: “The adjourned case of Owen (as trustee) v. Norgrove – a claim for damage done to goods while being conveyed in defendant’s vessel, the Amateur, to Terawiti – was heard, Mr. Brandon appearing for the plaintiff, and Mr. Travers for the defendant. Mr. Travers called Mr. Kebbell for the defence, who, on examining a sample of the damaged flour, (on which the claim was principally based), said he did not think the damage could be so extensive as was alleged – 30s a ton would, he considered, cover it. He did not think it possible that the damp from the green timber could have penetrated to the centre of the bags; in the case of the Falcon, which sank alongside the wharf, witness had half a ton of flour on board, and, though it was actually under water, yet it was only wet a small distance round the outside of the bags; had the flour damaged in the Amateur been sifted, the greater portion of it would have been fit for use.” The case was adjourned, to be later settled on Tuesday, 8th of March, with the award of £37, 7s to the plaintiff, with costs of £9, 10s. Horace didn’t have too much luck in court.

Oscar seems to have been less successful. We have already seen how he went to the Wakamarina gold rush and earned £300 in three weeks (page 67), but I doubt this money lasted long. He and his brother Walter had a business venture in Wainuiomata, where they operated a sawmill (or possibly a flax mill), and appear on the 1884 list of original settlers. They also had 400 sheep in 1884, so their activities were not confined to milling alone, but since they had no sheep at all in 1885 I doubt they were notable sheep farmers. Oscar also continued in his father’s trade as a painter until at least 1900, when he won a tender to paint some new buildings in Blenheim. The mill at Wainuiomata was the cause of at least one quarrel between Oscar and Walter, in which Walter punched Oscar on the nose. The scoundrel! It seems that Oscar thought that Walter’s wife, Esther Gain, hadn’t been pulling her weight, and hadn’t been feeding the men at the mill properly. Walter took offence. Well, who wouldn’t?

On the 18th of June, 1878, Oscar married Edith Brook, born in London on the 3rd of December, 1848, who had come to New Zealand for her health, as she had rheumatic fever. Edith Brook’s father was a candlemaker called Richard Brook, and her mother, Sarah Brown, kept a school for young ladies after the death of Richard (which happened I don’t know when). They lived at 20 Bridge St., Southwark, Surrey, at some stage. According to Kate Norgrove (Edith’s daughter), young Edith could remember being held up to the window to watch the soldiers marching to the Crimea. Crummy, the maid, was crying because her boyfriend was going. The Crimean War did for more than Crummy’s love life; it also ruined the candle factory.

Oscar and Edith had five children.

Edgar Roydon (1878–1964), was born in August, 1878, which, the observant reader will no doubt notice, is considerably less than nine months after June, 1878. Naughty Oscar and Edith. Edgar married Mary Ann Annand, and one of their children was Joan Norgrove, later Joan McNaught, who has been such a help to me in finding out information about the Norgrove family. Edgar was a volunteer fireman, with a day job as a builder. Mary Ann was from Scotland, according to my mother, spoke in a broad accent, always wore a pinny, and had a big bosom and a large bum. My mother is not very polite.

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1Evening Post, Saturday, February 12, 1870
2Yet another point of difference from the Neals.
CHAPTER 3. THE NORGROVES

Bertha Emma Mabel (Tots), born in 1880, committed suicide (by drowning) in 1911. Bertha married Horace James Melville, had a son, Eric Jack, who had a son, Ian, in turn. Ian Melville is another person who has sent me an enormous amount of information about the Norgroves, and another to whom I owe a considerable debt.

Kate. Their third child was my G-grandmother, Kate Norgrove (who married a Neal, as described in Chapter 2). After her were two more sons, both of whom died young.

Arthur Oscar (born in 1884) died on the 19th of June, 1914; he “fell down the hold of the collier Kauri at the Queen’s Wharf this afternoon and was killed. The doctor of HMS Psyche went to the man’s assistance, but death had been instantaneous. Deceased was single, about 24 years of age, and belonged to Blenheim.” According to his sister Kate he went to sea in the Temple Knight and was on the first boat to pick up signals from the Titanic. He had intended to settle down, and went to Auckland to look for a job. He picked up a temporary job on a coal hulk, but while helping a friend to close a hatch he fell 45 feet and broke his neck.

Alfred Brook. The youngest child. Born in 1886, died in 1918 during the flu epidemic.

On the 22nd of May, 1886, something occurred that throws enormous light on the entire history of the Norgrove family in New Zealand. The Marlborough Express writes:

At the R.M. Court this morning, before Mr. Allen, R.M., Oscar Norgrove was brought up as a person of unsound mind, and unfit to be at large. In support of this view the evidence of Drs. Porter and Nairn was taken. Norgrove protested to the Court that he was not mad, though very excited about certain inventions for electric ships and perpetual motion which had occurred to his mind, and stated that, if liberated, he would go steadily to work and calm down. He admitted, however, that the Court in dealing with him was acting for his good, though he protested that it was mistaken kindness. He also complained that he had been taken to a cell yesterday, and had not been supplied with any tea. Mr. Allen said that in Norgrove’s present state of dangerous excitement it would be necessary to send him to an asylum for a short time for medical treatment. His Worship added that it was for his good, and not by way of punishment. Norgrove admitted that was so, but hoped that “Valentine Vox” treatment would not be dealt out to him, and that his inventions would not be burked and the public hoodwinked. The unfortunate man was then removed.

Then again on the 5th of March, 1888, again from the Marlborough Express:

Mr. Oscar Norgrove was committed to the Wellington Lunatic Asylum on Saturday by Mr. Allen R.M., Drs. Cleghorn and Nairn having certified to his being insane. The poor fellow brought to our office a few days ago some models, very cleverly designed, with which he had been working out the theory of perpetual motion. Great sympathy is felt for his family.

And there you have it. The explanation, I think, of why the Norgroves, so energetic, so intelligent, so talented, were so unsuccessful. I cannot read those newspaper entries without feeling enormous sadness for Oscar Norgrove; teetering on the brink of insanity but well enough to realise that he wasn’t well, terrified that his idea and inventions would be stolen and unable to get them out of his mind although he realised that this was a sign of insanity, well enough to be terrified of the lunatic asylum (and who wouldn’t be, given the conditions in which the inmates of such places lived?), and yet well enough to know that he had to go.

Poor Oscar. And poor Edith and the children, even more so. How must it have been for them, with their husband and father, probably their only source of support, becoming gradually worse over

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1 In Auckland: Evening Post, 20th of June, 1914.
2 I doubt the accuracy of this particular story, as I can find no independent confirmation.
3 Henry Cockton’s The Life and Adventures of Valentine Vox, which was published in 1839, was one of the first Victorian novels to consider the poor treatment of the mentally ill, or not so ill.
the years (as he almost certainly did), until finally they could no longer cope, the community could no longer cope, and such drastic measures became necessary? One cannot imagine.

Note the dates. Oscar must have been in and out of the Wellington Lunatic Asylum at least twice, a couple of years apart, and possibly more often. We know he was working again in 1891 and 1900, when he got more painting contracts, and it may be that he recovered well enough to lead the rest of his life in a normal fashion. I hope he did. But I have little doubt that Oscar, and most likely his father before him, was a man who, for most of his life, struggled to survive on that knife edge; the genius of ideas on the one hand and crazed obsession on the other. My heart goes out to him and Edith. They cannot always have been happy.

Questions: I must admit that Oscar’s illness raises a number of questions for me. In the court records he didn’t sound too deranged. Indeed, he was clearly well enough to make literary references, and to understand well what was happening, and where he was going and why. So why was such drastic action taken? Was his family unable to cope? Unwilling, maybe? Was he dangerous to others or to himself? How long was he in the asylum, and how many times? Do medical records of his visits exist? It’s unlikely that we’ll ever be able to answer all these questions. However, I do know that there are extensive records of the early Wellington asylum, and I bet that a detailed search would turn up more information about Oscar. Yet another thing I have to do.

We know for sure that, whether or not they were happy, they were certainly poor. You can see the poverty clearly in a photograph of Oscar, Edith, and their two eldest children, Edgar and Bertha, which must have been taken around 1888 (page 71). Their house was unkempt and simple, the garden untended, with wood and branches in an untidy heap. Oscar is holding some unidentified thing, dressed in his working clothes, and looking as scruffy as I usually do, and his family look undeniably grim. It’s hard to avoid the conclusion that they were poor as a result of Oscar’s mental illness; although this must have affected Kate greatly, she never made any mention of it. Ever. Kate would tell stories of being sent down to the store to get food on credit as they couldn’t afford to pay for it, and how she was dressed in a coat and bonnet made from her father’s old overcoat turned. Her 6d wooden doll was a treasure and her fancy shoes had brass toecaps; her mother’s bedside table was a packing case draped with white muslin. I suppose that poverty was no shame to her, but a father’s illness was more difficult to cope with.

In August 1907 Oscar finally gave up the struggle, or had it given up for him I suppose, to be more accurate. His horse was frightened by some cans a boy was carrying, and threw Oscar off the trap, rupturing his liver. Oscar lingered on for ten days before finally giving up the ghost. Oscar’s obituary appeared in, of all unlikely places, the West Coast Times:

The late Mr. Oscar Alfred Norgrove who died recently at his home in Blenheim, from injuries received from being thrown from a trap, was (says an Exchange) born in Wellington in the year 1842, and was the eldest son of the late Wm. Norgrove. In the year 1854 he took up his residence in Nelson, where he resided with the rest of his family till 1861, when he came to the Wairau. In 1868, in conjunction with his brothers, Horace and Walter, he built the ketch Amateur, of 25 tons register, on the banks of Lockup Creek, near where Clouston’s stables now stand in Wynen St. For some years subsequent to this he followed the sea. A second boat was built at Picton, of 60 tons, called the Unity, in 1872. He sailed this boat for a time, and then he and his brothers gave up the sea, and deceased went to the Wakamarina goldfields, but returned shortly after to Blenheim to work at his trade, which has claimed his attention ever since.

Edith herself lived for a good long time after Oscar’s death, dying in 1936, two weeks before turning 90. One wonders if she found it more peaceful; I know nothing about what she did in the last 30 years of her life, and I ought to know more. Maybe one day someone will tell me.

And that brings our Norgrove story to an end. It is continued in the story of Kate Norgrove, who married John Frederick Neal, as the interested reader can read on page 43.

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There are quite clear signs that other members of the family also suffered similarly. Horace exhibits signs of paranoia in his letter about the three-keeled ship and his incessant litigation, while Bertha’s suicide cannot plausibly be unrelated.
Part II

Daddy Dearest
Chapter 4

Sneyds and Bonds

My father’s genealogy is almost the complete opposite of my mother’s. We know a lot about Mum’s ancestors, but only after they arrived in New Zealand; before they arrived here almost all is dark. With Dad’s relatives, we know a lot about them in Europe and America, but not so much of them in New Zealand. Mostly this is because I’m not so good at genealogical research as opposed to genealogical copying, and I haven’t found out the details for myself. Maybe one day.

At any rate, I know almost nothing about Dad’s paternal ancestors, apart from the barest of facts. They were poor immigrants to New Zealand, arriving in the 1880’s or so, and worked at a number of trades – engineering was a common one – leaving few traces that I have found. On his mother’s side, the light shines a lot more brightly. Her father was the mayor of Hamilton and Cambridge, and her mother was descended from the English landed gentry, of whom quite a few records survive, as we shall see.

I’ve included the Bonds in this chapter, not because they were in any way related or connected with the Sneyds – at least not before Granny married Pop – but merely because it is convenient for me to do so. The Bond genealogy has been written down in considerable detail by Brian and Carol Robinson of Hamilton, and Dad kept a copy for me. There was a Bond reunion in ... er ... 1989 (?) and I’ve always thought that Dad went along and glowered at everybody. Turns out I was wrong, and that Dad had a cast-iron excuse not to attend (which he didn’t, with obvious glee). At any rate, if you want to learn all about James Bond’s descendants, the Robinson’s are the people to ask. I don’t know how to contact them, mind you.

The Sneyds

My earliest Sneyd ancestor of whom I can be sure is Benjamin Sneyd, my grandfather’s grandfather. He was a pipemaker (probably a brick and tile maker also) in the Morriston spelter works\(^1\), who married a Margaret Ellen Jones in September, 1863, in Swansea\(^2\). Swansea is, as you can imagine, chock full of Joneses; it’s also rather full of Sneyds as it happens, as this was quite a common name in that part of Britain. The most likely spelter works where Benjamin worked was Vivian and Sons’ Morriston Spelting Works, Swansea, although I don’t know this for sure.

Questions: Surely it must be possible to find out more about Benjamin and Margaret Sneyd. For example, Slater’s Commercial Directory, 1858–1859, lists a Benjamin Sneyd in Morriston, a brick and tile maker, and this is highly likely to be our Benjamin. But what else could be found by going to Morriston and digging around? More, I’m sure. Someone just needs to do it.

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\(^1\) Spelter is zinc alloy; basically just slabs of zinc metal. It’s the most common commercial form of zinc.

\(^2\) I have a copy of the birth certificate of their son, Alfred, and I have also found a record of their marriage online at freebmd.org.uk. However, I don’t have independent confirmation that I’ve got the correct marriage date, so it’s possible that is wrong. There were probably, after all, many many Benjamin Sneyds and Margaret Ellen Joneses in Swansea at that time.
The Sneyds and Bonds
Alfred Trevelian Sneyd.
There is a famous family of Sneyds, landed gentry based at Keele Hall (now part of Keele University) in Staffordshire. They are no relation. So all the various *History of the Sneyd family* articles one sees around are quite irrelevant, at least to me. Staffordshire was (and is) a hotbed of the name Sneyd; there was a Sneyd hamlet in what is now Stoke-on-Trent, and still a Sneyd Green, as well as many Sneyd businesses. So what was a Sneyd doing in South Wales? I don’t know. However, our Benjamin was working with ceramics, which is the specialty of Staffordshire, and he was working in a metal factory, the specialty of the Swansea area. It’s tempting to think that brick and tile specialists were imported from other areas as their skills became needed, and Benjamin Sneyd’s ancestors may have been part of this. May not, too.¹ Without more detailed research we shall never know, and maybe not even then.

The following year, in December 1864, Benjamin and Margaret had a son, Alfred Trevelian Sneyd, who was born in Morriston, but who emigrated to New Zealand in 1886, arriving in Auckland on the *Lady Jocelyn*, on the 22nd of February. He was an engineer. Few Sneyds came to New Zealand, the only other major group being descended (I believe) from the Mr. Sneyd who came into Lyttleton in 1853, going on to leave a lot of Sneyd descendants in Kaiapoi, where there is still a Sneyd St.²

Our Alfred married Mary Emily Anderson on the 1st of December, 1900, in Tokatoka, south of Dargaville. Mary Emily was the daughter of William Warner Anderson, carpenter, born in London in 1855, and Charlotte Webb, born in Staffordshire in 1857. They married in 1877 in Auckland, and Mary Emily was born in Christchurch, in Salisbury St., on the 19th of February, 1881. Clearly, the Andersons were moving around a bit.

Questions: I know nothing about William Warner Anderson. When and where did he die, for example, which shouldn’t be too difficult to find out. There also has to be a lot more information about Harold Anderson’s mill in the Dargaville records. Just a matter of knowing where to look, I suppose, and having the time to do so. This is something that really needs a lot more work. For instance, I haven’t even yet obtained a copy of William and Charlotte’s marriage certificate, which should be easy to get.

I don’t know why Alfred and Mary married up in Tokatoka, but I can make an educated guess. It’s not unlikely that Mary Emily’s parents were working in that area, as her father was a carpenter, and Dargaville and Tokatoka were centres of the kauri timber and kauri gum trades. If I were forced to guess, I’d say that her parents moved there to find work chopping trees down or chopping them up.³ Later in life (or possibly even at the time of her marriage) her brother, Harold Anderson, owned a big sawmill in Dargaville, called, somewhat unsurprisingly, Anderson’s Mill. It was built many years before the First World War, and operated until the 1950’s. On the 17th of March, 1914⁴, Harold was ‘dogging’ a log in Dargaville, and a chip from the log went into his right eye. Ouch. He was rushed off to Auckland Hospital, and it was thought he would lose his eye. I don’t know whether he did or not. Pop (my grandfather, Alfred Trevelian’s son) would often tell stories of Harold Anderson’s mill. He was over 90 by then, mind you, and the stories were not usually very coherent, so I can’t remember them too well. Stuff about logs being floated down to Auckland and stacking up in the small river that flows into the Milford marina.

¹We know, for instance, that the Swansea pottery trade relied, in its beginnings, on the migration of skilled workers from Staffordshire.
²As far as I’m aware, my lot of Sneyds has outbred the other lot by a considerable margin.
³Goodness knows what Alfred was doing up in the boonies. Maybe they met in town. Who knows?
⁴Evening Post, 18th of March, 1914.
Questions: It’s embarrassing how little I know about Alfred Trevelian Sneyd. Why the posh middle name, for instance? I doubt his parents were wealthy, or of the social class to use the name Trevelian often. But they may have had enough money to give Alfred a decent education; the profession of engineer could cover lots of things. Benjamin McPherson, for instance, called himself an engineer, but was most likely a glorified gold miner with very little education, while Pop was an engineer also, but a specialised and trained marine engineer. Did Alfred Trevelian have any siblings? Of what was he an engineer? Where did he work in Auckland? Where is his death certificate? I did actually ask Pop these questions, but too late; Pop was over 90 by then and just couldn’t remember. What about Mary Emily Anderson? Where did they meet? Did she live in Dargaville at all, or was that only her brother? When did her parents come to New Zealand? Did her father work in Dargaville? I should know all this stuff.

Alfred died around 1934, and Mary died on the 30th of June, 1949, in Mangere. They must have lived in Mangere for a long time, as Pop was born there, in 1905, in McIntyre Road. They had five children:

**Edna**, who married Frank Wells.

**Alfred Harold** (Pop; more on him below).

**Alma Ethel** (Tots), who married Athol Meredith and had two children, James and Joy. James was killed when he was about 30, when his plane crashed. He was flying with Austin Seabrooks (?), but the plane crashed; Pop was watching at the time. Joy borrowed the family Bible from Pop at one stage, and Pop would tell everybody how he had to go and get it back from her. Her husband made the brass screen that always stood in front of Pop’s fireplace. As for the family Bible, Joy did give it back, and I saw it many times, but it disappeared sometime after Pop’s 100th birthday. I have no idea what happened to it. Fortunately, I had already transcribed all the genealogical information it contained. Pop would always tell me how it had to go to my father (the eldest son) and then to me (the eldest son). It was a big thing for Pop, this family Bible, and it’s sad that it’s now lost.

**Trevelian Winston**, who married Renie. During the war he was captured in Greece or Crete, destroying bridges behind enemy lines. I have his war medals, which he left to me in his will. He was a prisoner for many years, but finally escaped from Germany, together with Jack Turner, the son of one of the directors of Turners and Growers, where Pop worked for so many years. Uncle Trev and Pop were great mates for many years, always going to the rugby together on Saturday, but then something happened, and Pop wasn’t allowed to see Trev any more. Granny said so. So he didn’t.

**Annie Jean**, who married a Hansen and had a son, Colwin, and a daughter Tess, who died (according to a comment on a scrap of paper in Pop’s handwriting, found after his death).

**Alfred Harold Sneyd (Pop) and Catherine Charity Graham Bond (Granny)**

The second child, and eldest son of Alfred Trevelian and Mary Emily was Alfred Harold, or Pop to all the family. My father’s father, he didn’t die until 2006 (he was almost 101) and for the last few years of his life we lived close to him; he was in Takapuna, we were, and still are, in Mairangi Bay, and we saw him almost every week. This actually makes it much more difficult to write about him. Where do I start? What should I include and leave out?¹ Many times I’ve sat chatting to Pop with my laptop on my knee, struggling to get down all the details. The trouble was that he could only remember certain things; the war, building the deck on his Takapuna house, his school days. Any details about his mother’s life or father’s life were long forgotten.

¹I wish Dad would write something about Pop, but I’ve been bugging him for years with no result.
Pop. At bottom right is Pop on his 100th birthday, with me, my wife Monique, son Paul and daughter Kate. Goodness knows where my eldest daughter Sarah was.
Pop was born on the 14th of November\(^1\), 1905, in Mangere. The family lived on McIntyre Road, just north of the volcanic crater in Mangere; Mangere Domain it’s called now. His early schooling was at Mangere Bridge School and then he went to Auckland Grammar. Quite a trek for him to get to school; a long walk, a train ride, a bus ride, more walking, and that was just getting there. He was a keen rugby league player, and I presume there are old photographs in Auckland Grammar of Pop in the team. I’ve never gone to dig them out, which is naughty of me. After school he studied Marine Engineering at the Auckland Board of Trade – I’m not sure how one could study engineering at a Board of Trade, but that’s what Pop said.

Pop began his working life as a naval engineer. I have his Certificate of Competency as a First Class Engineer in the Merchant Service, dated 1 August, 1932, number 2864. From 1928 to 1939 he served on the *Kaikorai*, *Tofua*, *Makura*, *Monowai* (four times), *Marama*, *Poolta*, *Kaimiro*, *Mangungunui*, and *Niagara*. I also have a copy of his service record for the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, Limited. It ends “We have pleasure in stating that during the time Mr. Sneyd was in the employ of our Company he proved himself a capable and reliable Engineer, carrying out his duties at all times to our entire satisfaction. Mr. Sneyd was on the *Monowai* during the period this vessel was under Naval control and did not return to our service.” Good to hear, Pop, good to hear. Top marks.

Still living at Mangere while he worked as a naval engineer (probably still living at home, although I don’t know that for sure), he met his future wife, Catherine Charity Bond (Granny), through a friend who knew Granny’s sister, Nellie. They had common interests in matters botanical – he helped with planting trees and building a glasshouse, she married him. On the 16th of June, 1934, at St. Aidan’s in Remuera. Poncy.

My father was born almost exactly eight months later, which, if you knew Granny, would have to come as rather a surprise.\(^2\)

The happy couple lived at Victoria Avenue initially (with Granny’s mother, her father having died 12 years earlier) but moved out to Takapuna during the war. Takapuna, before the bridge was built, was a sleepy seaside holiday place then. It isn’t any more. They wanted to be closer to the naval base at Devonport to make it easier for Pop to get home when his ship was in, and houses were cheap in Takapuna at the time. People were afraid of being bombed by the Japanese. They bought the house they lived in for the rest of their lives, at the end of Ewen St., number 35, one house back from the beach, and added a second story and the deck. (When we added a second story to our own house in Mairangi Bay, many years later, Pop was full of questions. Where was the hot water tank going? Who was doing it? What was the construction? What colour were the curtains? And then all the questions again. And again. And again. He’d almost completely lost his short-term memory by then.)

When the war began he served first on the *Niagara* during training, and then helped to convert the *Monowai* to a warship, continuing to serve on her for the rest of his active service. (According to his service record, he served from the 23rd of October, 1939, to the 14th of June, 1943, and was discharged on the 16th of December, 1943, with the rank of chief engineer and Lieutenant-Commander). Pop always said that, by the time he’d finished on the Monowai he never wanted to go to sea again. Initially, he didn’t have a whole lot of choice. According to Dad, Pop had trouble finding a job after the war, and spent some years working as an engineer on the Harbour ferries, and then on the Auckland Harbour Board tugs. However, he was eventually able to get back on land, getting a job as a refrigeration engineer at Turners and Growers, building cool stores in Dunedin, Whangarei, Christchurch, Mangere, and a bunch of other places.

Pop was a bit funny that way. He spent an awful lot of time in boats – small ones, big ones, all sorts – but never really seemed to enjoy being on the water. Maybe I just didn’t understand him all that well, but it seemed to me that he couldn’t think of any other reason for taking out a boat than for going fishing.\(^3\) When we had a yacht he’d often ask us about how we’d enjoyed going out fishing. Oh, we weren’t fishing, I’d reply, just sailing. So, how was the fishing, he’d ask again, baffled.

After Granny died in 1999 he went on living in the house at Takapuna, and stayed there until a

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\(^1\)The date of my own birthday, and of Prince Charles, a fact that amused us all greatly.

\(^2\)Not, though, if you knew Pop, I have to say.

\(^3\)Me, I just love being on the water. I don’t even like fishing all that much, particularly not if I catch anything.
month before he died. As I said, we visited him often. He loved the company of the kids, particularly
the babies, and was the sweetest old man, never complaining about anything, always with a good
word for everybody, and with the biggest smile. His short-term memory was completely shot so one
tended to have the same conversation many, many times (within the space of 10 minutes).

The last year of Pop’s life he had been visibly failing, and Mum and Dad finally decided he had
to go into a rest home, at the end of May, 2006. He didn’t want to leave 35 Ewen St., where he had
lived for so many years, but there really wasn’t any choice. He’d had a good innings there. He was
still living there when he turned 100; we had a big party for him. Letters came from the Queen2, the
Prime Minister, and a host of other self-important dignitaries. So nobody can really complain. Still,
it was a sad, sad thing to put him into a rest home. We suspected he wouldn’t last long after that, and
we were right, he didn’t. Just a few days after, he fell and cracked his head. A week or so in hospital
then back to the rest home, but he just wasn’t the same. He declined rapidly, caught pneumonia, and
died.

The day he died Monique and I and the kids all went to visit him. He couldn’t talk all that well
because of the pneumonia, but he was quite alert and interested in things. We told him how the
kids had won their soccer games, how we were getting new doors put into our house, and how the
weather was lovely outside. As usual, he was full of smiles. After a while he said that he was tired
and wanted to sleep, so did we mind going? Sleep well, I said, and left. He took me literally, and
died just a few minutes after.

It was the passing of an era. He was the centre of Dad’s extended family, even when he couldn’t
remember all our names. We met at Ewen St., had lunch on the balcony, and looked out over the sea.
He did love to see us gathered. He’d ask about the conversation when he couldn’t hear. And now we
won’t be able to tell him anything ever again.

At his funeral I learned a lot about him. Alfred told us all how Pop had invented the world’s
first cow-drawn skateboard. It was hilarious. It’s probably improper to laugh at funerals, but we did
anyway. Sister Lizzie seemed to know the hymns so I just followed her. The coffin was surprisingly
heavy. Don’t fall into the grave I said. Don’t joke about it said the usher person, very seriously.
Ooops, I thought. OK, no joking. But Pop would have been the first to laugh if one of us fell in, I
know he would. It was a happy funeral, as these things go. Plenty of tears too, I suppose, but the old
fellow had done us all proud.

After Pop’s death, I got his Masonic certificate ... things. I hadn’t known he was a Mason.
Anyway, the certificates are priceless. You just couldn’t make this stuff up. Even the Society for
Creative Anachronism would have a hard time thinking up this sort of self-important pompous crap. I
kid you not, here’s an extract: “O all Illustrious Grand Inspectors General; Most Valiant and Sublime
Princes of the Royal Secret; Grand Inquisitors Commander; Grand Elected Knights; Excellent and
Perfect Princes Rose Croix; Grand, Ineffable, Sublime Free and Accepted Masons of every Degree
of Masonry throughout the Universe”...

And on it goes.

Anyway, I can think of no better way than to end this bit on Pop than with a poem that Cousin
Rose wrote.

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**Pop**

My one hundred-year old Pop
has apparently, finally, died:
I had never imagined he would

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1For some reason he had parking on his mind. I must have told him a hundred times if I told him once: “Yes, Pop, I have
a parking space at work.”

2Pop’s response to this was priceless. “The Queen? I didn’t know she still remembered me!”

3Not just the world, oh no. The UNIVERSE!! It’s easy to laugh at the Masons, and they deserve it, but it’s surprising to
me just how prevalent they were. Maybe they still are, I wouldn’t know. But Robert McPherson was a Mason also, as was
James Bond. That’s both of my grandfathers, and at least one of my G-grandfathers. I wonder why, I wonder what they saw
in it.
ever cease his relentless living.
At least not in my lifetime. Pop
always was, and always would be.

We all thought he would go on
going on, perhaps even beyond
the day of the apocalypse itself.
Or at least, if he would succumb,
his vanquisher would have been
something mightier than pneumonia.

My Pop, Our Pop, had defeated
countless and dreadful antagonists:
a ladder on a perilous lean, bombs
on ships, sharks I would picture
lurking in the waters around Rangitoto,
the Japanese, colonial New Zealand.

He probably thought it a great joke
slipping away as he did, unexpectedly.
Unaware were we who thought
the dreaded lurgy a pitiable foe, for
this was the man who had received
a letter from the Queen of England.

And he was an inimitable patriarch.
He adored seeing us gathered home:
on the terrace, or around the majestic
mahogany dining table. He happily
acknowledged the blame for the ensuing
cacophony - there are a lot of us, Sneyds.

And that was the way he liked it:
a glass of gin and a twinkling in his blue,
seafaring eyes, he would survey his
brilliant and burgeoning, clamorous clan -
I suppose, remembering Granny, with
whom he traversed a remarkable century.


Granny. Now, this is a much more difficult proposition. Let me be honest and give you all fair
warning; I cannot write about her with any degree of objectivity. She hated my mother, and I just
cannot get past that. I think I know why she did; Dad was headed for great things, but was distracted
by a vulgar woman of mean family and low morals into the byways of parenthood. Such a woman
is never to be forgiven, least of all by Granny who would never voluntarily forgive anyone. For
anything. She was a good hater, was Granny, and Mum was a good target. Never mind that my
parents’ marriage is the happiest I have ever seen, or that they were the best parents it is possible to
have. Mum was low and vulgar¹, too intelligent by far, and she stole Granny’s darling boy.

Probably the fact that I cannot forgive Granny, or even think kindly of her without an effort,
makes me more similar to her than I would like to admit. Now that is a sobering thought. I have to

¹Granny probably had a good point on this one, but I think Dad might be worse.
Granny (with Pop in bottom right). The graduation picture is when she graduated from Auckland University with a degree in French, I believe. She went to University at the same time as her son, Alfred, and they both did French. The picture with Pop is taken in the corner of the living room at 35 Ewen St.
admit, though, that when my mother wasn’t there she and Pop were kind to me in their way. Not always, but often enough for me to remember good things as well as bad.

Anyway, Granny was born in Hamilton, Catherine Charity Graham Bond, on the 23rd of December, 1909; she was the daughter of James Shiner Bond, the mayor of Hamilton. After her father retired (which he did in 1909) they moved to Auckland and lived in Victoria Ave., where James Bond died in 1922. Granny and her elder sister Nellie lived with their mother, Ellen Octavia Graham (Chapter 5), but Granny left a few years after she married Pop, when they bought the house in Takapuna. She was a very intelligent woman, going back to University in later life to get a degree in French, I believe. She taught French for many years at St. Anne’s. In Dad’s immortal words “Mother taught at St. Anne’s school in Takapuna which was on the side street between The Strand and Blomfield Spa (I forget its name). It is now defunct as the land became very valuable. It was a school for the stupid daughters of wealthy farmers although at one time there were also a few boys in the early classes. Its academic standard was not high and for a pupil to pass School Certificate was considered a triumph.”

I was in Michigan when she died in 1999. I didn’t attend the funeral.

And I think I shall leave it there. For me, Granny is a subject best left alone.

Granny and Pop had three boys. My dad, the eldest; then black James (I’m red James); and finally Alfred. I can’t possibly do justice to my uncles here, or their children, so I won’t try very hard. Anyway, as I keep pointing out, my goal is not to describe descents at length, but ascents rather.

Dad was the eldest. He was born when Granny and Pop lived in Victoria Ave., but spent most of his childhood at the house in Takapuna, attending Takapuna Grammar. We’ll learn more about Dad later, of course.

Uncle James also went to Takapuna Grammar. He married Heather had about 20 children I think; David, Kristin, Donna and Janine. Well, that’s almost 20 anyway. Kristin lives just down the road from us on Penzance Road but spends most of her time gallivanting around the world with America’s Cup sailing teams, David is a builder across the bridge in Auckland, Donna is in Australia and I can never remember what she does, and Janine is milking cows down in Canterbury. Janine is also very interested in family genealogy and I have corresponded with her every so often about that. I’m sure she’s horrified that I’m not putting in detailed dates and things here. (Sorry, Janine.) James was a champion swimmer when younger, and represented New Zealand at surf life saving I believe. Being the only brother with any business sense at all he became an accountant. He and Heather lived for many years in Mairangi Bay, on the North Shore, where we live now (well, not in the same house, but just around the corner as it happens), but a few years ago they moved to Tauranga, where they live now.

Uncle Alfred, who married the Famous Fiona of the Red Hair, had two children. Thank goodness it wasn’t any more; the world would have been too small. They all have Very Red Hair. Every single one of them. Oliver is now a red-haired computer programmer, Rose is a red-haired arty-farty type, doing sort of artsy type things like Italian and Art History. I know, I know. Shocking. Alfred and Fiona were, let me add, my childhood heroes. He is a mathematician, a professor at Waikato for many years, she a cook and an actor. I have vivid memories of, when very young, asking Alfred why waves break; why planes fly; why gliders work, why, why, why, as kids do. And poor Alfred would sit me down, with terrific patience, and write out all the mathematical equations for me. I didn’t understand a thing, of course, except for the fact that Math was Super Cool. I am now a mathematician and Alfred must take the blame. Mind you, Pop was very interested in math in his youth, and even did evening classes later in life, which I suppose explains why all his children and many of his grandchildren are mathematically inclined.

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1She’s not the one who put in the melamine.

2Actually, they’re still my heroes in many ways.
James Shiner Bond and Ellen Octavia Graham

James Shiner Bond, Granny’s father, my G-grandfather, the mayor of Cambridge, and later of Hamilton. A man of social weight, clearly, from his photographs (page 92); he sits, elegantly dressed, immaculately presented, with a Serious, Firm, yet Benevolent Expression,1 radiating authority. He looks like a mayor, in the same way that Robert McPherson absolutely doesn’t. The comparison makes me chuckle.

However, no matter his importance in New Zealand, James Bond’s ancestors were just as poor and unimportant as any McPherson, Neal or Norgrove. The first Bonds I know about were William Bond and Mary Shears, James’s grandparents. William was a builder, or so I’m told. Their son, Alfred Bond, was born in Shipton, Somerset, and worked as a smith. He married Sarah Shiner on the 29th of July, 1858, in Beaminster, Dorsetshire, and it was their eldest son, James, who was the first of the family to come to New Zealand. The rest of the family came out several years later, mostly because James’s sister Cherrie had a weak chest. Alfred had golden hair and a beard “like a Viking”. He continued to work as a whitesmith2 in New Zealand, at Deadwood Terrace in Ponsonby,

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1 The capitals are quite clear in the photographs.
2 i.e., someone who works with light coloured metals such as tin or pewter (usually cold), or who does finishing work on
Auckland. He and Sarah had a large family, many of whom went on to breed like rabbits themselves. Sarah Shiner’s forebears can be traced a little better than Alfred’s, but not by much. Her father was a wheelwright, and both her parents were buried at Beaminster, but nothing is known about her grandparents save their names.

Anyway, back to James. He didn’t have a lot of formal schooling, leaving school when he was only 12 (which shows that his family must have been poor. We expected this, of course, given that his father was a whitesmith.) According to family stories his first job was as a delivery boy for his grandmother, a corsetmaker. It is said that his first delivery was a pair of wedding corsets to a neighbouring village, which he dropped in the mud. They were returned to his grandmother with a request for a new pair, in a hurry.

From the age of about 13, James was employed in a printing office, where he clearly learned the trade that made his fortune in New Zealand. By the age of 20 he had amassed the enormous sum\(^2\) of £5, with some left over for his ship fare, and was ready to seek his fortune in foreign climes; he took ship to Auckland, New Zealand, arriving in 1878. I have not been able to find his name on any ship list into New Zealand in 1878, but all the sources are agreed on the date so I shall just accept it. For now. Almost certainly he sailed into Auckland; why or when he moved south to the Manawatu is unknown, but presumably he was following job opportunities.

James’s first job was for the \textit{Rangitekei Advocate}, a newspaper based in Marton (just north of Bulls, off Highway 1) that was published, I think, biweekly, and distributed as far south as Foxton and as far north as Hunterville. However, he didn’t stay there long; in 1880 he moved to Cambridge to run the printing department of the \textit{Waikato Mail}. This was the first Cambridge newspaper, published triweekly, and costing 2d. Since the paper itself wasn’t launched until September 1880, James Bond was probably there at the birth. As the paper itself said:

\begin{quote}
Such interest was manifested at the publication of our first issue, that quite a crowd assembled at our office last evening, to witness the printing of our first sheet. Miss Houghton, who gracefully performed this, drew the handle, took off the sheet, and exhibited it. Mr Rhodes, of Duke Street, acted as printer’s devil. Then followed a short address by Miss Houghton, expressing appreciation of the honour conferred upon her. This was greeted with enthusiastic cheers, and Mr Tom Wells, merchant, called for silence and demanded three cheers for the success of the \textit{Waikato Mail}. The meeting responded with three rounds which shook the building.
\end{quote}

The three cheers, and the graceful charms of Miss Houghton, were wasted. The \textit{Waikato Mail} hardly lasted a year\(^3\), and James Bond started the \textit{Atlas Printing Company}, which also sold books and stationery. I’m pleased to learn\(^4\) that in 1886-87 James S. Bond had very much pleasure in announcing that his supply of CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CARDS were now opened out and on view. His selection (so the advertisement continues) comprised a very choice assortment in PLUSH, SILK, IVORINE, & FRINGED CARDS, and were pronounced superior to anything ever before shown in Waikato. Good for you, James, good for you. And we believe you. Really, we do.

Whether or not we believe that James’s ‘ivorine Christmas cards were superior to anything yet seen in the entire Universe, it is clear that he was a substantial and wealthy businessman. He served on the Cambridge Borough Council from 1886 to 1895, and was mayor of Cambridge for the last four of those years. However, I imagine journalism was in his blood and he couldn’t resist trying again, in 1895, when he started his own newspaper, the \textit{Waikato Advocate}. This only lasted a year before he moved on to bigger and better things, buying a Hamilton newspaper, the \textit{Waikato Times}, merging the two newspapers, and converting them to a daily evening publication. Actually, it seems

\footnote{\textit{Origin of Waikato Winter Show". I actually haven’t read those sources myself. Yet.}}

\footnote{\textit{Waikato Times}, 24th of December, 1886.}

\footnote{This is sarcasm.}

\footnote{According to some sources; three years according to others.}


\footnote{\textit{Origin of Waikato Winter Show". I actually haven’t read those sources myself. Yet.}}

\footnote{This is sarcasm.}

\footnote{According to some sources; three years according to others.}
that James was sold a lemon. When the *Waikato Times* was sold to him, the business manager and the editor left, taking with them all the files and all the advertisers. James must have been rather irritated, and thought of taking legal action. Fortunately, he didn’t. Lawyers would probably have ruined him, as lawyers tend to do.\(^1\) Instead, he turned the lemon into a ... well ... an orange or something, and the *Waikato Times* prospered, as we know.

James Bond was as politically successful in Hamilton as he was in Cambridge, serving on the Hamilton Borough Council from 1901 to 1909, and was elected mayor of Hamilton for the final five years of this term\(^2\). His c.v. during this period sort of reads like a typical mayor’s c.v., or at least as one imagines a mayor’s c.v. would look. Lots of committees, lots of councils, lots of organising things, Bond St. named after him, all rather dull to be honest. Give me a good lunatic like Oscar Norgrove any day; much more interesting. Still, for the record, he was a member of the Waikato Agricultural and Pastoral Association, in 1890 was the Chairman of the Cambridge Licensing Committee, was President for one term of the Waikato Winter Show Association, in 1911 was on the Board of Governors of Hamilton High School, was a member of the Auckland Harbour Board and Auckland Board of Education, and was the chairman of directors of the Theatre Royal Co Ltd. I’m sure this isn’t a compete record, but I’m guessing this gives the general drift.

Although not universally popular, James Bond was considered one of the city’s most effective leaders. He supported a merger with the Frankton council and got the saleyards and horse bazaar established in Ward St. In his second term he presided over the first Winter Show, saw the opening of the Carnegie Library opposite Garden Place, the completion of the new hospital blocks and the new traffic bridge. His only real problem was a tendency to follow his own opinions no matter what, and his manner was sometimes considered dictatorial. Just to take one example which amuses me, the *Observer*, in 1903, observed:

> J.S. Bond, of Hamilton, will go down to posterity as a sort of coronial Guy Fawkes. He enjoys a monopoly of a certain kind of gruesome experience that nobody will envy him. A year or two ago, an old man was found dead after many days in a whare near Te Kowhai, and by order of Mr. Bond the hut, with the body in it, was set a-fire and consumed. The case was commented on at the time as one without parallel, as it probably was.

But it formed a precedent. For Mr. Bond, in his capacity as Coroner, burned down another shanty to cremate another corpse of long-standing at Hamilton on Sunday. The Coroner’s argument is based on sanitary considerations, but the practice should not be allowed to become general without grave consideration. In the cases under notice there were apparently no suspicions of foul play, but there are possibilities in the idea.

A Coroner too regardful of his own comfort and the health of the police might unconsciously aid in the covering up of crime. By the way, has a Coroner authority for such summary proceedings?

He was instrumental in starting the Waikato Winter Show, and closely associated with it for the rest of his life. According to the Bond family history, in the first few years of the Show he used to bring the takings home each night, sleeping with the money under the mattress. As the takings increased, his wife Ellen objected and the bank was persuaded to stay open to take the money.

His family continued to live in Cambridge, while he commuted to Hamilton on New Zealand’s early high-speed rail network which is nowadays such a prominent and useful part of the transport system\(^3\), but they must have moved up to Hamilton at some stage, as he was living in *Aroha House*, Selkirk St., Hamilton, in 1905, when he married his second wife, my G-grandmother, Ellen Octavia Graham.

On the 1st of April, 1891, James Bond married Sarah O’Connor, about whom I know absolutely nothing except for the fact they had nine children many of whom also reproduced and so there are

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\(^1\)This comment is designed to offend my brother, John, who is a lawyer.

\(^2\)Of course, this means that the newspapers of the time would have been full of information about him. Unfortunately, those newspapers are not online yet, or at least their archives aren’t, so I haven’t been able to search them for Bond tidbits.

\(^3\)This is a joke.
bushels of Bonds descended from the grand old patriarch. This is not my line. Sarah O’Connor died in 1902 (of what, I don’t know), and a few years later, in 1905, James Bond remarried Ellen Octavia Graham at All Saints Church, Ponsonby, Auckland. He was 47, she was 39. A few years later, after James retired, they all moved up to Auckland, and lived at 84 Victoria Avenue (a renovated farmhouse with two acres of land; the street has since been renumbered), where James died in 1922 after a bunch more Committees and Boards.

Now, with the entry of Ellen Octavia Graham into the story, we suddenly see the difference between what the world thinks of poor people (like the Bonds or McPhersons) and what they think of very rich people, like the Grahams. Not just the ordinary Grahams let me add hastily, but the Grahams of Edmond Castle, no less; nobody would have the gall to forget a Graham of Edmond

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1Actually, my family did intersect this other Bond line a few years ago when my daughter, also called Sarah, came home from school saying that one of her classmates had told her how her G-grandfather was the mayor of Hamilton. Really, said I, not too interested. Yes, said Sarah, and his name was James Bond. No way, said I, not remembering about Sarah O’Connor, his first wife. So my Sarah went back to school and checked, and sure enough, her friend insisted that yes, her G-grandfather WAS the mayor of Hamilton and he WAS called James Bond, and Sarah’s father was an idiot. Oh, said I, I’ll check. So I did, and felt a bit stupid that I’d forgotten about the first wife.
Castles.

And so it proved. Ellen Octavia’s ancestry can be traced back, almost indefinitely, with accuracy as good as any similarly long Western lineage, and it is to this lineage that we shall turn our attention in the next chapter.

However, before we do so, a brief description of Ellen Octavia is in order. She was the eighth child of Reginald John Graham of Edmond Castle and Ellen Leah Boileau, of the Boileau de Castelnau, of whom more in Chapter 7. There were another couple of girls after Ellen, and a total of 13 children, three boys and ten girls. The Grahams of Edmond Castle were English landed gentry, based in Edmond Castle, close to Hayton, in Cumberland, and, although wealthy, were not really wealthy enough to provide for quite that many daughters. So at least one of them, and maybe others, was sent off to travel around the world. I’ve always thought that she set out to find a husband, but given that she was almost 39, and unmarried, that is unlikely to be correct. She was probably a confirmed spinster by then, and not really thinking of marriage at all. However, she would have been adventurous, intelligent and bored silly, which would be explanation enough. Certainly, her mother came from a widely-travelled family with close connections to India, and Ellen very likely visited her relatives there as well.

Whatever her motives, she ended up in New Zealand. How she came to meet James Bond I have no idea, but meet him she did. They didn’t marry immediately, only after she had briefly returned to England, presumably to make arrangements to have her stuff shipped over, and to say goodbye to her family. James Bond must have thought all his Christmases had come at once. Here he was, a poor lad with almost no education, son of a smith, marrying a daughter of the English gentry. Not a peer’s daughter admittedly, not even the daughter of a measly Baronet, merely landed gentry, but poncey enough for all that. If he’d stayed in England it wouldn’t have happened, that’s for sure, but in New Zealand all things were possible.

I wish I could have met Ellen Octavia. I can never decide whether she would have been nice or nasty. Her daughters certainly weren’t very nice, but maybe they got that from their father. Pop always called her a “Lady” – you could hear the capital L very clearly – and one suspects he was told this many times. But she would not have been uninteresting; she had a strong interest in Botany, as did her sister Olive, and they would often go out into the countryside to look for new plants. She must have been a strong person, to emigrate to New Zealand as she did, and she cannot have been too snobbish, because she did, after all, marry the son of a smith. One wonders what her parents thought of it. Maybe she was just glad to be on the far side of the world from them. Or maybe she missed them terribly, but love overruled. Or maybe she was just so surprised to find a husband at her advanced age that she couldn’t say no. All in all, I’m inclined to think that I would have liked her.

Ellen Octavia died on the 17th of December, 1955\(^1\), and was cremated and buried in the same plot as James Shiner Bond (Waikumete cemetery, Anglican Division A, Row 7, Plot 7). The grave marker is still there (in October, 2008), a little battered but still legible. It had a stone cross on the top which fell off at some stage but has been partially replaced. In the cemetery notes her occupation was listed as “House Duties”.

James Bond and Ellen Octavia had two girls; Catherine Charity Graham and Ellen Sarah Hamilton (1908–1980). Catherine married Pop, as described above, and Ellen (Aunt Nellie) married Clive Tidmarsh. They had two children; Brian Graham and Mary Ellen. Brian is the famous Mr. Tiddles, as we children always called him. He married Helen Meril Shanly and had two girls, Angela and Stephanie, whom I knew reasonably well when I was young, although I haven’t seen them for a long time. Mr. Tiddles was a dentist in Dunedin for many years, and fixed up my front tooth when I broke it off, diving into the shallow end of the pool. He has written his own memoirs, which make an interesting read, so if you want to learn more about him that’s where to go. He’s still down in Dunedin, tending his beautiful garden; his second wife, Nancy, just died a few months ago. I see him every so often still, and Mum and Dad see him frequently.

Mary (or cousin Mary, as Dad always calls her) has lived in South Africa for many years, and I think I’ve only ever met her once, in 2000 when she came to Auckland for a visit. She married

\(^1\)My father, note, was 20 when she died, so he must remember her well, but can I get him to write anything about her? No way. I will have to keep bugging him.
From left to right: Mum, Alfred (hiding his face), Pop, Mary Tidmarsh, Dad, James, Brian Tidmarsh (in the front), some unknown male at the back, Granny, Nellie.

Robert Wilson, and had three children, Andrew, Julie and Michael.
From left to right: James, Dad, Brian Tidmarsh.
Right panel: Octavia Bond with Dad (left), James (on knee), Brian (right). At Victoria Ave. Top left panel: from left to right, Pop, Dad, James, Granny, Nellie, Brian. Octavia Bond in front. Bottom left panel: Front row; Dad, Mary, Brian. Middle row; Nellie, Alfred, Granny, James. Back row; Pop, Clive Tidmarsh’s father (Clive Tidmarsh married Nellie), Octavia. Taken at 35 Ewen St, Takapuna, before it was renovated.
Chapter 5

The Grahams of Edmond Castle

I have always been particularly interested in the Grahams of Edmond Castle, for a number of reasons. Firstly, my grandmother, Catherine Bond (Granny), would talk about them often; they were her grand rellies, the ones that gave her a reason for feeling superior to others. Secondly, I met Granny’s cousin, Eric Graham, a couple of times when I passed through London on my various travels, the last time when I was 20 or so, and I corresponded with him when I was younger.¹ So I grew up on stories of how the Grahams of Edmond Castle were British Peers, how important the family was, and how splendid a place is Edmond Castle. Eric sent me the information from Burke’s Landed Gentry [16] about the Grahams of Edmond Castle (which I mistakenly thought was from Burke’s Peerage), I read how the Grahams of Edmond Castle were descended from the Grahams of Montrose, and I traced the history of the Grahams of Montrose with terrific interest; the regicides, the traitors, the executions, all that wonderful stuff. I drew pictures of the coats-of-arms of the various Graham branches and learned about heraldry. I had enormous fun. My ancestors assassinated King James of Scotland!, they were Earls and Dukes! I would tell my friends. I think they probably just ignored me, or didn’t believe me, but I can’t remember.

It wasn’t until later that I came to realise that all these stories from my childhood, all those things that had so fascinated me as a boy, were mostly wrong. The Grahams of Edmond Castle were never in the peerage. They weren’t even measly Baronets, the lowest rung. They were merely landed gentry; basically rich rural landlords. Well, very rich rural landlords, I suppose, but nothing more. They were not descended from the Grahams of Montrose. They were, at best, bog-standard border Grahams; cattle-thieves and raiders initially, almost certainly, gaining respectability as their misdeeds disappeared into the past, as they got wealthier, and as the borderlands became stable and peaceful. Even the so-called coat-of-arms of the Grahams of Edmond Castle is most likely incorrect. A branch of the family eventually made it to the lofty heights of Baronetcy (and hence the fanciful coat-of-arms), but that line didn’t last, dying out after a couple of generations or so, leaving only the low-grade landed gentry Grahams. To add a final humiliating touch, a 1986 book about the House of Commons² calls Thomas Graham a “minor and unambitious Cumbrian landowner”. So much for grand ancestors.

Still, shattered dreams of grandeur or not, I am still terrifically interested in the Grahams of Edmond Castle. There’s something cool about being descended from a family with a castle in their name, even though it’s not, and never was, a real castle. Or even close. And the history of the English/Scottish border has always interested me, with all the various Grahams, Armstrongs and other thugs and villains.

For those who are interested in sources, most of my information about the Grahams comes from Thomas Henry Boileau Graham, my grandmother’s uncle. He lived from 1857 to 1937 and published eight articles about the Grahams and Hayton in the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquities and Archaeological Society [34]–[41]. While I was visiting The Ohio State University I was lucky enough to get copies of these articles (they are not easy to find). He did an

¹In French, as I remember. My French was, and is, execrable, so this must have strained his patience to the limit.
extensive search of the parish records and the old estate records to turn up all the information he could about the early Grahams of Edmond Castle; he claimed there was nothing more to be found than what he published, and this is likely to be correct. He even reproduces the parish records verbatim; they are extensively damaged, with many entries missing.

For the later Grahams a lot survives, but most of this I haven’t seen yet. For instance, there are many old legal records in the Carlisle archives, and the Lambeth Archives contain extensive records of the family, including correspondence, poems they wrote, as well as some editions of the family newspaper. Since discovering the existence of this archive I haven’t been able to get to Lambeth – it’s not so easy from New Zealand – and there is no electronic version of the records; so anybody who wants to help out can go and make copies.\footnote{The reference number is GB/NNAF/F186879, IV/4, and hurry up please.}

\section*{The Debatable Lands}

Although the first known Graham of Edmond Castle doesn’t appear until 1603, it is impossible to understand the history of the Grahams without going back a little into the past, into the 1500s, when the border between England and Scotland was a no-man’s-land of robbery, violence and murder, a land in which the clan was king and the long arm of the law was very short indeed. It’s not at all surprising that the border was like this, borders usually are. It was in the interests of England to disrupt the Scots, and \textit{vice versa}, each side conniving at the actions of the rogues on their side and complaining about the rogues on the other. For the rogues themselves, of course, patriotism was a long way down on their list of priorities. They were Grahams or Armstrongs first, and English or Scottish a very distant second, if at all, and then only when it was convenient to be so.

Cattle-raiding and all the associated violence that went with it was essentially a way of life for the border clans, often called the \textit{Border Reivers}. They shut themselves up in high stone towers, robbed, burned and murdered their neighbours, and were robbed, burned and murdered in their turn. Their only security was their immediate kinship group, and that not always; Graham would happily murder Graham if the need arose. The Border Reivers were immortalised by Sir Walter Scott who portrayed them in a relatively romantic fashion, in much the same way that the Wild West of the U.S.A. is the subject of so many completely unrealistic movies. But it wasn’t a romantic time, not at all. The border areas were fought over by England and Scotland, to and fro, for hundreds of years, and when the invading armies weren’t reiving them, the locals couldn’t imagine any other way they could possibly live, so they reived each other.\footnote{The best book on this time and this area is \textit{The Steel Bonnets: the story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers}, by George MacDonald Fraser [28]; it’s a great read, and widely regarded to be accurate as well. I also like [66] and [42]. Another excellent book, fiction this time, is \textit{The Sterkarm Handshake}, by Susan Price. It’s aimed more at young adults, I suppose, but it’s still a bloody good read, and, I suspect, an excellent portrayal of the times. I recommend it highly.} Extortion and protection rackets (the origin, it is claimed, of the modern work blackmail)\footnote{There are different etymologies for “blackmail” (one of which even claims it was invented specifically by a Graham! This is not one of the convincing ones.) but the most likely seems to be that the ‘black’ part came because the protection money was paid in kind rather than in money, while the ‘mail’ part is Old English (from Old Norse) for tribute or rent.} were a profession, and one popular method of execution was drowning, it being cheaper than hanging as no rope was needed. Walter Scott wrote about the Border Reivers that “they abhorred and avoided the crime of unnecessary homicide”, a comment that is quite clearly ridiculous. As Fraser says, with typical dry wit, the borderers might indeed have avoided unnecessary homicide, but they certainly found it necessary with appalling frequency.

One of the great documents of the time came from the pen of the Bishop of Glasgow, Gavin Dunbar, who was inspired to the heights of true genius at the thought of the activities of the Border Reivers. He was not a pleasant man – he was famous for his persecution of perceived heretics, many of whom he burned; one of his victims was burned alive for six hours before dying, as the wood was wet – and when he came to the borderers he let it all hang out, at least in a literary sense. His \textit{Monition of Cursing} puts him, as Fraser says, “among the great cursers of all time”. Here’s a sample:

\begin{quote}
I denounce, proclamis, and declaris all and sindry the committaris of the said saikles murtheris, slauchteris, brinying, heirschipes, reiffis, thiftis and spulezeis, oppinly apon upon
\end{quote}
day licht and under silence of nicht, alswele within temporale landis as kirklandis; togeth-
ether with thair partakeris, assitariis, suppliaris, wittandlie resettaris of thair personis, the
gudes reft and stollen be thaim, art or part thereof, and their counsalouris and de-
fendouris, of thair evil dedis generalie CURSIT, waryit, aggregeite, and reaggregeite, with the GREIT CURSING.

I curse their heid and all the haris of thair heid; I curse thair face, thair ene, thair mouth, thair neise, thair tongue, thair teeth, thair crag, thair shoulderiis, thair breist, thair hert, thair stomok, thair bak, thair wame, thair armes, thais leggis, thair handis, thair feit, and everilk part of thair body, frae the top of their heid to the soill of thair feet, befoir and behind, within and without.

I curse thaim gangand, and I curse them rydand; I curse thaim standand, and I curse thaim sittand; I curse thaim etand; I curse thaim drinkand; I curse thaim walkand, I curse thaim sleepand; I curse thaim risand; I curse thaim lyand; I curse thaim at hame, I curse thaim fra hame; I curse thaim within the house, I curse thaim without the house; I curse thair wiffis, thair barnis, and thair servandis participand with thaim in their deides. I wary thair cornys, thair catales, thair woll, thair scheip, thair horse, thair swyne, thair geise, thair hennes, and all thair quyk gude. I wary their hallis, thair chalmeris, thair kechingis, thair stanillis, thair barnys, thair biris, thair bernyards, thair cailyardis thair plewis, thair harrowis, and the gudis and housis that is necessair for their sustentatioun and weilfair.

There’s a lot more. Not too shabby, if you ask me.

One of the very worst places along the border was in the Western March, in an area just north of Carlisle, between the Rivers Sark and Esk, where neither England nor Scotland could agree on who owned what (see Maps 3 and 4 on pages 239 and 240). In the early 1500’s the policy was just to kill anything that moved there, in the hope that this would stop anybody actually trying to settle, thus solving the problem. It didn’t work, of course; the Debatable Land became home to the very worst of the worst along the border, a haven for criminals of all descriptions, and an endless source of trouble for the March Wardens on either side.

The Debatable Land and its surrounding regions was also the home of large numbers of Grahams, that “viperous generation” according to Lord Scrope, Warden of the English Western March. There were three major clans of Grahams; along the Line River (often called the Leven), from Solport to the junction with the Esk, lived the Grahams of the Leven, “great riders and ill-doers to both the realms.” There was Black Dick, Dick Graham of the Woods, John Graham of Westlinton, Richard Graham of Randidilton, Andrew Graham of the Mill, Will Graham of Stonystonerigg, and Parsell’s Geordie, who was murdered (see below).

Along the banks of the Sark lived another Graham clan, called unsurprisingly the Grahams of the Stark. They lived on both sides of the river, some in England, some in Scotland, although it’s not likely they thought of themselves in those terms.

Probably the largest Graham clan was the Grahams of the Esk, who lived along the banks of the Esk, from the sea to its junction with the Liddell. This is clan about which we know the most, thanks to a pedigree, A Catalog of the Greames, written by Lord Burghley in May of 1596. Things must have been pretty bad for such an important and busy person as Lord Burghley to spend time trying to figure out what the hell was going on with the Grahams, and then to write it all down. The motivating factor seems to have been the raid on Carlisle Castle, in which Buccleugh, together with a large number of assorted Grahams and others, broke Kinmont Willie (William Armstrong of Kinmont) out

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1Or so it was claimed at the time. I suspect exaggeration.
2He also called them “caterpillars” in a phrase that is so reminiscent of the “cockroaches” of the Tutsi massacres in Rwanda, I find it disturbing, at the very least.
3I’m not sure whom T.H.B. Graham is quoting here; there were a number who would have thought this – Scrope, Dacre, Musgrave or Wharton, just to name a few.
4William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley (sometimes spelled Burleigh) (13 September 1520–4 August 1598) was the chief advisor (and a good friend) of Queen Elizabeth I for most of her reign. He was twice Secretary of State (1550–1553 and 1558–1572) and Lord High Treasurer from 1572.
of prison. This event was one of the celebrated border forays, immortalised, completely inaccurately, in The Ballad of Kinmont Willie, one of the ballads collected by Francis Child in the late 19th century.

By tradition, the Grahams of Esk were the descendants of “Lang Will”, who was banished from Scotland around 1516. Lang Will seems to have come originally from the Mosskeswra barony in the parish of Hutton, in Dumfriesshire, and moved to Cumberland under pressure of circumstance. This would make him a descendant of the older branch of the Grahams, and unrelated to the Menteith and Montrose branches, as later claimed (more on this later). In Burghley’s pedigree it was claimed that William Grame, alias Longe Will, was banished out of Scotland “about 80 yeires since”. However, in 1537 a petition was presented to Henry VIII by Arthur Graham of Canobie, the second son of Lang Will, in which he and his brethren claimed that their father has “dwelt on Esk for sixty years”. Actually, the whole petition is a good read, so here it is:

Our father, yet alive, has dwelt on Esk for sixty years, and served your Grace and the wardens, and, till now, was never rent demanded of him. Once an Englishman, rebel to your Grace, who had slain fourteen Englishmen, robbed a merchant in Carlisle, and we took him, and I, Arthur Graham, who spoke with your Grace lately, smote off his head and set it on the walls of Carlisle. In the Insurrection we rescued your Grace’s serjeant from the rebels, and brought him to Carlisle. Afterwards, when the commons made the “sawte” to Carlisle, half of us went to defend the castle without wages, and the other half to stay the country. Afterwards we put all our force together, put the rebels to flight, and took seven score of them, and I, Arthur Graham, took one of the captains.

So Arthur Graham, son of Lang Will, met Henry VIII and chopped heads with relish. It’s always nice to know these things.

Personally, since Arthur Graham had a point to prove (that they didn’t have to pay rent, but should be allowed to live free) it’s not unlikely he exaggerated a little. T.H.B. Graham writes that, according to documents in his possession (which, I imagine, are now lost for good), Lang Will (William Graham of Arturet) was given lands around the Esk “by indenture dated April 13, in the 29th year (1538) under seal of the Duchy of Lancaster” by Henry VIII. Most likely, the grant from Henry VIII was related to the request of 1537, and merely confirmed the situation on the ground. For Lang Will was already mentioned in a document of 1528, and by 1534 was already well enough known to be appointed as an assessor for England in mediating in an Anglo-Scottish argument. The earliest reference to Grahams in Cumberland was in 1528, in course of some squabble where the Scottish warden burned Netherby, and the Armstrongs and Irwins burned some buildings belonging to Lang Will Graham of Stuble. So, all-in-all, I think it’s pretty safe to conclude, with Lord Burghley, that Lang Will, being ejected out of Dumfriesshire, came to Cumberland around 1516, establishing himself and his sons as the local Graham chief.

The pedigree of Lang Will, as given by Lord Burghley, is a treat to read. The eight sons were Richard of Netherby, Arthur of Canonby, Fergus of the Mote, John of Medoppe, Thomas of Kirkanders, George of the Fauld, William of Carliell (Carlisle), and Hutchen (base, i.e., illegitimate). Their various offspring are given in greater or lesser detail, with such interspersed notes as “... if his service hereafter be no better than as yet, the pension might be better bestowed, for he is a daily abettor of evil”, “now common spoilers of the Queen’s subjects”, “their issue a great number”, “dwelling inward in England, very good subjects”, “divers daughters”, and so forth.

There are a couple of particularly telling sentences in Burghley’s pedigree. The first reads “... to unite friendship between the houses of Netherby and Mote, who had been long at civil dissension and much bloodshed, ...”. Now, this is interesting because the houses of Netherby and Mote came from two sons of Lang Will Graham. Clearly, even close kinship ties were not sufficient to ensure goodwill, and cousin was quite happy to murder cousin whenever “necessary”. We even have a first-hand account of Graham murdering Graham. In 1584 a coroner’s jury at Carlisle returned a verdict that Simon Graham of Meadop (one of the Meadop Grahams from the line of Lang Will’s fourth son), John Graham of the Lake (brother of Richard Graham, alias ‘Meadop’) and Richard Graham, alias ‘Longtown’, of Breconhill (a son of Fergus of the Mote, and thus a grandson of Lang Will), and a large party of others, assaulted George Graham (Percival’s Geordie, or Parsell’s Geordie) at Leven Bridge; that Longtown, with a lance, value 20 d., struck George Graham between the shoulders,
and he fell to the ground. When he rose, Sim of Meadop, with a sword, worth 7s 4d, struck him on the calf of the left leg, giving him a mortal wound 8½ thumbs long, four broad, and three deep, and a similar wound on the calf of the right leg, of which he died, and that Thomas Carleton of Askerton, gentleman, harboured 15 of the murderers. I have to admit that, amidst the bloodshed, I find it hilarious how the coroner records the value of the lance and sword. What on earth could this have to do with the murder? You have to wonder.

The second telling sentence of Burghley’s pedigree reads: “There are also another sort of Grames, which inhabit upon the rivers of Levyn and Sarke, which are not of this race, but by course of tyme have marayed together, and are become of one partie to the number of foure or five hundred, almost all evel disposed, besydes Stories, Taylers, Fosteres, and Hetheringtons, and Bells, which are matched with them and like disposed.” So although it is tempting, for the sake of order, to try and distinguish between the Graham clans of the Esk, the Leven and the Sark, it’s almost certainly quite inaccurate to do so. They quickly became so interbred that distinctions, particularly at the remove of several hundred years, are probably not very useful. Also, note how many Grahams there were. Hundreds of them, all called Graham, all with nicknames to distinguish themselves from their neighbours, and all quite impossible to sort out now.

As for the antecedents of Lang Will, tradition (and Burke’s Peerage) asserts that he was descended from the Menteith branch of the Grahams, but T.H.B. Graham knocks this theory down convincingly. If you’re interested, read his arguments in the original. They are too long and involved to reproduce here. Suffice to say that it’s much more plausible that Lang Will came from Dumfriesshire, descended from a cadet branch of the old Graham branch of Dalkeith and Eskdale. The later claim of a connection to Menteith and Montrose was pretty clearly entirely political, and a later fabrication. No more certain pedigree can be given.

The tale of how the Border Grahams were broken up in the early 1600s is not pretty. Their treatment was brutal even by the standards of the day, but one can see why, I suppose. Once there was no border any longer, the government just couldn’t tolerate semi-independent crowds of lawless outlaws running things their own way. The Border Reivers were useful no longer, and they were doomed, one way or another. The Grahams of the Debatable Land essentially disappeared – murdered, executed, or deported – only to be resurrected by later Grahams who established the Netherby and Norton-Conyers branches later that century, an interesting story in itself.

The Early Grahams of Hayton and Edmond Castle

By 1598 the barony of Gilsland (which included the regions of Hayton and Brampton) was in almost complete anarchy, as can be seen from the reports of John Musgrave, the newly appointed land serjeant. The entire district had been so ravaged by the Scots, the Border Reivers and the plague that many towns were completely uninhabited, while others were controlled directly by Scottish lords. In 1600 a group of Grahams attempted to murder John Musgrave at Brampton by discharging more than thirty “dagges and gunnes” at him and his company, and tried to burn him in his house. While the assizes were being held in Carlisle, they broke into the gaol and liberated Jock Grayme ‘Jock o the Peartree’. They kidnapped the eight-year-old son of a Salkeld in Corby Castle, and used the boy to force the release of Watte Grayme. They burned down Hutchin Hetherington’s house, and when he came out they cut him into pieces. They levied blackmail. They threatened and assaulted all followers of “hue and cry”, and murdered those that gave evidence against them. They defied the lord warden of the Marches to his face, and more than sixty Grahams were outlawed for murder and other offenses, as can be seen from the records of the Sessions. No wonder that Lord Scrope, the March Warden, detested them.

Thus do the Grahams appear in the records of the district, but what was the connection, if any, with the Grahams of Edmond Castle? In Burke’s Landed Gentry [16] it is claimed that the Grahams of Edmond Castle were descended from a branch of the Grahams of Esk, but it is entirely unclear whether or not this was really the case. It’s almost certainly true in the general sense. The Grahams of the Debatable Land raided much further south than Hayton, and the whole area between Brampton and Carlisle would have been strongly influenced by them. It’s highly likely that there were kinship
ties of one degree or another between the Grahams living in the various places, but more than that it’s difficult to say for sure.

By 1581 there were already at least four Grahams living in Hayton Parish, as attested by a muster roll, dated February 9th, 1581; Thomas Grame (steel coat, cap and spear), Thomas Grame younger (cap and spear), Richard Grame (spear and cap) and Anthony Grame (lance). It’s not so plausible that all these Grahams were directly related to the Grahams of Esk and Long Will. After all, it was only 70 years of so since Lang Will had arrived in Cumberland. T.H.B. Graham also believes they were an older branch, who had probably been there a while. Then, on June 4th, 1596, a paper entitled “Note of lands in the baronies of Burgh and Gilsland, late the possessions of Leonard Dacre attainted, whereof the Graimes are tenants”, listed Edward, Richard, Anthony and Edrus Graime, all of the Manor of Hayton. It seems likely that the recent Graime listing was motivated by the fact that they were recent arrivals, settled there as a result of the incessant border fighting. But apart from that likelihood, there is no indication of a direct relationship between the Hayton Grahams and the Grahams of Esk.

Enter the Grahams of Edmond Castle, first mentioned in 1603 in the household accounts of Lord William Howard (published by the Surtees Society), who paid a small sum to Andrew Graham of Edmond Castle. There seems also to have been another reference in a contemporary account, in which Lord William Howard required William Grame, tenement at Emount Castle, to pay 8 shillings and 2 capons. The problem is that there were very likely lots of Grahams of Edmond Castle. Not to mention everywhere else. For instance, parish records from the mid 1600s are impossible to reconcile without assuming at least two, and probably three different families of Grahams at Edmond Castle, in addition to those at the Castle itself. In the Hayton parish register the earliest recorded Graham of Edmond Castle is “James Graim de Edmond Castle sepult. fuit quarto die Junii 1628”; the next Graham to die was John Grame, the son of David Grame of Edmond Castle, who was buried on the 30th of August 1648. The year 1656 saw two Grahams of Edmond Castle getting baptised, John, the son of John Graham (in November) and Jane, the daughter of Thomas Graham (in July that same year), and so it continues on. The records are incomplete, but from what is still extant it is impossible to connect any of these Grahams with the Thomas Graham that is my direct ancestor.

The Grahams of Edmond Castle from the 1600s to the 1800s

The first Graham of Edmond Castle whom we can be sure is in my direct lineage (well, reasonably sure) is Thomas (i) Graham, who was probably born around 1630.¹ He had three sons that we know of: Thomas (ii), who married Sibyl Scaife of Old Wall, William, who married a widow, Jane Muncaster, and Gerard, who married Mary Graham of Walton. Grahams marrying Grahams was of course not an uncommon occurrence.

Thomas (ii) was presumably the eldest (he was called Thomas, for one, and it appears he inherited the estate), and he and Sibyl had two sons, Thomas (iii) and John.² The younger brother, John, died unmarried, but Thomas (iii) married Mary Nicholson, a widow from Warwick Bridge. They initially lived at Warwick Bridge, but later returned to live with Thomas’s parents at Edmond Castle, which the younger Thomas eventually inherited.

Thomas (iii) and Mary had two children only; William, who died when he was only eight, and Thomas (iv), whose first wife was Elizabeth Garnett. They were married in 1746.

The Grahams of Edmond Castle seem to have had Stuart sympathies. Thomas (iv) got married very soon after the landing of the Young Pretender (Bonnie Prince Charlie) in 1745, and the story goes that he planted a Scotch fir tree outside Edmond Castle to commemorate this. This tree is still there, a beautiful old tree standing just outside the front door of the 1824 mansion (page 119). His father, Thomas (iii) got married in 1715, the date of the first Scotch rebellion, when the Old Pretender tried to grab the throne, but this is probably no more than coincidence.

Elizabeth Garnett died only sixteen months after her wedding, most likely due to childbirth, as her child died then also. She was 24. A family prayer-book contains the following entry: “My dear

¹Names can get tricky. There are just so many Thomas’s, for example, it’s easy to get confused. So I’m going to follow a common convention and number them where necessary with lower-case Roman numerals.

²A lamentable lack of originality in the names quickly becomes apparent.
wife died the 15th day of December, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and forty-seven, being 24 years of age. Her funeral sermon was preached by the Reverend George Gilbanks, minister at Wetheral.” On the fly-leaf is scrawled in a childish hand:\footnote{I have not seen this book. I’m quoting directly from T.H.B. Graham here.}

Elizabeth Garnett’s book
God gave her grace on it to look
And when the bells . . .

This is the beginning of a rhyme which ends:

. . . begin to toll
The Lord have mercy on her soul.

I have always thought this little poem to be particularly poignant.

In 1749 Thomas (iv) remarried Margaret Coulthard, the daughter of Thomas Coulthard of Scotby. This seems to have begun, or at least continued, a close connection between the Coulthards and the Grahams. Margaret’s elder brother, James Coulthard, was a solicitor in London, at Symond’s Inn in Chancery Lane [61]. All of the sons of Thomas and Margaret began their legal careers in James Coulthard’s office, with the two eldest sons, Thomas (v) and James becoming partners. The company still exists as Lawrence & Graham, a London firm of solicitors. I seem to remember that, when Eric Graham died, his legacies were paid by this law firm. However, I never kept the letter (stupid, stupid, stupid me), so I can’t be sure.

Questions: Who was Thomas Coulthard of Scotby? I know a Thomas Coulthard of Scotby was given an official coat-of-arms on the 16th of June, 1784, but these arms were granted too late to have been given to my Thomas. Multiple Coulthards were Mayors of Carlisle [47]: Thomas (1708, 1757, 1763; surely there were two Thomas’s), Richard (1739, 1759) and Morris (1771, 1779, 1796). The later Mayor Thomas Coulthard was a rich tanner — his daughter married Dr. John Heysham in 1789 — but there is no evidence that my Thomas is related to any of these mayors. The most plausible story is that the elder Mayor Thomas Coulthard (mayor in 1708) was the father of my Margaret, and that the arms were granted to the second Mayor Thomas. The dates are consistent with this story, but I have no evidence. Just to confuse things further, [25] says that John Coulthard, Esq. at Carlisle, twice Mayor of that Corporation, died in July, 1787. However there is no John Coulthard listed in Jefferson’s list of the Mayors of Carlisle. Very puzzling. I suspect that the elder Mayor Thomas was meant, not John.

Thomas (iv) and Margaret had seven children. Thomas (v) and James, the two eldest sons, about whom I shall have more to say shortly; Mary, born in 1756, married Richard Graham of Stonehouse, Hayton (another Graham on Graham marriage. Talk about confusing!\footnote{The Grahams of Stonehouse have their own pedigree in Burke’s Landed Gentry, and in Hudleston and Boumpfrey [46]. Richard Graham of Stonehouse was a J.P. for the county. On the wall of Mary Magdalene church in Hayton is a plaque that reads: “In memory of Richard Graham of Stonehouse who died May 8th 1807 aged 61 and of Mary Graham his wife who died May 8th 1833(35?) aged 77. Likewise of their two grandchildren Mary Jane Ross who died 21st Jan 1825(23?) aged 4 years and 2 months and John Richard Ross who died 28 March 1826 aged 7 months.” The writing wasn’t all that clear and the 3’s and 5’s are difficult to distinguish.} Stonehouse no longer exists; the only thing left is Stonehouse Farm, in Hayton, and there’s no grand house there at all, just a few paddocks and a gate (this was true in 2005 when I visited, anyway). The next daughter, Elizabeth, died when she was only four; the next son, John, trained as a lawyer but died at the age of 30 (he’s buried under the chapel at Lincoln’s Inn); the next son, William, was a solicitor also and died unmarried; and the last daughter, Margaret, died unmarried when she was 24.

James, the second son, was the only member of the family ever to reach the lofty heights of the Baronetage. He married a crap-load of money, name of Anne Moore, (Anne was, apparently,
Sir James Graham of Kirkstall, my 5G Uncle. He was the only member of the family ever to reach the lofty heights of a Baronetcy.
the heiress of the ancient Sandford upon Eden family, whoever they are) and was a prominent local politician, being rewarded by being created Sir James Graham of Kirkstall, Baronet (page 109). Kirkstall was the estate that came to him from his wife.

There is, in fact, a book [53] written about the Grahams of Kirkstall, written by a proud descendant in much the same way that I am writing this book. Never officially published, but still full of useful information, or so we like to tell ourselves. Simon Graham-Harrison, a descendant of James Graham of Kirkstall, sent me a copy. The second baronet of Kirkstall was Sir Sandford Graham, the son of James, and he and his wife (Caroline Langston, the daughter of John Houston Langston of Sarsden House) had three surviving sons and two surviving daughters (as well as two sons and one daughter who died young. The story goes that Willy, one of the sons, had been taken by his parents to Arundel Castle, was standing on top of one of the towers when he was startled by an owl and fell to his death, aged only eight.) The three sons, Sandford, Lumley and Cyril inherited the baronetcy one after the other, but none of them had any children so the title died out. It couldn’t possibly go to a girl of course. Sandford just about lost the whole lot through gaming debts on bad horses. Well, not necessarily bad horses, but certainly slow horses.

According to [53], the Kirkstall estate lay in the valley of the River Aire, three and a half miles from Leeds; a survey of the estate was made for Mr. Moore in 1778 by John Crookes of Leeds. It was then entirely agricultural and consisted of 550 acres of farm land let on short leases. There were 24 farms, besides two corn mills.

A visit to Kirkstall in 1810 is described in a letter of T.H. Graham, son of James’ eldest brother, then a boy at Harrow. He first visited Kirkstall Abbey, which was close to, but not part of, the estate. James’ nephew said the estate was very large, and he found good accommodation for sleeping. He was conducted by his uncle’s steward over the manufactories there, which consisted principally of wool, oil, flour, and cloth: they were worked by water and very well worth seeing; and he was especially interested in the cloth factory, because it was lighted entirely by gas, which was then a novelty rarely seen.

The estate was eventually subsumed into Leeds.

**Thomas (v) Graham and Elizabeth Susanna Davenport**

But it is with Thomas (v), the eldest son, that we are most concerned here. Although he was the heir to Edmond Castle, he seems to have had very little to do with it for most of his life. He became a partner in his uncle’s London law firm and established himself at The Hall, Clapham Common, on an estate that originally belonged to his wife’s father. He was a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn, was admitted an attorney of the King’s Bench June 28th, 1773, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities, 29th April, 1808. So much for the bare details.

His father, Thomas (iv) didn’t die until he was 89, and Thomas (v) only outlived him by six years, so I don’t think that the family moved up to Edmond Castle when Thomas (v) inherited the estate. You can see the problem. There was some need for the children to support themselves – the family wasn’t that wealthy, particularly not before they married into money a bit later on – and so they moved south, took to the law, and established themselves in rather more temperate climes, close to London and the sea, in much nicer places than the wilds of Cumberland. Don’t forget that the fancy house now on the site hadn’t yet been built. I don’t know what was there previously, but it was unlikely to be as comfortable as The Hall, Clapham Common. At any rate, you don’t really want to live in the same house as your parents, and they can’t really afford to keep you in lazy style, so you move away. But then, when the old man dies and you inherit the estate, what do you do? You’re over 50 years old, you’ve lived most of your life down south, and your wife is from the south also. It’s not too attractive to have to move up to Edmond Castle, so you don’t. You just leave it to your eldest son to take over. Which is, I’m quite sure, what happened.

It was Thomas’s eldest son, Thomas (vi), that moved up north, took over Edmond Castle, married into Carnegie money, and built the grand house that stands there today (see below).

The wife of Thomas (v) was Elizabeth Susanna Davenport, whom he married in August 1791. She came from a wealthy London family; her father, John, was Master of the Merchant Taylors’ Company in 1775, and woolen draper to the King. He bought a large estate, called The Hall, on the
north side of Clapham Common, near the present Sugden Road apparently (I have never been there, just looked on maps), and Elizabeth and Thomas lived there when they married, her father having died a couple of years earlier. Indeed, both Thomas and Elizabeth lived at The Hall for the rest of their lives. The name of the estate was The Hall, which seems rather unimaginative, but the family owned another estate in Clapham, called Rose Lodge. Son John lived there for a time.

Questions: Where did the Grahams live? All the various London and Eastbourne places owned, and lived in, by the Grahams can be confusing. Thomas (v) lived at The Hall, Clapham Common, as did his wife, Susanna Davenport. In 1830, their son, John, was living in Upper Gower St., and he was in business at Lincoln’s Inn [32]. However, very soon after that John gave up working, the family took a tour around Europe, and then resided chiefly at Rose Cottage, which was in Eastbourne, although they also spent a year in Brighton and a winter in The Crescent, Clapham. Around 1833 or so the family was spending half the year at Rose Cottage and half the year at Rose Lodge, which was within “ball-shot” of The Hall in Clapham Common. Rose Lodge was later called Northfield. I have a pencil sketch of Rose Cottage, Eastbourne, made in 1832 by some member of the family, presumably soon after they came back from their European tour. When Elizabeth Davenport died in 1844, son John moved into The Hall, but sold it in 1853, and it was presumably then that he moved to The Elms, Eastbourne. This was on Seaside Road, according to an 1867 Post Office directory, and was almost certainly where the current Elms Road and Elms Avenue form a triangle, just off Seaside Road.

Elizabeth Davenport must have been a most interesting person. She wrote at least a couple of books; one under the pen name of Theresa Tidy, with the title *Eighteen maxims of neatness and order*, was published in 1817 and was an exceedingly popular guide to tidiness for children. American editions came out in 1829 and 1833. She also wrote *Voyage to Locuta; A Fragment: with Etchings and Notes of Illustration, Dedicated to Theresa Tidy*, a pastiche of Gulliver’s Travels, intended to teach grammar to young children. Unfortunately, both these books are now collectors’ items and difficult to find. According to her grandson, Henry Davenport [32], “...she was a superior and very clever woman, very particular”, and her publisher observed of her “Mrs. G. was a lady who made herself beloved and feared”. She sounds like a right old tartar.

Her father, John Davenport was also an author, or so the story goes. It is claimed that he wrote *Rules for Bad Horsemen*, under the pen name of Charles Thompson. I’ve never found any independent evidence of this (it’s just a piece of family lore, I suppose), but I’ve never found any evidence it’s incorrect, either. Pay your money and make your choice. The book itself is available on Google books and comes across as more than a little pompous. At some stage the family was granted a coat-of-arms, which appears on a bookplate of one of Elizabeth Davenport’s books (page 123). It’s possible that John Davenport was the one granted these arms, as it’s likely that he was the first member of the family to become wealthy (otherwise his father’s name would have been mentioned somewhere), but I’m just guessing.

John Davenport married Elizabeth Eade whose ancestry can be traced back two more generations via wills in the Public Trust Office. Her parents were Jonathan Eade and Ann Prince, while her paternal grandfather was David Eade, a mariner. The beginning of David Eades’ will reads: “I David Eades of the town of Woodbridge in the County of Suffolk Mariner being outward bound to sea and considering the dangers thereof and the frailty of all mankind do therefore make publish & declare ......”. This was written in 1692 and by 1701 David was dead. I’ve always thought his death was most likely due to the dangers thereof and the frailty of all mankind, but I could be wrong.

Anyway, to return to Thomas (v) and Elizabeth, they had six children. The eldest, Thomas (vi) inherited Edmond Castle and lived there for most of his life. He married into some serious money, in the person of Mary Carnegie, who was related to all sorts of Baronets and Earls. It wasn’t his wife’s money that he used to rebuild Edmond Castle, as he started this before he got married, so he must

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1Most likely a whole lot more interesting than her husband one feels.
have gone north with a lot of cash on hand, seen the state of Edmond Castle and begun an extensive rebuilding project to make the place liveable. In other words, he inherited a fixer-upper. He became prominent locally, and was very popular with Hayton church, where he paid for the construction of a special Graham stall, and presumably donated lots of money. A plaque in Hayton Church says how wonderful he was, so Devoted to the Service of God, so self-denying, so full of unwearying efforts for the spiritual welfare of the young, etc etc. Another plaque in Hayton Church says how he built and endowed Talkin Church and Hayton School and built the chancel of the church. This explains the first plaque, I imagine.

To be honest, he sounds like he was a bit of a prig. He even built a special house right beside the Hayton Church so that he and his nearest and dearest could stay there overnight to avoid missing any part of the sermon. I mean, that really is going a bit overboard if you ask me. Some people would call this devout; I call it righteous. Still, priggish or not, he was clearly generous with his money, and was probably a good sort of person.

Thomas (vi) and Mary died childless, so the Edmond Castle estate was inherited by a nephew of Thomas, the eldest son of his brother John. This seems a little sad to me. I feel sure that Thomas and Mary loved children and would have liked a family of their own, to fill their huge, new house. But they never had any, for whatever reason, and the estate was passed on to his nephew in the south. The fancy new Edmond Castle, upon which Thomas had spent so much money, was never (or hardly ever) a place where Grahams raised a family; Thomas’s nephew inherited the estate, and moved up from the South to live there, but his children didn’t raise families there, either remaining unmarried, or nipping off down south to live in London. Eventually, Edmond Castle just sat uninhabited to be hocked off to developers in the 1930’s. Not what Thomas and Mary would have wanted, I’m sure.

The second son of Thomas (v) and Elizabeth was John Graham, and since he’s my GGG-grandfather I’ll discuss him in more detail below. After John came three girls, one of whom was Harriet who died when she was only eight. Elizabeth Maria (known as Maria) remained unmarried and was instrumental in building St. George’s Church, Battersea\(^1\), with its associated school and vicarage, while Emily married the Rev. Thomas Collins. And that’s all I know about them. Not a lot.

The youngest was Anne Margaret, who married into the Polhill family and whose letters survive in such abundance in the Lambeth Archives. Anne was almost certainly the painter of two watercolours of Edmond Castle that were auctioned by Lunds in the late 1990s. I was surfing the web one day, as one does, searching for anything about Edmond Castle, and there they were. Two watercolour paintings of Edmond Castle, signed by A.M. Graham. I have no idea how they ended up at Lunds Auctioneers, or who bought them, or where they are now, but I’d dearly love to get my hands on them.

As well as containing the correspondence of Anne Margaret, the Lambeth Archives also contain potentially one of the most interesting of all the Graham family documents; a Family Chronicle, published as a newspaper and called The Strawseat Chronicle, which was produced by Elizabeth Susanna and her children, detailing the week’s happening in the style of grand society reporting. It contains verses, ink sketches, rhymes, stories, and letters, and has to be a fascinatingly detailed glimpse into the lives of the Grahams in the early 1800s. There are 183 files in this archive, an enormous amount of information, and I am determined to get copies of it all, somehow, sometime. Then I will probably have to rewrite these sections of this book.

Thomas (v) died in 1813, Elizabeth in 1844, and they were both buried in the Davenport family vault at Acton.

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\(^1\)Damaged by bombing during the London Blitz in 1940 and since demolished.
Ann Margaret Graham, my 4G Aunt.
Questions: Where was Elizabeth Davenport buried? Acton, we are told, but there are Actons all over the place, and I don’t know which Acton is meant. There is an Acton in West London (St. Mary’s is the parish church) and possibly this is the one. How many generations lay in the family vault? Was it just her parents, or were her grandparents wealthy also? I’d like to find this Davenport family vault at Acton, wherever it is, and have a look. Her father, John Davenport, being an eminent draper, must appear in records also, but, as always, it’s a matter of finding them. Overall, there’s an awful lot to be discovered about my Davenports. A lot of my information about John Davenport comes from Patrick Baty, a descendant of Margaret Graham; here are some of the tidbits he has sent me. The Davenports appear in a map of Clapham families in C. Smith’s Actual Survey of the Road from London to Brighthelmston, 1800 (reproduced in The London Rich, by Peter Thorold, 1999). In the book Robert Bevan: A Memoir by His Son, it is claimed that ‘An ancestor on his mother’s side, John Davenport, wrote an amusing Hints for Bad Horsemen, published in 1786 under the pseudonym Charles Thompson.’ This is the source of my information about the identity of Charles Thompson. A letter from R[chard?] Davenport to his mother from Eton (21st March, 1779) was addressed to 432 Strand. In 1794 that address was occupied by Gilpin & Newton, Woollen Drapers and by Davenport & Gilpin, Army Clothiers. Musgrave’s Obituaries prior to 1800 records John Davenport, Clothier 16 July 1789 aged 70. John Davenport was mentioned in Jonathan Eade’s will of 1762 (PRO – Prob 11/1181). He (John Davenport) left his three unmarried children £10,000 each.

John Graham and Caroline Eleanor Curteis

As I said above, when Thomas (v) died, the Edmond Castle estate was inherited by his eldest son, Thomas (vi), who moved up north, married a pile of money in the person of Mary Carnegie, and rebuilt Edmond Castle extensively. The second son, John, stayed in the south, where he married Caroline Eleanor Curteis, a member of an old Kent family based in Tenterden, Rye, and Windmill Hill, and continued to practise law. I’ll deal with the Curteis family separately (Chapter 6), as a lot is known about them.

John bought an estate at The Elms, Eastbourne, but I don’t know when, exactly. According to the Lambeth Archives, John moved to Rose Lodge (later called Northfield), Clapham, in 1833, but returned to The Hall in 1844 when his mother died. He left The Hall in 1853 and presumably moved to The Elms, Eastbourne. The Hall was sold to developers in 1886, which was the end of the Graham connection with Clapham.

He was a Justice of the Peace for Sussex and a Deputy Lieutenant also. This latter title, as far as I can tell, is pretty much a honorary title given out to old farts who are thought prominent in the county. They are deputies to the Lord Lieutenant, another honorary position, who seems to have no duties at all, so I doubt it was an onerous job. According to Wikipedia they tend to preside at ceremonial openings and the induction of vicars. Sounds like a blast.

John and Caroline had five children. The eldest was Reginald John, my GG-grandfather (see below). The next was Henry Davenport who married Anna Sophia, the daughter of John S. Jenkinson, Vicar of Battersea, a name and title that has always amused me for some immature and pathetic reason. Henry Davenport was the author of [32], which contains some interesting tidbits of family history. Charles, the next son, was a lawyer like his father, while Edward Curteis, the fourth son, went to Trinity College, Cambridge, and became the Vicar of Wartling.1 The final child was a daughter, Caroline Curteis (the younger), who married her cousin, Jonathan Darby of Leap Castle2. Kings

1 Just as well he wasn’t the Vicar of Fartling.
2 A famously haunted castle in Ireland where an oublie was discovered, with spikes lining the bottom of the fall. It took three cartloads to carry out all the human bones there. It’s a good story. It might even be true, although I doubt it. It didn’t help when, in 1909, a Mrs. Mildred Darby dabbled in the black arts and called up an elemental! The size of a sheep, which seems a bit of an anticlimax, but complete with lustfully burning eyes and the stench of a decomposing corpse, so it can’t have been all bad. In 1922 the castle was severely damaged during the Irish fight for independence and the Darbys were driven out. Being owned by an English family it would have been an obvious target.
Co. He was the cousin of the younger Caroline because the older Caroline’s sister, Laura Charlotte Curteis (page 126) married a Darby and Jonathan was their son.

**Reginald John Graham and Ellen Leah Boileau**

John Graham died before his elder brother, Thomas (vi), so Edmond Castle was inherited by Reginald John Graham, the eldest son of John Graham and Caroline Curteis. This must have been quite a shock to him, suddenly to inherit an estate way up in the boonies, a long way from the civilisation of the south, in a place to which, by now, he would have felt little connection. After all, he had never lived there, and neither had his father, who hadn’t even been born there. And even though his grandfather had been born there, he hadn’t lived there for most of his life. He probably wondered what on earth he was going to do with it (while he collected the rents, of course, and laughed all the way to the bank). However, he did go up to live in Cumberland; in 1911 his widow was still living there with some unmarried daughters and a few grandchildren.

Like his father, Reginald was also a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for Sussex (after Harrow and an M.A. at Trinity College, Cambridge. The Grahams were clearly a bunch of top ho Trin. Coll. gents), as well as a Justice of the Peace in Cumberland.

Reginald John married Ellen Leah Boileau, of the Boileau de Castelnau, of whom so much is known that they get an entire chapter to themselves (Chapter 7). They were originally French Huguenots who fled to England and Ireland, became wealthy selling wine, and sent their sons off to die for the British Empire, mostly in India. However, let me not preempt the Boileau chapter.

The Boileau were a fecund lot and in typical fashion Ellen Leah produced 13 children; 10 girls and 3 boys. It was the eighth child, Ellen Octavia, who sailed around the world and met James Bond in New Zealand (Chapter 4). Thus, finally, the New Zealand connection.

**Thomas (vii) Henry Boileau Graham.** He was the heir to Edmond Castle, and the author of the articles about the Grahams of Edmond Castle in the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquities and Archaeological Society* [34]–[41]. He was clearly very interested in family history, but he didn’t live in Cumberland for his entire life, even though he was a J.P. there. He was a lawyer and another Trin. Coll. gent. During his lifetime Edmond Castle was
uninhabited for many years, eventually to be sold by his son, Eric Graham. He died on the 10th of March, 1937.

I don’t know who his wife was, but he had three sons and a daughter. The eldest was Herbert Henry Cecil, who served in the Royal Navy and was a Commissioner of Taxes. Herbert died in 1950, well after his father. Family records show another unnamed son (this is unusual; sons were nearly always well remembered, it was only the girls who tended to get forgotten) and then a daughter, Violet, who also had a son, or so I’m told.

It was Thomas Henry Boileau’s youngest son, Eric Graham, who inherited Edmond Castle, and there have always been questions about why this was so. Rumours fly of illegitimate older brothers discovered in dramatic circumstance, but I know nothing of this. I visited cousin Eric (well, first cousin twice removed) in London a couple of times when I was younger. He was a charming man, and very kind to me. I particularly remember the vicious gin and tonics (just a wee smell of tonic) that I tried to drink at his club. They were quite disgusting.

Actually, the whole of my family (Mum, Dad, kids, the lot) visited Eric en masse in about 1972. It’s easy to imagine how he must have felt, a horde of colonial rellies descending on him for a formal afternoon tea, from New Zealand, totally loud and vulgar. My sister Catherine is famous in family history because of this visit to Uncle Eric. Catherine and the other younger children were given tea and cakes at a separate table. Catherine farted loudly, all the children collapsed in giggles¹, and Mum and Dad were highly embarrassed. Farting is something a young lady shouldn’t do, but I guess Cathy didn’t know that. I’m quite sure she still doesn’t.

If I’d had any sense at all I would have asked him about his family history, but I didn’t so I didn’t. Talk about an opportunity missed! I feel like such an idiot.

Eric left all us children a rather nice legacy in his will. He was, as I said, a very kind man. He died in 1998, but I’m not sure of the exact date.

**Herbert Reginald Curteis Graham.** He was a Lieutenant in the 10th Lincoln Regiment, and died, unmarried, of a fever at Malta.

**Mary Constanse Boileau Graham.** Died young, less than one year old.

**Caroline Eleanor Graham.** Died young when almost three.

**Mary Paulina Caroline Graham.** She married Silvanus Key Borton, the Rector of Binstead², Isle of Wight, and had two daughters, Violet and Silvia, both unmarried.

**Violet Graham.** She had two husbands; Thomas Inglis and Charles Bolton and at least one child from the first marriage.

**Geraldine Frances Elizabeth Graham.** Married James Cochrane Adam and, as they say, had issue. A daughter, Violet Estelle Adam married George Sylvester Grimston and had a daughter, Caroline Elizabeth Mary Grimston, with whom I have corresponded. She is now Caroline Siggins (she married Richard Siggins, an Irishman. She never said whether being an Irishman was a good thing or a bad thing) and has sent me information about her side of the family.

**Ellen Octavia Graham.** Get it? Eighth child – Octavia. They must have been running out of names. My GG-grandmother, and the entire reason I've got a chapter on the Grahams of Edmond Castle in this book. You can read more about her in the Bond chapter (Chapter 4).

**Nona Evelyn.** Aunt Nona. Unmarried.

**Georgina Decima.** Aunt Decie. Unmarried. Maybe she and Aunt Nona should have gone to New Zealand too; they might have found a handsome husband, just like Octavia did. Or maybe they spent their lives thanking the Good Lord every day that they were back in England, not

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¹Mum probably did too.

²Another good name.
stuck at the ends of the earth like their poor sister Ockie, in daily danger of being devoured by cannibals or killed by ravening lions.\footnote{This is a joke. I am perfectly well aware that there were no lions in New Zealand when Ellen Octavia was.}

**John Davenport Graham.** The Roll of Honour of the Parish of Hayton (on the wall of Hayton church) lists an officer, John Davenport Graham, as fighting in the Great War. (For some time I thought it said he was killed in that war, but I was just misreading the plaque. Doh!). Also, my father’s cousin, Brian Tidmarsh (page 96), inherited from his mother (who was the daughter of Ellen Octavia Graham), an old compass, made in 1918, and in a leather case. The case is inscribed J.D. Graham, Edmond Castle, 5th (?) Warwickshire Regiment, and must surely have belonged to this John Davenport. Ellen Octavia would have got it from her brother and passed it on to her daughter, Nellie.

John Davenport married Evelyn Mary Paton, the daughter of Major James Paton, 3rd of Crailing, Jedburgh, Roxburghshire, a deputy lieutenant for that county.

**Estelle Alice Graham.** There is a plaque about her on the wall of Hayton church. She died, unmarried, when three days shy of her 25th birthday. This must surely have been a terrible family tragedy; yet another thing I know nothing about, yet another story for me to discover.

**Olivia Graham.** Aunt Olive. In 1920, when she was over 40, she married the Rev. Edward Evelyn Barber, Rector of Ongar 1913-1928. Apparently she was of a scientific bent; she was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a real live F.R.G.S. I like to believe she was good at it. Dad doesn’t. He is so cynical. She had no children, which is hardly surprising given the age at which she married.

For years I had only a single photograph of Aunt Olive, out of focus, repainted, and with horrible red cheeks, and knew very little more. But then, in 2010, some kind person read my web page and sent me some scans from a book that Olivia had written\footnote{[33]}. She was a very keen motorist, back in the days when cars were not usually driven by ladies, and she was awfully proud of herself. She writes about her trips around the countryside, and down to London and back; “Jim” Bond and Octavia and their two daughters visited, coming on the ship *Rotorua* on the 10th of April, 1912, their first visit to New Zealand together, and James’s first visit for over 30 years.

This book contains a few more photographs of Olivia, then about 35 I suppose. She was clearly an interesting and strong-minded person, quite willing to step outside conventions and do whatever the hell she felt like doing. Probably not too dissimilar from her siblings, one suspects.

At the time of the 1911 Census, Ellen Leah was living at Edmond Castle (a widow, aged 73, 13 children born alive, 9 still living), as were Nona Evelyn, Georgina Decima, and John Davenport. Another daughter, Geraldine Francis Elizabeth, was also living there with her husband, James Cochrane Adam, and two daughters, aged 4 and 3. I wonder where Olivia was living, as she wasn’t mentioned.

Interestingly, there were also seven servants: Elizabeth Graham (aged 23, single, a nurse), Francis Brown (aged 55, single, a cook), Adam Bell (aged 64, married, a butler), Olive Clark (aged 59, single, a lady’s maid), Lilian Bateman (aged 19, single, a housemaid), Barbara Midleston (aged 27, single, a kitchen maid), and Isabella Crom (aged 16, single, a housemaid). Must have been rather a comfortable life; seven servants to look after six adults and two children.

**Edmond Castle**

Most likely, Edmond Castle was originally a peel (pele) tower, the usual kind of defensive tower built on the Anglo-Scottish border. According to tradition, it was named after Edmond Graham, who built it when the adjacent land was lying common.
Edmond Castle in two old photographs (of unknown date; they were sent to me by Ruth Smithson who lives nearby Edmond Castle). Top panel is the view from the front of the house; the Scotch Pine that was planted to commemorate the invasion of the Young Pretender can be seen to the right. The bottom panel shows the side of the house, with the conservatory on the left (note the lovely windows).
Edmond Castle in two recent photographs that I took in 2005. Top panel is the view from the front of the house; the Scotch Pine that was planted to commemorate the invasion of the Young Pretender can be seen to the right as in the previous figure. The bottom panel shows the two distinctive towers. The remains of the original pele tower can be seen to the left, while that ugly grey wall with the trellises is all that is left of the conservatory.
The hamlet of Edmond Castle originally consisted of a number of buildings, but, as the Grahams prospered, they gradually bought out their neighbours, leaving only their own house, which took on the name of the hamlet. According to [35], at the end of the eighteenth century there were four dwellings in the hamlet of Edmond Castle, in addition to the big house:

1. Dixon’s, which was sold to Thomas (iv) Graham in 1759;

2. Willie’s House, the property of James Graham of Fenton, whose relationship, if any, to my branch of the Grahams is uncertain. He sold to Thomas (iv) in 1784. Apparently this was the centre of the local smuggling trade, and brandy was sold at fourteen pence a quart.

3. Charley Tom’s, property of Thomas Graham, alias Charley Tom. He had a son Thomas, who was known as “young Charley Tom”.

4. Reed’s, occupied by John Nixon, and bought by Thomas (iv) in 1786.

As a side issue, this gives some idea of how many Grahams there were, even just in the vicinity of Edmond Castle.

All these houses were demolished at around the same date (presumably soon after 1786) to make way for improvements to the big house, the house of the Grahams of Edmond Castle. By 1796, Dr. John Heysham, a well-known Carlisle doctor and naturalist, was able to comment on the sand martins in the artificial lakes which Thomas Graham was making [54], so the renovations must have been well under way by then.

The Edmond Castle that exists today (or did, until it was chopped to pieces by developers in 2005 or so) was built, in a second major round of improvements, by Thomas (vi) Graham (1793-1881; my 4G Uncle) who married Mary Carnegie in 1829. The building was designed by Sir Robert Smirke between 1824 and 1829. The building was designed by Sir Robert Smirke between 1824 and 1829. On the external walls of one of the wings is a plaque to commemorate that. You can see the Graham escallops on the left, and the Carnegie eagle on the right. Above the shield it reads TH 1829 MG(C?) (page 123). It was then extended by Robert Smirke’s brother, Sydney, in around 1846.

In 1937 T.H.B. Graham died, and his son Eric inherited. However, he wasn’t too keen on Edmond Castle and sold it, with the entire estate and associated cottages. For £38,500 according to the conveyancing deed. They dickered over the deposit. Eric wanted £3,850, the buyers wanted to pay £500, and they settled on £1,000. Nothing much changes, huh?

Fortunately, the new owners, Henry Studholme Cartmell and Stanley Walton did not simply sell the timber and demolish the house, as often happened in the Depression, but allowed Czech refugees to take shelter there from about June 1940. Ruth Smithson sent me copies of some of the letters of complaint written about the Czech refugees, who, apparently, left gates open (horror! Sometimes twice a day!), interfered with rabbit traps (Oh No!), used Ruddick’s spring cart and broke a shaft (unimaginable disaster!), and generally trespassed where they weren’t supposed to. It’s a delightful set of letters.

The owners then sold the hall to the Home Office in 1942 for use as an approved school. The school trained delinquent boys in plastering, plumbing, painting, joinery and bricklaying, employing them to carry out repairs on the property and painting murals of rock’n roll singers, cowboys and undersea discovery. During the latter stages of the war, my grandfather (Alfred Sneyd, or Pop) visited Edmond Castle when it was a Borstal, and gave a talk to the boys. He was in the New Zealand Navy. Presumably he was sent by my grandmother, who was the Graham descendant and never let anyone forget it. Especially not her husband.

The Castle was later turned into a hotel, but I don’t know when. I visited in 1990 and took some photographs, but they are little different from the photographs I took in 2005. Actually, there’s a neat story about how I first found Edmond Castle (it wasn’t easy in 1989, as it was called Hayton Castle Hotel, and the name Edmond Castle didn’t appear on any maps, at least that I could find). It wasn’t me who found it, as it happens, it was my mother. My wife Monique and I lived in Oxford in 1989 (approximately anyway) and we went on a tiki tour of Britain just for fun. My mother came along, and Monique’s aunt Helen and her mother Mary too.1 Anyway, we went up to Cumberland,

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1 I know what you’re thinking. Me and Monique and two mothers-in-law sounds like a recipe for total disaster. But it wasn’t at all, it was rather fun.
on our way to Scotland, and we stopped at Lanercost Priory just to have a wee look. I knew a little about the Grahams of Edmond Castle then (but very much less than I know now), and I kind of knew that the Castle was close by, but I didn’t know where. I didn’t care too much, and would have been quite happy just to visit Lanercost and keep on driving. Not Mum, oh no. She sees some old geezer wandering around Lanercost Abbey and trundles up to him and says, basically, Hi, I’m a country hick from New Zealand. Where is Edmond Castle? I remember being too embarrassed to ask, and a little embarrassed that my mother had so little shame. Oh, says the old geezer, yes, I know that. It’s called Hayton Castle Hotel. It’s X miles along the road, after the Y turnoff, keep on going for Z miles, and then the driveway is on the right. Can’t miss it. I remember clearly how flabbergasted I was. It was hard to believe that Mum’s brazen shamelessness had paid such dividends. Anyway, off we went, up the driveway, and there it was. Easily recognisable from the shape of the two towers, which I had seen in family paintings. Cool. Into the lobby, where Mum does her Hi, I’m a county hick routine, and I blush. No go this time. Piss off, they said. Well, they didn’t actually say that, but you see they meant it. So we stuck our heads around the corners, had a wee look at as many rooms as we could, ate lunch at the cheapo place in the stables (we couldn’t afford the real restaurant inside the house), and carried on to Scotland.

In 2005, Edmond Castle was sold again, broken up by a developer and sold. If I had had the money, I would have bought it. I wasn’t even close.

I visited Edmond Castle again in August, 2005, when the builders were there to do the developer’s dirty work. A terrible shame. The house was being broken up and sold off in pieces; a bit here, a bit there, a two-bedroom apartment in this bit, a four-bedroom apartment in this bit. Walls were being built to break the garden up and I just hate to think of the damage being done inside.

1 Yeah, right.
2 Well, maybe. As Dad said, if you bought it you’d feel obliged to live there, and imagine having to live in Britain. Shudder. No thanks.
Soon there’ll be essentially nothing left of the grand old house it used to be. Ah well. Nothing I can do about it.

The coat-of-arms of the Grahams of Edmond Castle

I know, I know. Heraldry is ridiculous. It embodies everything\(^1\) I detest about Britain; the class structure, the snobbishness, the pretensions to grandeur, the belief that a person is defined by their parents or their accent, and that an inherited title somehow makes you a better person.\(^2\)

However, no matter how offensive it is, I do love heraldry. So I’m completely inconsistent. And I don’t care.

The coat-of-arms which was entitled to be used by the Grahams of Edmond Castle is a matter of considerable confusion, as the written evidence doesn’t agree with various inscriptions and carvings. The official arms are given in Burke’s Landed Gentry \([16]\) as: *Per pale indented erminois and sable, on a chief per pale of the last and or, three escallops counterchanged. Crest: two armed arms ppr., garnished or, embowed issuing out of the battlements of a tower, also ppr., holding an escallop gold. Motto: N’oublie.* There’s a picture of them on page 123.

All very well, so far. Burke even gives a picture. However, the actual arms used by Thomas Henry Graham and Reginald John Graham in their burial monuments in Hayton church are quite different, being merely the usual Graham three escallops in chief. So, it seems clear that the Grahams of Edmond Castle didn’t actually use their official arms, if they had any in the first place, and just used the three Graham escallops. I’m sure it’s not impossible that the arms given by Burke (and reproduced in Hudleston and Boumphrey \([46]\)) were a pure invention. I was surprised to find in Hudleston and Boumphrey that practically every Cumberland Graham family also used the three Graham escallops in chief. I’m betting that anybody called Graham in Cumberland just used them without worrying too much about whether they were officially entitled to use them.

However, the plot thickens. A carving on an external wall of Edmond Castle commemorates the marriage of Thomas Henry Graham to Mary Carnegie, in 1829. If you look closely (page 123) you can see along the top the carving reads TH 1829 MG. The right of the shield contains the Carnegie eagle, while the left contains the three Graham escallops, with the colour scheme clearly indicated (the spaced dots are the usual way of denoting gold, and the small cross-hatching is the usual way of denoting black. This can be seen in Holland’s illustrations of Rietstap \([59]\).) However, the escallops are not in chief now, but in bend. Nowhere can I find a Graham coat-of-arms that has the escallops in bend rather than in chief. I suspect artistic license. Maybe the carver just put them in bend to give himself more room to carve the escallops. Maybe it was just a mistake. Maybe Thomas Henry was being creative. Whatever the reason, it’s quite possible the specific design has no particular heraldic significance. However, a bookplate of Elizabeth Susanna Graham (born Elizabeth Davenport; page 110) in which the Graham escallops are also in bend, with the Davenport arms on the right, suggests that the escallops in bend may have been a deliberate choice of Thomas Henry’s father. It is confusing.

So if there is no evidence of the Burke coat-of-arms ever being used, where did it come from? I believe it was most likely invented for the Kirkstall Baronets and then just used for the Grahams of Edmond Castle also, either by mistake or from a desire for them to have a ‘proper’ coat-of-arms. On the other hand, the crest of the Grahams of Edmond Castle is consistent in everything I’ve ever seen. It’s a tower, presumably referring to the original Edmond Castle. This tower is on an old gold ring I have of the Grahams, a silver christening mug, on all the funerary monuments, and in the descriptions of the coat-or-arms. It was clearly the tower and the escallops they cared about; all the rest was just flummery.

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\(^1\)Well, not everything. It doesn’t have much to do with hugely overcrowded beaches, people not washing, and soggy luke-warm fish and chips

\(^2\)Oh, shut up James. Stop ranting.
Coats-of-Arms of The Grahams of Edmond Castle. Top left: the arms and crest given in Burke’s Landed Gentry [16]. I believe this to be incorrect, applicable only to the Kirkstall Baronets. Top right: a bookplate of Elizabeth Susanna Graham (Davenport), as you can tell from the fancy ESG. On the left are the three Graham escallops, on the right are the Davenport arms. Bottom left: the Graham and Carnegie arms on the wall of Edmond Castle. Bottom right: the arms of Graham of Edmond Castle and Boileau de Castelnau, from the funeral monument of Reginald John Graham, who married Ellen Leah Boileau.
Chapter 6

Kent, Sussex and Yorkshire

As we saw in Chapter 5 John Graham married Caroline Eleanor Curteis in 1821. She came from a family that was just as prominent in Kent as the Grahams of Edmond Castle had been in Cumberland. More so, most likely. Indeed, the antecedents of the Curteis family, and of families into which they married, can be traced back a lot further than can the Grahams of Edmond Castle. Of course, the further back you go, the more uncertainty there is; in the Curteis line we meet, for the first time, great uncertainty as to whether or not the details are correct. For the Grahams, for example, we can be pretty sure of everything after about 1630 or so. The Curteis line goes back with reasonable certainty to the 1580s, and, together with associated families such as the Newingtons, the Beales, the Dawtreys and the Colepepers, can even be traced back to the 1300s. Of course we pay a price for this, in that the details are quite unreliable and we cannot put too much faith in the genealogy; however, it is all we have, and interesting to consider nonetheless.

Let me add quickly that genealogical reliability depends to a large extent on what one considers to be certain. All the relationships here are attested by original sources – parish records, heraldic visitations, and so on – so nothing is entirely speculative, but the question is how much one can trust these sources. Most likely they are vaguely correct, but often wrong in detail, which would play havoc with lines of descent.

The main evidence for the Curteis’s of Windmill Hill comes from Burke’s Landed Gentry [17] as well a quite a few monumental inscriptions; in addition, the Curteis’s, Newingtons and Beales all appear in William Berry’s County Genealogies [9]. I have also relied greatly on the efforts of a number of other researchers. Geoff West, David Kennedy and Carol Cheeseman have been particularly helpful, so thanks to them.

The reader is warned that this group of descents is considerably more complex than others that have appeared so far (although much worse is to come!) and that frequent reference to the genealogical charts is recommended. Still, it’s your choice. Far be it from me to tell you how to read this. I know how this works. I have teenage children. It’s OK if you never refer to the charts, not once. I don’t mind. It’s entirely up to you. You are not being controlled here. You can make the decision. Just relax. No big deal. You don’t need to swear at me.

The Curteis Family

The earliest Curteis’s

It is difficult to reconcile the traditional history of the Curteis family with known facts. According to family tradition (and Berry’s County Genealogies) the earliest known Curteis ancestor was a Stephen Curteys, who owned land in Appledore and Brookland, in the county of Kent (see Map 6). Stephen had three sons; one of his sons, Reginald Curteys, was sent by Henry V on an embassy to Holland to procure ships for the transportation of the English army on its way to the battle of Agincourt (in October, 1415), and Reginald himself fought in that battle. Another of Stephen’s sons, John, had a

1No matter how foolish it might be.
son John in his turn, who had a son, Thomas, who was the first Curteys to move to Tenterden; before then the family was based in Appledore and Brookland.

The traditional family descent is based on a 1619 document “This Desent of the Antient Family of the Curteis’s in the County of Kent, Gentlemen, faithfully collected out of the Office of Armes the publicke Records of the Kingdome Private Evidences of this Family and other venerable Monuments of Antiquity”. The document, written on four membranes of parchment, is subscribed “This Coate of Armes doune to Norton Curteis Eldest Son of George Curteis of Maidstone, is a true Copie, taken out of the Originall now in the hands of Sir George Curteis of Otterdein in Kent which was Exemplified by the Authority of the office of Armes testified by the Scale and confirmed under the hand of William Segar Garter Principall Kinge of Armes Anno Domini 1619”.

So much for tradition. Although that’s what I’ve put into the Curteis chart (page 126), I don’t believe it.

There were a number of known Curteis’s in the 1300s and 1400s [57].

- There was indeed a Reginald Curteys of West Cliff who performed that mission to Holland for Henry V. On the 17th of April, 1402, this Reginald married Margareet, the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham, and the sister of Eleanor, the wife of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the Lord Protector of the Realm in the minority of Henry VI. There were also two Curteys’s who fought at Agincourt (although they seem both to have been called William; I have never found any trace of a Reginald Curteys at Agincourt).

- In a parchment roll of the time of Edward I (1271–1307) is a list of those who paid “Seot” in Appledore and the neighbouring parishes. Among those names are Clement Curtehose, Hame [?] Curtehose, John Curteys, Robert Curtehose, and Robert Curteys. This parchment is in the Cathedral Library at Canterbury.

- In a roll of the fifteenth year of the reign of Edward III is a list of freemen of the Cinque Ports exempt from subsidies. Among them is the name of John Curteys.

- On the 4th of August, 1361, Edward, the Black Prince, founded two Chantries in the Under Croft of Canterbury Cathedral and named a John Curteys as one of the first Chantry priests.

- In a manor Court roll of Brookland of the years 1397–1401 the name of John Curthose appears.

- In 1429 William Curteis was elected Abbot of Bury St. Edmonds, and repaired the campanile, or bell tower. He entertained Henry VI in 1433, and died in 1445. His arms appear to be the same as those borne by the Curteis family to this day.

- A family of Curtehose or Curteys held lands in or near “The Manor”, Kent, from early in the reign of Edward I.

- A Piers Curteis was Keeper of the Wardrobe to Richard III (who reigned from 1483–1485) and the Writer of the Wardrobe Account, or Coronation Roll.

- In the Diocesan Probate Office in Canterbury there is a will of Stephen Curteys of Brookland, dated the 8th of February, 1461, in which he mentions the name of his wife, Alica, the first known name of a female Curteys in Kent.

- Finally, the Curteis coat-or-arms appears in several places in the roof of Canterbury Cathedral Cloisters, which were built between 1390 and 1411. All the subscribers to rebuilding the nave were apparently commemorated by their arms being introduced as ornaments. The Curteis arms were also placed in windows in the Churches of Chilham and New Romney about the same time, and have always been considered to be those of Stephen Curteys of Appledore and Brookhaven.

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1I’ve never seen it, but there is a copy in the Sussex Archive Office. One day I’ll get to see it for myself.
2The compartments in which they are (numbered from the Martyrdom westwards) are 23, 26, 445, 446, 455, 536, 537. I’ve never seen them myself.
In this list there is a lot in common with the more recent Curteis’s. They lived in the same area, in Kent, around the Cinque Ports, Appledore and Brooktown. They had the same coat-of-arms. They had the same names as the family tradition (although this means almost nothing, I suppose.) Given all this, I think there can be little doubt that at least some of these early Curteis’s were directly related to our Curteis’s. The Stephen who made his will in 1461 is one obvious candidate, for instance; all the Curteis’s consistently claim a Stephen Curteys from Appledore and Brookland as their immediate ancestor, they shared the same coat-of-arms, and the dates are possible. However, the tradition that Reginald was his son is likely incorrect, as the dates just don’t work out. Most likely the Curteis’s were desperate to have a noble fighting ancestor at Agincourt (no less!) and just commandeered him.

The later Curteis’s

Whatever the truth of the matter, there is little doubt that the first reasonably reliable ancestor of the Curteis’s was William Curteis, who died in 1582. It is said that William’s father was Thomas Curteys of Appledore, who moved to Tenterden, married Joan Twaight, daughter of Edward Twaight (claimed by Burke to be the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports), and died sometime after 1527. The Thomas Curteys might be accurate, and even the name of his wife might be accurate, but the bit about Joan’s father being Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports is twaddle for sure. Every single one of the Lords Warden is known, and known well, and Edward Twaight wasn’t one of them. I’m quite sure that we see here a bit of wishful thinking coupled to an active and unblushing imagination. Later Curteis’s were wealthy and well-known, mayors of Tenterden for generations, desperately in need of illustrious forebears. So they made them up: a hero of Agincourt and a Lord Warden. They weren’t the first family to do that, and not the last. Although, to be fair, the earliest family history in the 1619 document mentioned above says nothing of Edward Twaight being a Lord Warden, or so I am informed. So the invention was somewhat later, and might indeed have been due to Burke himself for all we know.

Getting back to William, he had two wives, Joan Buntinge and Joan Pattenden of Biddenden, of whom we are concerned only with the latter. The eldest son of William and Joan Pattenden was Stephen Curteis, who was the Mayor of Tenterden in 1622 (or maybe 1621; the sources disagree slightly). He married Elizabeth Short and their son Samuel continued the line. Well, so claims the family history, but Here Be More Dragons. The thing is that there certainly was a Stephen Curteis, Mayor of Tenterden, but the only such Stephen Curteis I know of was married to Mary Stark, and had a son Nathaniel and a daughter Elizabeth. And this is information from Stephen’s will and his gravestone, both rather reliable sources (although not infallible). Nary a Samuel in sight, nor an Elizabeth Short. However, it’s not impossible that there were two different Stephen Curteis mayors of Tenterden; this wouldn’t really surprise me. Tenterden had to have a lot of mayors, and there were a lot of Curteis’s around, from different branches of the family, and I imagine a good fraction of them were called Stephen.

For the next few generations this branch of the Curteis’s was closely associated with Tenterden. As Hasted’s 1798 The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent says:

The town of Tenterden is situated nearly in the centre of the parish and hundred. It stands on high ground, neither unpleasant nor unhealthy; the greatest part of it is built on each side of the high road leading from the western parts of Kent and Cranbrooke through this parish south-east to Appledore. A small part of it is paved, where there is a small antient market-place, built of timber; but the market, which is still held on a Friday, is but little frequented, only two millers, and seldom any butchers attending it. It is a well-built town, having many genteel houses, or rather seats, interspersed

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1Actually, to be honest, he doesn’t seem to be all that reliable either, as we shall see, but I shall pretend he is for now.

2Such sceptical comments as these cause offence, or so it would seem. In 2009 I received an email from a Curteis descendant in Australia saying that the Curteis family would never make up anything like this, already had very illustrious forebears, and such remarks were “in bad taste to the Curteis name”. Hmmmm... well. I’m convinced.

3The Short family provided Mayors of Tenterden as many as fifteen times in the 16th & 17th centuries. Some of them were clothiers; Daniel Shorte in 1632 borrowed materials for dyeing from James Skeets, and William Shorte had land to the west of the Tilden Dye Works[52].
throughout it, among which are those of the Curteis’s, a numerous and opulent family here, who bear for their arms, Argent, a chevron between three bulls heads, caboshed.

Stephen’s grandson (Edward) and great-grandson (Jeremiah) were both mayors of Tenterden – Edward in 1663 and Jeremiah in 1696. One of Jeremiah’s sons, Edward, married Sarah Beale, a descendant of an equally prominent Biddenden family, while two of Edward’s sons married two Giles sisters. The Beale connection itself can be traced back to the 1300s as we shall see below.

Jeremiah Curteis (1735-1806), who married Jane Giles, took an enormous step and moved entirely away to foreign parts. To Rye, where he established himself as an attorney, and served as the Town Clerk from 1756 to 1800. Not a bad effort, that. He obviously did very well for himself. He (and his son, Edward Jeremiah) bought extensive estates in the Rye area as well as at Tenterden, Goudurst, Hawkhurst and in Romney Marsh. From 1807 their principal residence was at Windmill Hill (see Map 6 on page 242). His daughter, Martha, married into yet more serious money, and her daughter, in turn, married her Curteis cousin, Herbert Barrett (son of Edward Jeremiah), thus bringing wads of money back into the family. How nice that would have been. The advantages of inbreeding.

Edward Jeremiah Curteis (1762-1835), my 4G-grandfather, was a lawyer and an M.P. for Sussex from 1820 to 1830. Maybe it’s my cynical nature, but I suspect that he spent most of his time being a gentleman rather than in any useful pursuit, but who knows. Since most of what I know about him comes from his obituary in the Gentleman’s Magazine, I might as well quote it directly.

March 18. At Windmill Hill, near Battle, in his 73rd year, from a sudden attack of illness, after some years of previously declining health, universally respected and esteemed, Edward Jeremiah Curteis, Esq. a Magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant for the Counties of Kent and Sussex, and formerly M.P. for the latter county.

He was born at Rye in Sussex, July 6, 1762, and was the only son of Jeremiah Curteis, esq. of that town, the first of the family who settled in Sussex, and of Jane his wife, the daughter and coheirress of Searles Giles, esq. of Biddenden, Kent. His family has for centuries been settled in Kent, chiefly at and in the neighbourhood of Tenterden, of which town Mr. Curteis was Recorder for some years. Stephen Curteis was living at Apuldore, in the reign of Edward III. His great grandson Thomas, 1527, married Joane, daughter and coheirress of Edw. Twaights, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports [nonsense, as we saw before], in the reign of Henry VII. and VIII., whose arms the family still quarter, together with those of Segrave. His son William (ob. 1582) married twice. From his wife, Joan Buntinge, are descended the Curteis’s of Sevenoaks, Tenterden, and Canterbury; from Joan Pattenden, the subject of the present memoir, as also the Curteis’s of Otterden Place (vide Gents. Mag. vol CIL., part i, 396–).

Mr. Curteis was educated at Westminster School, which he entered in 1774, and of which he was head boy in 1778. He left the following year for Christ Church, at the early age of 16. In 1783 he took the degree of B.A., was elected Fellow of Oriel College in the following year, and proceeded to the degree of M.A. in 1786. He was called to the Bar in 1788; for some years he generally attended the Home Circuit, and was well acquainted, and intimate with many of the legal as well as the leading literary and political characters of the day.

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1The names are hilarious; as well as Tenterden, Haffenden and Biddenden, we also get Frittenden, Ibornden, Wosenden, Hevenden, Omenden, Bugglesden and Wachenden. It’s hard not to giggle.

2I’m not entirely sure where all those places are, but it’s not really important.

3In a footnote it says: Reginald Curteis of West Cliff, the son of Stephen, married April 17, 1402, Margaret, the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham of Sterborough, and sister of Eleanor, the wife of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, the Lord Protector of the Realm in the minority of Henry VI. Some time previous to the battle of Agincourt, Reginald Curteis, together with Richard Clydow, went over to Holland to treat for ships for the King’s service, to be sent to the ports of London, Sandwich, and Winchelsea. The names of two Curteis’s appear in the list of those who are mentioned as having fought at Agincourt, October 25, 1415. William Curteis was elected in 1429 Abbat [sic] of St. Edmond’s Bury, the campanile or bell tower of which he repaired. In 1433 he entertained Henry VI, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Court, for some months at his Abbey. He died in 1445 (vide Dugdale’s Monasticon). Piers Curteis was Keeper of the Wardrobe to Richard III. and the writer of the Wardrobe Account, or Coronation Roll of that monarch, which is still in existence (vide Archæologia).
In 1796 he left London, and resided in East Sussex [note that this was the year his father died, so that is presumably when he inherited the ‘duties’ of a country gentleman], where he was well known as a most useful and active magistrate, and as one who thoroughly understood the local interests of the county. He was elected member for Sussex in 1820, together with the late Walter Burrell, esq. and again in 1826. He was independent as to party, and was distinguished in the house as a staunch and uncompromising agriculturist. Through his exertions were passed some local bills of considerable utility to his constituents. In 1830 his declining health induced him to retire altogether from Parliament and from public life; since which period he resided entirely at his seat, Windmill Hill, near Battle. His remains are interred in the family vault, in the church of Wartling, in which parish Windmill Hill is situated. He was succeeded in the representation of the county in 1830 by his eldest son, Herbert Barrett Curteis, esq. who is still one of the members for East Sussex.

Mr. Curteis married April 14, 1789, Mary, only dau. and heiress of the Rev. Stephen Barrett, M.A. of the Bent, in Kildwick, Craven, Yorkshire, and Rector of Hothfield in Kent the last male descendant of a very ancient Yorkshire family. His grandmother was the sister of Archbishop Sharpe. He married Mary, the only child of Edward Jacob, esq. of Feversham, Kent, by his second wife Mary Chalker, and the half-sister of Edward Jacob, esq. an eminent naturalist and antiquary.

[There follows information about his children and grandchildren.]

Mr. Curteis was endowed with brilliant talents, and was noted for his conversational powers, as well as for his varied and extensive information. He was a member of several literary and charitable institutions. He was a frequent contributor to the Gentleman’s Magazine, Nichols’s Literary Anecdotes, &c. and was well known in both the literary and political world. He was universally beloved and esteemed; and, both in public and private life, he was a most active and useful member of society.

A lot of E.J. Curteis’s correspondence survives, and I even have copies of some of it. Unfortunately it’s very difficult to read. I got it from the East Sussex Archives; you look up in the catalogues and get the numbers and write a letter and organise a postal note (no internet payments for them, thank you very much), and send it off, and wait, and wait, and wait, and finally you get a big envelope in the post which you open with terrific excitement . . . to find 10 pages of poorly photocopied, completely illegible, writing, so dim and faded that you can barely tell it’s writing as opposed to random markings. And for this you paid £1,000,000 and waited 20 years. It would piss off a bloody saint, I tell you.

So I’ve transcribed only one of these letters, which, as it gives a nice picture of the state of the family, I give in full here. It’s difficult to read in spots, so this transcription is only partially accurate.

Postmarked 1827, the letter is addressed to Miss Inglis and Mrs Powis, Shane Street, Kensington. From E.J. Curteis. It is a letter from Edward Jeremiah Curteis to his granddaughter, Mary, daughter of Mary Curteis who married Steuart Boone Inglis. Mary Curteis was long dead by this date. 

Windmill Hill Battel

Sept. 23 1827

My Dear Mary

I am desired to forward to you the inclosed letter from your Father, by your Grandmamma, & I take the opportunity of saying to you that all of this family are well – we are glad to find that you like your new situation & we hope that you will make the most & best of it for Improvement [sounds like a Grandfather, indeed]. We expect your Uncle and Aunt Darby [that would be Laura Curteis, daughter of E.J., and her hubby] to come

1I exaggerate.
over in the [?] for some months – the Graham families [that would be Caroline and John et al.] are all of them in France – the Edwards we have lately heard of – the Coll[?] has the Govt of the Province of Cutch[?] & the Command of the Army there. Mrs. Mascall & Anne [I think he’s referring to his sister, who married Robert Mascall] are with us, they have been on a very pleasant tour in the West. Mr. Frankland Lewis Mrs. Hare’s son, is appointed as Secretary to the Treasury – the Wagner families are all assembled at Hurstmonceux. Past Bowne[.....?. I really can’t read it here]. Mr. [?] is at Rose Cottage but the lodge is unlet. We have had a good deal of papering & painting done at the Hill this Summer – which now seems to be over, for of late we have had a great deal of rain & wind.

Your uncle Herbert [Herbert Barrett] is coming back from Scotland. Reginald is still here & Edward is at B[?] and has been on a visit from there to Mrs. Collet [E.J.’s sister married a Collet] at the Jungle. Mr. Luxford has purchased a house at Robert’s Bridge, called Highhome – a very pretty place – Miss Emily Graham [sister of John Graham, who married Caroline Curteis] I am glad to say is quite restored to health in all respects. Mr. Young our Curate has just been presented by his Lady with a little Boy – the Greenalls are living together at the Living in Suffolk near Cambridge – which is a very good one – Your Grandmama & I have both of [us] been better in health than usual this Summer – & your Aunt Eliz has been on the whole very well. We have a great many tame Pheasants running about on the Lawn – & there is an abundance of game this year. We all unite in kind love to you and in every fond wish. I am My Dear GrandDaughter,

Always
Most Affectionately Yours
E.J. Curteis

In the other correspondence, Caroline was writing to her brother Edward, who was very interested in the genealogy of the Hodges family (his wife was a Hodges), but I haven’t bothered to transcribe it properly yet. Neither have I transcribed Edward Jeremiah’s will, of which I also have a copy. One day, somebody with more energy than myself will do these jobs and send me a nice legible electronic file. Please.

To complete the connection, it remains only to point out that one of the daughters of Edward Jeremiah was Caroline Eleanor, who married John Graham of Edmond Castle (Chapter 5).

The Barretts

On the 14th of April, 1789, Edward Jeremiah Curteis married Mary Barrett. Now, the ancestry of this Mary has intrigued me for years, and only recently have I got it partially sorted out. So I feel rather attached to the Barretts, and you, as a loyal reader, must too.

Why was I so intrigued? Well, the first thing I read about her was the entry in Burke’s Landed Gentry, which reads “Only daughter and heir of Rev. Stephen Barrett, Rector of Hothfield, Kent, and the last male descendant of the ancient family of Barrett of the Bent, Kildwick, Yorks.” How exciting, I thought. Has to be something in this. Ancient family. Rector of Hothfield. Heiress. All those good things which suggest that more can be discovered.

Well, nothing. There was wide agreement that Bent was the home of lots of Barretts, and had been for a long time (I wrote to the local genealogical group in Yorkshire, and they tried to be helpful, but weren’t really) but nothing else. For years, actually. Every so often I looked around the web again, but nothing ever appeared. Stephen Barrett of Bent was one of my great mysteries.

Then, as more stuff kept getting put on the web, I started learning more about this Stephen Barrett. First his gravestone in the Hothfield Church monumental inscriptions:

Sacred to the Memory of the Rev. Stephen BARRETT MA who died 26th November 1801 in the 83rd year of his age. He was born at Bent a very ancient Mansion of the
family of Barrett in the parish of Kildwick in Haven [sic; really Kildwick-in-Craven] in the County of York. He was during a long and flourishing period Master of the Free Grammar school of Ashford and almost thirty years Rector of this parish. Likewise to the memory of Mary his wife, youngest daughter of Edward JACOB Esquire of the city of Canterbury, who died 28th March 1786 in the 60th year. This tribute was erected by their only daughter and Heiress Mary wife of Edward Jeremiah CURTEIS Esquire of Northiam in Sussex.

Woo Hoo. Finally I had found something. I now knew that he taught at the Ashford school, and the name of his wife.

But wait! There’s more! Even more things began to appear on the web. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography has an extensive entry about him. He was a regular contributor to The Gentleman’s Magazine and Nichols’s Literary Anecdotes. He was a good friend of Samuel Johnson. A story is told of how the Editor of the Gentleman’s Magazine wanted a Latin poem translated. “Give it to Barrett” said Johnson. “He will correct it for you in a minute”. Whereupon Johnson and Barrett agreed to share the task which they completed in a very short time.

Just to cover the details, here is his entry in the Dictionary of National Biography.

Barrett, Stephen (bap. 1719, d. 1801), schoolmaster and Church of England clergyman, was born at Bent, in the parish of Kildwick in Craven, Yorkshire, and was baptized there on 14 May 1719, the son of Peter Barrett of Sutton, Yorkshire, and his wife, Mary. He was educated at the grammar school in Skipton, where he excelled in poetry and classics. He matriculated from University College, Oxford, on 24 March 1738 and graduated B.A. in 1741 and M.A. in 1744. Having taken holy orders he became rector of the parishes of Purton and Ickleford, Hertfordshire, in 1744. Five years later, in 1749, he was appointed master of the free grammar school at Ashford, Kent, on the nomination of Sir Wyndham Knatchbull. He raised the school’s academic reputation and attracted the patronage of the local gentry, who sent their sons to his school. Its success enabled Barrett to augment the master’s salary of £30 to an income of 120 guineas per annum, presumably by charging fees for pupils who boarded. In 1751 he applied for the mastership of his old grammar school in Skipton; it seems that both he and the rival candidate, William West, offered bribes to some of the churchwardens who were electing to the post. Although at first Barrett disdained such means, in a letter dated 6 August 1751 he wrote that he would invest £100 in bribes to please his patron, Lord Thanet. He had secured a majority of votes when he suddenly pulled out of the competition, fearing a scandal, should details of his bribes leak out.

Barrett resigned from Ashford in 1764 but returned as headmaster two years later. By that time he had married Mary, daughter of Edward Jacob of Canterbury; their only child, Mary, was baptized at Ickleford, Hertfordshire, on 5 August 1764. Barrett resigned the mastership a second time, in 1773, when presented to the rectory of Hothfield, Kent. He was a friend of Dr. Johnson and Edward Cave, and a frequent contributor to the Gentleman’s Magazine. He also published some verses, a Latin translation of Pope’s Pastorals, and Ovid’s epistles translated into English verse, with critical essays and notes; being part of a poetical and oratorical lecture read to the grammar school of Ashford in the county of Kent, and calculated to initiate youth in the first principles of taste (1759). Tobias Smollett gave a withering review of Barrett’s works in the Critical Review: “though he might be an excellent schoolmaster, he had, however, no pretensions to taste” (Nichols, Lit. anecdotes, 3.346n).

Barrett died at Church House, Northiam, Sussex, on 26 November 1801, and was buried at Hothfield on 3 December. He was survived by his daughter, who had married Edward Jeremiah Curteis, a barrister.

From Nichols’ Literary Anecdotes [56] we learn additional lovely tidbits. A review of his “Ovid’s Epistles etc”\(^1\) said that he had:

\(^1\) *Monthly Review*, vol. XX, p. 273. This is not the “Independent Socialist Magazine” that shares the same title, but rather
before sufficiently distinguished himself as a complete Master of the Latin Tongue by an elegant Translation of Mr. Pope’s Pastorals into Latin Verse; and by a very judicious Scheme for the Improvement of Lilly’s Grammar, by reforming the order of the Tenses agreeable to that of Varro. He appears, however, in common with many other Professors of the learned languages, not to be equally Master of his own.

Ha. Somebody didn’t like his English much. We also learn that his paternal Grandfather was

. . . a very active and zealous partizan of the cause of Charles the First; after whose death he was compelled to take refuge in Ireland, a price having been set on his head by the Usurper Cromwell. After the Restoration he returned to England, but was not able to recover back more than a comparatively small portion of the property which had been wrested from him during the troubles.

So finally, I feel that I know my old friend Stephen Barrett a whole lot better. It took years, but I got there in the end.

Stephen Barrett’s wife was Mary Jacob, the daughter of Edward Jacob, a surgeon in Canterbury and mayor of Canterbury in 1727 and 1728, and his second wife Mary Chalker (or possibly Chelker). They will appear in the very next section.

Unfortunately, Stephen Barrett’s ancestors remain uncertain. I have looked through the parish records of Kildwick-in-Craven, but it’s not possible to piece together a coherent genealogy. There were Barretts all over the place, had been for centuries, and they all seem to have had the same name. Very confusing it is, to be sure.

In 2008, the village of Sutton-in-Craven published on its website a complete version of the book *The History of Sutton-in-Craven*, written by Nellie Stell in 1927 (http://www.sutton-in-craven.org.uk/stellch01.asp). This book mentions the Barretts a number of times, and is a very interesting read.

For example, in the poll tax of 1379 there were two Barets mentioned (Johannes Baret & ux, and Johannes Baret junior), and one Willelmus de Bent & ux (and wife). The author comments:

The name William de Bent is interesting. There is still a district of Sutton called ‘The Bent’, there is a Bent Farm and also Bent Lane. Evidently William held land or lived in this area. The surname Baret occurs twice in the list [i.e., the 1379 poll tax list]. Later we know that the Baret family also held land near the Bent. The surname is still very common in the village.


During the Civil War, as we have already seen, a William Barrett of the Bent was a partisan of Charles I, there was a price on his head, and he had to flee to Ireland. Still later, in 1658, there were seven Barretts on the list of ratepayers in Sutton.

And that’s pretty much it for the Barretts. Not enough for a detailed genealogy, but enough to give a pretty accurate idea of where the family came from. One intriguing puzzle remains but I shall leave that to the special question box.

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*an English periodical founded by Ralph Griffiths, a Nonconformist bookseller, that was the first periodical in England to offer reviews.*
CHAPTER 6. KENT, SUSSEX AND YORKSHIRE

The Curteis and Beale coats-of-arms. Just because I like the pretty pictures. These are the Curteis arms that are carved on the ceiling of the Cloisters of Canterbury cathedral. The images are stolen from one of those horrible online shops that try to sell the “family arms” to anybody with the same name who’s willing to buy them. That’s why they look so corny. But they’re still kind of pretty.

Questions: Was Stephen Barrett’s maternal grandmother the sister of John Sharp, the Archbishop of York? Enquiring minds wish to know. E.J. Curteis’s obituary claims it to be so (page 129). However, other sources say his mother was a Clough, another well-known family in the area of Kildwick-in-Craven. Now, John Sharp had an only sister, Hannah Sharp, who married John Richardson, which doesn’t immediately square with the claim that Stephen Barrett’s mother was a Clough. Not impossible, of course, what with remarriages and suchlike things, but more difficult to confirm. Fortunately, we know that Hannah and John had children, but, to keep balance in the universe, I don’t know who they are. John Richardson, as it happens, has a pedigree that is described in Burke’s *Commoners*, 1835, Vol. 3 [15]. He was one of the Richardsons of Bierley, and his father, Richard Richardson of Bierley, had to pay a fine of £40 to Charles I for declining the honour of a knighthood. Well, well. And I thought nobody turned this down. Maybe he just hated Charles I. There is also quite a lot known about Hannah Sharp’s parents (not that anybody cared about her, she was only a woman, but she shared parents with an Archbishop [43]¹). However, by strict genealogical rules I can’t really include the Sharps or the Richardsons in my ancestry, as the exact link cannot be verified by any source – an offhand mention of somebody’s grandmother doesn’t really count. But I really would like to find out one way or the other.

¹John Sharp’s son also wrote a biography of him, but I’ve never seen this.

The Jacobs

This is another family about whom I knew very little until somebody else did all the hard work and published their results online. It was clear that much had to be known about the Jacobs; he was, after all, the mayor of Canterbury and an Esquire to boot, so something in the records was pretty much guaranteed. Still, I wasn’t in Canterbury, it wasn’t easy, and I just didn’t bother.

Then, in 2009, some other descendant of the Jacobs put a neato web page online, in which the family and forebears of Edward Jacob were described (http://www.myjacobfamily.com/favershamjacobs/edwardjacob2.htm). It’s one of those excellent web pages that gives full source information, even including scans of parish registers and old documents, and I believe it to be trustworthy. It’s certainly very stylish.
CHAPTER 6. KENT, SUSSEX AND YORKSHIRE

To begin at the beginning of the Jacobs, the earliest known is Amos Jacob of Elham (1570–1635), who appears as a farmer in a number of old documents. He married Richordina Claringboule, a member of an old established family apparently, and had at least eight children, all baptised at Elham.\(^1\) His eldest son, Richard Jacob (1593–1664), married at least twice. He was a widower in 1639 when he remarried Frances Cosen at St. Margarets, Canterbury. Two of his sons, Amos and Richard, became doctors of medicine. Amos, the elder, was licensed at Ashford as a surgeon and a medic in November, 1661, married Deborah, and had at least five children in Ashford. He must have moved away from home to live and work in the big smoke, assuming that Ashford was then, as it is now, considerably bigger than Elham.

Our Edward (the father of the Mary Jacob who married Stephen Barrett) was the son of Amos’s second wife, Mary Clarke, the widow of William Harris. He was born at Ashford, and was a scholar of King’s School, Canterbury, some time between 1694 and 1696. He also moved away from home, to work as a surgeon in Deal, after having done his apprenticeship with Samuel Harris, surgeon, of Deal.

Described as an apothecary, he became a freeman of the City of Canterbury in 1706. He had brought to the Registrar at Canterbury a note from a local Deal surgeon, testifying to his apprenticeship to a Mr. Samuel Harris of Deal for the full term of seven years. In the writer’s opinion he was fit to be licensed for the practise of Chyrurgery. He was elected Mayor of Canterbury in 1727 and was an alderman and chamberlain of the city for many years. His first wife was Jane Viol, with whom he had eight children, but after she died in 1719 (probably due to childbirth), he married a second wife, Mary Chalker.

Their first two children died young, and their third child, our Mary, was baptised on the 5th of October, 1726. Her mother died only nine days after, surely due to childbirth. Edward’s wives weren’t too lucky in this department. Mother Mary was buried in Tilmanstone, where the family had clearly been living for some time, as five earlier siblings and half-siblings who died in infancy were all buried there also.\(^2\)

The Beales

In 1733, Edward Curteis married Sarah Beale, the daughter of Richard Beale and Elizabeth Newington. The Newingtons also can be traced, but we shall do that a bit later.

The Beales (page 135) were an old Biddenden family that made a pile of money as clothiers and eventually got rich enough to buy estates and be labeled as landed gentry, with their own coat-of-arms and all. This was a common pattern; we saw it in the Curteis’s also and we shall see it again in the Boileau and others. I suppose the Grahams of Edmond Castle were slightly unusual in that they didn’t earn their money and their status by actually doing anything useful. Originally they probably just stole it. However, in the more settled region of Kent, money had to be earned. If I was a proper historian I could probably make some wise comment about how all these Kent families (Curteis’s, Beales, Newingtons, etc) showed the emergence of a wealthy mercantile class that challenged and eventually took over the old feudal order. That’s certainly how it looks to me, but then I’m no expert. But if I find it interesting how you can see, in these Kent families, how wealth begat status, and how emerging families were desperate to ape the manners of their social betters. They bought estates and called themselves Curteis of Windmill Hill, Beale of River Hall, Barrett of the Bent\(^3\), Richardson of Bierley, and so on. They all got coats-of-arms. They built mansions, or bought castles where they could. They invented notable ancestors. And they intermarried, again where they could, with the younger daughters of the old families further up the social scale such as the Cheneys or the Colepepers.

It’s a lot more difficult to write about this part of the family tree. Most of the people are known only by their names, and maybe an odd date or two. You can easily get this information from a simple chart, like the one on page 135. It’s of little use merely to list the same information again

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\(^1\)Elham is due south of Canterbury, and due east of Ashford. Tiny place it seems.

\(^2\)Tilmanstone is just east of Deal, between Deal and Canterbury. Again, it seems to be a tiny place.

\(^3\)I know, I know, that’s Yorkshire not Kent, but the point remains
here. However, every so often something interesting pops up, and these are the bits I’ll concentrate on.

One of the first interesting bits is actually the parents of Sarah Beale: Richard Beale and his wife, Elizabeth Newington. They are interesting for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the Newingtons were another well-known family whose ancestry can be traced, and secondly, they are an excellent example of the difficulties and confusions of genealogical research.

How so? Well, I knew from Richard Beale’s gravestone that he married an Elizabeth, and there was a record of a Richard Beale marrying an Elizabeth Henden in 1705 in Biddenden. So, for a long time I thought they were the parents of Sarah. It all made sense; the right time, the right names, the right place. Easy. However, they’re not. In that same year, in Wadhurst church, a different Richard Beale married a different Elizabeth, a Newington this time, and there’s a lot of very strong evidence (including dates of death and the names of their children) that these are the parents of Sarah, who married a Curteis. Presumably Elizabeth was from Wadhurst, as that’s where they got married. It was originally Geoff West who pointed out this error to me, and showed me the evidence. It makes one wonder how many other mistakes there are in the genealogy. Probably lots and lots. Certainly, anything that relies on Burke is destined for embarrassment. But even parish records can be misleading, unless enormous care is taken.

Richard Beale didn’t much like one of his sons-in-law, James Haffenden, who married Elizabeth, or so it seems to me. Maybe it’s just standard legal jargon, but the following excerpt doesn’t sound all that trusting to me:

Also I give and bequeath unto my Son-in-Law James Haffenden of Tenterden in the said County of Kent Gentleman the sum of three score pounds of lawfull money of Great Britain to be paid him within twelve months next after my decease subject nevertheless and upon this express condition that he the said James Haffenden shall and will peaceably and quietly accept receive and take the same in full payment and in satisfaction of all claims challenges and demands that the said James Haffenden now hath or ever shall have against me on any account whatsoever. And also that he the said James Haffenden shall not nor will at any time or times after my decease sue molest disturb or trouble or cause to be sued molested disturbed or troubled my said Executor and Executor howinafter named or for or by reason of any such claims challenges and demands or for or by reason of any other act matter or thing whatsoever and that at the time of payment of the said legacy or sum of three score pounds he the said James Haffenden shall and will sign seal espouse[?] and deliver such quittances releases and discharges my said Executor and Executrix shall be advised and think necessary for discharging the said legacy and all such other demands as he the said James Haffenden now hath or ever shall have against me or them on any amount whatsoever. And my Will and meaning is that in case the said James Haffenden should refuse to accept receive and take the above Legacy of three score pounds given to him by me as aforesaid on the above terms and conditions that then and in such case he shall not be intitled to the same or any part or parcel thereof by virtue of this my Will.

One really does wonder if this was all entirely necessary. To be fair, I’ve seen similar phrases in a number of other wills of the period (although nothing quite so extensive as this) so maybe it was just a standard set of phrases that meant little.

By the way, if anybody is interested, Richard’s wife got his “best bed with the Bedstools, Curtains, [...] and all the other furniture thereunto belonging and also two pair of sheets ...”. Generous. Still, this seems to be a better deal than what the wife of his grandfather (another Richard Beale) got. She got

... free libty to brew wash and make in the rooms for those purposes belonging to the said house and the utensills thereto as also to doe any other necessary or huswifery business in the said house and free libty use and a privilige to have and take water in the sewers belonging the said house and convenient room ... To have receive take possess and enjoy the said use benefitts libtyes and priviledges to her and her assignes during
the tyme that she shall keep her self a widdow & unmarried after my decease and noe longer.

Sounds to me like she was only allowed to carry on doing the housework. Well, I jest just a little. I imagine it was important to ensure that his surviving wife was allowed to remain in the house and use it, otherwise she could possibly have been ejected by the heir. Somehow, it doesn’t seem quite fair I must say.

Richard the grandfather married, for a first wife, Mary Seaman, who appears in more detail in the next section. His gravestone in the Biddenden churchyard reads “Under this Tombe lieth ye Body of Richard BEALE of Biddenden, Clothier, who died October 30th 1691 aged 72 years and nine months. He was twice married, his first wife was Mary daughter of Mr SEAMAN, Minister of Bredgate (sic) By whom he left one son William. His second wife was widow of John NEWENDEN by whom he left another son, John, who erected this tomb. North side. Here also lieth Mary second wife of Richard Beale who died July ye sixth 1696 aged 73 years and four months.” He left quite substantial sums of money to his children and grandchildren:

Item I give & Beq unto my son Wm Beale and unto Sarah his wife the sume of 5 pounds a peece of lawfull money of eng and I doe give unto Rd Beale son of the said Wm Beale the sume of 50 pounds of good money and unto Thomas Beale and Elz Beale the sume of ten pounds apeece of lawfll money of Eng also I give & beq unto Mary Beale d/o the sd Wm Beale the sume of 200 pounds of ...all which sd Legacyes given to the said Wm Beale and Sarah his wife Rd Beale Tom Elz & Mary Beale children of the sd Wm Beale I doe order & appt shall be pd to them respectively within 6 months after my dec. by my Exec. hereafter named. Provided nevertheless and upon this condicon Following (viz) that in case the sd Wm Beale shall any wayes disturbe or molest my Exec. hereafter named in the quiett enjoyment of what I doe give and devise to him by this my last Will and Testament or to hinder the same . . .

Clearly, being a clothier was a money-making proposition. The Beales lived at River Hall, described by Hasted [44] as

River-Hall is a seat in the south-east part of this parish, near Stroud Quarter, which has been for more than a century in the possession of the Beales, formerly clothiers here. Richard Beale, clothier, of Biddenden, resided here in the beginning of Charles II.’s reign and his grandson Mr. Richard Beale is the present owner of it, and resides in it. They bear for their arms, Sable, on a chevron, or, between 3 griffin’s heads erased, argent, as many estoiles, gules.

The Seamans

One of Sarah Beale’s brothers was called Seaman, a most unusual name. This came originally from her great-grandmother, Mary Seaman, whose own grandfather, Robert Seaman, was a blacksmith. I think old wills are fun to read, so here is his (as transcribed by Robert Kennedy):

In the name of God amen the 17 of June ano domini 1605 I Robert Seaman dweling in the parish of Bredgar being of a sound & perfect [?] memory have caused this note containing my last will and testament to be mayd in manner & forme following; First I Comfitt [? Maybe commend] my soul to God and my body to the earth. Item I give to Richard Seaman mine eldest sonne my house and Garden that belongs thereto together with my shopp lying in the parish of Bredgar and to his heires for ever Item I give to John Seaman my sonne Three pounds of good and lawfull money of England Item I give to my sonne William three pounds likewise I give and will to Thomas Seaman my sonne five pounds of good and lawfull English money and moreover I forgive all **h debts **s he oweth me. Item I will to Peter Seaman my sonne the summe of thirty pounds of good and lawfull money of England to be payd unto him within one whole yeare
after the day of my decease, And if it fortune that my sayd sonne dye before payment
bemayd according to the time limited then I will that the sayd summe of xxx poundes
be payd equally by even portion, to my sonsnes and daughters that then shall be livinge.

Item I give to Symon Seaman my youngest sonne x/- [= 10/-] and Calvins Institutions.

I will to Mary my daughter twenty nobles to be payd to her one whole yeare after the
day of my decease. Item I will to Margarett my Daughter xly [=40] shillings to be payd
unto her as she shall need it presently after my decease and further I will unto her a
payer of good sheets and the Chest that stands [?] *** the path [?] syde of my bedd:
I will besyds that Richard my eldest sonne his heires executors or assignes shall pay
unto the sayd Margarett my daughter xs [=10] yearely during her naturall life the which
[?] xs my mynde is [?] it shall be payd att two severall [?] payment that is to say five
shillings halfe yearely, And if the foresaid Richard his heires executors or assignes doe
refuse [?] this to pay it Item I will that the sayd Margarett shall either straine [?] any
goods that shall be within the foresayd house or orchard or cease upon the sayd house
and orchard and keep it in her owne possession until such time as the sayd summe of
money shall be payd (as aforesayd) according to the same [?] meaning of my will: I will
unto Richard Sellden and George Sellden sonnes of George Sellden tenn shillings to be
spent in clothing of them. Item I will tenn shillings to tenn of the poorest of this parish,
All my moveable [?] goodes either within the house or without or in the shopp that [?] I
work in he paying all legacyes and bequeaths I bequeathe to Richard my sonne whome
I make sole and whole executor of this my last will and testament dated and written the
day & yeare aforesayd in witnes whereof I have sette my hand and seale in the
presence of Thomas Ly*ystead [?] his marke, Thomas Batchelor his marke, Seaman
Richard [?] Seaman his marke.

For me, the most interesting thing in this will is the 10 shillings and book (presumably John
Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion) he bequeathed to his youngest son, Simon. The money
was a fee to Simon, the local vicar, to preach his funeral sermon. Nowadays, such a bequest might
be a joke, seeing as how he left another son £30. However, one suspects it isn’t. Simon, as we shall
see below, ended up much wealthier than the rest of his family, so presumably the £30 was better
spent elsewhere.

I also rather like the provision for his daughter Margaret; if it isn’t paid on time she gets to grab
the house and orchard until it is. I wonder if old Robert was concerned that his son Richard wouldn’t
pay out. It certainly seems a bit that way. And why were other bequests put off for a year, like the
20 nobles to his other daughter Mary? Enquiring minds want to know.

Robert’s son Simon must have been an unusually intelligent child; although his father and his
brothers were blacksmiths, he was lucky and clever enough to receive a proper education, and was
raised to the dizzy heights of a vicarage, well above the rest of his family in income and social status.
In 1588, when he was 20, he was awarded one of two scholarships for Kent, founded by the Deacon
of Nottingham, and rotated around the counties in turn, and on this scholarship went to St. John’s,
Cambridge.

Simon got his B.A. from 1591-92 and his M.A. in 15951, and was then appointed as Vicar of
Bredgar, his home town, where he remained for the rest of his life, from 1595–1622. His father was
presumably proud of him. We know almost nothing about his activities as vicar, except that one
thing he did (in addition to his usual duties, one assumes) is to transcribe into the parish ledger many
of the old records before he became vicar. They can still be seen (well, I’ve only seen photocopies,
to be honest, but that’s still pretty cool), with a little notation “Simon Seaman, Vicar” at the bottom
of each page.

In 1596, Simon married Susanna Wythers in London, at St. Michael Bassishaw, a church that
was demolished in 1899. It’s a reasonable assumption that this was Susanna’s home parish. It’s
possible that she brought quite a lot of money to the marriage, as in his will Simon left his daughter
Mary (who later married Richard Beale) various items, including “my little bible . . . the brasse vessle

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1 According to the official list of Cambridge University Alumni, 1261–1900
my wife used to fry fritters in . . .” and £100 to be invested for her. The most likely place where Simon could have got this kind of wealth is from his wife; it was a large sum for the time. His will contained no provision for his wife, so it’s likely she was already dead.

Mary was only five when her father died, and the will implies that her mother was already dead. Neither does the will name any guardians for her; it’s not known how she was raised. Still, raised she was, to marry so far above her grandfather’s station that he would have been turning in his grave. Not out of displeasure one imagines, but certainly out of surprise. So, gentle readers, let this be an object lesson to you all on the values of a good education.

The Newingtons and Hepdens

Recall that Sarah Beale married Edward Curteis in 1733. Well, Sarah Beale’s mother, as we saw before, was Elizabeth Newington, another old Kent family that is described in Berry [9]. Elizabeth’s father was Samuel Newington of Wadhurst, which is consistent with the fact that Elizabeth got married in Wadhurst Church, while Samuel’s father, another Samuel, was of Hawkhurst, Kent (see Map 6).

The second Samuel’s parents get the prize for the strangest names; Zabulon Newington, of Ticeherst, and Goodguift Hepden. They just don’t come like that any more. Hi, we’re Zabulon and Goodguift, your new neighbours. Mind you, the Newingtons were tame compared to the Hepdens. Goodguift’s siblings (see the chart on page 141) were Herbert, John, Retourne, Elizabeth, Goodgift, Hopestill, Fearnott, Constance, Thankful, and Goddard. No prizes for guessing their religious persuasion. Mind you, according to Berry, Goodguift’s great-grandfather had “come from the North and had issue”, so they were basically a bunch of foreigners coming in and breeding like rabbits. Nasty. Three of the Hepden girls married Newingtons, with Fearnott and Hopestill marrying two Newington brothers, cousins of Zabulon. A bit of a genealogical mess, really.

Actually, I was motivated by these names to find out more about Puritan nomenclature, the first serious study of which was done by the Victorian vicar C.W. Bardsley [8]. He made a distinction between the Hebrew names such as Samuel and Joshua and the later names consisting of “scriptural phrases, pious ejaculations, or godly admonitions”. Examples of both types of name can be seen clearly in the Newingtons and Hepdens. Apparently, the heartland of Puritan names like this was East Sussex and the Kent border, while the only other place they became popular was in Northamptonshire [65]. So the families discussed in this chapter were right in the hot seat of Weirdo Puritan Nomenclature (WPN©). One of the originators of WPN was almost certainly Dudley Fenner, a curate at Cranbrook in Kent, around the 1580s. He named his daughter Good-Fruit and inspired some poor sucker to name his son From-Above Hendley. From Cranbrook these new names spread mostly into East Sussex, but after 1600 the fashion died out fairly quickly. So, contrary to what I had thought before, WPN was highly localised both in time and space, and was not at all a generic feature of Puritanism.

The Hepdens are one well-known family to have used WPN; in fact they used regular names in conjunction with WPN, which was not at all unusual. Goddard Hepden, who later called himself Godward Hepden, appears in [65] as an example of an upwardly mobile Puritan. His father, John Hepden, made his will in 1586, at which time he called himself a yeoman, although one of his executors called himself a gentleman. His sons, Goddard and Thomas, were also called yeoman at that time. In 1591, Goddard was reported by the vicar of Burwash for failing to receive communion there for over a year, but, despite these differences in doctrine, both Thomas and Goddard were calling themselves gentlemen by 1610, when Goddard was a member of a grand jury.

Goddard built himself a house at Burwash, Homshurst, which is still standing today. It’s made of brick, with stone dressings, and has the initials G.H. and the date 1610 carved on the lintel. By this time he had reverted to Goddard, as opposed to Godward, although it’s not clear whether he was a good boy and received the communion. In the preamble to his will he admits that “the days of my pilgrimage to be both few and evil” and speaks of “the small estate and substance which God hath lent me”. This was nothing but self-righteous pious hypocrisy; he goes on to mention his freehold lands in Heathfield and Mayfield, copyhold land in Brightling, and property in Burwash, which sounds like his small estate wasn’t too small at all. In his will he also left money bequests
amounting to £183 5s, and a further £23 in annuities, as well as £2 10s for the poor. Since, in the 1590s, when he was called a yeoman, he had been assessed at £4, it’s clear that he had done rather well for himself thank you very much.

Returning to the Newingtons, there is, unfortunately, little more to be said about them. Sir Adam Newington of Witherden, Ticeherst, Sussex, Knight (whom I don’t believe existed anyway); Thomas Newington of Saleherst, Sussex; his son Thomas Newington of Saleherst; they’re all just names to me. I assume that, if they existed at all, they were farmers, landowners, reasonably wealthy. They had a coat-of-arms (Azure, three eagles displayed, three, two, and one, argent. Crest: On a chapeau azure turned up argent a demi eagle, wings elevated, of the last.) but it’s not clear to me exactly who was entitled to it. Probably not all of them.

However, the most intriguing things about these gentlemen are their wives. And here my suspicious nature comes into play. According to the 1662 Sussex Visitation\(^1\) the first known Newington, Sir Adam, married Alice Colepeper, the only daughter of Sir Alexander Colepeper of Bedgebury and his first wife, Agnes Davy. Now, this rings all sorts of alarm bells. The only source I know for this claim is the Sussex Visitation, which was copied by Berry in his County Genealogies \(^9\). But the Colepepers were a very well-known family, with an ancient pedigree, and this sounds very like the Newingtons, in typical style, invented an illustrious marriage for their early ancestor, who was likely also fictitious; Sir Adam Newington, Knight, the ancestor of a bunch of unknighted gentry (i.e., rich farmers), just sounds a little too convenient to me. Not to mention that, given that this was the record of a Heraldic Visitation, the Newingtons clearly would have been under pressure to produce some noble ancestors to justify the use of their coat of arms. It would be understandable if, under the circumstances, some minor inaccuracies crept into the family records. If I could find some other source of this, some confirmation from an independent source, I’d believe it. But if Berry and the 1662 Sussex Visitation is the only thing going, well, I’m not convinced.\(^2\)

Of course, there is no doubt that women often married beneath them in social station, and it was common for the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of nobles to be much less socially advanced; it didn’t take many generations to lose the blue blood. However, although it’s possible, there’s little evidence of that happening here.

Similarly for the Cheney and the Dawtrey wives. Each of those families was also ancient and eminent. For example, the Dawtrey lineage appears in Burke’s *Commoners* \(^{15}\); Jane Dawtrey (wife of Thomas Newington, who died in 1580) was (or so it is claimed) the daughter of Sir John Dawtrey of Moore Hall, Sussex, who married a daughter of a Shirley of Weston, whose ancestry can be traced to the Plantagenets. If true, it would be nice addition to the family tree. But it probably isn’t.

So I don’t think I’ll continue the lines any further. It would be an interesting exercise in genealogical construction, just to believe all these marriages and construct a detailed lineage as far back as possible. However, until I actually believe it, I can’t be bothered. I’ll leave it to somebody else.

**Questions:** As I pointed out in the text, do we believe the early Newington wives? If we do, what’s the evidence? It would be nice to have a confirmed link to the Colepeper, Dawtrey and Cheney families, but somebody needs to do more work on this.

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\(^1\)Heraldic Visitations were essentially inspections by the King of Arms to see who was using coats of arms as they shouldn’t be. The King of Arms would go around the country asking the gentry to present proofs of their nobility, their arms, and their descent. Understandably, these visits weren’t popular. The Visitations took place from 1530 to 1688, after which the landed gentry became too powerful to have their precious coats of arms taken away from them, whether they deserved them or not.

\(^2\)By the way, for anybody interested in the early history of the Colepepers there is an excellent web site, http://gen.culpepper.com/, the best family history web site I’ve ever seen. In particular, it has a complete reproduction of two articles by Attree and Booker \([6, 7]\) from 1904–1905, which have a very nice discussion of the early Colepepers.
Chapter 7

The Boileau de Castelnau

You will recall from Chapter 5 that my father’s G-grandmother was Ellen Leah Boileau, the wife of Reginald John Graham of the Elms, and of Edmond Castle. The Boileau de Castelnau were a Huguenot family based at Castelnau, in Languedoc. The official pedigree goes back to the Crusades but the details are almost certainly nonsense, in much the same way that Sir Adam Newington, Knight, is likely nonsense also. The Boileau were tradesmen who got wealthy, got pretensions, got a coat-of-arms, and got a castle. They then got the noble ancestors. Anyway, at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (in 1685) most of the family were booted out of France and fled to England, where they established themselves in London and Dublin, making another fortune as wine merchants. (A younger brother remained in France, converted to Catholicism, and continued rich and famous.) They were closely involved with the British Empire in India, and many of the family, both male and female, lived and died there.

One branch of the family (not mine) made the lofty heights of a Baronetcy, much as a branch of the Grahams of Edmond Castle did (page 108), but the Boileau Baronet line has persisted to the present day. I believe there exists a Boileau Baronet still, in Australia of all places. I must say that one doesn’t naturally associate Australia with Baronets, but who am I to complain? It takes all sorts to make a world, or so sayeth the wise.

Along the way the Boileau married into all sorts of other families; French nobility, French Huguenots, other refugees in England and Ireland, British families in India. Many of these other families have detailed pedigrees of their own, so the whole thing rapidly gets out of hand. In this chapter, and the ones following, I’ll basically just concentrate on some of the more interesting and lesser-known families. Once the lineage gets into the upper reaches of the European aristocracy (which is all well known, well documented, common to very many people, and thus rather dull from my point of view) I won’t bother tracing the lines in detail. I’ll leave all that to any interested reader with time to spare. It’s pretty much a matter of reading the relevant books, such as Europäische Stammtafeln [62].

Nevertheless, all the various families and lineages can be highly confusing. It’s not possible to put them all into one big chart – well, not easy anyway. Some years ago I actually did prepare an enormous chart that contains quite a lot of these families, and I even got some copies printed. I went to a special printing place who, in hindsight, must have thought I was doing a prepress run for Auckland University and they were very helpful, no doubt seeing lots of university dollars on the horizon. Eventually I said, yes, that’s good, I’m happy now. How many copies do you need, they asked. Three, said I. What, said they, surely you jest. Nope, said I, three copies. Can I pay by Eftpos? Oh, they said, no we can’t do small retail sales, you can only pay by Auckland University purchase order. Oh, said I, really? I can’t get one of those. Oh, they said. Oh, said I. Silence ensued. Oh, bugger it, they said, take them for free. It’s not worth the hassle. Thank you, said I, and hightailed it out of there clutching my prizes, one of which is now hanging on my wall, another of which I gave to Mum and Dad. It’s worth doing once, but never again. Of course it’s well out of date by now, but it still looks pretty.

At any rate I’ve broken up the genealogical charts into bite-sized chunks as best I can, and I shall
CHAPTER 7. THE BOILEAU DE CASTELNAU

discuss them bit by bit over the next few chapters. I encourage you to refer to the charts often. I’ll do my best to guide you through, but it won’t be easy.

The first question that any serious genealogist will always ask is “How do you know all this?” Well, my grandmother, Catherine Bond (page 85), was interested in family history and wrote down a brief history of the family in a little red book, which I call the Little Red Book, because I’m very clever and good with names. In the Little Red Book she wrote down details of the Grahams of Edmond Castle and of the Boileau de Castelnau; the Boileau details were clearly copied from the famous Boileau chart [11] (to be discussed later). Everything in the Little Red Book agrees with all other sources I have been able to find, including Lart [50] and the Big Book of Boileau [10] (to be discussed shortly), so there is no doubt of the lineage, at least for the most recent generations.\footnote{I remind the reader that any lineage that goes back more that a few generations is always subject to doubt, and the more the generations, the greater the doubt.}

The Little Red Book is a genealogist’s dream; very few are lucky enough to have such a convenient grandmother, and those of us who do thank our lucky genealogical stars each and every day.

My luck doesn’t end there, either. Many of the Boileau de Castelnau, as it turns out, were keen genealogists themselves, and have collected and preserved enormous amounts of information about the family. Not only that, but there are enormous numbers of people connected to the family, and they have collected information also. So all in all, being related to the Boileau de Castelnau is the genealogical equivalent of finding a gold field where all one has to do is wander around picking up nuggets.

Of all the information collected by the various Boileau, two pieces stand out. Some years ago, Vince O’Grady sent to me a copy of a wonderful family history of the Boileau de Castelnau, which I call the Big Book of Boileau, or BBB [10]. This document has been written by at least two recent generations of Boileau (Digby Whicher Boileau, Thomas Whicher Boileau, and Peter Mudie Boileau), is over 200 pages long, and contains a wealth of priceless information; a detailed discussion of the Boileau armorial bearings, a description of the castle, biographies of just about every known Boileau, and so on. Not only is the document comprehensive, it also appears to be carefully researched by people who cared about their sources.\footnote{See page 145.}

BBB is not, let me add, entirely without fault. Or rather, I should say that I do not always entirely agree with its method of presentation, which, I suppose, does not necessarily constitute a fault in anybody’s eyes except mine. It concentrates very much on matters male and military, and ignores, for the most part, all the girls. Military actions, regiments, and battles are described in loving detail, while most females are dismissed in a line or two. At one stage the authors even seem to express surprise that someone had traced a Boileau pedigree, including the female lines! How silly! Tracing females! In this the authors are no worse than most genealogical compilers. Even in this book that you’re reading now the females receive less attention, purely as a result of the fact that I know less about them. Nevertheless, one could at least try.

Anyway, despite my niggles, the Big Book of Boileau is the \textit{sine qua non} of Boileau genealogy. Unfortunately, it is not properly published, and is available only in the form of a Microsoft Word file that is circulated around family members. All one has to do is ask for it, but one must first discover its existence. I hope that one day the authors will see fit to publish it formally, so that it could be more easily available and widely known.

The second major work is what I call the Big Boileau Chart, or BBC [11]. In December 1867 a Boileau relation called Jane Alicia Innes compiled a genealogical chart of the Boileau pedigree, including all known Boileau descendants. It has handwritten additions from the 1890s on.\footnote{BBB refers once to something it calls “The Innes chart”. It’s hard to believe that this refers to something other than this chart, but no more detail is given. Furthermore, the reference in BBB to the Innes chart seems to be referring to something quite different. Unlikely though this might seem, it’s possible that BBB didn’t refer to this chart at all. However, in BBB there is another oblique reference made to an attempt to list all the descendants, including those in the female line, and this almost certainly refers to this chart.} The original copy of this chart is now owned by Chris Read, yet another Boileau descendant, and he was kind enough to photograph the whole bloody thing and send it to me (see the photo on page 145).

Actually, there’s a neat story about how I learned about the Big Boileau Chart. Some years ago I typed out the whole of Granny’s Little Red Book and put it on the web. A while after doing this,
Leigh Boileau contacted me from Australia, and said how she had the original copy of the chart from which Granny had copied her information. Wonderful, said I. So Leigh very kindly sent me a copy of her chart; sure enough, the agreement with the Little Red Book was word for word. No doubt at all where Granny had got her information.

However, a few years later, Chris Read contacted me, saying the same thing, that he had the original chart from which the Little Red Book was copied. Very nice, I replied, I've already got a copy of the original. Er... no you don't, was the answer; the original is 1 m wide and over 15 m long, and you don't have a copy of it. My jaw just about hit the floor. 15 m long?! What on earth was in it? So Chris painstakingly photographed the whole chart, piece by piece, and emailed me a vast number of photographs, which I pieced together into a single pdf file. Sure enough, the chart that Leigh Boileau sent to me was itself a copy of only a small part of the Big Boileau Chart. I can only assume that the Big Boileau Chart is the original of all these charts; if it's a copy of a part of a larger earlier chart, then I'm not sure I want to know. Fifteen metres long is bad enough; anything more would just be ridiculous.

The sources for many of the French families into which the Boileau married are, I fear, just as unreliable as Burke's massive works of fiction. I've referred often to Chesnaye-Desbois [21] but this has a reputation of being completely unreliable. However, I have nothing better. I'm not conversant enough with French, particularly not old French, to search the records myself, so I am somewhat restricted in what I can do. I've also used Artefeuil [5] and d'Hozier [45], but they are just as unreliable as Chesnaye-Desbois.

It remains to discuss in slightly more detail the sources used by BBB. Almost all of the original family documents are now lost; most importantly a detailed account of the family that had been compiled by Charles (ii) (page 159) was lost in the fire that followed the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, and others are thought to have perished when the family residence in Dublin burned down some time before 1811. Despite this, an account of the family that was written in 1754 still survives; the author clearly referred to many of the original documents, and there's no reason to distrust it.
in any important respect. There is also surviving a copy of the Certificate of Nobility (page 154) granted to the family in 1668, which contains a list of all the documents produced in proof of the descent. The existing 1811 story of the Boileau family, produced by Bluemantle Poursuivant, of the English College of Heralds\(^1\), is based almost entirely on the 1754 document. BBB recognises that the accounts of the family in Debrett’s *Peerage and Baronetage*, and in Burke’s, are mostly a pile of nonsense. No surprise there. Interestingly, BBB doesn’t like Lart much either, although it’s better than Burke. Then there is a long list of other documents used to establish family facts; family letters, the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, regimental histories, various books about French history, Proceedings of the Huguenot Society, etc. All in all, I trust BBB implicitly. They did their homework.

So, to begin.

**Boileau mythology: Etienne and the Crusaders**

I’ve decided to start the story of the Boileau with Etienne, the Grand Provost of Paris in 1250, even though there is no evidence that links him to any later Boileau. He is traditionally considered to be the first known member of the family, and who’s to say, this might even be true. Stranger things have happened. At any rate, it makes for a nice story. Just as long as we keep in mind we are really discussing a work of imaginative fiction we won’t go too far wrong. (Well, Etienne’s existence *per se* is quite certain – it’s just the descent to later Boileau that is the work of a more creative mind.)

According to Joinville [49]

> There were moreover so many malefactors and robbers in Paris and round about, that the whole country was overrun with them. The King, who was very zealous for the protection of the common people, found out the whole truth; so he would no longer allow the provosty of Paris to be sold, but gave secure and high wages to those who for the future should hold it. And he put down all the evil customs whereby the people might be oppressed; and made inquiry throughout the whole kingdom and country where a man might be found who would administer sound and strict justice, and spare the rich no more than the poor. And then Stephen Boileau was pointed out to him; and he upheld and kept the provosty so well that no malefactor, nor robber, nor murderer, durst abide in Paris but he was presently hanged or ruined: neither kith nor kin, gold nor silver could protect him. The King’s territory began to improve; people came thither for the sake of the good justice that was done there.

To commemorate this wonderful occasion in 1250 there is a statue of Etienne outside the Hôtel de Ville in Paris.

To continue with the fable, Robert Boileau, the son of Etienne, accompanied Louis IX on his expedition to the Crusades in 1270, and perished at the siege of Tunis. Family documents claimed that Robert went with Louis to the Holy Land, where he died, but since Louis IX’s crusade never got there, this is somewhat unlikely. Louis’s army was decimated by disease, among the victims being the King himself; it is claimed (by the Boileau family) that he was shriven on his deathbed by a priest named Geoffroi Boileau, a story just as believable as all the other stories about the early Boileau.

After Robert come a string of Jeans. Even the originators of these tales couldn’t decide how many Jeans there were, two or three. The first, Jean (i), is supposed to have been born in 1270 which is possible, I imagine, even though his claimed father died that same year while on Crusade. His son, Jean (ii) was ennobled by Charles I in 1341, in an event that actually is probably historical, as a certificate of the Patent of Nobility still exists. The Patent, from the Register entitled *The Register of Documents of the Chamber of Accounts of the Lord the King*, begun at All Saints, 1362, and finished at 1st January, 1388, reads: ‘Master Jean Boileau, Notary to the King, by the favour done to him by his [i.e., the King’s] letters, given in the month of September AD 1371, concerning his [i.e., Jean’s] nobility and that of Master Jean, his son, together with their posterity. Issued and delivered

\(^1\)Don’t you just love the name?
The Boileau de Castelnau: Chart II. The earlier generations.
on payment of the sum of 119 livres, 4 sous, 1 denier, which must be recovered by the Treasury, according to the schedule of the said Treasury given the 27th of October 1372, and returned to the said Master Jean.”1 Below this is written: “Compared with the original, signed, made an extracted as above by me, Conseiller, Secretary to the King, House and Crown of France, and his finances and Writer in the Chambre des Comptes, signed, Richer. This fact is pronounced by the Notaries of the King at the Chatelet of Paris. Undersigned the 12th April 1667: Le Boucher, Levesque”, and is signed with their official signatures.

So it seems there really was at least one Jean Boileau who was ennobled. It was either this Jean, or his son Jean, who went with 2000 other gentlemen, and the Duc de Nevers, to help the Emperor Sigismund, and was killed at the battle of Nicopolis, on the 28th of September, 1396. According to Chesnaye-Desbois, he was ordered by the Duc de Nevers to carry on his arms trois croix en sautoir, but he never did this.

This is all very interesting actually. It’s likely that this Jean Boileau existed, and may even have fought at Nicopolis, but he seem to have had quite a different coat-of-arms from the Boileau de Castelnau; there is no evidence at all for a direct link between the Jean and the later Boileau, and the different coat-of-arms is evidence that there was no link. It’s a nice example of how a family that bought into the nobility would invent its own noble ancestors, grabbing them from wherever they could. If they had the same name, so much the better.

The earliest historical Boileau

The first Boileau to live in Languedoc was Regnaud (d. 1400), supposedly the son of Jean (ii) or (iia). He first lived in Montereau-Fault-Yonne, close to Paris, but was commissioned by Charles VI to build a castle at Nîmes. So he sold his house for 4,500 livres – it is said that his coat-of-arms was carved above the door of this house – and moved down to Languedoc, being the first of the family to live there, and thus beginning the long association of the Boileau family with this region.

Regnaud’s name first appears in the records in 1390, as Treasurer of the Domain of the King in the Seneschalship of Beaucaire and Nîmes. Chesnaye-Desbois says how he dropped the arms of Etienne Boileau in favour of his own – the tower denoting the castle he was commissioned to build, presumably, and the crescent denoting the bravery of his father at the battle of Nicopolis. This appears to be merely a transparent attempt by Chesnaye-Desbois to cover up the uncomfortable fact that the coat-of-arms had suddenly changed, and he had no idea why. The new coat-of-arms of Regnaud was D’azur, au château d’argent, macôné de sable, au croissant de même en point. Le caisque: ouvert d’argent. Cimier: un Pêlican d’or, donnant son sang à ses petits. Devise: de tout mon coeur. That is, a blue background with a silver castle, trimmed in black, and a silver crescent below; silver helmet, and the crest is a pelican giving its blood to its children. Motto: with all my heart.

Regnaud’s son, Antoine (i), is pretty much an unknown. There is little doubt of his existence, and it’s likely he lived at Montpellier at some stage, but little more can be said; BBB claims he was definitely never Treasurer, as some accounts claim.

Antoine’s son was Guillaume (i) (1420-1494). We know nothing of him until, on the 20th of October 1469 he was commissioned by the then Treasurer, Mathieu Picot, to receive the payments on his behalf; he continued doing this for 15 years.

In 1470 he married Etiennette Bourdin (daughter of the Receveur Général des Finances de Poitou), and in the marriage contract he is described as keeper of the salt barns at Montpellier, an appointment connected with the gabelle2. On the 24th of June 1484, he took over the appointment of

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1 Sounds to me a bit like the cash for honours scandal.
2 From Wikipedia: “The gabelle was a very unpopular tax on salt in France before 1790. In France, Gabelle was originally applied to taxes on all commodities, but was gradually limited to the tax on salt. In time it became one of the most hated and most grossly unequal taxes in the country, but, though condemned by all supporters of reform, it was not abolished until 1790. First imposed as a temporary expedient in 1286 in the reign of Philip IV, it was made a permanent tax by Charles V. Repressive as a state monopoly, it was made doubly so from the fact that the government obliged every individual above the age of eight years to purchase weekly a minimum amount of salt at a fixed price.” Isn’t Wikipedia great?
Treasurer from Jean Berri. As part payment he was obliged, by Michel Gaillard, Chancellor-General of France and the husband of Marguerite Bourdin (probably a relation of Guillaume’s wife) to make over to Picot’s children his inheritance of Argenteuil, near Paris. This consisted of a strong house, with battlements, lands, vineyards, fields and gardens, and 120 to 140 livres of income. As far as it is known, this marks the severance of the last tie of the family with the north of France.

In 1487 he appears in an incident involving his wife’s brother Antoine, who was Receiver of the poll-tax in the Diocese of Nîmes and who had arrested two men for debt on a market-day, contrary to the privileges of the town. The Consuls made representations to the Seneschal, whose Lieutenant sat to adjudge the dispute, with the Judge of the Criminal Court, the King’s Advocate, the public prosecutor and Guillaume Boileau, the Treasurer of the Seneschalship. The Lieutenant took the advice of these officers and, on their unanimous opinion, he upheld the petition. Guillaume is recorded as having agreed with the decision, but also as having spoken on his brother-in-law’s behalf.

The following year, the Commissioners of Account in Paris addressed an instruction to him as the Commissioner for the investigation of francs-fiefs, or noble heritages. The original of an order directed to him as Treasurer in 1493 is among the Boileau family papers. In the previous year, he had obtained from the King letters of reversion of the Treasurership to himself and to his son Antoine. I think this means that the office of Treasurer was just passed directly from him to his son.

He died on the 6th of September, 1494, and his tomb, in the family house at Nîmes, was to be seen as late as 1754, with the following inscription, translated from the Latin original:

IHS\(^1\) To the blessed memory of Lord Guillaume Boileau
Treasurer of our most serene King, Lord Antoine Boileau,
his son and Treasurer, caused (this tomb) to be erected
with a chapel for himself and his (family)
in the year of our Lord 1499, in September.

‘Pray for the dead, that they may rest in peace’.

He had 11 children.

Of those eleven children, only seven appear in the records. The oldest male, Antoine (ii), I deal with below. Guillaume (ii) became the Prior of St. Nicholas, near Uzès, Jean Guillaume was a councillor at Montpellier, Madeleine married Pierre de Rollot, Treasurer of Provence in 1491, Nicholas was a councillor in the Grand Council (whatever that was) and is believed to be the ancestor of the famous poet Boileau Despreaux, Agnes was the second wife of Pierre de Rochemore (who is actually my 12G grandfather through his first wife, Jeanne d’Orjolet; see page 285. It all gets a little complicated), while Jeanne Catherine didn’t marry the Chancellor of France, as is sometimes claimed. I don’t know whom she did marry, but it wasn’t him apparently.

It was Guillaume’s son, Antoine (ii), who first bought lands at Castelnau, thus becoming the first Boileau de Castelnau; he purchased the estate of Castelnau-de-la-Garde, and of St. Croix de Boiriac (or Boirac)\(^2\), from the Comte Secoudin de St. Felix, for £400 and in 1500 took possession of the property. This was a very significant purchase, as it provided the Seigneurie by which the Boileau could be classed as noble. It appears that, no matter how important or rich you were, you couldn’t be officially classed as a Noble until you had the estate to prove it. It should, however, be noted that the Seigneurie de Castelnau did not constitute a Barony, and thus none of the Boileau de Castelnau were Barons, contrary to the claims in some sources.

It’s maybe useful to say a few things about the French system of nobility, to help us understand better where the Boileau came from. The first important thing to realise is that nobility in France was quite specific, carrying as it did a number of legal rights and privileges, particularly exemption from taxation. There were three ways nobility could be acquired; by birth, by office, or by letters

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\(^1\)An abbreviation of the Greek spelling of Jesus.

\(^2\)We know where Castelnau is – it’s called Castelnau-Valence in the map on page 243 – but I have no idea where St. Croix de Boiriac is, and I don’t think anybody else does either. Its precise location seems to have disappeared into the historical mists. I can’t even find it on Google maps.
patent from the Sovereign. Typical offices that conferred nobility were things like municipal offices (aldermen, mayors, that kind of thing), judicial offices, fiscal offices (senior tax collectors, state auditors, members of the tax courts, etc.), administrative offices (positions in the King’s household for instance), or military commissions. You could lose nobility by failing at your feudal duties or practising forbidden occupations: commerce, for example, or manual crafts were to be avoided. Medicine, glass-blowing, exploitation of mines, maritime commerce, and wholesale commerce were acceptable, for some strange reason. Tilling your own land was acceptable, but farming someone else’s (except the King’s) was not.

Titles (such as Duc, Comte or Baron) were quite different from nobility, and were attached to specific pieces of land. One had to be noble to have a title, but most nobility had no title. To complicate things further, as I understand it commoners could become Seigneurs, or Lords, of estates, merely by buying them. Although a commoner who bought estate X could then be known as the Seigneur de X, they could not take over any title associated with that estate, to become, say, the Comte de X. There was thus no simple correspondence between Seigneurs and the nobility, or the nobility and titles. As far as I can see, Seigneurs were pretty much rich farmers, with a variety of legal rights over their tenants in addition to the rights of a landlord.

It seems clear that the Boileau de Castelnau acquired their nobility through the acquisition (presumably the purchase) of financial offices, and became the Seigneurs de Castelnau upon purchase of that estate. They were not originally titled, as the Seigneurie de Castelnau carried no title, although I believe they became so later, after my ancestors had split off and gone to England.

Like his father, Antoine (ii) was Treasurer, the office being granted to him by Charles VIII in 1494. He appears in July 1496 as Treasurer in an order to pay certain fees, and is described as a ‘licencie-en-lois’, a grade of lawyer between ‘bachelier’ and ‘docteur’. Upon the accession of Louis XII in 1498, Antoine was confirmed in the office, at Senlis. For some unknown reason, however, he was suspended from office from August 1511 to April 1512; this may account for his obtaining yet another confirmation of office in 1513, in Valence, while yet another was necessary on the accession of François I (this must have been quite a familiar procedure by now).

The suspension evidently did not affect his reputation, for in 1516, when the Duchesse d’Alençon (Marguerite de Valois, the King’s sister) visited Nîmes, he was taken into her service; his wife Françoise was appointed Marguerite’s Dame d’honneur, and their son Jean (iv), described as Seigneur de Sainte-Croix, was made an officer of the Household. These honours probably indicate the high esteem in which the family was held. Marguerite was always favourable to the Protestant religion, and this may ultimately have influenced the family into becoming Protestants.

In 1525, one Noble Marcelin Doumergue appears as Treasurer so commissioned by the King. The circumstances of this appointment are not known, but it may have been under a new system of financial administration introduced by the King in 1523. It did not last very long, for Antoine reappears in June, 1526, as Treasurer and Receiver-Ordinary, and again in 1531 and 1533. Letters of survival were issued on the 21st of August, 1534, to Antoine and his son, Jean (iv), continuing the office to the latter on his father’s death, which took place at some date before Jean’s marriage in 1538.

In 1497 he married Françoise Troussellier, daughter and heiress of Dr. Jean Troussellier (counsellor and principal physician to Charles VIII) and by her had four children. Pope Leo X, in an indulgence dated August 1516 recognised Antoine and his descendants as Noble, and this document remained among the archives of the family till the year 1755.

In addition to their son, Jean (iv), Antoine and his wife had three daughters, Catherine, Magdeleine and Etienne. I know nothing about them except the names of their husbands, which is pretty typical in a sad sort of way.

Antoine and his wife were devout Catholics, and in 1516 Pope Leo X granted indulgences for them and their family. These documents have the additional interest in that Antoine’s Noble status was recognised in them. However, their Catholicism had a rather more interesting consequence than merely some indulgences. The earliest Boileau family portrait is a painting of Antoine and Françoise (page 152) from 1519. The sit facing each other, hands in prayer, he with an elegant pageboy haircut and chubby cheeks, she demurely covered up. He looks heavenwards, like a good Catholic I imagine, while she stares straight ahead, with an expression that could be interpreted by
Antoine (ii) Boileau and his wife, Françoise Troussellier. This is the earliest Boileau family portrait, and the earliest picture of the Boileau coat-of-arms. The caption reads “1519 Antoine de Boileau Cher Seigneur de Castelnau Senechat de Nimes et de Beaucaire Trésorier du Roi et Françoise de Troussellier sa Femme, mariées en 1497.

an uncharitable person as somewhat sour. Behind them is this rather strange background, with a child in one corner. It’s not until you look closely that you realise that the child is being held by a pair of hands, but the body to which those hands belong has been deliberately obliterated. This background was originally a representation of the Madonna and Child; this evidently caused one of their Huguenot descendants to fear that this might be a temptation to worship the Virgin, and he therefore erased her figure from the picture, leaving the Child and her hands only. Nothing like a bit of religious bigotry to enliven the dry and dusty family history. Don’t worry, there will be plenty more.

Interestingly, the painting displays the earliest known emblazonment of the family coat-of-arms, which are also shown dimidiated with those of Françoise, an unusual way of combining coats-of-arms.

The next Boileau was Jean (iv), the son of Antoine (ii) and Françoise, who succeeded his father both as the Seigneur de Castelnau, and as Treasurer. He did homage for this office in 1535. He was almost certainly the first of the family to turn Protestant. There’s no direct evidence of this, but he married into a well-known Protestant family, the Montcalm, and at least three of their children married Protestants.

It’s claimed that Jean was imprisoned, tortured and beheaded in 1560, but reports of his death

1 i.e., me.
Two versions of the Boileau de Castelnau coat-of-arms: D’azur, au château d’argent, maçonnet de sable, au croissant de même en point. Le caîque: ouvert d’argent. Cimier: un Pélican d’or donnant son sang à ses petits. Devise: de tout mon cœur. My version is on the left, and on the right is the version carved above the door of the Boileau mausoleum at Ketteringham church. This photo was sent to me in September, 2008, by Mary Parker, the churchwarden of Ketteringham.

were greatly exaggerated; he was definitely alive on the 31st of May that year, when he was confirmed as Treasurer, and appears to have survived quite well without his head for a number of years thereafter.

Jean (iv) married Anne de Montcalm, a family with a long pedigree of its own (page 209), and they had five children that I know of. Jean (v), and four girls. As usual I know nothing about the girls except the names of their husbands. The only interesting one was the husband of Claudine, a charming gentleman by the name of Jean Jacques de Lageret, who is said to have been responsible for the ‘Michelade’, the massacre of Catholics, including 24 Catholic priests and monks, by Protestant rioters in Nîmes on Michaelmas (29 September) 1567.

The religious wars in France

And on that happy note of massacre, it is time for me to detour a little and write about the French religious wars. They had an enormous impact on the Boileau de Castelnau, and thus, although not genealogical in the strict sense, are crucial1 for a proper understanding of the family history.

After the introduction of Protestant ideas to France around 1520 or so, there followed a period of about 80 years that were essentially a continuous civil war, sometimes sleeping, sometimes pursued with vigour, but always there in the background. It wasn’t just a conflict between Catholic and Protestant, it was also fuelled by dynastic squabbles; the Catholic House of Guise and the Protestant Bourbons struggling desperately to maintain their own power and diminish that of their opponents. Indeed, once the political squabbles were ended by the accession of Henry IV (who switched to the Catholic faith with the famous remark “Paris vaut bien une messe” – “Paris is well worth a mass”) it’s remarkable just how quickly the extreme religious violence died down.

These religious wars were punctuated by a series of truces and atrocities, the most famous of which was the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre of 1572. Started by the Duke de Guise, who led a band of thugs to murder the Admiral de Coligny (a Bourbon), the anti-Protestant violence spread first through Paris and then to other cities; it’s estimated that about 10,000 people were killed, 2,000 in Paris alone.

In 1589 Henri de Navarre became King of France, after the assassination of Henry III. Henry IV was a Protestant and, financed by Queen Elizabeth of England (among others) he won a series

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1People have been known to mock me for my overuse of the word crucial. However, I think it’s OK here.
of battles against the Catholic league, but was unable to take Paris, whose Catholic citizens were strongly opposed to a Protestant King. However, Henry’s conversion to the Catholic faith in 1593 allowed a resolution of the situation, and Henry became one of the best-loved, and probably most human, of the French Kings (who were, in general, a bunch of complete twats). Of all monarchs I have ever read about, Henry IV is undeniably one of my favourites. A close second, maybe, to Queen Elizabeth I, but right up there with the best of them.¹

His major effort to defuse religious tension was the Edict of Nantes, not a sign of genuine toleration, more of an armed truce. However, without the political will driving the conflict, open violence was more or less avoided. Until, of course, Henry IV was assassinated by an angry Catholic on the grounds that Henry had betrayed the Catholic religion. How typical it all seems, how very unsurprising. Politics hasn’t changed from that day to this.

Over the next century, genuine religious toleration remained a thing unheard of, and there was increasing trouble between the factions, until in 1661 Louis IV, who was a particularly rabid anti-Protestant, introduced a number of harsh policies aimed at scaring Huguenots out of the country, or persuading them to convert. Finally, in October 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked (by the Edict of Fontainebleau) leading to the emergence once again of open violence against the Huguenots. Their response this time was not, in general, to fight back in any organised way. Instead, they left the country in droves.

And among those droves, as we shall see, was a branch of the Boileau de Castelnau.

The Patent of Nobility of the Boileau de Castelnau. I’ve never seen a transcription or translation of the writing, but that’s what I’m told this is. I’m not even sure what date this is from.

¹This is not setting the bar very high. Monarchs are and were, practically without exception, idiots.
The Huguenots: flight from France

Although we’re not sure whether or not Jean (iv) was a Huguenot (although we think he probably was), there is no doubt about his son, Jean (v), (1545–1618), the next Seigneur de Castelnau. He married twice, and both of his wives came from rabid Protestant families. Both of his fathers-in-law were implicated in the Michelade, and were fined.

In spite of the Michelade, when the news of the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre reached Nîmes, the townspeople of both religious factions met in council to consider measures to avert disorder, and the orders from Paris for the Catholics to retaliate and kill the Protestants were not carried out. Peace was maintained by mutual accord, and a guard of both religions was placed on the gate. A joint delegation was sent to the Seneschal to ask for his support, and Jean is on record as having been among those present and consenting.

Later he appears as Syndic of the Diocese of Nîmes, no doubt in its secular administrative character, i.e., he was its representative in its affairs. In 1586 he was summoned as a Noble to join the Constable Duc de Montmorency, the Governor of Languedoc, in his journey through the upper part of the province, and in 1594 he presented himself for service on the call-up of the arrière-ban, or feudal levy.

In 1600, the people of Nîmes asked him to represent them at an assembly at Montpellier for putting into effect the provisions of the Edict of Nantes. In the same year he was a deacon in the Consistory, or Presbytery of the Reformed Church at Nîmes, the duties of the office being to collect and distribute the alms for the benefit of the poor, the prisoners and the sick, to visit them and to care for them.

By 1605 he was 1st Consul of Nîmes. The consuls were the municipal magistrates of the towns in the south of France, forming the executive council. They were elected annually. In Nîmes there were four, of whom the first was a Noble or advocate, alternately; the second, a bourgeois or merchant; the third, a notary or artisan, and the fourth, a labourer.

Jean’s first wife, Honora de Blanche was the daughter of Robert Blanc, Juge-royal ordinaire de Nîmes, and his second wife was the daughter of Nicholas Calvi`ere de St. Cosme, a distinguished Huguenot. Jean’s eldest son, Jacques (i), was the son of Honora de Blanche. He is the ancestor of the branch of Boileau based in Uzès; he became a doctor of medicine, and was the 1st Consul of Uzès in 1619 and 1625, playing a leading role in the affairs of that town. BBB gives a lot more detail about the Uzès branch of the family, but since anybody interested can read it there, I shall not repeat the information here.¹

From his second marriage with Rose de Calvi`ere, Jean (v) had at least nine children (I believe he had thirteen in total, between both his wives). The eldest son, Nicholas (ii) inherited the Seigneurie of Castelnau; the next son, Guillaume, was a doctor of law; the next three sons, Jean (vi), Claude, and Daniel, all went off to fight and die young in completely unimportant and meaningless wars in various places around Europe, while I know nothing about the other children.

Next to come was Nicholas (ii) (1578–1657), the eldest son of Jean (v). He was a doctor of law, having taken his degree at Geneva, and was received as an advocate at Valence in 1598. He was Advocate to the Seneschal at Nîmes. According to BBB, “he was regarded as one of the cleverest of his time in his profession, his advice and writings having been followed eagerly in all the courts. He settled innumerable cases of litigation, not allowing his clients to go to court, if at all possible. His competence, ability and integrity were so well known, and his reputation was so well established, that he was still often asked for as Advocate as long as ten years after his death. Although he took no money from poor litigants or from Nobles, he earned nevertheless more than 100,000 francs.”

Hmmm.... well, I have to say that I remain unconvinced. This noble Robin Hood act is somewhat implausible to me. After all, if he never took any money from either poor or rich people, how on earth did he get so wealthy? This reads more like something somebody wrote for his funeral oration.

It was probably Nicolas who is mentioned as ‘de Boileau’, as one of the five gentlemen who, in 1619, at a time when civil war was threatening, went to tell Louis XIII how loyal his subjects in

¹One thing I don’t entirely understand is why the eldest son didn’t become the Seigneur de Castelnau, but ended up as a mere doctor of medicine in some other place connected with his mother’s family (Robert Blanc was from Uzès).
Languedoc were. It’s unlikely that Louis was convinced. He didn’t like Huguenots, and I doubt he liked Nicholas much.

In 1620, Nicholas represented the Consuls at a meeting of the leaders of the community and of the Protestants, called to deal with the town affairs at a time of civil disturbance. In 1621, he was asked to represent Nîmes in the matter of a levy for supplies to the Huguenot forces. Later that year, he represented the Town Council in discussion with the magistrates when the Protestants were causing trouble by trying to demolish the Catholic cathedral. In 1625 he was present at an assembly of leaders called by the Duc de Rohan, a Huguenot leader, to establish a council of direction for the conduct of the affairs of the Town. Two years later, the Duc de Rohan, then general of the Languedoc Protestant forces, set up in Nîmes a council of sixteen with powers to take such action as they thought fit for the security and welfare of the town; Nicolas was one of the first to be nominated.

Before his marriage in 1619, he travelled widely in western Europe, including a visit to England. According to the Little Red Book: “In his profession he rose to great eminence and having amassed the sum of £1400 Sterling, he resolved to visit foreign countries”. Good for him. How very broadening.

He married his cousin, Anne de Calvière-Boucoiran, and they had eleven children. The eldest, François (i), a professional soldier1, was drowned on a voyage to Naples in his father’s lifetime, and so Nicolas was succeeded by his second son, Jacques (ii).

And so, finally, to Jacques (ii) (1626–1697), the last of the Huguenot Boileau de Castelnau to live in France. The poor fellow didn’t have a happy life. He certainly started off well, training as a lawyer in Orange, and becoming a doctor of law on the 28th of October, 1642; he was admitted as advocate at Nîmes on the 31st of that same month. He became the Seigneur de Castelnau somewhat unexpectedly, his brother having died young (as often happens to military men one supposes), and he capped it all off by marrying a super-duper heiress from a super-duper important Huguenot family, Françoise de Vignolles. Her contribution to the marriage was 20,000 livres and 22 children; I presume her husband spent the money and let her raise the children. The de Vignolles, as we shall see later (page 205) had antecedents similar to those of the Boileau de Castelnau, but the mother of Françoise was a Baschi d’ Aubais, one of the very old, very rich, and very noble families of southern France, a descendant of the crème de la crème.

Jacques was as prominent in local politics as his father had been. In 1652, Louis XIV allowed the Protestant inhabitants of Nîmes to elect the most qualified of their number to the council, to balance the voice of the bishop, and Jacques Boileau was chosen to do this. Then in 1668 he was examined by the Royal Commissioners, who verified his letters of nobility, and confirmed him and his descendants in the nobility.2

However, Jacques’ luck didn’t last. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked and life for the Boileau de Castelnau, as prominent Huguenots, quickly became very difficult indeed. Jacques initially made plans with some friends to flee the country, but they were caught before they could do so. On the 12th of January, 1686 Jacques was arrested in Nîmes, all his property was confiscated, and he was imprisoned without trial in the castle of Pierre-Encise, near Lyons. He never saw his family again.

Persecution was gender-neutral.3 Françoise also refused to convert to Catholicism, and was locked up in a convent in 1686. Two years later she was transferred to a convent in Nîmes, but by

1BBB gives a long and loving description of his military honours. “Capt. in the Regt de Rousillon, his father having been given a King’s commission of a company of 100 foot-soldiers in the regt. of M. le Comte de Rousillon, dated 10th January, 1642. The regt. was disbanded in 1645. During the period 1642–45, it was engaged in Catalunya 1642–43, with the Army of the Rhine 1644, including the battle of Fribourg and the siege of Philipsburg, and in Catalunya again in 1645. In 1648 he was Capt.-Major in command of the Regt. de Ste Cecile, and was certified as having served throughout the campaign of that year in Catalunya. He is known to have become later a Lieut. Col. in the Cavalry Regt. of Destrigi, but nothing can be learnt about this unit.” This is pretty typical BBB-speak; it’s all very interesting information, I agree, but one wishes a little more information was given about the girls.

2A peculiarly French thing, these periodic examinations to make sure you can pass the nobility test. Wouldn’t want to have imposters, you know. It happened in Britain also, as the Heraldic Visitations are somewhat similar (see the footnote on page 142), but to a lesser extent I think. I could be wrong. Of course, nobility in France carried much more specific legal rights, such as tax exemption, than in Britain, so it’s understandable they tried to keep track of who was what.

3I use this expression solely to annoy my father.
Jacques (ii) Boileau (1626–1697). A translation of the writing below the picture is given on page 158.

1690 she had escaped and made her way to Geneva, where she lived until 1692. It’s tempting to think of imprisonment in a convent as a kind and gentle thing, with holy nuns floating around in white habits, ministering piously to the poor benighted heathen. Think again. Two of Françoise’s daughters, Marguerite and Madeleine, were also imprisoned in convents. Marguerite didn’t survive. She was 17 when she died in prison. Madeleine managed to escape but died very shortly afterwards, aged 16. Convents were clearly lethal.

Jacques didn’t have it any better, of course. In 1687 he and his friends wrote to the King:

Sire: Esperandieu, Castelnau, Riffard, the brothers Baudan, of Nîmes and Uzès in Languedoc, detained by your orders in your castle of Pierre-Encise at Lyon, since 19th January, 1687, appeal to your clemency, and pray you very humbly to have the charity to order that the subsistence which it has pleased your Majesty to accord since the month of April 1693, may be regularly paid to them. They have until now, Sire, lived by the help of their friends, who being no longer willing to continue this for fear of losing what they have lent, they thus see themselves reduced to the state of wanting for bread, if your Majesty does not take pity on them and has the charity to provide it. It is, Sire, that they have reason to expect justice and kindness from your Majesty, who has always taken care to give needed relief to the miserable; the suppliants who find themselves of this number will have the happiness of obtaining the favours that they ask with all possible respect in this submission, and by the vows and prayers which they address unceasingly for the continued good health of your sacred person, for that of all the Royal Family, and for the prosperity of your State and of your Arms.
Not surprisingly, the King paid no attention.

After becoming paralysed in August, 1696, Jacques was allowed to go to the baths at Balaruc on the south coast, but this obviously didn’t help a great deal. He died at St. Jean de Vedas, near Montpellier, on his way back, one presumes, to his prison cell, where he died after more than ten years in captivity, on the 7th of July, 1697. A late portrait of him (page 157) shows a gaunt, bearded man, with the inscription (in Latin):

In lasting memory of his hard imprisonment at Pierre-Encise the most Noble Jacques Boileau, Seigneur de Castelnau et de Sainte-Croix, &c had painted by the hand of the worthy woman, Joanne Garnier Charpy, of Lyon, in the year of salvation 1694, the 15th day of April; of his age, 68 years and 3 months; of his captivity, 8 years and 3 months and 3 days; he died 17th July, 1697, in the 71st year of his life, the 6th month and the 2nd day, and of his captivity, 11 years, 6 months and 5 days; this portrait, showing the sadness of his heart, by the dirt and leanness, the ugly wrinkles on his furrowed brow, the bristly beard, his face watered by copious tears drawn forth by the bitter fate of his exiled and best beloved wife and unhappy family scattered through various parts of Europe. O Lord, he whom thou hast kept from the womb, forsake him not in his old age.

The Lord didn’t pay any attention either.

Of the 22 children of Jacques and Françoise, I know the names of only 17, and at least four of them died very young. I’ve already described how two of the daughters were imprisoned in convents, one dying there and the other dying very soon after her escape. The fate of Maurice, one of the younger sons, and of at least one of the younger daughters, is particularly interesting. By the Edict of Fontainebleau it was decreed that young Protestant children should be removed from their parents and forcibly raised as Catholics; such was to be Maurice’s fate. He was only seven in 1685, and was removed from the care of his parents to be brought up Catholic. It’s not known who brought him up, or where, but he ended up inheriting the Seigneurie of Castelnau, marrying Eva de Guiran, the daughter of the President of the Parlement d’Orange, and having 12 children. The Seigneurie of Castelnau continued in this line for many generations; BBB [10] has a lot more details about them, if anybody is interested.

The youngest daughter, Louise, suffered the same fate as Maurice. She ended up marrying Abel de Ligonier, and their descendants are described in Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica, New Series, vol. IV (1884), p. 219. The Ligonier family were ‘new converts’, i.e., recent converts to Catholicism.

Since they were too old to be taken away from their parents so easily, and they had no prospects in France, the elder sons of Jacques and Françoise left France and took military service abroad, fighting with various Protestant armies across Europe. Henri (iii) and Jean-Louis (i) first joined one of the ‘Compagnies des Cadets’, established in France for the sons of Nobles who didn’t have any money but still considered themselves much more important than everybody else. After the Edict of Fontainebleau they escaped France (their unit was stationed at Besançon, near the border, making for an easy exit) and went to Brandenburg, where the Elector was making the Huguenots welcome. After all, why wouldn’t he? They would have made excellent army officers, one imagines, particularly for fights against Catholics. Henri was first a gentleman-cadet and then a Captain in the grenadiers-a-cheval of Brandenburg. He was killed at the siege of Tournai in 1709. According to Smiles [63], he was “killed by a blow from a fusil on the head, in the trenches before Tournay, whilst watching the attack of General de Saxe Schuberbourg, and was interred before the standard.” I can’t help feeling that it was unwise to be standing around watching a battle. You can get killed that way, it seems.

By 1702 Jean-Louis was fighting for the Hanoverians, and in April 1704 he and his regiment were in the great march of Marlborough’s army from Holland to the Danube which ended in the battle of Donauworth, or the Schellenburg, on the 2nd of July. This victory was followed on the 13th of August by the defeat of the French and Imperial armies at Blenheim, or Hochstedt. According to BBB [10] “The Hanoverian brigade, including de Luc’s, was at first engaged in the attack on
Charles (ii) Boileau (1673–1733).

Blenheim. It was then moved to the centre, where three of its battalions met the advance of nine French and defeated them. Jean-Louis was mortally wounded by a musket ball through the chest. He lived long enough to be promoted Captain by the Prince he served.” Further details can be gleaned from Smiles [63], who informs us that “He had been pierced from his chest to his spine, and two of his ribs were broken.” An almost-posthumous promotion always seems like a bit of a waste to me. Like attending someone’s deathbed when you haven’t bothered to visit them for the past 20 years. It’s bad timing at the very least.

Our tale turns now to Charles (ii), the only son of Jacques and Françoise to have left France and then survived long enough to leave descendants. By default, almost, he thus became the ancestor of the British Boileau. Like his older brothers, Charles initially fled France to Brandenburg, where he joined the Musketeers. However, his uncle, Charles de Vignolles, bought him a commission in the British army, which he joined as an ensign, on the 25th of May, 1694. He would have been just over 20 years old according to some dates, 24 according to others. Take your pick. In 1698 he was an ensign with Farrington’s Regiment, and a Lieutenant by 1703.

Just to put this into slightly more context, the so-called “Glorious Revolution”, where William of Orange invaded Britain to kick out James II, happened in 1688. However, William’s position remained highly insecure for some years after that, and so an influx of Huguenot soldiers was a godsend for him. His position at home was precarious, his English subjects couldn’t always be trusted to support him all that strongly, and he had numerous martial commitments abroad, particularly in Ireland and Holland. Farrington’s Regiment was not one of the Huguenot Regiments formed around 1688 (see page 189), but was formed by Colonel Thomas Farrington, a well-known soldier of the time, in 1694.

In 1704 Charles was taken prisoner at Lunengen1 by the French but was exchanged at Valenciennes on the 1st of February, 1709. This, to my mind, is supreme irony. If he had been caught trying to flee France as a Huguenot, he would have been executed. But when he’s caught after he leaves France it’s OK, no problem, even though he’s fighting against the French and presumably killing a few of them. This doesn’t make a lot of sense to me. The military mind is a weird one, for sure.

On the 30th of December, 1703, in Dublin, Charles married Marie Madelaine Collot d’Escury, the daughter of Daniel Collot d’Escury (page 200), Seigneur de Landauran, and a Major in Lord Galway’s French regiment of cavalry. He was then foolish enough to get caught by the French, and so spent the first five years of his married life a prisoner in France. Marguerite, the eldest child, wasn’t born until December, 1710.

In 1711, a couple of years after his release from captivity, Charles sold out of the army and settled

1 At least according to [63], but I have no idea what place is meant by this. I even tried to look it up, and found nothing.
in Southampton, where he and Marie raised their family of ten or twelve children (the sources differ, and the names of only ten are known). He was known as the ‘Gallant Refugee’, in reference to his social, not his military, prowess. In 1717 he came to a formal agreement with his younger brother, Maurice, and renounced his right to the Seigneurie de Castelnau. Presumably he got paid for it. Although Charles was no longer the Seigneur de Castelnau, he continued to call himself Charles Boileau de Castelnau, as did his descendants.\(^1\)

Charles’s business ventures were not initially successful and he lost an enormous fortune, £20,000, in the South Sea bubble in 1720. So he sold up and moved to Dublin in 1722, where he established himself as a wine merchant and retrieved the family fortune. He died in Dublin, in 1733, aged 60, two years after Marie, who died aged 51.

The British Boileau

Charles (ii) had innumerable descendants. BBB tries to cover many of them, and gets through a fair number of those with the Boileau name (of which there were plenty), but pretty much ignores any girls who weren’t married to a Boileau. The Innes chart [11] (page 145) enumerates a lot also, this time including the females, thus showing an admirable liberality of mind, but gives no details at all. I am not as ambitious as either. I shall merely describe, relatively briefly, the Boileau who are my direct ancestors, with only passing glances at any others. I omit, therefore, an enormous amount of Boileau information, but this is the price of having a book of reasonable length.

The oldest child of Charles (ii) and Marie, Marguerite (iv), married the Reverend John Peter Droz; as it happens he was also the minister who officiated at the wedding of Marguerite’s sister, Marie Boileau, to Henry Hardy. Marguerite and John Droz had, as the saying goes, issue. Lots of issue; well, they had only two children themselves, but quite a few grandchildren and so on. Some of their progeny went out to India, and thus the references to the Droz cousins in India, which are sprinkled through the sources.

Similarly, the youngest child, Marie, married Henry Barthelemy Hardy, and they also had issue, almost all of whom died young. Six died before their first birthday, another two died before the age of 25, one died when she was 33, and the last one, Simeon Henry, survived to the age of 62. There are still lots of descendants from this Boileau/Hardy marriage, and I’ve corresponded with a number of them (Vince O’Grady, for example. springs to mind immediately).

However, from my point of view, the most interesting child of Charles (ii) and Marie was Simeon (i), (1717–1767) who carried on his father’s wine business in Dublin, in partnership with his brother, Charles-Daniel. In 1741 he married Magdalena Elizabeth Desbrisay, a scion of another old Huguenot family (see Chapter 9), and they had 16 children (at least six died young), many of whom also reproduced with abandon. All of a sudden there were a lot of Boileau.

Magdelen. I know nothing interesting about her at all. Neither BBB [10] nor Lart [50] say anything about her apart from the fact she was born in Dublin.

Solomon (i). The eldest son, and thus the founder of what BBB [10] calls the elder branch. First he was a soldier, then the cashier of the Dublin bank. What a comedown that must have been. He married Dorothy Gladwell first and Lucy Slater second and had a lot of children. And I mean a lot of children. Seventeen by my count.

Simeon (ii). He died when only a year old.

John Peter (i), the third son of Simeon and Magdalena and my 5G uncle, was the first of the family to go out to India, in 1764, thus beginning a connection with that country that lasted over a number of generations. He started out, aged 16, as a mere Writer\(^2\) for the Honourable East India Company, but after nine years he was appointed as a member of the Company’s council at Masulipatam. In this position he was able to steal a lot more freely, and possibly even legally

\(^1\)One separates oneself from the common herd however one can.

\(^2\)The lowest grade; the hierarch was, in increasing order of importance, Writer, Factor, Junior and Senior Merchant. A person would typically spend about 5 years as a Writer before being promoted to Factor.
(according to British Law, that is), and he managed to amass quite a fortune. Even BBB [10] admits obliquely that his money was most likely not always obtained with the strictest honesty. Being a good sort of chap\(^1\), he used his position to obtain appointments or rich husbands for his siblings and cousins, and so a steady stream of Boileau went out to India to make fortunes in their turn. Most of them, like John Peter himself, eventually returned to England to spend their ill-gotten gains, building estates, wielding political influence, and buying titles. John Peter’s eldest son, John Peter (iv), was the only member of the family ever to become a Baronet (see the paintings on page 161), a title which still exists today, I believe. Sir John Peter (iv) Boileau Bart. is the subject of a delightful book by Owen Chadwick [20], 180 pages devoted to the doings of Sir John, his hypochondriac wife, his good-for-nothing, drunken, wastrel son (who “struggled against temptation with repeated earnestness and total failure”, to quote Chadwick’s immortal line), his religious psycho-nutter daughters, and the annoying vicar who didn’t know his place. It’s a great read, whether you’re a Boileau descendant or not.

**Anne Charlotte.** She married a Peter Friell in Dublin, where they lived for the duration, and had lots of progeny. Many of her children went out to India.

**Bonnie** went out to India, fell in love with the ship’s captain, Captain Lestock Wilson, and married him in Madras as soon as they arrived. He became an agent for the East India Company and made a pile of cash. As usual with the Boileau, she had a pile of progeny.

**Philip Daniel** was the first of John Peters many siblings to come out to India, as a cadet in 1771. After he had visited his brother at Masulipatam, the ship in which he took passage to Calcutta was lost with all on board.

**Mary Magdalena.** Nothing at all known. Not a sausage. Very likely she died young.

**Henrietta (i).** She went out to India with her sister Bonnie, stayed with her brother, John Peter (i), for a year, and then went to visit the Droz cousins in Bengal. There she married John Peach,

\(^1\)Only to anybody with a white skin, one presumes.
a Senior Merchant, but he died a few years later and she returned to England. Another sister, Margaret, reached India with two Friell girl cousins, but she died soon after arriving.

**Thomas (i).** My 4G grandfather. I’ll discuss him properly below.

**John Theophilus (i).** The brother that stayed in Dublin, becoming a rather dull druggist. In 1781 he married Jane Wilson, daughter of one George Wilson and his Huguenot wife, he being the head of a wholesale druggist’s business in Bride Street, Dublin. A few years later he became a partner in the firm, the name of which then changed to ‘Wilson and Boileau’, and on Mr. Wilson’s death to ‘John Theophilus Boileau, Druggist’. In 1799, John’s three sons were made partners while still very young, and in due course they took over the business as ‘Boileau Brothers’. As usual, he and Jane Wilson had a pile of children – at least 15.

In or before 1811, John suffered a severe paralytic stroke, supposed to have been caused by extreme anxiety over the destruction of his property by fire, in which a lot of family documents and pictures were lost, apparently. In spite of his illness and loss, however, John was not strapped for a dime. Far from it.

On Dec 8th, 1845, page 7, the *Times* of London has a couple of lines saying how Messrs. Boileau, the “eminent druggists of Bride-street” have gone bust, paying 10s in the pound. But this was well after John Theophilus had died.

**Marguerite.** Nothing known at all. Probably died young.

**Sarah.** Ditto.

**Gaspard Francis.** Almost ditto, except that it’s known he died young, less than a year old.

**Elizabeth** married a Michael Carter and had at least eight children, but I don’t know anything else about her. BBC [11] lists the children.

**Margaret.** Presumably the sister Margaret who went out to India with her sister Henrietta and promptly died.

However, let me not get distracted from the main star of the show, who is, in this case, **Thomas (i),** (1754–1806), the fifth son of Simeon and Magdalena, and my 4G grandfather. Thomas started out as an attorney in Dublin, but, when he was 25, his brother John Peter persuaded him to go out to India, where he was admitted as an attorney of the Supreme Court at Fort William in Bengal, on the 23rd of October, 1780. He became the under-sheriff of Calcutta in 1791, a post which seems to have had extensive opportunities for self-enrichment, in 1794 he was appointed one of the four JP’s, whose function it was to administer the municipal affairs of Calcutta, and in 1800 he was appointed Police Magistrate of the City. Thomas was one of the ones who didn’t make it back to England, dying in Calcutta in 1806, at the age of 52.

**Leah Jessup**, who married Thomas (i) Boileau in 1796, has a most interesting history herself, being descended from a well-known early immigrant to the east coast of the United States [48]. She herself was born in America, probably in Albany County in the Colony of New York. When her parents were kicked out of the U.S.A. she went with her parents to England. It’s possible she met Thomas Boileau there, but more likely that she met him in India, where the family went because they didn’t have enough money to live in England.\(^1\) I shall leave further discussion of her family to Chapter 8.

Thomas and Leah had ten children, all born in Calcutta, with the last, Henry Alexander Edmonstone, being born posthumously. After Thomas (i) died, (which you will recall happened in 1806), Leah took her children back to England on board the ship *Hugh Inglis*, which sailed from Calcutta in February, 1807. Her sister, Deborah, who was in failing health, returned to England at the same time. In 1813 Leah was living at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, which seems to be where the children were raised. Her sister writes of her the following year that she is “well situated and much respected

\(^1\)Presumably this means that they didn’t have enough money to live as wealthy people in England without doing any work.
for her good care and management of her family; for having had a good education she teaches them a great deal at home”. After the battle of Waterloo she went over to France with a portion of her own family, together with some of her nieces and nephews, the children of her sisters Elizabeth and Sarah.

Leah died in London in 1845, almost 40 years after her husband. In her will she left various precious family items to her children, with the request that some were to be treated as family heirlooms – her husband’s silver inkstand was to go to Thomas Ebenezer and thereafter to his eldest son, Alfred; a gold watch to Thomas Ebenezer; a gold pencil case to Simeon John; a gold-headed cane, a snuff box, and “the different little things . . . that belonged to their dear father” to John Theophilus and Alexander; Leah Anne got a special thing which is completely indecipherable to my untrained eye, and she and her sister Elizabeth got the furniture, plate, servers and other household items, including the wine, to be divided between them equally “share and share alike”.

Just for interest, here’s what I know about the children of Thomas and Leah.

**Thomas Ebenezer John.** My GGG grandfather, and described in more detail below.

**Elizabeth Magdalen** married John Ives Bosanguet of the Bengal Civil Service, joint magistrate of Nuginah, a district in Rohilcund. He died on the river Ganges on his way to Calcutta in 1820, leaving a daughter who died unmarried. Elizabeth herself didn’t die until almost 50 years later, in 1869, and spent most of this time in London.

**Simeon John** practised as a barrister in Warrington, and at Compton in Lancashire, but doesn’t seem to have been too successful. He went to Madras in 1840, at the age of 41, but didn’t get any work there either, so came back to England, dying at Egton Rectory in 1863, at the house of his father-in-law. He left a surviving daughter, who married a Major James Bond Clarke, apparently, of the 90th Regiment. See what I mean? We’re not even told the daughter’s name, but we’re told her husband’s name, and even his bloody regiment’s name. I got this information from [48], so Henry Griswold Jesup must take the blame for this.

**Leah Ann** resided chiefly in London (according to [48]) and died unmarried.

**John Peter** died young, in 1816, when he was only 13. His death is mentioned in a letter which his aunt wrote in 1816, the full text of which is reproduced on page 186.

**John Theophilus** worked as an architect and engineer in many parts of India, and must have been an interesting person. He helped to repair the Taj Mahal, for example, and was clearly an excellent astronomer; he was put in charge of the observatory at Simla and in 1840 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He also wrote a number of books on astronomy, land area computation, rents and wages, and logarithms. He had the soul of a mathematician and was all the better for it. He gave a lot of help to Henry Griswold Jesup in the writing of [48], and so that book has a lot of information about him, including a long obituary from the *Royal Engineers Journal*.

Henry Alexander Edmonstone Generally known as Henry, possibly because that was his name. [BBB][10] describes his military positions (in India) with love and attention, but I can’t really be bothered. (For example, he was Agent for Suspension Bridges and Superintendent of Canals, in the Calcutta area. Not exactly gripping stuff.) He and his brother John married the Hanson sisters, Charlotte and Anne respectively. He died of dysentery in 1862 at Cawnpore.

After their education in England, it is interesting to see how most of the children of Thomas and Leah returned to India. I’m guessing their mother had fond memories of the place, and possibly the eldest, **Thomas Ebenezer John,** (1796–1853) did also. After all, he was almost 12 when they left. Whether he did or not, Thomas Ebenezer, my GGG grandfather, was back in India before he was 20, working as a Writer in the Madras Civil Service. He then worked in a series of judicial posts; Assistant Registrar, Provincial Court, S. Division, Madras Presidency, 1818; Acting Judge, 1824;

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*[The full text of these letters is given in Chapter 8.]*
Assistant Judge, Canara, 1827. He retired in 1851, as Civil & Sessions Judge, Northern Circuits, at which time he presumably returned to England, as he died in Brighton in 1853.

Thomas Ebenezer married three times. His first wife was Mary Anne Millar (d. 1831), the daughter of an army surgeon, and they had two children. The original authors of the Big Boileau Book, Digby Whicher Boileau and Thomas Whicher Boileau, are descended from the second son, Archibald John Maddy Boileau. Thomas’s second wife was Ellen Eliza Neale, the widow of Lt. Col. Conry, but she can’t have lasted very long, as less then three years after his first wife died, Thomas Ebenezer married Elizabeth Hannah Norgar, my 3G-grandmother, on the 3rd of March, 1834, in Cuddalore, India. Her father was a Captain Master Attendant at Madras. I’m guessing that true love for all eternity held little place in the life of Thomas Ebenezer; his wives were often and easily replaced, it seems. Mind you, in his will, Thomas Ebenezer left everything, without exception, to his wife: “... I hereby will & bequeath to my devoted wife Elizabeth Hannah Boileau the whole and every portion of my Property [?] and so to be retained or disposed of by her as best suited to her views and interests leaving her sole Executrix...”. It’s a very simple will, this one.

Elizabeth was still alive in 1887, more than 30 years after the death of her husband. An account of her in Jesup’s book [48] says: “The third wife, a widow, resides at Eastbourne, and had one son only – Despreaux John Boileau, who held a commission in the 90th Regiment and died in the Punjab, 24 July, 1864. One daughter, unmarried, resides with the mother. All the others are married.” The daughters’ names are not even given, while the son’s name is given in loving detail, and even the name of his bloody regiment. Damn it’s annoying.

For the information of Henry Griswold Jesup, the daughters’ names were Mary Elizabeth, who married George Elliot Clark, Sarah Anne, about whom I know nothing, Hannah Amelia, about whom I know nothing, Alice Upton, about whom I know nothing, and Ellen Leah, my GG grandmother, who married Reginald John Graham (page 115). Reginald John Graham was living at Eastbourne at the time, and this is presumably where he met Ellen Leah Boileau, who would have been either living there, or nearby in Brighton. They married on the 30th of April, 1856, three years after her father’s death, but a long time before her mother died. Since her mother died in Eastbourne, it’s possible that Elizabeth Norgar lived with Ellen Leah and Reginald in her later years.

BBB [10] makes a passing comment that Despreaux John Boileau was an excellent artist, and used to send back sketches of his adventures in India. Luckily, my parents found an example of one of these letters home; it was being used in Granny and Pop’s house on Ewen St. – as a drawer liner! It’s now rescued and preserved as well as may be. Since it’s such a cool letter I reproduce it in full in Appendix II (page 267). Despreaux John never saw active service, but died young anyway, of disease, at Mian Mir, the new name for the Lahore cantonments. What a terrible pointless waste of a life, for which we can, yet again, thank the military.

Questions: It is a bit silly that I know more about the earlier Boileau than I do about Thomas Ebenezer, my GGG grandfather. There must obviously be extensive records existing about him in the British Indian Archives, but I’ve never done any research to find them. Pure laziness on my part. Probably his life was entirely uneventful, one judicial post to another, ho hum, but there still has to be more that can be said. It is possible that Digby Whicher Boileau (being a direct descendant of Thomas Ebenezer) has already done a great deal of digging in the archives and found all there is to be found, but I think this unlikely. What about his children? I know their names, and practically nothing else.

Castelnau

Now that we have a Boileau de Castelnau married to a Graham of Edmond Castle, our account of the Boileau family comes to an end. However, just for interest, I shall include as a final word some

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1The Master Attendant was in charge of the dockyard, and held the position of Captain presumably to make it easier to deal with stroppy naval captains.
The castle of Castelnau, the traditional home of the Boileau de Castelnau. The photo above was taken by my uncle Alfred in 2005, the one below by sister Mary, in 2008.
details about the castle at Castelnau. I know there’s no connection any longer, but I like castles, and I’m writing this book so I can put in anything I like and you can’t stop me.

Map 7 (page 243) shows the general environs of Castelnau, which is now called Castelnau-Valence. It is situated almost directly west of Uzès, off the road between Alès and Nîmes. It perches high on a hillside, a romantic battlemented medieval castle, so like those one finds dotted all over the European countryside. Of course, I’ve never been there. Monique and I went on holiday to Languedoc some years ago, but at that stage I was not very interested in family history at all, and I had no idea that we were holidaying close to Castelnau. Yet another opportunity missed. I feel like such an idiot. However, I made up for this by sending various relatives to take photographs (page 165) whenever they visited Languedoc. Uncle Alfred and Fiona of the Red Hair took some photos in about 2005, as did sister Mary in 2008.

The Seigneurie of Castelnau was an ancient one. It figures in Gallia Christiana for the year 1211 under the name of “Castrum de Castro Novo” and it is later found in the possession of different families, until passing to Antoine. The fief was held direct from the King of France, as is proved by the verdict of a lawsuit in which Charles (ii) Boileau was involved with the Duc d’Uzès who claimed that the property of Castelnau owed him feudal service; the courts decided that he had no such claim, Castelnau having always been held of the Crown in capite and owing service to no feudal superior but the Sovereign.

The full title of the family was Boileau de Castelnau de la Garde et de Sainte Croix de Boiriac. Nobody seems any longer to have any idea of where all these names came from. A nearby river is called the Gard, or Gardon, which might explain the de la Garde bit, but then again it might not. Similarly, Sainte Croix lies about one mile northwest of Castelnau, but the addition of Boiriac to this also cannot be explained.

No matter. It’s a neat castle.

Digby Whicher Boileau was shown an account of the castle written in French in 1865; it’s not clear who wrote this account, but a copy was given to Digby by the Comte de Valfons, the then current owner. Because I like reading old things like this, I give it in full below. I presume the translation is due to Digby.

The Chateau of Castelnau, situated on the top of a hill which dominates the left bank of the Gardon, halfway between Alais and Nîmes, is still, in spite of the modifications which it underwent in the 17th and 18th centuries, a curious enough specimen of the medieval strong chateau.

The period of its foundation is uncertain. Examination of its walls shows very considerable remains of masonry bosses, which by their position in relation to the whole building, are evidently anterior to all other parts of the chateau, but a definite date cannot be assigned to them. There is just one thing, that a local tradition says that Castelnau was taken and devastated in the year 800 by the inhabitants of Brignon, a neighbouring village, formerly a Gallo-Roman town; the dressing in rustic bossage being found besides in some ancient monuments, it might be inferred from this that this chateau was built in the first ages of the French Monarchy, maybe at the time of the last Merovingian Kings.

However, facing with rustic bossage seems to have been much in use at the end of the 13th century, under the reign of Philip the Bold, who had several strong places, in the Midi of France, repaired or built. It becomes, in consequence, more likely if one places the foundation of Castelnau in this period. The following fact supports this opinion; in the neighbourhood, one notices the keeps of Moussac and Boucoiran, also with rustic bossage, dating unquestionably from the same period as the chateau. Now these two keeps, which have not undergone any essential modification since their origin, are in a state of preservation, which does not allow in any way this origin to be carried back to the Merovingian period.

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1A list of all the Catholic Abbeys and Dioceses in France, from the earliest times. It was first compiled in 1621.
2But then one would expect Castelnau du Gard
The tradition mentioned above could then apply to an older chateau, whose traces have disappeared, or are today hidden under the thick whitewash with which the chateau of today was covered towards the end of the 18th century.

The little fort, built in rustic bossage, was lower and much less extensive than the existing chateau. Under the whitewash which covers it, is distinguishable the stone work, today very dilapidated, of its northwest and south-west curtains. Also to be seen is its primitive entry, placed towards the middle of the SW curtain at the level of the first storey.

The defensive postern, which still today gives access to the interior of the chateau, is evidently of later date than the wall in which it has been pierced.

In the 14th Century, to the first building was added the SE part of the existing chateau. The absence of bossage, several gargoyles representing animals on their forefeet, and a stone course which crowns the rampart, distinguish this part from the early building. These two buildings are, otherwise, of the same height.

Subsequently, the chateau grew yet more by the addition to the NW face of a new building, to which was given a greater height than that of the previous constructions. A little later, the latter were brought up to the level of the new building all along the SSW face. The curtain was raised, and to it was added, for two-thirds of its length, a defensive gallery, abutting on the buildings of the NW. In addition, the south-tower was given an elevation proportionate to that of the new curtains.

From the character of a big appointed overhung arcade, and from some other architectural details, the NW building appears to belong to the 15th century. The upper gallery, and the curtain which shelters it, could date from the end of the same century, or the beginning of the 16th.

Today, the chateau forms a quadrilateral, of which the sides measure 131, 121, 65½ and 49 feet long. It is flanked by a tower at each of its angles. The main buildings surround a courtyard, into which one penetrates from the outside by way of a postern, which was defended by a portcullis, and upper trap-door, and a machicoulis.

The most vulnerable points of the walls were also provided with machicoulis, of which only the corbels remain.

In the interior court is seen a well cut in the rock, 65 feet deep. It gave a pure and healthy water to the garrison, which was accommodated in three galleries, built one above the other. They still exist, and are against the longest face of the surrounding walls, that of the SW.

The outer walls of the chateau, about two metres thick, were, and still are, crowned by a path running round, covered from the outside by a parapet which is itself surmounted on the whole perimeter by battlements pierced by loopholes.

The north tower used to enclose in its upper storey a windmill, whose millstone was put into operation by a paddlewheel placed horizontally inside the tower. Eight little windows pierced obliquely in the circular wall which forms the tower, admitted the wind, which, striking the paddlewheel at an angle, conveyed to it a rotary movement which it communicated to the millstone.

Castelnau dominated a vast countryside, even more remarkable for its picturesque views than for its extent. From the top of the towers can be seen 68 villages, and a much greater number of isolated houses.

At the foot of the hill, and in the SE and SW directions, the eye follows the course of the river Gardon, over a stretch of 11 miles. The river flows slowly in the midst of a long forest of poplars, and runs through a beautiful and fertile valley, whose rich cultivation is everywhere shaded by mulberry and chestnut trees. Its waters, stretching in wide sheets, sometimes reflects the blue of the sky, sometimes shines with the brilliance of the sun, like an immense mirror capriciously broken up.
Towards the NW beyond a long succession of hills and cultivated valleys, the horizon is, in the distance, limited by the ascending and blueish summits of the Cevennes.

To the east are outlined the mountains of Provence and the Dauphine, above which, when the clearness of the air allows, can be seen, at a distance of 50 or 60 leagues the great chain of the Maritime Alps, and the tops of the Pelvoux Mountains, crowned with eternal snows.

During the absence of the family (after the Revocation) Castelnau was often the asylum of the Camisards, and became in 1704 the scene of one of the most remarkable events of the little war which these insurgents sustained against the Royal Troops.

They were then commanded by a Chief aged 29, whose name was Roland, and family name La Porte. His paternal uncles were a master-smith, and two pastors of the Protestant Church who had given him a liberal education. His studies finished, he had taken service in the dragoons, and had returned home after the Peace of Ryswick, 1697. He had then taken part in the insurrection of the Cevennes.

Endowed with a grave, silent, imperious character, he hid under an impassive exterior an ardent mind and heart; his speech was brief and forceful. These qualities had soon brought him much influence in the minds of his co-religionists. Also, when Cavalier, who commanded the insurgents, had laid down his arms after having obtained an honourable capitulation from Marshal de Villiers, Roland was called to succeed him by the unanimous vote of the Camisards, who placed all their hopes in him.

But love and an imprudent confidence caused his loss. Mlle. de Cornely, daughter of a Protestant gentleman of the Cevennes, full of zeal for the cause of the insurgents and of sympathy for their chief, was the object of a sentiment which did not find her insensible. Lamoignon de Basville, Intendant of Languedoc, informed of their mutual attraction, thought to profit by it. Mlle. de Cornely having been arrested for giving asylum in her house to some of the rebels, he secretly permitted her to escape, in the hope that the steps which Roland would take to see her again would lead to his capture. The better to attain this end he made a secret agreement with a young man of Uzès, called Malatte, who was one of Roland’s friends and had a great part of his confidence. Malatte consented to deliver up his friend for the sum of a hundred louis, which was promised him.

Roland had formed the project of going with eight of his lieutenants to the Chateau of Castelnau, situated 11 miles east\(^1\) of Uzès. He was due to meet Mlle. de Cornely there, who had advised him to accept the conditions of the capitulation of Cavalier, and was doubtless coming to find him to renew her pleadings on this subject.

The traitor Malatte, hearing of this, and of the day of its execution, came the evening before to warn the Brigadier de Parate, who commanded the garrison of Uzès; this was on the 14th August, 1704. On the following night, Parate made Lacoste-Badre, Commandant of the 2nd Brigade of Charolais, go with all the well-mounted officers to be found in Uzès, and two companies of dragoons from St. Sernin. All of this troop was so anxious to catch Roland, that it parted with extreme speed to Castelnau, where it arrived before dawn. The Camisard chief and his companions still slept. They trusted to the vigilance of one of their number, Grimaud, who was posted high on the chateau on the path which runs around the top of the surrounding wall.

Unhappily, the troops arrived from the side of the village of St. Dezery and in this direction the shelter of some hills hid their march from the view of the chateau, so that Grimaud only saw them when there was no longer time to give the alarm. Already the dragoons were proceeding to invest the chateau, when he came in all haste to warn his commander of the peril which threatened him.

Roland, awakened with a start, put on some clothes and seized his arms. His companions did the same, and all sought to gain the stables to get their horses, but only three of

\(^1\) Sic. He means west.
them, Bason, Bourdalie and Marchand, quicker or better served by circumstance, could get there and ride away.

Deprived of this means of evasion, Roland and his remaining five lieutenants, had no other course to take but that of saving themselves on foot, by a side door of which the dragoons had not yet made themselves masters. From the inner court of the chateau, it gave access to the countryside, across escarpments impassable by horses; but its obstacles were turned by the dragoons, who soon reached the fugitives in spite of all their efforts.

Roland, putting his back against a tree, defied the boldest approach, and his proud bearing disconcerted his adversaries for the moment. Their chiefs, who much wanted to take him alive, did not know in what way to arrest him, when one of the dragoons, who was following them, named Soubeiran, terminated their indecision by a shot which stretched Roland dead on the spot.

The five officers who had accompanied him, Souteran, Grimaud, Guerin, Mallie and Raspal, dumbfounded at the sight, let themselves be arrested without resistance. The group returned to Castelnau, which was still surrounded. Mlle. de Cornely was no longer there. It is probable that she left it some moments after Roland, and that the officers who commanded those surrounding the chateau did not trouble to hinder her escape.

The body of Roland was taken up, carried in triumph to Uzès and then to Nîmes, where it was tried. It was dragged on a hurdle, burnt, and the ashes were thrown to the wind. The five chief Camisards remaining were broken alive on the wheel, and the traitor Malatte received his promised reward.

There are brief records of other Boileau visits to Castelnau, but the only particularly interesting comment was that of Thomas W. Boileau, who visited in 1954. He noted the stained glass windows of the Long Room, which are portraits of the Boileau ancestors. I wonder if they are still there.
Chapter 8

The Jessups: the American connection

As we saw in the previous chapter (page 162), Thomas Boileau married Leah Jessup in 1796. Her GG-grandfather was one of the early pioneers to the east coast of North America, and his descendants are the subject of an entire book [48], written by Henry Griswold Jesup (yes, that’s right, only one s), which is widely available on the web (for a price of course). In its way, the Jesup book is as invaluable for the Jessup family as is the Big Book of Boileau for the Boileau de Castelnau. It’s over 200 pages of original letters, wills, land transactions and legal deeds, carefully and meticulously researched, or so it appears to me. This short chapter follows this book closely, as it is the only source of information I have for the Jessup family.

For convenience I’ve included a map of the area where the Jessups lived (see Map 8 on page 244).

Edward (i) Jessup the pioneer

The first of our Jessup ancestors to be known for sure is Edward (i) Jessup, who came to New England some time before 1649; it’s known that he was already a resident of Stamford, Connecticut, at that date. Although we don’t know the exact date of Edward’s arrival in North America, it’s highly likely that he had lived in Fairfield before then, as in 1653 he sold “one parcell of meadow at Sascoe neck, being in quantity half an acre and a quarter and eighte rods, more or less” to a Thomas Barlowe.

To put these dates in context, the Mayflower pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in 1620, while James-town was established in 1607. Although, obviously, these were not the first European visitors to the New England area, they were the first determined efforts at settlement. Fairfield itself was first settled in 1639, most likely only a few years before our Edward Jessup owned land there, while Stamford was settled around 1641. Interestingly we know that one of the original Stamford settlers was a John Jessop, who had previously lived close to Boston. Given that they had the same name and were in the same place, it’s tempting to conclude that our Edward and this John were related, but it’s not known whether this is true for sure. It seems likely to me, for what that’s worth.

Despite many pages of scholarly discussion, the Jesup book essentially concludes that nothing at all is known about the English antecedents of Edward Jessup, beyond the fact that he was possibly from the North of England. Hardly convincing. Attempts to connect him to the Jessups of Broom Hall have an air of desperation; one suspects the authors would dearly love to have claimed this but didn’t quite have the gall to do so. However, we do learn that “The Jessops have never been deficient in brain power, but they have in my opinion all along been lacking in nervous vigor. They seem at all times to have been weak on the emotional side, too highly strung and impulsive; and while they seem generally to have been tall, more than ordinarily handsome, with never a taint of blood, such as comes out in the more common hereditary maladies, they never seem to have been men and
women big of bone and of rugged, muscular frames, without which I do not believe that any family can make a great place, or at any rate keep it for long when made”. This has to be worth something.

Edward didn’t stay long in Stamford; in 1652 he was one of the founding settlers of Middleborough (now called Newtown, on the western end of Long Island, and buried deep within Queens; see the map on page 244), purchasing land from the local Indians at the rate of a shilling an acre. Edward Jessup must have been one of the wealthier founders as he paid the princely sum of £4, which would have bought him a fair bit of land. Only one other person, Robert Coe, was able to afford so much. About ten years later, in 1661, Edward was also buying a house and land in Jamaica. It’s clear that he wasn’t your average run-of-the-mill dirt-poor pioneer, but a man of substance. Whether or not he came to the Americas with money is not clear, but if he didn’t he certainly got it soon. Not surprising, given that his descendants, by and large, were sharks, as we shall see.

There was considerable conflict between the Dutch, based around New Amsterdam (later New York, of course), and the British on Long Island, and Middleborough appointed Robert Coe and Edward Jessup to travel up to Boston in 1653 to try and get assistance from the Commissioners of the New England colonies. Nothing came of this, but neither did war break out between the Dutch and the British, so maybe they did something right. That Edward Jessup was chosen for this mission is revealing, as it shows him to have a man of importance in the town, consistent with his apparent wealth.

The English were not always at odds with the Dutch, as we know that in 1655 Edward Jessup was one of the men who helped defend New Amsterdam against an attack from the Indians. Their role in this was so prominent that it led the Indians to declare considerable irritation with them particularly:

Sep. 8, 1665.¹ Joseph Safford and Thomas Reed, residing at MespadtsKil [Middleborough], testify that they were this day informed by Joseph Fowler [and others] that some inhabitants of Gravesend had been at Westchester, and that the sachems of the savages had been there at Lieut. Wheeler’s, and that they would send to the villages on Long Island to deliver and place in their hands Thomas Nuton, Henry Nuton, and Edward Jessop, because they had assisted the Dutch in the Fort [New Amsterdam] during that night when the savages here did so much harm, while the savages had forbidden the English to bring any provisions or fuel to the Manhatans, and intended to burn their huts and houses in case the English would help the Dutch with fuel and provisions.

However, this politeness towards the Dutch didn’t seem to be too common an occurrence. In 1662, soon after the accession of Charles II, in a fit of patriotism, the English inhabitants of western Long Island, although nominally under Dutch control, tried to annex themselves instead to English Connecticut. Stuyvesant, the last Dutch governor of New Amsterdam² wasn’t pleased, and one of the principal troublemakers, James Christie of Middleborough, was arrested. John Coe and Edward Jessup went across to Westchester, enlisted the assistance of Captain Richard Paton, another anti-Dutch agitator, and tried to liberate Christie from the Fort Amsterdam prison. They failed, managing only to liberate (so the story goes) the brandy in the sheriff’s cellar. Another inhabitant of Middleborough wrote a tell-tale letter to Stuyvesant; Jessup and his friends had been calling the Governor a “devil, and a wooden-leg rogue, and a picaroon.” What naughty men they were.

In either 1662 or 1663, Edward Jessup moved across the Sound to Westchester, now subsumed into the Greater New York area, and a commuting suburb for Manhattan. He was clearly on the make. He and John Richardson bought a large piece of land, probably around a few thousand acres, that was subsequently called West Farms. This was presumably at the place still called West Farms, just south of the Bronx Zoological Gardens. The original deed still exists:

These may certify whom it may concern, that we Shawnerockett, Wappamoe, Tuck-ore, Wawapekock, Cappakas, Quanusecoe, Shequiske, Passacahem, and Harrawocke have aliened and sold unto Edward Jessup and John Richardson both of the place aforesaid, a certain Tract of land, bounded on the East by the River Aquehunng or Bronckxx, to

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¹I suspect a misprint in Jesup’s book, which says here 1665. However, the date 1665 makes no sense at all. Edward wasn’t even living on Long Island at that time, having already moved to Westchester. Not to mention that by 1665 New Amsterdam had already become New York. So I’m pretty sure that 1655 is the date meant.

²In 1664 the English took over New Amsterdam by force, ejected Stuyvesant, and renamed the town New York.
the midst of the River, on the Northward by the Trees markt and by a piece of Hassock meadow, westward by a little Brooke called Sackwrahung, Southward by the sea, with a neck of land called Quinnahung, with all the Meadows, Uplands, Trees, and whatever else besides be upon ye said parcell of lands, with all other comodities belonging to the same, quietly to possess and enjoy the same from us our heires or successors, to their heirs and successors forever, and for their cattle to range in the Wood so farre as they please, without any Molestation or Infringement, and that this is our true Intent and Meaning, Wee have set to our hands, the day and yeare above written.

Each Indian’s mark was a drawing of an animal.

According to Henry Jesup, Edward was “a man well able to maintain his ground at a time when men were judged as men...”. Well, quite. However, despite him being a man among men, Edward didn’t survive very long to enjoy his, probably ill-gotten, gains. He died in 1666, after the 6th of August and before the 14th of November. His will is one of the first recorded in English in New York City. He left his son, Edward, “two mares with two colts by their sides; one is a gray mare, and the other is a mare marked on both ears with two half-pence on each ear, to bee set out for him for his use a year and a day after my decease”. I have no idea why the year and a day stipulation, but whatever the reason, the horses were not available at the required time. The son got instead “three cows which are, the two black and white feet cows and one red cow, and two oxen which are called by the names of Swan and Sweetling.”

Edward married Elizabeth, of uncertain maiden name, at uncertain date, and they had three children; Elizabeth, who married Thomas Hunt, Hannah, who was not yet 18 when her father died, and Edward, who was born in 1663 and thus only about three when his father died. Elizabeth the elder, the widow, remarried Robert Beacham, who lived in Fairfield, Connecticut, and moved there with her two younger children. In his will he left almost everything to Elizabeth, and provided well for his step-son, Edward. Elizabeth herself, having outlived two husbands, died after 1690, and very likely in 1692. Seeing as she seems to have been tougher than her husbands, she must have been rather better than them at maintaining her ground at a time when women were judged as women.

Edward (ii) Jessup the younger

Born in 1663, either in West Farms or Newton, Edward (ii) Jessup was brought up in Fairfield, Connecticut (a bit further east along the north shore of Long Island Sound), where he became a freeman1 and bought property in the parish of Green’s Farms. In 1692 he married Elizabeth Hyde (b. 1669 and thus about 23 years old) who was the daughter of John Hyde, and the granddaughter of Humphrey Hyde, who came from England in 1640. The Hydes were an old established family in Green’s Farms.

It seems that that 1692 was a busy year for our Edward; as well as getting married he also testified in one of the famous Fairfield witchcraft trials, on the 15th of September [30, 31]. Some poor woman, Mercy Desborough, was indicted for “having familiarity with Satan, and that by his instigation and help she had in a preternatural way afflicted and done harm to the bodies and estates of sundry of their Majesties subjects.” Yeah, right. The crap they believed is quite extraordinary. Charges were brought against her by Katherine Branch, the maid of Sergeant Daniel Westcott, who claimed she had suffered torments from the ‘shapes’ of Elizabeth Clauson, Mercy Desborough and Goody Hipshod. Kate, the shrinking violet, fainted repeatedly when Mercy Desborough looked at her, although personally I think it’s rather more plausible that Daniel Westcott bore an old grudge against Elizabeth Clauson, as she claimed. Not to mention that Daniel’s wife didn’t believe a word of what he said, and that Kate herself seemed suspiciously unconvincing to many observers. According to a couple of local clergy, Kate’s afflictions seemed more like a combination of fakery and hysteria “improved by craft”. They submitted a written “Opinion” which agreed “with the generallity of divines that the Endeavor of conviction of witchcraft by Swimming [was] unLawfull and Sinfull” and that Katherine Branch’s testimony “carr[ied] a suspition of her Counterfeiting” and also said that spectral evidence was “very uncertain and fallable from the easy deception of her senses and [the]

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1I’m not entirely sure of the significance of this.
Subtile devices of the devill." Lastly, “as to the other Strange accidents as the dying of cattle, etc.,” they “apprehend[ed] the applying of them to these women as matters of witchcraft to be upon very slender and uncertain grounds.”

However, many others were not disposed to be reasonable. Mercy came from a poor family, and, before he died, her father had been taken to court for theft and fraud. She also had a shady past, and had appeared before the court before. It’s clear she was defenseless and an easy target. So, old grudge or not, a committee of women searched the defendants’ bodies for witch marks and found an ‘excrescence’ on Desborough’s ‘secret parts’, but only a wart on Clauson’s arm.

Edward appeared as one of the witnesses, although I have to say that he appeared to suffer rather more from an excess of alcohol than the wiles of Satan. He observed how, at Desborough’s house “the food on the table changed its appearance so unaccountably that he was at first afraid to eat of it; that when Moses Sherwood and he disputed the woman’s interpretation of a certain passage of Scripture, neither of them were able to read the passage in the open Bible, until she had manipulated the leaves; and that when going home, his horse could with such difficulty be kept in the road that he was the greater part of the night travelling the distance of only two miles.” So he couldn’t focus and couldn’t drive. Must be witchcraft yer Honour. I’m convinced.

Mercy Desborough demanded the water test, but when this was carried out, she and Elizabeth Clauson bobbed around, just like witches, even when the men tried to push them under. Not a good look, but they still refused to confess; Elizabeth’s husband even produced a petition from over eighty people, including magistrates, testifying to her good character.

Mercy was convicted, but the execution was never carried out. I’m not sure why not. One hopes that reason prevailed, but I doubt it.

In 1720 Edward (ii) moved from Green’s Farms to Stamford, where he lived for the rest of his life. He left his oldest son, Edward, in Fairfield but the rest of his children moved with him. He died on the 28th of December, 1732, leaving a rather dull will; land to his sons, shillings to his daughters, the usual kind of thing. Son Joseph, the land shark, was his executor. Edward’s wife, Elizabeth, lived another fifteen years. The Jesup book gives a lot of details of their children, but if you’re interested read it for yourself. I am concerned only with Joseph.

A parcel of rogues; Joseph Jessup and his sons

Joseph Jessup, the son of Edward (ii), was born in Fairfield in 1699 and married Abigail James in 1734. They produced three sons in quick succession (Edward (iii), Joseph and Ebenezer) and then a daughter, Leah, who died in 1742 when only just over a year old, her mother following her to the grave soon after. It’s very likely that the deaths of Abigail and Leah were connected; certainly, they were buried together, in an old burial ground near the Noroton River.

After his wife’s death in 1743, Joseph took his three sons (aged about 4, 6 and 8) and moved to parts so foreign and strange that his mother, when she wrote her will in 1747, was clearly afraid he would never appear back alive. They went all the way to Dutchess County, New York, the first (and only) Jessups to move away from the comforts of New England. Very brave. He then began a series of land purchases, carried on by his sons, that made their fortune.

They started off by speculating in land around Dutchess County, but with the end of the French-Indian War in 1759, the opportunity arose to steal vast tracts of land in the headwaters of the Hudson River, around Albany and up as far as Lake George. So the family moved upriver in 1771, settled in Albany, and began a systematic land-stealing spree. They schmoozed local politicians to great effect,

1It doesn’t seem to have crossed anybody’s mind that maybe her husband was a witch as well, or maybe Daniel Westcott was himself the Devil in disguise. The logic seems somewhat faulty to my jaundiced eye.

2She was the daughter of Henry James, whose name is among those of the vestrymen and wardens of Trinity Church, Fairfield (now removed to Southport), who in 1727 petitioned the General Court for liberty to manage their own affairs according to the canons of the Church of England. He was of Greenwich in 1757, and said to be a sea-faring man of very considerable wealth.

3Dutchess County is located in eastern New York State, between the Hudson River on its west and the New York-Connecticut border on its east, about halfway between the cities of Albany and New York. It contains two cities: Beacon and Poughkeepsie. It’s bordered by Fairfield County to the southeast, so Joseph didn’t actually move all that far.
becoming friends of Sir William Johnson, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New York, and were closely associated with Governor Dunmore and General William Tryon, the last of the royal governors. The family was Church of England, and clearly threw in their lot with the British, a choice that was eventually to cost them dear.

But not yet. According to the Jesup book [48], the Jessups “were soon engaged in very extensive transactions in wild lands in that part of the State now known as the counties of Warren, Essex, and Hamilton. In cases where purchases were made directly from the Indian proprietors, or when for any reason the Indian title had not been extinguished, the purchaser was required to be at the expense of first vesting the Indian right and title in the Crown before he could obtain the patent which alone could guarantee him in possession of his purchase. The fees exacted were often very considerable.”

Well, well, and there you see the procedure. First, you paid enormous bribes to the local authorities of the Crown (very handy to know them well, for this), you persuaded them to claim enormous tracts of “wild” land, and then sell it on to you at a pittance. Some examples:

Dec. 25, 1767: 7,550 acres lying “in the county of Albany, east side of Hudson’s River, to the northward of the township of Queensbury, and between the said river and Lake George, whereon they proposed to make a settlement”, reserving mines and white-pine trees for masts.

Dec. 28, 1767: Another 4,100 acres adjoining the above piece, and called “Jessup’s Patent”.

May 8, 1771: the Earl of Dunmore, Governor of New York, granted to Edward Jessup and Ebenezer Jessup 2,000 acres of land “beginning in the south bounds of a tract of 7,550 acres of land formerly granted to Ebenezer Jessup and others”.

Aug. 25, 1774: Governor Cadwallader Colden granted to Edward Jessup, Ebenezer Jessup, Joseph Jessup Jr., and thirty-seven others, for 40,000 acres on the west side of the Hudson River, in the county of Charlotte.

The original deed for this last land grant still exists:

\[\text{. . . Know ye that we, Hendrick, alias Tayahansara, Lawrance, alias Agquerajies, Hans, alias Canagdawre, and Hans Krine, alias Anajoadhoje, native Indians, send Gree-\]
\[\text{ting: Whereas Ebenezer and Edward Jessup, in behalf of themselves and others of his Majesty’s subjects, their associates, did lately petition the Rt. Hon\textsuperscript{ble} John, Earl of Dun-\]
\[\text{more, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over the province of New York . . . reciting that whereas great frauds and abuses had been committed in purchasing lands of the Indians, to the great prejudice of his Majesty’s interests\textsuperscript{1} and to the great dissatisfac-\]
\[\text{tion of the said Indians, his said Majesty, by and with the advice of his privy Council, did thereby enjoin and required that no private person do presume to purchase of the native Indians, proprietors, any lands not ceded to or purchased by his Majesty within these parts of his Majesty’s Colonies where he has thought proper to allow of settlements; but that if at any time any of the said Indians should be inclined to dispose of the said lands, the same should be purchased by his Majesty’s Governor . . .; [there follows a description of the 40,000 acres]}

Now, therefore, Know ye that we, the said Indians, for and in behalf of ourselves and our nation – at a publick meeting or assembly with his Excellency, William Tryon, Esquire, His Majesty’s Captain General and Commander-in-Chief . . . do now declare our intentions and inclinations to dispose of the said tract of land above described . . .; and accordingly, by these presents, at the said publick meeting and assembly held for the purpose, with the assistance of John Butler, Esquire, Interpreter, to us well known, do for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred and eighty-six pounds, lawful money of New York, to us in hand paid by the said petitioners, and the further sum of five shillings like lawful money to us in hand paid by his said Excellency . . . [and thus their land is stolen].

\textsuperscript{1}i.e., no bribes
Not bad – £186 for 40,000 acres. And don’t forget the five shillings from the King of England. Theft on a grand scale.

In an even more rascally deal, in 1771, the Jessups ‘purchased’ 800,000 acres from the same Indian chiefs, for the sum of £1,135 – and the five shillings from the King. This enormous deal was done through intermediaries, two gentlemen named Joseph Totton and Stephen Crossfield; since the Jessups had already got their fingers into so many deals it was thought safer to do this deal, which basically was to purchase practically an entire county, somewhat anonymously. It’s unlikely anyone was fooled, but at least this way they could pretend they were.

You might well ask what was the magnitude of the bribes required to set this all up. Well, for the so-called Totten-Crossfield purchase, i.e., the 800,000 acre deal described above, the Jessups paid almost £9,000 pounds to have the land patented by the Crown, more than seven times what they paid the Indians for the land itself.

The Jessup brothers, having clearly decided to do everything together, married sisters; Ebenezer married Elizabeth Dibble, while Edward married her sister, Abigail Dibble. They were the daughters of Jonathan Dibble, who had married Sarah Jessup, the aunt of Ebenezer and Edward. So the Dibble ladies were the Jessups’ cousins. If you think this is complicated, George Dibble, the son of Jonathan Dibble, married yet another Jessup, Phebe this time, who was the daughter of Jonathan Jessup, and thus George’s cousin. Talk about cousins marrying cousins. I surprised they didn’t all have eleven fingers and webbed feet.

Until about 1760 Jonathan Dibble owned land in New York City, which is possibly where his children were born (although he was also a resident of Stamford, and his children may have been born there). It was situated near the ‘tea-water pump’, as it was called, on the west side of Chatham Square. For many years he also ran a tavern on the Bowery, between Bayard and Pump St. (now Canal St.), known as the Bull’s Head Tavern. The tavern was a favourite meeting place for cattlemen and butchers, and there were stockyards and an abattoir in the rear. Later, when residents got tired of the noise and the smell, the Bowery Theatre was built on the site, but this burned down in 1929. I don’t know what is there now. There is still a place called the Bull’s Head Tavern in New York, but it’s at a different place, way up on 23rd St., and has no relation to the older establishment. The Bull’s Head Tavern is noted for George Washington having stopped there in 1783 for a pee before riding down to the waterfront to witness the departure of British troops, but this was well after Jonathan Dibble had left.

Both the tea-water pump and the Bull’s Head Tavern are marked on a 1782 map of New York City (page 178).

Having bought their land, the Jessups retired up the Hudson River and established themselves at Jessup’s Landing¹, where they built sawmills and a grist mill, becoming the first lumbermen in the region. However, one suspects that they were not your typical lumberjacks. If I may quote Jesup [48]:

The wives of Ebenezer and Edward were cultivated women, sisters, and first cousins of their husbands. They were born in New York City, though their father, Jonathan Dibble, closed his life on his farm in the town of Stamford, Conn. The removal of the entire family of Joseph Jessup to Albany, and their association with men of social position and education among the Colonial officials, led them naturally to use the means they were acquiring in a somewhat similar style of living.

Another local antiquarian, Dr. A. W. Holden² wrote, in A History of the Town of Queensbury:

¹About 10 miles up the Hudson River from Glens Falls, Jessup’s Landing is right in the foothills of the Adirondacks, close to the modern town of Corinth.
²Austin Wells Holden (1819-1891) wrote extensively on the history of the Glens Falls region and is best known as author of the book A History of the Town of Queensbury, published in 1874. Austin Holden was born in White Creek, Washington County, New York. His family moved to Potsdam when he was young, but in 1836 they settled in Glens Falls. In 1848 he graduated from Albany Medical College and opened his medical practice in Warrensburg. In 1851 he married Elizabeth Buell. Holden became a homeopathic physician, and for several years starting in the late 1870’s he served as Chief of Staff and Director of the Homeopathic Hospital on Ward’s Island in New York City. It’s amazing what information you can find on the web, isn’t it?
Above: A map of New York City, from 1782. Below: A detail of this map showing the Bowery. If you look carefully you can see labelled the *Bull’s Head Tavern* (on the Bowery) and the tea-water pump, just southeast of the Freshwater Pond and the Tan Yards.
somewhere about the year 1770 Ebenezer Jessup removed to this then wilderness region and built him a spacious log dwelling on the farm now occupied by Thurlow Leavins, and on the brook near by erected a saw and grist mill. There, until after the commencement of the Revolutionary war, he maintained a state and style of living which bespoke opulence, taste, culture, and familiarity with the elegance and customs of the best provincial society. If tradition is to be credited, his commodious and comfortable dwelling, however rude may have been its exterior, was the frequent theatre of hospitable entertainments, its rooms garnished with elegant furniture, its walls embellished with costly paintings and choice engravings, its capacious tables arrayed in spotless linen and imported covers, and loaded with massive silver plate. All of this, with the many costly fittings and adjuncts of such a house, was at a later date plundered and carried away.

The War of Independence

In 1775 the American War of Independence broke out, and everything suddenly went bad for the Jessups. Well, not suddenly, but it was the beginning of the end, as their side ended up losing.

Jessup’s Landing was a focus of loyalism in the years just before the revolution, and when Sir Guy Garleton succeeded in driving the American forces out of the province of Quebec in the summer of 1776 the Jessups led a party of some 80 loyalists to join him at Crown Point, New York.

The Jessup party was first attached to Sir John Johnson’s King’s Royal Regiment of New York, but in June, 1777, the King’s Loyal Americans corps was tentatively established with Ebenezer as lieutenant-colonel and Edward as captain. Although the corps was not fully formed, the Jessup brothers took part in John Burgoyne’s campaign, with Edward as commander of the bateaux service on the Hudson. Both Edward and Ebenezer were taken prisoner in the Saratoga campaign but were paroled and allowed to make their way to Quebec.

1The Saratoga campaign was an attempt by Great Britain to gain military control of the strategically important Hudson River valley in 1777 during the American Revolutionary War. The primary thrust of the campaign was made by an army...
Since many members of the King’s Loyal Americans were dispersed during this campaign, the unit never attained its established strength and remained for the next four years a semi-independent appendage of Johnson’s regiment, engaged mainly in building, repairing, and garrisoning fortifications around Montreal, Sorel and lower Lake Champlain, although it also took part in several raids into New York. Edward went on such raids in October 1780 and again the following fall. It was probably these services, as well as his administrative capacities, that led Governor Haldimand to choose Edward over Ebenezer as major commandant of the new corps of Loyal Rangers, created in November, 1781, from a number of smaller military formations including the Loyal Americans. The new corps soon became known as Jessup’s Rangers.

But since the British lost, the Jessups were attainted and lost everything. Both Ebenezer and Edward were specifically named in a 1779 bill in the New York Legislature, in which

\[ ... \text{each of them are hereby severaly declared to be, Ipso Facto, convicted and attainted of the offence aforesaid [adhering to the enemies of the State]; and that all and singular the estate both real and personal held or claimed by them the said persons severally and respectively whether in possession, reversion or remainder, within this State on the day of the passing of this Act shall be and hereby is declared to be forfeited to and invested in the people of the State.} \]

Sec. II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, – That the said several persons herein before particularly named shall be and hereby are declared to be forever banished from this State; and each and every of them who shall at any time hereafter be found in any part of this State shall be and are hereby adjudged and declared guilty of felony and shall suffer death as in cases of felony, without benefit of clergy.

Pretty unambiguous; New York didn’t like the Jessups any more. Although some loyalists eventually regained part of their estates, the Jessups didn’t. Many years later, on the 8th of July, 1838, Leah Jessup, the daughter of Ebenezer and the wife of Thomas Boileau, wrote for her son, Simeon Boileau:

In answer to your enquiries about my father, Lieut.-Colonel Ebenezer Jessup’s property, I can state to you that it was in the Province of New York in America, and a part of it was in and near Albany; but the whole was lost by his taking part in favor of the British Government.

My father raised a regiment at his own expense, and went with it to Canada, and commanded it during the whole of the American war. He was in the campaign with General Burgoyne, and was taken prisoner with his army, after which he returned to Canada with his regiment, and upon the Americas breaking their treaty, he served again actively during the remainder of the war. On his first quitting Albany to go to Canada, my father buried all the deeds and papers which regarded his estates, to secure them against the plunder of the Americans, hoping to return in time to save them from being spoiled; but the war having taken an adverse turn, he was so long absent that upon their being opened they were illegible, and from this circumstance he wanted proof of much of his claims against the Government for his lost property. The American Congress were so exasperated against him for the part he took in favor of the British Government, that they outlawed his person and confiscated his property, which they valued at £150,000 when they put it up for sale. My father received a very trifling compensation for all this great property (I think only about £2,000), nor did the Government pay him for the expense of raising the regiment, which I have heard him say cost him about £2,000.

At the conclusion of the war my father’s regiment (The King’s Loyal Americans) were put on half-pay, and as a compensation for services had lands allotted them in Upper
Canada. My father’s portion as Lieut.-Colonel Commandant was a thousand acres, and was located somewhere near Yorktown (now Toronto); but from my father not choosing to settle there with his family, and from neglecting to cultivate it, this property was not secured to him. All this I state from memory only. His property in Canada was lost by his own neglect to cultivate it as required of all the settlers. His claims for losses in the war were sent in to the Government in 1783 when the war closed, and for these, as I have said, he received only a nominal compensation.

My brother Henry James Jessup’s only surviving and eldest son, John, went to New York to endeavor to recover some part of his father’s estate, which not being able to do he thoughtlessly sold his right for a mere trifle, – I think I heard it was only £15, – and he died there not long after.

My brother had three sons, all of whom died unmarried; and two daughters, – the eldest, Mrs. George Macilvain, died childless; and the youngest, Mrs. Davidson, is now alive, but has no issue.

My sister, Mrs. Alexander Wright, and her husband went to Upper Canada about 20 years ago, and if I remember rightly they made over their share and interest in the property to my cousin Edward Jessup’s widow, or some of his family.

At the end of the war, Ebenezer Jessup, considerably poorer, moved to England in 1783, and his family joined him in 1787. But, but finding life difficult there on only a Lieutenant-Colonel’s half pay, in 1790 he received an official appointment in Calcutta, to where he moved, and spent the final 28 years of his life. His wife, Elizabeth, and at least three of his daughters, went with him.

It is fascinating to those of us interested in Heraldry that Ebenezer Jessup was granted an official coat-of-arms, as shown on page 182. Apart from the fact that it’s a nice picture it’s interesting to see that the Garter Principal King of Arms implicitly admitted a connection to the Jessops of Broom Hall, as well as to the Hydes that were the Earls of Clarendon. However, the King of Arms also pointed out that Ebenezer was unable to prove these connections; one suspects that a bit more cynicism might have been in order, and, if one was nasty like me, one might just suspect that a little money changed hands to encourage the King of Arms to accept these rather dubious claims. As usual, though, I know nothing; I merely suspect and speculate.

Ebenezer and Elizabeth had six children.

Henry James, (1762–1806), was born in Dutchess County, New York, and appears to have been the only son to survive into adulthood. He was a barrister and solicitor in Quebec, and went with his father to London in 1783. There he married into the upper circles of the aristocracy, in the person of Lady Anna Maria Bowes, daughter of John Lyon Bowes, the ninth earl of Strathmore. They eloped when she was only 18. Naughty, naughty. Anna’s mother was Mary Eleanor Bowes, “The Unhappy Countess”, reputed to be the richest heiress in Europe, with a fortune over a million pounds, and with a taste in men so self-destructive that you can only read her biography with wonder and astonishment. She first married an earl, who left debts of over £100,000 when he died, and secondly married a man who beat her, raped her, kidnapped her, and abused her. Not to mention doing all that to her maids as well. She finally escaped (with the help of one of her maids) and managed to get a divorce, after an extremely high-profile legal battle, and her second husband ended up in prison. What a story. After she managed to escape her husband (from about 1792 on), she lived in a relatively quiet retirement, in the company of two of her daughters, one of whom was Lady Jessup.

Jesup [48] didn’t know very much more about Henry’s family or descendants. In 1798 Henry was appointed “Searcher of Customs” at Cape Town in South Africa, so he obviously moved out there at some stage. He would have left there before 1802, when Cape Colony was restored to Holland, and he died in Connecticut at the house of his uncle, George Dibble, in 1806. He was only 43. Anna died in 1832. Clearly, she didn’t accompany her husband in his travels.
The coat-of-arms of Ebenezer Jessup. Quarterly, First and Fourth, Barry of Six Azure and Argent, nine Mullets pierced Or, three, three and three for Jessup; Second and Third, Gules a Chevron Erminois between three Lozenges Or, on a Canton Argent a sword erect proper for Hyde, and for the Crest of Jessup on a Wreath of the colours, in a Maunch Sable charged with three mullets pierced Or, a dexter arm, the hand grasping a sword proper, pommel and hilt gold.
around the world as she was living with her mother instead, so my guess is that she came to regret her elopement. She probably had the same self-destructive impulses that her mother did.

He and Anna Bowes had five children, of whom I know very little, except that one of their sons was John Henry Bowes and is said to have been a midshipman on board the Victory with Lord Nelson. He died young, in Brooklyn, New York. Two of his sisters married, but neither had any children, and so his descendants appear to have become extinct.

**Leah**, b. 1767, is the one who married into the Boileau family and is my 4G-grandmother, so I’ll talk more about her below.

**Sarah** was born in Albany, New York, and went with her family to England, where she married the Rev. John Maddy. She died before 1831, and John Maddy remarried. Sarah and John Maddy had three girls; Mary, Susan and Sara, two of whom reproduced. Details are given in [48].

**Elizabeth** was also born in Albany. She married Alexander Wright, a member of the English Bengal Civil Service, Collector of the Revenues at Agra. They lived in India for almost thirty years before returning to England, having sent their four sons there some years previously, to live with her sister Sarah, Mrs. Maddy. I don’t know very much more about their sons. It’s not clear they left any descendants.

**Deborah.** All that is known about her is that she married someone called Smythe, and they were living in Calcutta in 1813, when her mother died. She had previously returned to England in 1807, on account of her health, but came back to India.

**Mary Ann Clarendon.** Nothing is known about her except that she was nearly six years old on the 30th of August, 1789.

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**Leah Jessup**

One of Ebenezer’s daughters who went with him to India was Leah Jessup, who there met and married Thomas Boileau, as already told on page 162, and thus the connection with the rest of my family tree. Just to recap a little, Leah went out to India with her father in about 1790, and married Thomas Boileau in 1796. He only lasted another ten years, dying in 1806, whereupon Leah, with her seven children (the last born posthumously), returned to England in 1807, and raised her children at Bury St. Edmunds. Most of them later returned to India.

We are lucky enough to have copies of some of the letters written by Leah Jessup and her sister Sarah Maddy. They give a lovely picture of the family life in England, as well as some details of the death of Leah’s mother. Since letters like this are rare they are worth quoting in full.

**Letter from Leah Jessup to her cousin, Sarah Dibble**¹, in Stamford. 1 November, 1786. Quebec. In 1786, Leah would have been about 19, and would have been living in Canada for a few years. Her father had already been in England for three years or so.

Dear Cousin:— I have just heard of an opportunity of writing to you, which I gladly avail myself of to ask you how you and all our dear friends are, and to tell you that we are all in very good health. I heard a few days since from my Uncle Joseph; he lives in the same place my Aunt Abby does [Abigail, the wife of Edward Jessup]. He tells me my cousin Abby Walker has three children now; the two eldest are boys. I sent to visit them the winter before last; they are really very fine children. We had a letter from Aunt Sarah [Sarah Dibble] from St. John, New Brunswick. She was very well the first of last month; but I suppose you hear from her much oftener than we possibly can. She tells us she often hears from you all, that you were all in very good health lately, which intelligence gave the greatest pleasure, I assure you, for we had not heard from you in so

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¹The daughter of George Dibble, the brother of Leah’s mother. Sarah later married James Waring, of Stamford.
long that we were afraid something was the matter with some of the family. But I hope
your silence was owing to want of opportunity, and not to sickness or any accident.

We have heard frequently from my father this summer. He has settled the business for
which he went on to England, and he has sent for us to go to him, which we mean to
do early the next summer. We wished much to have gone this fall; but the season is too
far advanced now, and we are waiting for my uncle Edward to arrive here before we
go. He sailed from London the 24th of August. We are afraid he will not arrive this
year, as the Capt. of the ship was never here, and this is a dangerous river for people
that are unacquainted with it to come up so late in the year as this. Many people think
they will be obliged to put into Halifax to winter, but I hope that will not be the case.
I am sure my aunt will be very uneasy if she does not see my uncle this fall, and I
really begin to fear she will not. He has been in England two years, and my father has
been there three, and it will be near a year longer before we can possibly see him. My
brother is with him, and it is very probable he will settle in London. I don’t know what
part of England my father means to settle his family in; but for two years hence, I dare
say we will live in London. Tho’ I wish very much to be with my father, as it is very
disagreeable keeping up two families as we have done for several years past, yet I shall
feel a very sincere regret at leaving this place. We came strangers to Canada, and we
have found many valuable friends and agreeable acquaintances, from whom we have
received the greatest politeness and hospitality. I am very grateful for the many favors
and civilities our friends have shown us, tho’ our situation has been such as not to allow
us to return their civilities; yet I hope some future day will enable us in some measure
to repay them. We have a pleasing prospect before us just now; my father has received
some compensation from government for his lost estate, but what it is I have not heard;
but his half-pay as Lieut.-Colonel, with a small additional income, will make us very
comfortable. My mother and sisters join me in best love to my dear grandmother, uncle,
and aunt, not forgetting yourself, and all your sisters and brothers. I hope to have the
pleasure of hearing from you very soon. I seldom have opportunities, or I would write
oftener.

Leah Jessup

Letter from Leah Jessup to her cousin, Sarah Dibble, in Stamford. 30 August, 1789. Woolwich,
Kent. Leah would have been about 22, and, as you see from the letter itself, had been living in
England for two years.

My Dear Cousin:– I have deferred writing to you for some time in hopes of having it in
my power to answer your letter by Edward Jessup\(^1\); but though he says he put it up very
carefully with his clothes, he has not been able to find it again. Tho’ I am disappointed
of the pleasure of reading your letter, I assure you I am very sincerely obliged to you for
writing to me. It made us very happy to hear from my uncle that you were all in good
health. We were particularly happy to find that no bad consequences have arisen from
my dear grandmother’s\(^2\) having broken her arm some time ago, – a circumstance that
gave great uneasiness to my mother and the rest of our family. I hope she will continue
to enjoy health and happiness, as well as your father, mother, and the rest of your family,
to each of whom my father, mother, and sisters join me in best love and good wishes.

We were sorry to hear my uncle has been so much troubled by the Americans. It is
difficult to say who fared the worst, – those who remained with their estates or those
who left them; but certain it is, the Loyalists in general have great reason to lament there
ever having been an American war.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)The son of Edward (iii), and the cousin of Leah. He would have been 23.

\(^2\)Sarah Jessup, the mother of Elizabeth Dibble. Sarah Jessup died in 1792, in Stamford, Conn., at the ripe old age of 82.
Leah’s other grandmother, Abigail James, had died many years earlier, in 1743 (page 175).

\(^3\)Right. They lost.
We have been in England two years. I have travelled over a great part of it, and think it a most beautiful country. We lived in London the first year, since when we have been within nine miles of that great city. The house we now occupy is most pleasantly situated. It stands on a hill, and commands a view of the Thames, which is one of the largest rivers in England, and is constantly full of ships sailing to and from London. We can see St. Paul’s Church (which is the largest in England), Westminster Abbey (in which most of the Kings of England are buried), and many other buildings in London. We have good gardens and a large field belonging to this house, which we have taken a long lease of; but with all these advantages we find it very expensive living in England, for almost everything we eat, drink, or wear is taxed.

My brother has been married a year and a half; his lady was brought to bed of a son a few days ago. I have four sisters; the youngest is nearly six years old, so that in all probability my mother will not increase her family. She is still a very handsome woman, although her hair is as white as snow. She enjoys good health, as does my father, at present. They again desire to be most affectionately remembered to my grandmother and all the family. I hope soon to hear from you, my dear cousin. You will please direct to me at Woolwich, in the County of Kent. Give my love to all your family, and believe me,

Your affectionate cousin,

Leah Jessup

Letter from Sarah Maddy (the sister of Leah Jessup) to her uncle, George Dibble, in Stamford. 14 August, 1814. Piccadilly, London. Leah would have been about 47, had already gone to India, got married, had children, had her husband die, and toddled off back home.

My Dear Uncle:— I now write to inform you of the melancholy event which has taken place in our family, of the death of my dear mother, your sister Elizabeth, who died the 25th of August, 1813. I had a letter lately from my sister Deb. (who is married to Mr. Smyth), giving me an account of it. She was with my dear mother and nursed her with filial affection, I am sure, during her illness, which lasted only five days. She was taken from the dinner-table senseless, and remained so all the time she lived; a stroke of the palsy is said to be the case. My sister wrote to me that she and my father had procured the best advice Calcutta affords, and that they spared no expense in providing her every necessary comfort, which is certainly to me a great consolation under this heavy affliction. There was never a better Christian or parent. My father is tolerably well, but has not been out of his house for four years, which is more from habit than from any cause. The hot climate of India does not disagree with him; he has had time to try it, having been there 23 years, which is a pretty good proof.

My eldest sister, Leah Boileau, a widow with five boys and two daughters, lives at Bury St. Edmunds, a handsome town in Suffolk, and 8 miles from where my husband has a small living. We see her and her family often. She is well situated, and much respected for her good care and management of her family; for having had a good education she teaches them a great deal at home. I am at present at Margate, a seaport town, for the purpose of bathing my large family; for tho’ I have but three daughters living, I have the care of four of my sister Elizabeth’s sons, who with her husband, Mr. Wright, is in India. The youngest boy and one of my girls require sea air and bathing, for which purpose I am here with my young ones to pass their holidays, five weeks. I hope they may benefit by it, for the expense is great.

1Leah’s brother, Henry James Jessup, married Anna Maria Bowes on the 20th of January, 1788. They eloped when she was only 18.
2And would have been about 44.
3Alexander Wright, the collector of revenues at Agra, India.
I have a very small house, for three guineas per week, and every article of food full as dear as in London. We already experience the happy effects of a peace with the Continent; vessels are coming in continually with provisions from foreign markets, which I hope will reduce the price here. I have to-day bought a quarter of lamb at one shilling a pound, beef and mutton ten and a half pence, – somewhat dearer than it was when I saw you last at Albany in 1777, which I can just remember. I mentioned our having a small living in Suffolk, which is beautifully situated and has a good neighborhood, where I pass most of my time, seven months in the year, because my children are not healthy if I live four months together in London.

We have in the country every convenience and comfort of life. We only occupy fourteen acres of land, so that we farm it in a very small way; but it amuses my husband a little when he can get to Somerton, in the way he likes, and is conducive to his health, which is not very good owing to his having had too much to do in his professional line, and his being obliged to be a great deal of his time in London, for there the greatest part of his income arises.

Pray give my love to all your family and believe me ever your affectionate niece,

S. Maddy.

[Her husband, in typical husband fashion, adds three lines to the end, sending his love.]

Letter from Sarah Maddy (the sister of Leah Jessup) to her cousin, Sarah Waring (i.e., Sarah Dibble, who later married James Waring), in Stamford. 12 May, 1816. 16 Argyle Street.

My Dear Cousin:– When I received your kind letter, dated almost a year ago, we were extremely busy in moving from Piccadilly to No. 16 Argyle St., a most comfortable house indeed, and immediately after to our cottage in Suffolk, where we pass every summer. I left your letter in London and did not know your address, or should have acknowledged the receipt of it sooner. I was sorry to hear of the death of my dear uncle. He was the only one of your family I ever saw. I remember him perfectly well, tho’ so long ago as 1777, when I was seven years old. I also remember my grandmother, but I was younger the time she was in Albany.

I shall be obliged to you if you will take the trouble to enquire what my grandmother’s grandfather Hyde’s Christian name was, and what part of the Clarendon family he belonged to. I should be glad likewise to know something respecting my ancestors the Jessups and Dibbles, as I know very little about my family, and it certainly would be a gratification to me to know more, if I can obtain information without its being too great an inconvenience to you.

We have had a very unhealthy winter; a vast number of people have died, and many suddenly. My sister Boileau has lost a son, a very clever, industrious boy of 13 years old, who was always at the head of his class and shewed a most excellent example to his brothers and sisters. She has now six children and is a widow. She is going in midsummer next to France, in order to educate her daughter Ann, and as it will be an advantage to our girls to go also, Dr. Maddy purposes sending Mary and Susan for one year, as they will acquire a pure French accent which cannot be obtained in England. It is quite the fashion now to go to France for education, but I do not think it is to be acquired better there than in England, only it is not so expensive, I am told. The French are a bad example as to their moral conduct, but I shall base no fear on that head, as Mrs. Boileau is an excellent example to young people.

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1 George Dibble, who died on the 19th of April, 1813.
2 It was John, but I am not at all convinced by the claimed connection to the Clarendons. There is no evidence now, and there wasn’t then either, it seems.
3 John Peter Boileau. See page 163.
4 Leah Ann Boileau. See page 163.
I have one boy in my family who is unwell. Our physician recommends our going to the sea with him, and it is likely I shall accompany my sister to the opposite shore for six weeks during the midsummer holidays. On my return I shall have the pleasure of addressing you again. I have just returned from a jaunt to Herefordshire, my husband’s native place, a beautiful country on the border of Wales, where the mountains are cultivated almost to their summits\(^1\) and the valleys are rich pasture. I was delighted with my excursion and regretted leaving the country to pass another six weeks in London at this season of the year, just when the fruit trees are going to blossom. It is a cyder country, and of course there are large orchards.

If you should send your son to England Dr. M. and myself will be happy to show him any civility in our power. You will find it expensive, but I suppose you have informed yourself on that subject; if not I will most willingly inform you the first opportunity.

I have heard from the last vessels from India that my sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Wright, are going to take America in their route to England, as my sister has a desire to see her native country before she finally settles here. I have the care of her four boys; it is the oldest who is so unwell as to require the sea air and bathing, which I hope will be of service to him. Dr. M. and our three girls unite with me in love to yourself and family, also to all your sisters and brothers; and believe me always your affectionate cousin,

S. Maddy.

I forgot to mention that I know nothing of our relations in Canada. We have not had any intercourse by letters for years past. I wrote a few years ago, but had no answer to my letter. I mean to make another trial soon; I may have better success.

Leah Boileau died in 1845, in London, at the age of about 78, her sister, Sarah Maddy, having died some years previously, in 1831. The story of her children is continued in the Boileau chapter, on page 163.

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\(^1\) Must be pretty pathetic mountains, then.
Chapter 9

Huguenot and Medieval Families

When one looks at the Boileau charts on pages 147 and 148 one sees that the Boileau de Castelnau were connected, as one might expect, to a range of other French families, such as de Vignolles, Collot d’Escoury, de Calvière and de Montcalm, each of which had an extensive lineage of their own. We have already dealt with the Jessups in Chapter 8. In this chapter we deal with some of the other French families, mostly Huguenot, to which the Boileau were connected. Realistically, it’s not possible to do a complete job of this, as the connections are too extensive, and not all that well known. Neither do I have good sources for most of them, mostly just Chesnaye-Desbois [21], the French equivalent of Burke, and just as error-ridden. However, every so often a brighter light shines, which makes the effort worthwhile.

At the end of this chapter I provide a brief pointer to the medieval families in our ancestry. They quickly become far too complicated for anything more than the most cursory consideration, but they are also very well known. Any interested reader can easily find them out for themselves.

Desbrisay

On the 6th of August, 1741, Simeon Boileau (my 6G grandfather) married Magdalena Elizabeth Desbrisay (surprisingly enough, my 6G grandmother) and proceeded to have 16 children (see page 160, and the chart on page 147). As it happens, Magdalena came herself from a most interesting family. However, although it’s interesting it’s also highly confusing; there is very little information about her father and grandfather, and great uncertainty over their exact birth and death dates. Lart [50] gets his Desbrisay dates completely and utterly wrong. He has, for example, Magdalena Desbrisay being born one year before the birth of her father. Even for Huguenots, this would be tricky. At least one spurious generation is inserted by Lart, and other sources seem sometimes to follow him blindly. So what you are about to read is an informed guess only.1

Magdalena’s grandfather was Captain Théophile (i) de la Coeur Desbrisay, supposedly born in 16712, who first appears on the 1st of July, 1689, when he received a commission in one of the French Huguenot Regiments of William of Orange [1]. These regiments were formed directly after the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1688, in which William of Orange invaded England, booted out James II, and called himself William III.3 After his arrival in England, it became apparent to William that he was going to have to fight another war in Ireland (which culminated in the Battle of the Boyne, in 1690), and thus he formed four Huguenot regiments, commanded by prominent Huguenots; François du Cambon, Charles Massue de La Caillémotte and Isaac de Monceau de La Melonière commanded three infantry regiments, while a cavalry regiment was commanded by Frederick Herman von Schomberg, a former marshal of the French army. When Cambon died soon after the Battle

1Don Lowe has been particularly helpful in teaching me about the Desbrisay family. A lot of his information is at http://www.islandregister.com/desbrisay1.html and http://www.desbrisay.ca/. He doesn’t always give sources unfortunately.
2I have never seen any reference for this date, so I approach it with considerable scepticism.
3You can tell he won because it was called the Glorious Revolution. If he’d lost, the enterprise would have been called the Orange Invasion.
of the Boyne, his regiment was commanded by Frédéric Guillaume de Rochefoucauld, Comte de Marton, afterwards the Earl of Lifford. As a side note, Cambon was trained as an engineer, but made a huge fuss whenever called upon to exercise those talents; presumably he thought it beneath him. He was insubordinate and contrary, perpetually squabbling with his fellow officers and his superiors, leading Schomberg to describe him as a “chicanier sur ses mathematiques”. I don’t know how to translate this properly, but it means something like a mathematical nit-picker, or pedant, or squabbler, or all around pain in the arse one suspects. Most likely the mathematical bit was the worse insult.

Théophile’s 1689 commission was in Cambon’s regiment so he was clearly one of the Huguenots recruited by William of Orange for his Irish war. In 1698, Cambon’s regiment, now Lord Lifford’s regiment, was disbanded, and Théophile’s name appears again, in a “List of the Staff and Standing Officers of the Earl of Lifford’s Regiment of Foot”.

On the 19th of July, 1700, we find in the Treasury Books that Captain Desbrisay was acting as an attorney for Dame Mary de Beaupy “praying payment of 15l. 10s. 8d. due to her son as a Reformed Ensign in Lord Lifford’s Regiment and of 7l. 10s. 2d. due to him [Desbrisay] as attorney of Peter de Briscac, Ensign in the said Regiment.” It seems likely that this is Théophile, so his skills were presumably legal as well as military.

Théophile then disappears from view. Apparently, the burial of a Théophile DesBrisay is recorded on an old and almost obliterated inscription on a tomb stone in the Huguenot Cemetery in Merion Row, St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin, bearing the date 15th July, 1767, together with the names of Simeon Boileau, aged 50, and John Boileau. However, the date on this tombstone is clearly the date of Simeon’s death, not of Théophile’s death, so the common interpretation, that Théophile lived to the age of 96, is both unlikely and unsupported. Note that the name on this grave cannot refer to Simeon’s father-in-law, Théophilus (ii) Desbrisay, as he didn’t die until 1772 (for which we have a newspaper announcement to prove it). Hence, the Théophile buried with Simeon Boileau is possibly the elder Théophile (i), Simeon’s father-in-law’s father. One likely candidate for the John Boileau in this grave is the brother of Simeon, who died in 1722, aged only 1.

Although I don’t believe that Théophile (i) lived to be 96, it seems that he lived at least until his 70s in Dublin (where his son Théophilus (ii) was based, as we shall see); he appears in a 1907 history of Dublin [26] as a figure of some amusement:

A strange figure was Captain Debrisay when upwards of 70 years of age still wearing the dress of the reign of Charles II, ‘a large cocked-hat all on one side his face, nearly covering his left eye; a great powdered wig, hanging at the side in curls, and in the centre at the back a large black cockade with a small drop curl from it; his embroidered waistcoat down to his knees; the top of his coat not within three inches of his neck, the hip buttons about a foot from it; buttons all the way down the coat but only one at the waist buttoned; the hilt of the sword through the opening of the skirt; a long cravat, fringed, the end pulled through the third button-hole; small buckles; the coat sleeves very short, and the shirt sleeves pulled down, but hid by the top of the gloves, and the ruffles hanging out at the opening of the cuff; the waistcoat entirely open except the lower button, displaying the finely plaited frill’. Such, in his bodily presentment, was the old courtier who we learn ‘walked the streets of Dublin unremarked.’

Since King Charles II died in 1685, Théophile, born in 1671, might well have been wearing clothes of the fashion of that time, so this account is consistent with other information I have. That’s about the best that can be said, without a lot more research.

According to Lart, Théophile (i) married Madeleine Boisrond de St. Leger, about whom I think I know a little (see page 194). They married on the 13th of December, 1692, at the Savoy Temple in London, and had two children; the elder, Magdalaine Marie de la Cour, was born in 1693 and married Solomon Blosset de Loches, a brigadier-general in “La Melonières” Regiment of Foot.
The second child of Théophile (i) and Madeleine Boisron de St. Leger was Captain Théophilus (ii) de la Coeur Desbrisay, born in 1694. His full name was possibly Samuel Théophilus, or Samuel-Théophile, but there is considerable confusion as to the exact number of generations and their respective names. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography claims that Captain Théophilus was baptised Samuel-Théophile. However, other family researchers say that Samuel-Théophilus was a Cornet in the 4th Troop of the 3rd Horse, or King’s Carabiniers, on the 14th of November, 1749, which is so unlikely as to verge on the impossible, if he was born in 1694. People of his rank were not in the army as a cornet at the age of 55. Either Samuel-Théophile was the son of Captain Théophilus, or there is some mistake in the army commission. It seems most likely to me that this Cornet was a third Théophilus, the son of Théophilus (ii), and the grandson of Captain Théophile (i).

Théophilus (ii) married Magdalene de Vergèze d’Aubussargues (see page 195) in 1718, and they had ten children. One daughter, Magdalena Elizabeth, married Simeon Boileau, and thus, eventually, there came me. For more details, and their descendants, see page 160. Of the sons of Théophilus and Magdalene d’Aubussargues, four entered the army and ended up as a general, a captain, a lieutenant-general and a colonel; Peter died in 1759 while defending Basse-Terre, in Guadeloupe. A fourth son was a Reverend, while a fifth was a colonial administrator in Canada (see below). The other girls made various marriages, and had various children.

Théophilus (ii) remained a Captain in the army; he was the Agent for the 2nd Regiment of Foot at Cork Hill, according to the “List of General and Field Officers as They Rank in the Army 1754,” which is in the Library of the British Museum. There exists voluminous correspondence from the period 1760–1768, between him and Sir Robert Wilmot, Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, about various military matters. It all looks terribly dull, to be honest. Bills, troop movements, and

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1Mind you, he was lucky to live even up to 1759. In 1746, at the Battle of Rocaux, he was bayonetted at least 13 times but survived. God knows how.
so on. A Captain Théophilus Desbrisay appears in a few other official documents; he was the Irish agent of the 39th from 1752–9, which doesn’t entirely agree with the List quoted above, in which he was the agent for the 2nd Regiment. Maybe there is a simple military explanation for this, or maybe he was the agent for both of them, or maybe a different Captain Théophilus Desbrisay is meant. I’m not sure.

In 1732, someone of the same name was put on half pay as a “reduced captain of horse”. This is possibly the elder Captain Théophile (i), who would have been about 61; it’s unlikely to be the younger Théophilus (ii), who was still an army agent some 30 years later.

The most intriguing entry is in Treasury documents from 1771, a year before Théophilus died, which read “Votes of the House of Commons”: that a committee be appointed to enquire into the disposition of the effects of debtor Théophilus Desbrisay”. Well, well. Does this mean that our Théophilus died a debtor, of such a scale that he required a House of Commons committee? I find this hard to believe, but there is no denying the existence of the document. Maybe the document refers to an entirely different person. That Théophilus was not wealthy is confirmed by a letter he wrote to his son in 1769, which is reproduced below. In it he says that, given his circumstances, he couldn’t show his affection by real effects; this is entirely consistent with a bankruptcy in 1771.

Questions: There are clear indications that Theophilus Debrisay was relatively poor towards the end of his life, probably a debtor. There is probably a story here, and I’d like to find it out. One day. I bet that Irish military records, or local Dublin records will contain more information about this. Or are there any followups to the House of Commons document?

Captain Théophilus (ii) died in Glasnevin, Dublin on the 5th of July, 1772; an announcement of his death appeared in the Londonderry Journal on the 15th of July. His wife, Magdalena survived him by a few years, dying on the 13th of December, 1788, also in Dublin.

One reason that so many people have been interested in Captain Théophilus de la Coeur Desbrisay is that one of his sons, Thomas, born in 1735, went to Prince Edward Island in Canada, where he became a prominent colonial administrator, and left a lot of descendants.

In 1769, Théophilus wrote the following letter to Thomas, on the occasion of Thomas leaving for his assignment on Prince Edward Island. To my mind it gives a nice insight into the sort of man Théophilus was.

Dear Tom,

As by all appearances, at my great age, I cannot hope to see you more after you leave this Kingdom and my circumstances not affording me the means of showing you my affection by real effects, I shall at least discharge a duty by laying before you such advices for the conduct of your life, which if attended to may be conducive to your welfare and happiness.

Let me observe to you:

1. That your principal duty is to offer daily your worship to the Supreme being, not only in private, but let your family join you in acts of devotion morning and evening. In the post wherein it hath pleased God to place you, you are not to consider yourself alone, but to be an example to others. This you will do by never neglecting, with your family, to attend the Public Worship.

2. As Lieutenant-Governor of St. John’s Island I think there are many obligations laid on you and the mentioning of some of them may, I hope, be of use.

3. In regard to the Inhabitants of the Island whom His Majesty hath laid under your inspection, be to them affable and courteous, but especially to the Officers immediately

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1 National Archives, T 1/484 Treasury: papers.
2 And Americans and Canadians, in particular, seem to be fanatical about genealogy. Well, lots of them anyway.
3 He never did, dying only three years after he wrote this letter.
attending on Public business be civil but not familiar. Have no favorites and beware to let any one get an ascendancy over you. Reward virtue and punish vice without showing any partiality in either case. Be just and fear not. Dare to be wise.

4. Be very sparing in giving Entertainments. From a long experience I have found that they answer no end, insomuch that those persons who have eat your meat and drunk your wine will look upon it as a small obligation and perhaps blame you in their minds.

5. Be constantly on your guard against being tempted to make any advantages, that perhaps they may appear innocent. Money making is a dangerous snare and avarice hath often perverted the best minds who, when out of reach of temptation, thought themselves secure from that vice.

6. As you may be allowed to dispose of employments, do not stretch your authority too much to your advantage, forever give the preference to merit tho at your loss. By this method you will gain friends. His Majesty’s service will be better promoted and you will have the inward satisfaction of having acted by the rules of generosity, disinterestedness and with sentiments abhorring a filthy lucre.

7. You will, I suppose, have plans of Worship of different denominations. In general people are very tenacious of their religious principles. When their differences are laid open History will inform us to what length opinions and prejudice will carry men. The consequences are always fatal. If any such arise in your island, these as governor you may compose, by an impartial behaviour accompany’d with gentleness and moderation. If you can compass this great end, your island will be peaceable and every particular member will apply himself to his private affairs and consult the good of the whole. Do not suffer partys of any kind to take root. Prevent them at their first appearance, but always with good manners.

8. Apply yourself to Agriculture and Horticulture. This will employ some hours in each day, take you from Idleness, and will occasion such reflections, as will raise your thoughts, and fill your mind with sublime ideas by admiring the works of Providence and will give you an amiable taste to virtue, which will every day increase.

I have now laid before you some few leads for your conduct, to which you may add your own reflections, and enlarge upon them. As to the passions ingrafted in us, by our nature, or to speak better by Providence and what relates to the education of your children, you are come to that time of life, that I should be sorry that you should want advice.

I most ardently pray God that He may bless you, you and yours, that He may sow in your minds seeds of morality and virtue, that you may pass the days of your pilgrimage with all those who belong to you, in health, happiness and comfort and the conscienteness of doing well.

Amen


Connection to the earlier De Brisay family

There probably isn’t one, but it’s worth a quick look as this question has been a source of discussion for over a century. The point is that there is a super-famous De Brisay, or De Brizé, family, connected closely to the French royal family, with a lineage that extends back well into medieval times. Not only this, but there is a very plausible story that can be constructed as to how the Huguenot Desbrisays were connected to the famous French De Brisays. As far as I’m aware, this story was first put about by the Reverend Henry de la Coeur Desbrisay in about 1884, and was promoted by Jane Alicia Innes when she constructed the Big Boileau Chart [11].

The story goes as follows: Pierre de Brisay, Chevalier and Seigneur de Denonville married Jacqueline d’Orléans de Longueville (a recognised illegitimate daughter of Claude d’Orléans de Longueville, the Grand Chamberlain of France, and a descendant of King Charles V of France) was
the first of the family to become a Protestant. His son, Jacques de Brisay, was born at Denonville in 1579 but fled to Holland where he died at Heusden in 1625, leaving a son, Pierre, by his wife, Judith d’Argenson. Pierre, however, with an eye to the main chance, converted back to Catholicism, and headed off back to France to pick up his considerable fortune and continue the family line. I can’t say I blame him. His children became very rich and very famous. All correct so far.

However – and here is the crucial step – Jacques remained in Holland, and may well have had other children. They are not mentioned, of course, by any French genealogist; Huguenot progeny were usually completely ignored. But then, neither are they mentioned by anybody else, French or otherwise. There is no record yet found that links Jacques de Brisay, Seigneur de Denonville, who died in Holland in 1625, with Théophile de la Coeur Desbrisay, who first appears as a Captain in Holland in 1698. It’s possible they were related; it’s possible they weren’t. We just cannot say.

The authors of the Big Boileau Book [10] are scathing about this claimed connection, saying baldly that it’s total nonsense, and the two families are quite unrelated. Well, this may well be true, but I wish they’d given a few more details. In general, the Big Boileau Book is very reliable, so I tend to believe it, but it’s unlikely to end the arguments.

So, make up your own mind. If you’re happy in an evidence vacuum, and you really want to be descended from the Kings of France, then by all means believe the story. If you’re more of a sceptic like myself, don’t. It’s up to you.

St. Leger de Boisrond

Although it’s technically correct that I know nothing at all about Madelaine Boisrond de St. Leger (the wife of Captain Théophile (i) de la Coeur Desbrisay, see page 190), I believe I do know a little. It is known that René de St. Leger, Seigneur de Boisrond et de Orignac was the Protestant commander of a French regiment at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Although he converted to Catholicism, his wife and children did not, deciding to flee the country. One of his sons, Samuel de St. Leger de Boisrond, entered Brandenburg service before joining Cambon’s Huguenot regiment in England. Another of his sons, Henri, also served in Ireland in one of the Huguenot regiments. It is implausible that Madelaine Boisrond de St. Leger was anything other than closely related to Samuel and Henri, either their sister or the daughter of one of them. Note that Samuel was in the same regiment as Théophile; indeed, he was a lieutenant-colonel (commissioned in September, 1690), while Théophile was a mere captain. They appear together in the list in Agnew [1]. So it’s most likely that Madelaine was the sister or daughter of Samuel.

René’s other son, Henri, was naturalised by an act of Parliament, wherein it states that he was the son of René Boisrond de St. Leger, by Benine, his wife, born in the province of Saintonge in France [51]. One of Henri’s sons was called Théophile, who was presumably named after the good Captain, either his aunt’s husband or his cousin’s husband.

Agnew claims that the wife and daughter of René were refugees in England (which confirms that René had a daughter), and says that the daughter was imprisoned in France, being conveyed from one convent to another from 1685 to 1688, but, upon proving ‘obstinate’, was banished. We don’t know this daughter was Madelaine, but it might have been. It’s certainly consistent with a marriage date of 1692.

All in all, there can be little doubt that we’ve now found Madelaine’s family.

Pursuing the St. Leger family a little further, a 1698 list of the nobility of the region around La Rochelle lists “de SAINT-LEGER, seigneurs de Boisrond, d’Orignac, etc., . . . De gueules, à la croix écartelée d’argent et d’azur, cantonnée de 4 fleurs de lys d’or.” So a red background, a silver and blue cross with golden fleurs de lys. Sounds quite nice, doesn’t it? It’d make a nice cushion. More history of the St. Leger family appears in the Archives Historiques de la Saintonge et de L’Aunis [4]. The first René de Saint-Léger, Seigneur de Boisrond et de la Montagne, married Péronne de Pradel in 1560, and was still living in 1582. His son, another René, became the Seigneur d’Orignac by virtue of his 1578 marriage to an eleven-year-old heiress, Marie Le Forestier, dame de Lussac et d’Orignac. This second René was killed at the siege of Brouage in 1585, when Marie would have been only 18, but they still managed to reproduce. One can only feel sorry for Marie.
The final mention of this family in the archives of Saintonge is in 1686 (or 1687), when François-Louis de Bourbon wrote a letter to Monsieur de Boisrond, in Pons. The recipient was “Réné de Saint Léger de Boisrond, IV du nom, dit ‘Le Forestier’ et surnommé ‘Fine Plume’”; this Réné was also the author of some memoires, but I have not been able to find out much about them. The only extract from them I’ve found [64] is a couple of pages that don’t mention his family, and a short introduction that says “Boisrond is a Saintongeais Gentleman; a converted Protestant by necessity, and combining in his person the grace, spirit and legendary insouciance of the French Nobility. His wife and children were refugees in Holland; his person, his servants and his goods were in peril; but he did not cease, for a single day, to continue his gay parties in Paris, in Saintes, and in the chateaux of his friends. The style of his Memoires is sharp and clever, with a Gallic twist; there is nothing more amiable.” Right. So his wife went off to danger and privation, while he stayed behind with the money and partied on. Quite the insouciant French noble, no doubt. I’m quite sure I don’t like Réné de Saint Léger de Boisrond, IV du nom, dit ‘Le Forestier’ et surnommé ‘Fine Plume’.

Vergèze d’Aubussargues

Magdalene de Vergèze d’Aubussargues, the wife of Théophilus Desbrisay (page 191), came from a Huguenot family that has a rather uncertain history, difficult to piece together from the available sources. Probably the most reliable account is that given in the 1911 volume of the Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français [14], and this is what I follow here.

The first of this family who became a Protestant was Antoine de Vergèze. His son Claude, married in 1570 to Domergue de Joanis, had a son Nicholas, who, in 1621, was in charge of the fort of Sainte-Anastasie, overlooking the Gardon river (and thus, interestingly, close to Castelnau. Aubussargues is almost exactly halfway between Castelnau and Uzès; see Map 7).

Jean d’Aubussargues, the son of Nicholas, married Bonne de Barjac in 1638, and had a number of children, two of whom, Jacques, the elder, and Jean, are known to have fled France at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It’s difficult to know what they did abroad, as they were both usually just called Daubussargues, or Daubessargue, and only sometimes do we also find any other identifying name.

Upon leaving France, Jacques succeeded the Vicomte de Saint-Bonnet as the commander of the Grand Musketeers in Brandenburg, where he also commanded the Horse Grenadiers, an elite corps formed by the Grand Elector at the same time as the Grand Musketeers, that admitted only those of honourable birth or proven valour. However, by 1698 Jacques was in Ireland, a Colonel in Galway’s regiment. He died in Dublin in 1720.

When he left France, Jacques left behind his wife, Madeleine Gasc (the daughter of the co-seigneur de Sanilhac and the consul of Uzès in 1636) and his ten children, to protect their inheritance. She raised their children, who inherited the family wealth, her husband having fled, and finally rejoined her husband in Dublin, in about 1702, where she died sometime after 1714. Apparently, she called herself Madon de Gas. One of the ten children she raised by herself in France was another Jacques, while two of the girls were called Madeleine and Jeanne. I know nothing about any others. It’s likely that this younger Jacques was a Captain in Galway’s regiment in 1698, the same regiment where his father was a Colonel, although his name isn’t given by Agnew [1].

Finally, it is this younger Jacques who was, according to family tradition, the father of Magdalene, who married Théophilus Desbrisay. This is, let me emphasise, only tradition, not genealogy. Historically, there is little doubt of the connection between our Madeleine and the other de Vergèze d’Aubussargues; genealogically, there is no specific proof, and is thus technically unacceptable.

Just to add to the confusion, there were at least three Madeleine de Vergèze d’Aubussargues in Dublin at various times. One was the wife of Colonel Jacques, who signed herself Madon de Gas. Another was the Madeleine who married Théophilus Desbrisay, while the third was the wife of Jean de Vergèze d’Aubussargues, the brother of Colonel Jacques. Jean and his wife lived in Dublin for a time, before moving to Switzerland, where they remained for the rest of their lives.

The d’Aubussargues coat-of-arms was De sinople à un lévrier courant à fasce d’argent accolé de gueules bordé d’or accompagné de 4 roses d’argent boutonnées. That is, a dark green background,
with a silver running greyhound, collared in red and bordered in gold, surrounded by four silver roses. Very stylish. This is illustrated on page 191, in a bookplate of Théophilus Desbrisay.

Collot d’Escury

My 6G grandfather, Charles Boileau, married Mary Magdelena Collot d’Escury (page 159), and, as it happens, we know a lot about her family. A surprising amount, actually, because Magdalena’s father and her brother wrote a few pages about themselves and their parents, pages which are reproduced in the 1861 volume of the Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français [13]. I’ve translated most of it (well, Dad helped), although there are still bits I don’t understand as my French is truly awful. However, I get pretty close most of the time, I think. The first part of this was written by Magdalena’s father, Daniel Collot d’Escury, before he married and had children, and it contains an account of what Daniel’s grandfather had told him about his own life. The second part was written by one of Magdalena’s brothers, and continues the account of the family. It’s truly a priceless account of the Collot d’Escury.

But we not done yet! There is more! A lady by the name of Susannah Proctor Flory published in 1896 a book called Fragments of Family History [27], in which she described at length her ancestors, including those of the Collot d’Escury variety. I don’t know how, but she clearly had access to family papers that are now quite likely lost, including the diary of Daniel Collot d’Escury, and the letters patent that proved the family’s nobility. There is a copy of this book in, I believe, both the British Library and the Huguenot library in London, but I’ve never seen it. However, Vince O’Grady sent me copies of quite a few pages from this book, so a big thank you to him. Where they can be compared, Flory’s book agrees in all material aspects with the account in [13], so I trust it.

Finally, there is in the Mormon library, Archieven van het geslacht Collot d’Escury. Deel I. Het familiearchief 1611-1939 : met oudere stukken van aanverwante geslachten, by F. de Wijs (i.e., The family archive of the Collot d’Escury family of the Netherlands, with older documents of related families). Who’d have thought the Mormons would ever be useful for anything? I have never read any of these archives, but one day I might get around to it. As long as they’re not written in Dutch, which, come to think of it, they probably are. That would be a problem.

So, the Collot d’Escury. They were yet another Huguenot family, forced to flee France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The males took service in various Protestant armies, the major one of which was that led by William of Orange, and thus ended up in England, Ireland, or Holland, where they met hordes of other Huguenots in identical circumstances. The girls followed along until they could find a husband. This is the same story as the Boileau de Castelnau, the Desbrisay, the Boisrond de St. Leger, and the d’Aubussargues, all families that we have seen before.

The early Collot d’Escury

According to Lart [50] the earliest known ancestor of the Collot d’Escury was Jean Collot, who was known to be living in 1531. He married the Dame de Chaumont and had a son, Louis, who married Adelaide de Drouilly, through whom he became the seigneur de Drouilly. I’m not sure how much faith we should put in these details, but they’re all we have, so there’s no real point in throwing them away.

However, with the next generation we stand on slightly firmer ground. Louis and Adelaide had two sons, David (i) Collot d’Escury and Louis. David married Renée d’Avrout, whom we know was a Huguenot, as she was murdered in the Vassy massacre of 1562. On the 1st of March, 1562, François, the second Duke of Guise, travelling to his estates, stopped in Vassy and decided to attend Mass. He found a congregation of Huguenots holding religious ceremonies. Outraged, or more
likely pretending to be so, he led his men in setting fire to the church, killing just over 80 Huguenots and wounding hundreds others. This was the spark that ignited open warfare between Catholics and Protestants, the so-called Wars of Religion, that were to last, with varying degrees of ferocity, until the Edict of Nantes in 1598 (page 153).

Renée’s two young sons were there in the church with her. The elder, David (ii), later told his grandson, Daniel, who included an account of the incident in his mémoires:

> Everything that we have been able to learn about the origins of her husband, was told to my grandmother, Marie Le Noir, by her late husband David Collot [David (ii)], esquire, seigneur d’Escury. He said to her that when he was about 15 years old, and his brother a year younger, his mother [Renée d’Avrout] was killed in the massacre in the church at Vassy, a small town in Champagne, on the Bloise, in the first religious civil war in the reign of King Charles IX of France. His mother perished in the church at the hands of the army of the duc de Guise. While they were chanting Psalm 88, the barbarians entered the church, sword in hand, and massacred everybody there, and he and his brother could hear their mother, who was a widow, asking God many times to save her children, for the sake of her who was dying for his holy name.

David Collot and his brother noticed that the troops had white ribbons on their hats, put the same on theirs, and were spared. David went to the Bishop of Noyon, a good friend of the family, where he hid for three days, after which time the Bishop said he had to leave, as if anybody discovered that he had given asylum to David, he himself would be killed. So my grandfather went to Brittany, to the house of Monsieur le comte de Fretigny, who took him in very willingly and looked after him until his marriage to Françoise-Philipe de La Villorio.

At this time, Henry IV took the throne of France. My grandfather took the opportunity to go to Vitré, a small town of the Messieurs de la Trimouilles, in Brittany, where there was a large church maintained by those seigneurs [presumably a Protestant church]. There, finally, he was able to gain the consolation of his proper faith, in a way that had been very difficult to do previously.

Clearly David (i) Collot d’Escury had already died by 1562, but I have no idea when.

His son, David (ii) Collot d’Escury, the survivor of the Vassy massacre, married twice, once to Françoise-Philipe de La Villorio, with whom he had no children, and secondly to a much younger woman, Marie Le Noir, whose heart seems to have been a match with her name. They had three children; Philippe, Marguerite and André, but David (ii) died in December, 1611, when the eldest child was only about four. Marie’s second husband, Amaury de Mardeaux, was a Catholic, and seemed to have turned Marie so completely against the children of her first marriage that she burnt all the Collot d’Escury family documents in an attempt to prevent them ever inheriting the property of their father, her first husband. She was also mostly likely highly irritated by her first husband’s will, which returned the property of his first wife to her family, rather than giving it to his second wife. Marie Le Noir and the evil stepfather managed to convert two of the children, Philippe and Marguerite; Marguerite became the Lady Abbess of the Abbey of Stranches, in Normandy.\(^1\)

**André Collot d’Escury**

However, the younger son, André Collot d’Escury, seems to have been a much tougher proposition. The official line was that André was pure in the faith and held to his religious principles through thick and thin. Well, this may be true I suppose, but since it seems that André was not yet two when his father died, it’s unlikely his religious principles were all that strong. Of course, it might be that he was older than two when his father died; in any case, he left home at the age of 12, and even at that age I doubt his religious convictions. I’m guessing he just couldn’t stand his stepfather, and got the hell out as soon as he could. In the words of André’s son, Daniel [13]:

\(^1\)I have never found any other mention of this Abbey anywhere. Maybe the name is spelled incorrectly in Lart.
My father left his stepfather at the age of 12, to go and find Monsieur d’Antrague, who lived in the Cévennes, two hundred leagues from Vitré; he arrived there safely, and Monsieur d’Antrague received him with all the affection and tenderness of a father, bringing him up for the next two years with his own children. Monsieur d’Antrague was the governor of Barnègues; he gave my father a position as ensign, but the wars of religion arrived. Louis XIII took Barnègues and disbanded the troops. My father then went to Holland where he was for two years in a regiment at Utrecht. Upon his return to France, Monsieur le duc de la Tremouilla raised a company of soldiers and gave the command to my father, but this company did not last long, as the court forced Monsieur le duc to dismiss them. Since my father found himself without a job, he went to Mademoiselle Rohan to ask of her a letter of recommendation to her brother, Henry de Rohan, who was the commander in the Valteline; having obtained one he went there.

He was received very favourably by Monsieur de Rohan, and was made a gentleman of his chamber and a cornet in his guards. After the disgrace of Monsieur de Rohan my father took service with the duc de Birkenfeld, who made him a cornet. However, the king of France having no more need of these troops, my father found himself again without employment. Monsieur de Turenne gave him a position as lieutenant in Streefs. My father went on campaign and was badly wounded, with a broken arm. He was taken to Metz, where he thought he was going to have to have it amputated, but it healed. He went on a second campaign, without having his own company. As he had the misfortune to be wounded in every situation in which he found himself, he received at Lamort (?) a musket ball that crushed his whole nose and that he thought was going to kill him, but which procured him his own naval company in 1639 [I’m not too sure of the translation here]. He commanded a number of companies after that.

In 1640 André married Marguerite de la Primaudaye (or Primaudois), with whom he had eight children, four boys and four girls, in eight years. Unsurprisingly, she promptly died. I would have, too. Two of the boys died young, and a third was killed at the battle of Senef. Only one daughter survived infancy. Marguerite herself came from a noble Huguenot family, but I have not been able to trace her relatives. There are lots of Primaudaye around, but I have never been able to find any specific connection to Marguerite.
André had a lot of trouble establishing his proof of nobility, as French nobles were required to do, and there is quite a lot of discussion about this in the writings of his son [13]. It seems that, around 1649, soon after the death of his wife, André forgot to register his letters patent, which he had received from the king. So when he was required to prove his nobility in 1655 he wasn’t able to, at least not easily. It went to court in Brittany and there seems to have been a protracted legal argument, which was not resolved until André appealed again to the king in 1675. Even that didn’t settle things, although the details are not very clear to me.\footnote{It seems that the actual title really belonged to André’s cousin, a son of the elder branch of the family, but André thought that, since he had gone to all the trouble and expense of getting the documents from Picardy, it should belong to him. His cousin asked for the documents to be sent to him, and then never returned them. It all sounds a bit shonky to me, and rather as if André Collot d’Escury was not, after all, the Seigneur de Landauran, as he claimed. Most interesting.}

It was all, however, a little late for André Collot d’Escury, as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes followed soon after, in 1686, and he and his family were forced to leave the country, whereupon he promptly died in Holland, at the age of 76.

Daniel Collot d’Escury

André’s third son, Daniel Collot d’Escury, my 7G grandfather, was the only son who survived long; his two elder brothers died as children, while his younger brother, Siméon, was killed in 1674 at the battle of Senef, aged only 26. Daniel described his early years briefly in [13]:

I was about six when my very dear mother died. After her death, my father sent me to Ladomerie, to the home of my uncle and aunt de Latulerie, where I stayed for two years. After that, my father took me away from there and put me in school, where I stayed another two years. In 1654, my father, who was in Paris, brought me to stay with him; I stayed there about six months, after which my father sent me to the provinces with my aunt Primaudois. Fifteen days later, my father returned to the provinces and took me to Saumur, where he left me to continue with my studies. But I wasn’t there very long as Monsieur le marquis de la Moussaye, the god-father of Monsieur de Turenne, who had seen me in Paris, wrote to my father to ask him to send me to him as his page, which my father did. I went to Monsieur le marquis in 1655 and stayed there until 1660; in 1661 I went to Paris, to the academy, where I stayed for 15 months, and then in
A selection of coats of arms. Top left, de la Vallette: Azure a fess and in chief three mullets pierced or, over all an escutcheon of pretence, quarterly. 1 and 4: Per fess or and azure, in base three fleurs-de-lys of the first. 2 and 3: Argent a lion passant gules. Top right, Primaudaye: France ancient, in bend sinister a lion’s gamb couped or armed gules, over all an inescutcheon or with a tourteau sable. Bottom panels, Collot d’Escury: Azure, a fess argent charged with a mullet sable. Supporters: two lions, or. [They look more like griffins to me, to be honest.]. The three greyscale images are reproduced from Flory [27], while the colour one is my own creation.

1662, I joined the Queen’s Guard, a new company composed of 100 men, all gentlemen of the reformed faith. In 1665, I was made a lieutenant of that company, which was disbanded in 1668. I then went to see Monsieur le comte de Quentin, who kept me with him for three years. But the war having started again in 1672, he made me a lieutenant of cavalry, and in 1674, my captain having been killed at the battle of Saint-Sein, he gave me command of the company.

And there his narrative ends. Fortunately, however, it was continued some years later by his son, Henri:

A very short time after the death of M. de Turenne, my father [i.e., Daniel] had the misfortune to have his arm broken by a gunshot; it was necessary, in order to save his life, to amputate it, two fingers below the shoulder [you can see this in the picture on page 200]. The king compensated him with an annual pension of 200 écus, for the remainder of his life, as one can see from an act still in my possession, and my father enjoyed this pension for the rest of the time he remained in France.

In 1677, on the 19th of May, my father married my dear mother, Anne-Catherine de la Vallette, daughter of M. de la Vallette, seigneur de La Touche, who had been the king’s lieutenant at Stenay, a strong fortress on the Meuse. My father had five children with her, all born in France, four boys and one girl; the eldest died in France, and the
four others left France with my father and my mother when, in 1685, they abandoned their property, goods, pension and their native country, to escape the cruelties inflicted on those who refused to change their religion. As all the histories of that time are full of details of this terrible persecution, I shall recount only those particularly noteworthy events.

My father and my mother, as I said, in 1685 went traveling with their four children in order to find, in a foreign country, the freedom to worship God in safety, following the teachings of our holy and divine religion. My father and mother were on horseback, and the four children, of whom the eldest was six, were in panniers on a horse that a valet was leading by the bridle. My father, who had business in Tours, when into the town, taking a different route from my mother and the family; he had the misfortune to be arrested and put in prison, where he stayed only four days. His fears for his wife and children, who had not been arrested, were much greater than his fear of death, or the sufferings inflicted on him in an effort to make him change his religion, which was the only thing required of him.

So he was freed; as soon as he was released, he spent all his time looking for his wife, not knowing what had become of her. He learned that she had continued along the road to Orléans, but she had been forced to leave behind one of her children, Siméon, at the home of a friend, as he was the youngest of the four, because he was too young to endure the hardships of the journey. Fortunately, my father passed by and heard news of his wife; he found my brother, whom he took with him, pleased that God had returned my brother to him, rather than leave him in a country where he would have been raised in a religion so opposed to the commandments of God. My father caught up with my mother in Orléans, and they traveled together to Basle, in Switzerland, without any other incident to them or their four children.

Daniel himself also wrote an account of his escape from France, and fragments are reproduced in Flory’s book [27]:

We believed that the only remedy was to fly, and we prepared to depart in the night [from Chateau de la Touche] but we were too much watched to go far. I was arrested and made prisoner, and all I could do was to prevent my wife from coming, and to beg her to use every endeavour to get away by all means. She went to the Couдрaye House, five miles from Tours, to Mademoiselle Bouilly, who had a rebellious maid-servant who had caused me to be taken to Tours. I found myself in a cell, arrested, and thought there was no help for me and my family. Grief took hold of me, for I feared my wife and children would be arrested and put into convents. The monks informed me that my family had been captured, and that they were already placed in convents. I had no news from my wife, except a note, which I received the day after my detention, in which she told me of her intention to return to La Touche. I thought all was over, and begged God to put into my heart what He wanted me to do for His glory and my salvation.

After five or six days, Daniel was released and he wrote:

I thought that my wife had returned with the children to La Touche, but was much astonished when, on arriving at La Courdraie, I found one of my children, called Siméon, who was the youngest, and not eighteen months old; they told me that they could not inform me where my wife had gone with the three others, viz, Madelon, Daniel, and Henry. I also heard, through one of my servants I had left there and whom I met, that my wife was not there. At last I learned from a letter I had the same evening from her, that she had gone straight to Monbelliard with her three children. I blessed God for her resolution, and only thought of taking away my poor child and following her; that was a great difficulty, as I only had one arm, but God, who managed everything for our salvation, had taken her to one of her friends at Boisgensy, from whence she sent me back the only valet who was of her religion to try to hear of my whereabouts. I was delighted
to hear about her, and hoped God would not try us any more, since He had taken her so far without being arrested. It is true she thought this would have happened at Amboise, but God saved her. I could only think of reaching her. I made the servant carry the child Siméon and set off directly, and ordered the valet to go to Orléans, where I went also. We walked without stopping as far as Bar, near Monbéliard, where I did not think we were safe.

After spending a day there we started to this place, where Divine Providence has taken us for the salvation of our souls. My three eldest children were on one horse – the two boys in the baskets and the girl on a pack-saddle, and poor little Siméon in front of the valet’s horse; my wife and I each on a horse. This little story is only related to let my children know, when they are old enough, what great things the Lord has done in taking them out of this wretched Sodom to keep them in His real Bethel, the house of the Lord.

Regarding the escape from France, Henry Maret de la Rive, the grandson of Daniel Collot d’Esccury, wrote [27]:

My great Grandfather was David [he means André] Collot D’Escury. He stole early out at the Commencement of the Persecution, and leaving his own Country went to Holland. His and family’s Escape was thus effected. Mr. Collot D’Escury had three Asses or Mules with Paniers on each side, in each of which a Child was concealed, and over them some Lemons and Oranges for apparent Sale.¹ My great Grandfather and my Grandfather (who helped to lead the asses or mules) did by this Artifice impose on all the Intendants and Guards of the Districts through which they passed; and thus arrived Safely in the Dutch Territories with their Charge.

Returning to Henri’s account of his father’s life [13]:

The first thing my father [Daniel] did upon arriving in Basle was to give thanks to God for the favour he had showed them, to save him and his whole family from Babylon, and asked his forgiveness [there follows a few lines of religious enthusiasm which are too difficult for me to translate. Reading between the lines, I’m guessing that Daniel was forced to abjure his faith in order to get his release, and that he felt terribly guilty about this. I could be wrong.]

My mother [Anne-Catherine de la Vallette], upon arriving in Basle, gave birth to a son; it should be remarked that her children were rather embarrassed, she was so large [I doubt this is the correct translation]. After the birth, my father left the whole family in Basle, and went to Holland. M. le prince d’Orange gave him a pension as a captain of cavalry, after which he established his wife and children at Nimègue, where they stayed until 1688, when my father went to England with the prince d’Orange when he invaded that kingdom. My father was made a captain of cavalry in the regiment of Chambéry, since called Galway’s regiment, where he was then made a major. After the prince was recognised as king of England, my father went to find my mother, and brought the whole family to England; the family was larger by a daughter, as my mother had given birth to a daughter at Nimègue. So we were four boys and two girls.

In 1689 my father went to Ireland with the army, where he campaigned with his regiment until that country had been forced to recognise the prince d’Orange as the king of England. When the king had reduced all these States to obedience, he considered restarting the war with France, which was very popular and which he could do in the Spanish Netherlands. To this effect, he sent to Flanders all those troops he didn’t need in England. The Galway regiment was one of those sent to that country. But Lord Galway, who was a close friend of my father, advised him to stay in England with his family, which was already large, and getting bigger almost every year, and offered to gain the

¹According to Flory, there was a family tradition that, during the escape from France in the panniers of fruit, a soldier became suspicious and thrust his sword into one of the panniers. The child escaped unhurt.
agreement of the king. My father took this advice for the good of his family, for if he had been killed they would have been in a sad and deplorable condition; he had six children, the oldest of which was ten. This is why my father never reached a high position, which he should have done, by virtue of his seniority. But not having served in the last campaign of the war, he was not promoted.

He stayed in England until the disbanding of the army after the peace of Ryswyck. He then went to Ireland on a pension where he remained; he lived with my mother until her death in Dublin in 1699, aged 46, and died himself in 1714, aged 71. They had eleven children all told, but only seven survived past childhood. A daughter, born in France in 1679, married a Boileau de Castelnau, from Nîmes. Four [he means three] boys; Daniel, born in France in 1684, Henry, born in France in 1682, Siméon, born in 1682. These four children were all born at La Touche, an estate we owned in Touraine but abandoned, with the rest of our property, for the sake of our religion. The fifth child, Abel, was born in Basle, Switzerland in 1686. In 1688 my mother gave birth to my sister Anne in Nimègue; Anne married a Marret de la Rive, captain of dragoons in England, and she is now living with her two children in Dublin, in Ireland. My mother gave birth in 1699 to my sister Marie; she married a Corneille, captain of infantry in England, and chief engineer of Ireland. They have had many children, of whom seven are still surviving; four others died while young.

Daniel died in 1710, a captain of dragoons in the regiment of Walef. Henry, myself who wrote this, I’ll talk more about later. Siméon was colonel in an English regiment that carried his name, and married, firstly, a Lady Zellard de Leefdoel, with whom he had no children. He married secondly a Lady Baron, with whom he had three children; a daughter who died young, and two sons, who are captains of infantry in the English army. Abel was killed at the siege of Bonn, in 1703, when he was a cadet in the regiment of Disselle.

Another account of Daniel’s later life is given by his grandson, Henry Maret de la Rive, who wrote [27]:

André Collot D’Escury, my great Grandfather, had been Governor of Quintin in Brittany; he on his retreat in Holland obtained a Captain Commission in their Service, and died soon after his Refuge. My Grandfather [Captain Daniel Collot d’Escury], who went to England with William III, there obtained a Company of Infantry, and being ordered with his Regiment to Ireland, had his Arm shot off at the Battle of the Boyne (June 1, 1690).1 He had five sons. The eldest, Henry, my Godfather, remained in Holland for a time, and coming over to England with the Princess of Orange (in whose suite he was), he kept the Pharaoh Bank Table at her Court. When returning to Holland with her Majesty, he was made one of the Burgomasters. Daniel died a Captain in the Dutch Service. A third died young. A fourth (named Able), a boy, when mounting a breach as a Cadet or Volunteer, was kill’d; and the fifth, Simeon, died in England, Colonel to the 23rd Foot, in 1738. Henry, the Eldest Son of my Grandfather, left two Sons, one a Burgomaster; the second, who came to Ireland on a Visit to his relations, and whose Christian name was Edmund, was some Years ago Lieutenant Colonel in the Dutch Service, who (if alive) has very probably a Regiment. In a letter he wrote home, he signs himself le Baron Collot d’Escury.

Finally, to complete the line, let me remind you, gentle reader, that it was Daniel’s eldest child, Marie Madeleine (Mary Magdalene), who married Charles Boileau in Dublin (page 159), from whom the line descends, eventually, to me.

1This is incorrect. Daniel himself says that he had only one arm when he fled France, so it must have been lost well before the Battle of the Boyne, and his son said it was lost soon after the death of M. de Turenne, who died in 1675. Other family documents [10] suggest it was lost at the Battle of Attenheim on the Rhine, in 1675. Actually, Henry’s memory is highly suspect in a number of things, so I wouldn’t trust his account without independent evidence.
De la Vallette

Recall that Daniel Collot d’Escury married Anne-Catherine de la Vallette. Well, if you look around the web you find it written that Anne-Catherine de la Vallette was related to the famous family of de la Vallettes, whose lineage extends back a number of centuries in a seriously rich and famous way. This would be lovely if it were true. However, as far as I’m aware, there is absolutely no evidence for this claim. Interestingly, the notes by Henry Maret de la Rive shown in Flory [27] give a rather different picture of Anne Catherine. He says:

Captain d’Escury, my grandfather, was married to a Mlle. Belney, a lady of good family; one of whose Uncles lived in Holland (at the Hague), a Monsieur La Villette, a man of large fortune. Mlle. Belney had an Estate at Montbelliard in Switzerland, which my grandfather gave my mother at the death of his wife, to dispose of for her own use and said purpose. ...... My mother often told me of a large Dog, of the Wolf breed, belonging to her Uncle, La Villette, at the Hague, on whose neck his Master would hang a basket, in which lay a piece of silver. He would then every morning send the Dog to his Baker for bread; which the dog would do. The baker, after putting the bread into the Basket, would take the money, and the Dog would carry the bread home; no one in the Streets daring to touch the Bread or Basket.

I’m a little suspicious of this; I suspect the poor memory of an old man. Where on earth does the Belney come from? We know that’s not right, for a start, as his grandfather’s wife was definitely Anne-Catherine de la Vallette. Her own son said so. However, it is true that Daniel, the grandfather, left his wife’s property to Anne, the mother, as we know from his will. So Henry Maret de la Rive remembered that correctly.

According to Lart [50], Anne-Catherine’s father, Pierre, was “Chev. governor of the Chateau Stenay. Sgr. de la Touche, in Touraine. This family came originally from the Bourbonnais. He lived in the parish of Chilé, near Chinon. He and his brother, René de La Valette, Sgr. de La Brosse, living at St. Laurent-du-Lin, near Angers, maintained their noblesse since the year 1532, commencing with their grandfather, in 1668.” So these de la Vallettes seem much more like relatively recent nobility, not part of the old and prestigious family.

De Vignolles

The next in our lineup of French Huguenots are the de Vignolles, the connection to whom is through Françoise de Vignolles, who married Jacques Boileau de Castelnau in 1664. She is the one who was imprisoned in a convent after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, eventually managing to escape to Switzerland (pages 156 and 148). The de Vignolles, although only noble for a century or so, had married into the crème de la crème of Provencal and Languedoc society.

The de Vignolles appear in a number of places; Lart [50] for one, d’Hozier [45] for another. Here I just follow those two sources, unreliable though they most likely are.

The earliest noble de Vignolles on record is Etienne de Vignolles, who was ennobled in a convent after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, eventually managing to escape to Switzerland (pages 156 and 148). The de Vignolles, although only noble for a century or so, had married into the crème de la crème1 of Provençal and Languedoc society.

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The earliest noble de Vignolles on record is Etienne de Vignolles, who was ennobled 15th of December, 1549. We have the names of a few earlier generations, but know little about them, except that they were humble, with the earliest, Jehan, being called a labourer. One presumes that Etienne got wealthy and bought a title. His son was Jean de Vignolles who married Gauside de Parades, thus becoming the Seigneur de Parades. Or possibly Prades, depending on which source you follow. I’m not entirely sure where is this Prades or Parades, but it’s possibly the Prades-le-Lez just north of Montpellier. Gauside de Parades made her will on the 29th of April, 1595, in which she named four sons: Pierre (to be considered soon), Jean, Seigneur de Bruguier, Paul, the ancestor of one of the third branch of the family (in d’Hozier’s numbering), and Jacques, who is known only from his sole appearance in his mother’s will. Jean and Gauside also had a daughter, Perrette de Vignolles, who married on the 16th of November, 1577.

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1Very cleverly keeping a French theme here, you’ll notice.
Pierre de Vignolles, Seigneur de Prades, was a king’s councillor and a Juge Conservateur des Conventions at Nîmes. In 1600 he married his second wife, Gabrielle de Villages, herself descended from a number of old Provencial families. Her GG-grandfather, Jean de Villages, was Seigneur de Lançon and chamberlain of the duc de Calabre. He lived in Marseilles during the reign of René, King of Sicily and Comte de Provence, who appointed him councillor and, in 1453, admiral. Moro, the Doge of Venice, had to ask him for permission to sail the Republic’s galleys to Aigues-Mortes, which must have been a nice feeling. When Provence was united with France in 1481, and Louis XI thus became the Comte de Provence, Jean de Villages continued to be employed in bureaucratic affairs (grand and important affairs according to Chesnaye-Desbois [21], but I’m hardly silly enough to believe that), at which, it is claimed, he acquitted himself with wisdom and great success. Since this account was probably written by his descendants, I’m hardly likely to believe that either.

Anyway, to return to the de Vignolles, Pierre had a son, Jacques de Vignolles, Seigneur de Prades, who made the most illustrious marriage his parents could possibly have desired. He married Louise Baschi d’Aubais, which must have been a bit of a let-down for her, but not a bad effort for him; her ancestry takes in pretty much the entire European medieval nobility, and I’ll have a brief look at it at the end of this chapter. Jacques, although not reaching the giddy heights of a Baschi d’Aubais, still had balls enough to prove his own (minor) nobility, which he did on the 2nd of January, 1669. His career was that of a typical soldier of the time. In 1634 he was a Captain of Cavalry in the Regiment d’Aubais (I guess he married his boss’s daughter. Not unheard of.), he helped to punish a couple of deserters in 1640, was a Colonel-General by 1645, and a Major by 1660. He was, of course, a Protestant, although I don’t know whether or not he was the first of family to be so.

Jacques de Vignolles and Louise de Baschi had at least 16 children, of whom at least four died in infancy. The surviving children, being Protestant at the wrong time, mostly left the country. Louis and his wife died in Switzerland, Charles, the ancestor of the main branch, died in Dublin, Alfonse died a Protestant minister in Berlin, Madeleine died in Berlin, Françoise, as we have already seen, died in Geneva, and the others I’m not sure of. Clearly, the family was scattered far and wide by persecution.

As you can see from the chart on page 206 there were quite a few other families who married into the de Vignolles. However, very little is known about them except their names; often their existence is known only from wills, land transactions, or marriage settlements, and these documents, by their nature, shed little light on the people themselves. Not to mention that I find it difficult to navigate the maze of French genealogy; not being able to read French very well is not a help.

De Calvière

Next up, the de Calvière family, who married into the Boileau de Castelnau at least twice (see the chart on page 208) and the de Vignolles at least once. The earliest of the family I know of is Antoine de Calvière, a lieutenant-juge, and consul of Montfrin in 1468 and 1472. Montfrin, in the Diocese of Uzès, is almost exactly halfway between Nîmes and Avignon (see Map 7; page 243). According to Louis de la Roque [60] there is a mention of an Arnaud Calvière who witnessed an oath of homage taken by the inhabitants of Moissac to Raimond VI, comte de Toulouse, on the 12th of May, 1197. However, since there is no further information this Arnaud might well be no connection at all. Moissac is north of Toulouse, quite a long way from Montfrin, which argues somewhat against a connection, but who knows?

Antoine’s two sons, Antoine and Raymond de Calvière, both called Chevaliers, were living at Montfrin on the 4th of August, 1508. They bought land in Montfrin on the 10th of May, 1510, from Brother Charles-Alleman de Roche-Chinard, Grand Prior of Saint-Gilles. I don’t know for sure, but it seems very likely that these brothers were the first of the family to purchase nobility. The status of

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1His first wife was Anne de Calvière de Boucoiran, who appears a bit later in this chapter.
2Whatever that is.
3i.e., an assistant judge, who acted as a judge when the real judge was away.
their father is not very clear to me, but there is no doubt that these two brothers purchased land and titles.

Raymond had three sons and three daughters. Two of the sons, Nicholas and Robert, are my 10G grandfathers, but in different ways, of course. In Raymond’s will he leaves each of his daughters a sum of money, two night-robes, and a silver girdle. I guess their brothers got everything else, including the castles and the lands. Wow. The girls must have been delighted. Don’t you wish you were a female in medieval times?

Nicholas was the founder of the branch of St. Cosme, or Côme, while his brother Robert was the founder of the branch of Boucoiran. Guillaume, the eldest brother, was the founder of the main branch, and there seems to have been some disagreement between him and Robert; on the 10th of December, 1556, they came to an agreement whereby Guillaume returned to Robert some of their father’s goods.

Nicholas paid homage to the king for the lands of Saint-Côme on the 23rd of March, 1552, and then bought, in 1557, the lands and Seigneurie of la Boissière from Jacques de Bouzène (my 12G grandfather; see page 284). He was a busy Protestant soldier during the religious wars of the latter half of the sixteenth century. First, in 1567, an Ensign in the company of Captain Bouillarge, he fought at Nîmes in 1569; he was present at the lifting of the siege of Montpellier, in 1577; he was appointed Governor of Nîmes in 1580, and finally Gentilhomme ordinaire de la Chambre du Roi, in 1581. He and his wife, Françoise Brochet, whom he married in 1552, had at least nine children, of whom at least one girl, Hélis, died young. A son, Pellegrin, was killed at Nîmes in 1603 (presumably as a soldier), and another daughter, Rose, married Jean Boileau de Castelnau in 1576.

On the 26th of November, 1566, the brother of Nicholas, Robert de Calvière, purchased the lands and title of Boucoiran, becoming thus the Seigneur de Boucoiran. He married Claudine de Leugue in about 1546, and had at least three children. Marguerite married a judge in Nîmes, while Anne became the first wife of Pierre de Vignolles, my 9G grandfather through his second wife (page 207). Their son, Guillaume, did homage for the seigneurie de Boucoiran in June, 1567, and married Isabelle Barrière in 1591.

Guillaume and Isabelle had at least nine children. One of them, Anne, married Nicholas Boileau de Castelnau, but another of them, Françoise, married the far more interesting Jean-Valentin de Sade, Seigneur d’Aiguèières. And this is a name we all recognise, as being an ancestor of the infamous Marquis de Sade, which make me peripherally related to a famous weirdo.¹

In Montfrin there still exists a house built by the de Calvière, in 1549, and you can find photos of it on the web. It’s a classified historic monument.

De Montcalm

The last to appear in this chapter are the Montcalm, yet another Languedoc family, who were later Huguenots. They, like the Boileau, and probably every other family in the minor nobility, fabricated their origins, making up all kinds of important ancestors for themselves, all dutifully reproduced in the pages of Chesnaye-Desbois [21]. However, a French genealogist, Peter Loriol, has sent me a lot of information about the Montcalm, and other related families; I trust this information as it is sourced in detail and plausible.

As it happens, the Montcalm are connected through a number of other old families, the de Gozon and de Garceval, to the Mostuëjous, a family that is traced back to about 1070 or so. Of course, it’s impossible to be sure of the descent, but there seems to be general agreement.

The first of the Montcalm, Raimond, was most likely a barber in Millau, Languedoc, as was his son after him. It was the next Raymond who got wealthy enough to purchase lands and a title. He was the doctor to the comte d’Armagnac, and was ennobled in 1439 when he bought from Bertrand de Vissec some land around Saint-Veran. His son, Jean de Montcalm, was the Seigneur de Saint-Veran, de Tournemire, du Viala, de la Baume, de Pradines & de la Panouse, Conseiller du Roi & Maître des Requêtes de l’Hôtel, for all of which he took oath in May 1437. Between the hands of the Bishop of Maguelonne, for those who care. Later, in 1462, he gave homage to the comte

¹As opposed to being related to unfamous weirdos such as my siblings.
d’Armagnac for his lands at Saint-Veran. This comte d’Armagnac, Jean V, was a rather colourful character. Not in a good way. Although he fought for King Charles VII against the English, he was essentially completely outside the control of the French king, and when he forced a priest to marry him to his own sister (who bore him three children, by the way. She was not unwilling by all accounts, although I’m a little sceptical of that claim), the scandal was too much for Charles VII. In 1455 he invaded the comte’s lands and kicked him out to Aragon, where he spent his time pleading to the Pope and trying to organise resistance to the French king. When Charles VII died in 1461 the new king Louis XI unwisely reinstated Jean V who immediately turned against him; he was part of the league that called themselves the Bien Public and threatened Paris at the head of 6000 mounted men. In 1469, when Louis sent an army against him, Jean fled to Spain, only to reappear in 1471 in the train of the king’s rebellious brother, the duc de Guyenne. Finally, Louis had him besieged in his stronghold of Lectoure and put to death by Jean Jouffroy, the bishop of Albi, in 1473. Nothing to do with the family history, but a good story.

Anyway, this Jean d’Armagnac was not a good person to swear fealty to, and so Jean de Montcalm was imprisoned in Tours, together with Guillaume and Gaillard, two of his sons, and all his possessions were confiscated. Fortunately for them, Louis XI had a change of heart and pardoned them, restoring their possessions in March, 1471.

Jean de Montcalm married Jeanne de Gozon about whom more shortly. They had a bunch of known children, three of whom (Guillaume, Guy and Gaillard, all the G ones) founded different branches of the Montcalm family. Of the other sons, Jean became a Benedictine monk in the Abbey of Nant, Antoine became Protonotaire of Saint-Siège and the Prior of Sénillac and Sumène, while Eustache was also a monk in the Abbey of Nant, as well as the Prior of Saint-Sauveur du Larzac. Golly. What a lot of monks. The only recorded daughter, Michelle, married Jean de Rocosel. It’s very typical of these old genealogies that the daughters are almost entirely ignored except where they made a good marriage, in which case their husband’s name is more important anyway.

Our Montcalm branch is the one founded by Guy, who founded the branch of the Barons of Montclus. He married Marguerite de Lageret and had at least five children. One son, Gaillard, was the father of Anne de Montcalm, who married Jean Boileau de Castelnau. Gaillard’s brother, Odon, was Vicar General of the Abbey of Saint-André of Avignon, and the Prior of Saint Theodore of Larzac. I just like all these monkish titles, which is why I’m giving them; they do rather roll off the tongue.

Jeanne de Gozon, who married Jean de Montcalm in 1438, was the granddaughter of Jean de Gozon, Seigneur de Melac, St. Victor, Malvieu, Montredon, and Montagnot. Quite some farmer. Jean married Delphine, the daughter of Aymeric de Garceval and Hélène de Mostujouls, which is interesting mostly because the Mostujouls family can be traced right back to about 1075. Not bad at all. The earliest known Mostujouls was Raymond I, who was named in a 1075 charter when he gave a gift to the Abbey of Saint-Sauveur for the foundation of the priory of Rozier, in Gevaudan. He was the seigneur of the château de Mostujouls, a castle and town that was associated with the same family for many centuries, situated on the western border of the Cévennes. His son, Raymond II, appears in 1132, in a treaty between Bérenger-Raimond, comte de Gévaudan, marquis de Provence, and Guillaume VI, seigneur de Montpellier. They were arranging how to deal with the administration of the lands of the comte de Melgueil, during the minority of the comtess Béatrix. Interestingly, the comtess Béatrix de Melgueil is also a direct ancestor, although in quite a different line. She was born in about 1124 (and thus in 1132 was only about 8, still in her minority), the child of Bernard de Melgueil and Guilmette de Montpellier, and married, as her second husband, Bernard Pelet, a name famous in the annals of French medieval history. The Pelet family, for those who care, have the simplest coat-of-arms I’ve ever seen. Plain red; nothing else. Or, in French, de gueules plein. Cool, huh? They were just so important they didn’t need anything else. Not to mention that their ancestry can be traced back to the vicomtes de Narbonne, of whom the first known is Franco, born before 852, so that they got first pick of the available patterns. It’s quite noticeable how the earlier the coat-of-arms, the simpler it is. Later monstrosities became quite ridiculous.

Anyway, to return to the Mostujouls family, the son of Raymond II was, unsurprisingly, Raymond III. Around 1135 he was witness to an agreement between Raymond d’Anduze, Rostaing
The de Montcalm and de Mostuéjouls.
CHAPTER 9. HUGUENOT AND MEDIEVAL FAMILIES

d’Arsac, Pons de Montlaur and Bernard de Sauve. You can guess what I’m going to say now; yes, indeed, most of that list are also direct ancestors one way or another. Or uncles, at the very least. The interconnections among the aristocracy are frightening to behold. They probably all had webbed feet and drooled.

Raymond’s grandson, Aymeric de Mostuéjouls, wrote his will in 1214. His widow, Aigline, appears in a charter of 1232, in which she freed a woman who had been imprisoned in the château Mostuéjouls for theft. Their son, Pierre, seigneur de Liaucous, de Lueyses, de la Condamine, de Vebron, de Verceil, de Mostuerques, de Mostuéjolenques, coseigneur de Montrun, appears in 1246 when Raymond de Roquefeuil gave some property to Hugues, comte de Rodez. Hugues had married Isabeau de Roquefeuil, the daughter of Raymond de Roquefeuil. And yes, Hugues, comte de Rodez is a direct ancestor also (22G grandfather). Once you go back this far, one just has so many ancestors they are almost impossible to avoid. Practically every charter or land agreement involves families from whom descent can be traced. It’s a fun puzzle game to play, but little more than that.

And so the Mostuéjouls continue, a procession of wills, charters and land grants; monks, priors, seigneurs, lots of money, the usual story. All the way to 1999 at least, or so it seems. But we branch off with Hélène in the 14th century, and head off with the Montcalm down to the Boileau de Castelnau.

A very brief look at some other medieval ancestors

We have already seen in the previous sections how various French ancestors can be traced back almost 1000 years. However, those complications pale into insignificance when compared with the ancestry of Louise de Baschi [58], who married Jacques de Vignolles (see page 206). If we were to attempt to draw a diagram of her ancestry it would take an entire wall. I know. I did it. It takes an entire wall (see page 143). The trouble is, of course, that once you hit one member of the nobility, you get them all, as they were so interbred. However, Appendix III gives her ancestors for ten generations, in the form of an ahnentafel, just in case anybody cares. Even more generations are given on my web page, http://www.burningviolin.org/family. I also give a strange kind of chart on page 213, where I list many of the best-known families and the approximate dates during which our ancestors lived. I couldn’t think of any other way of doing it concisely. As you can see, the ancestry can be traced back to a number of well-known people, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, William the Conqueror, and Charlemagne, taking in along the way most of the known families of southern France; there are connections to other families, of course, but the southern French contingent is very much the strongest.

And that, I think, is all I’ll say about these lines. They are mostly very well known as vast numbers of people are descended from these families, and so I find them less interesting. At any rate, what point is there in me giving little potted biographies of the comtes d’Auvergne, for instance, or the ducs de Boulogne? If you’re interested, look them up for yourself.
Medieval families, with some well-known people labelled, just for interest. This chart is highly approximate, with many families omitted; I’ve really only tried to hit the major points. It was Louise de Baschi d’Aubais who married Jacques de Vignolles, thus connecting these lines with the ones described earlier in this chapter.
Part III

The Five Horrors
Chapter 10

About us Children

I know that this book is supposed to be about Mum and Dad’s ancestry, but I can’t resist putting in at least something about their children. Me, that is, and my siblings. I have often wondered what future genealogists would want to know about my parents, my life, and all those kinds of things. Obvious enough to me now, of course, but not at all obvious in 50 years or so. Perhaps it is arrogant to think that there will ever be anybody interested in this at all. Maybe, maybe not. I really don’t know. But I’m interested, and others might be. Given the rate at which my sisters reproduce (well, and the fact that I also have three children) it’s not improbable that a descendant somewhere along the way will be interested enough to read this, and grateful that I wrote it. I can only hope.

So, if you’re reading this, dear future genealogist, spare a thought for poor old me, working my fingers to the bone while sitting upstairs drinking tea in my office looking out over the Hauraki Gulf. Go and visit my grave, or something. Put some expensive flowers on it. Well, actually, don’t bother. I’ll not know one way or the other and the money will be wasted.

Mum and Dad had five children; Mary Jane, Alfred James Robert (me, but I’m called James, not Alfred), Catherine Adair, Elizabeth Sarah Neal, and the baby of the family, John Graham. I have asked each of them to write their story. If they don’t, I’ll write it for them, and I can assure you they don’t want that. They really don’t.

Mary Jane

I am Mary Jane Sneyd, the oldest child of Rosalie and Sam Sneyd. My name does not have a hyphen. The following entry contains some extremely inaccurate memories from my past, but my brother James made me do it!

I believe I am generally regarded as the least mad of the Sneyd clan – probably not something to really be proud of (note the hanging preposition and split infinitive, Dad) considering the silliness of the others. My siblings often refer to me unkindly as ‘bossy big sister’ and my youngest brother John has called me his ’second mother’, and I am certain he did not mean to be flattering. But for goodness sake, someone has to keep the unruly, stroppy mob in order.

I was born in Auckland, New Zealand on September 11th, 1960, not a very auspicious date any longer. Now I can never remember which way around to write my birthdate. I was born on 9/11 but have to write it 11/9 in New Zealand. Mum and Dad were house surgeons when I was born and someone (George Salmond?) raised the flag over the hospital at my birth and confused the other local hospitals. I think we drove to Dunedin in a toy car when I was little. Apparently on this trip I drove my parents insane with my continuous whining of ‘I no ike divings’. In translation – I don’t like driving.

My first memory is of sitting on the edge of the basin in a house in Caversham, Dunedin as Mum cleaned up my blood. I had fallen head first through the front glass door and cut myself between the eyes. I don’t remember getting stitched up but I still have the scar to prove it.
When I was 3? I (plus Mum and Dad and baby James) went by boat, The Rangitoto, to Nashville, Tennessee for Mum and Dad to work at Vanderbilt University. I vaguely remember having my 4th birthday party on board ship but I best remember the wonderful underwater scene puzzle I completed. Neptune came on board as we crossed the equator and I hid terrified under a table with my kindy group. I was sure they were going to kill my dad as they covered him in white foam and threw him into the pool.

Schooling in Nashville at James Robertson Academy was intriguing. I wondered if I’d ended up at the wrong place because my class was still learning their colours and letters. They were 6 years old for goodness sake! Before lunch each day we had to stand with our hands over our hearts and pray, but being allowed to eat olives at the canteen made up for this nonsense. To this day I have no idea why only boys were allowed on the grass at school, but those were the rules. I was also made to sit in the corner for smiling at a boy in class. That must have been another rule.

I remember the episode in the US when Mum tried to sell Dad and which James describes in detail below. But I thought the advertisement had read “TV and husband for sale. Only one in working order.” So much for historical accuracy. My major memory surrounding this event is of fear. I believe that Mum got quite scared when her personal details were published and one night we were shut in the basement when someone knocked at the door, but no real harm came to any of us, and Mum and Dad stayed married.

When we returned to New Zealand in 1968 we were a family of 5 as baby Catherine had been born in Nashville. About a year after arrival in Dunedin, Mum and Dad bought their lovely house in Cliffs Rd where they have lived ever since. I think Mum was pregnant with Elizabeth when we moved in because I remember getting into great trouble for building a hut out of packing boxes in the best room, and when punishing me Mum was wearing her purple maternity dress which I disliked. The house in Cliffs Rd. was near my grandparents; Mum’s parents. I spent some time with them and remember my grandfather Gummy fondly. He had budgies and helped me learn my times tables. The night he died Mum came back from visiting him in tears and my brother James vomited on the stairs – something James did far too often.

My great grandmother Kate (Mum’s maternal grandmother) also lived quite close. When I was at Macandrew Intermediate School I would sometimes go to Kate’s flat in Forbury Rd for lunch. She would cook a roast chicken and roast potatoes and roast kumara and another vegetable and sometimes custard tarts for pudding. I wish I could make custard tarts like hers; without soggy bottoms. Kate was very deaf (and prudish) when I knew her and Dad teased her dreadfully. She died, aged 93, when we were living in Cardiff, Wales and she left me some embroidered handkerchiefs – she had written a note to me on the bottom of the box.

Secondary school in Penarth (near Cardiff), Wales was fun. (Youngest brother John was born a year before we went to Wales). I had to work hard to keep up and thoroughly enjoyed it. Coming back to secondary school in New Zealand was an anti-climax and rather tedious. I attended Queens High School briefly and then went to Bayfield High School. I did as little as possible to stay at or near the top of the class.

My other main interest was music. I started the violin at age 8 and played the Vivaldi A minor violin concerto with the Dunedin Youth Orchestra when I was still small. I think my grandfather Gummy managed to come and hear me play. I lead the Youth Orchestra for several years until I joined the then Dunedin Civic Orchestra (now the Southern Sinfonia) on viola. The unplanned arrival of my daughter Anna while a medical student stopped my viola playing for about 10 years.

After completing a science degree in Biochemistry and Physiology, I attended medical school at Otago. It was not what I was expecting: Mum and Dad were both doctors in an academic kind of way and I thought this was what medicine was about. Actually it was 5/10 boring rote learning, 5/10 grovelling after the medical hierarchy and 8/10 being scared shitless of making a mistake and killing someone. By the way, doctors aren’t very good at arithmetic. Anyway I persevered at medical school and qualified when Anna was about 3 years old. I cannot recommend attending medical school and having a child at the same time without a great deal of family support, which I certainly did not
have, but it was worth it in the end and we had our very funny times too. I remember doing a ward round with Anna tottering after us carrying my stethoscope. While looking at the upper back of a young stab victim, the patient kept complaining of pain although none was apparently touching her. However, when we looked further down the bed there was Anna, copying the medical team, and standing beside the bed pinching the patient’s leg very hard!

In 1989, when Anna was 5 1/2 we went to Cambridge, UK. I worked at the Dunn Nutrition Unit, the MRC Unit and finally Addenbrookes Hospital Gerontology Unit on the preliminary phase of the EPIC study. It was very interesting work and my last boss was excellent but the British class system was a pain in the proverbial. I had a peculiar accent, was a female doctor with children (heaven help us) and none could tell what school I’d attended. So none knew how they were supposed to treat me.

William was born the following year. It is hard to know where to start with William. Anna had been a bright little thing, into everything, very curious and a bit of a handful, but easily teachable. William was on another scale all together. After he was born he screamed for 5 hours. He got dehydrated and he clutched his tiny mouth shut and absolutely refused to open it for anything except breast (which was, for a short while, empty). My lovely baby didn’t need a name – he was the bright red lobster waving its arms around and screaming in the nursery. They wouldn’t let him room-in with me because he woke up the entire ward. The writing was on the wall then, but had I foreseen the future, I might have put him back. Just kidding (I think).

We returned to New Zealand when William was about 20 months old and Anna was 8 years old. Unsurprisingly, William screamed all the way from London to Christchurch. He finally went to sleep in my arms at Christchurch airport. It was the trip from hell.

Back in New Zealand I did a PhD in Epidemiology in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine and have been there most of the time ever since. I too have never left academia. It is not a matter of arrogance – I don’t think the business environment would tolerate me, or me them, for one instant. I call a spade a spade, I’m not PC and I don’t ever intend to be so.

I have been fortunate in being able to travel a bit around the world and live in various places but I always return to NZ. I am also extremely fortunate with my 2 children. They are both very well-educated and, barring accidents, none can take that away from them. Anna is now a lawyer, registered in both NZ and the UK, but has recently moved to California with her husband John, and cannot practise there. She is very sensible and has her head screwed on very well so I am certain she will find a good job, possibly using her genetics degree rather than law. William is a web developer and has been working full-time in Wellington since he was 17 years old. He won’t admit to having a mother at his work, but he doesn’t appear to mind giving his Mum a hug in public. That says a lot for a 19 year old! He can even be charming when he chooses, although he can still talk the hind leg off a donkey.

I have had a new partner, Brian Cox, for the last 4.5 years and we live in a wonderful old farmhouse (built in 1880) on 8 acres of land on the edge of Dunedin. We have about 3 acres planted as garden with hundreds of rhododendrons and camellias and fruit trees, and lots of wildlife. We love the place and only plan to leave feet-first, in a box. Each year I make enough jam/marmalade/fruit juice for England because I hate to waste anything (genetics are to blame here, I believe). We have recently extended the house for the sun and are now getting a garage-come-studio built. Then it will be wonderful to get all the mess cleaned up and the garden weeded and tidy. Oh well, dreams are free.

Alfred James Robert

I was born on the 14th of November, 1962, at Queen Mary Hospital in Dunedin, New Zealand. The hospital has since been converted into student accommodation for Otago University which is a bit disrespectful to my birthplace if you ask me, but nobody did as it happens. Dad was working at the hospital as some beginning doctor kind of thing (I always get confused over the doctor titles) and
Mum was presumably knee-deep in Mary’s shitty nappies. I know for certain that Dad wasn’t. He always claimed with pride that he never changed a shitty nappy, which we children always said was not a matter for pride at all, but made him a misogynistic dinosaur. We have truth and justice on our side. I’m not sure where exactly in Dunedin we were living when I was born; I’ll have to ask Mum.

I was still very young, only about 2 or so, when we moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where we lived until I was about 5. Dad had a post-doc at Vanderbilt. I can still remember the house we lived in, some nightmares I had about dinosaurs and witches, and Dad playing the coin trick on us, but that’s about it. The coin trick, by the way, is where you take a coin, pretend to throw it, and tell the children where it has ended up. On the other side of the house inside a book, for instance, or underneath the sofa cushions. It had me completely fooled, as I remember. I was always terrifically impressed by this. When I tried it on my own kids I dropped the coin. They weren’t fooled at all I don’t think.

It was while we were in Nashville that Mum tried to sell Dad, in an epic story that reached news bulletins all across the world. My darling father was, so we are told, watching too much sport on television and Mum got a little irritated. She put an ad in the local newspaper: For Sale: Television and Husband. Joined at the eyeball. Well, well, she should have known that Americans don’t have a sense of humour, or not one that anybody would ever recognise. Some local media got hold of this and rang her up for an interview, whereupon she promptly made things worse by saying such things as “In New Zealand we don’t shoot our husbands, we sell them.” Oh Dear. Silly, silly Mum. The shit really hit the fan. The story was in newspapers in Europe and Japan (I’ve seen the clippings), and Mum started to get harassed by letters from would-be husbands, to the extent that she got seriously frightened. I don’t think that Dad ever quite saw the joke.

Mind you, Dad was no better. I’ve read another old newspaper clipping that describes how a group of Otago university students, on being told they weren’t allowed into the lounge bar without their jackets, went outside, put their jackets on, removed their pants, and came back inside. I suspect they still weren’t allowed in, but I can’t remember any more details. I tell you, my parents are both bonkers.

When we returned to New Zealand in about 1967 or so we lived, I think, up by the Balmacewen golf course. Maybe. The only thing I remember about that house is reading about the Wahine disaster. That would have been in April, 1968. But then we moved to 20 Cliffs Road, and that house I remember very well indeed, of course. Mum and Dad still live there; they’ve probably been there for 40 years now.

It’s a beautiful house, one of Dunedin’s grand old houses. Designed and built in 1882 by F.W. Petre, one of New Zealand’s best known architects, it was built in Petre’s ‘English Cottage’ style, a sort of idealised Tudor style with half-timbered black beams set into white painted plaster walls, beneath beamed gables and a slate roof. The front porch was the warmest place to sit and read in the summer; now that the conservatory has been added, that’s the warmest place. The front room is lovely and sunny in the morning. The garden has a big rock in the middle where I sat with Caroline Hobson, whom I thought very beautiful when I was young\(^1\), and who lived across the back fence. At the bottom of the garden I planted two acorns when I was 12, and they are now large oaks. I talk to them every time I go home; I’m quite sure dryads live in them, and appreciate the conversation. The garden has a stream where I used to chase frogs, and where we threw in Grant Edie during a birthday party. The study has a fire place and this is where we put the TV to watch the men landing on the moon. The beach is a minute’s walk away; I would play on the old pier poles, slide down the sandhills, dodge the waves on the steps, swim often. I could continue almost indefinitely but there’s hardly much point. Everybody has similar memories about the house they grew up in; mine are no different from yours I imagine.

I went to St. Clair primary school (I climbed the trees on Albert St. on the way home, and once I threw a stone at another boy and clonked him on the head. I thought I was going to miss, but I didn’t, and I hurt him, and I felt bad about that.) and then Macandrew Intermediate (I got bullied just a little bit by some kid whose name I can’t remember, but I remember he wore a tie) and then Kings High School, which was not then a very good school, but I enjoyed myself. I played hockey but was never

\(^1\)I don’t now. Trust me.
really all that sporty. I knew Paul Yates, with whom I freelanced for a number of years when I went to University, and whom I still see every so often. I knew David van Zanten, now teaching mathematics in Wanganui; he’s getting married (again) soon, and we’re invited to the wedding. Alex Morton is in Cromwell, and I saw him again just last year. Other names disappear into the unreachable recesses of my memory. Nowadays I can barely remember what I did last week, even less what I did 30 years ago.

My major interest when I was young was playing the violin. I started when I was 5, I suppose, and did the whole classical thing – orchestras, lessons, string quartets, etc etc – until I was about 18. Then, one day, my big sister Mary was talking to a friend of hers, Duncan McKenzie it was, and he said that their band was looking for a new fiddle player. Big sister Mary said “James will do it.” Duncan laughed. Ha ha ha. Very funny. That little geek?! But they were desperate and I was keen. So I joined the Bog Boogie Band, and never looked back at classical music again. Well, I still love to listen to it, of course, and I’ve played a bit here and there over the years since, but not much, and not often. I went to Australia to play folk rock but got bored doing it full time so back to New Zealand to go to University, many bands in Dunedin, jazz band in New York, nothing in Oxford (Poms are too snotty for my taste), rock band in Los Angeles, folk rock and jazz in Christchurch, folk band in Detroit, a selection of bands in Auckland – blues, funk, klezmer, Irish, jazz, country, bluegrass, cajun, you name it; I’ve played it. Well, except for rap or disco. Currently it’s a Cuban charanga band. Next gig, Thursday night in Manakau.

My kids don’t really play. They’ve learned various instruments; violin, clarinet, oboe, guitar. But they don’t practise, and I don’t make them. I often feel that I’ve dropped the ball on this one, that I should have done better. I feel guilty, I suppose.

Anyway, back to the story of my life. After school I went to Otago University. For my entire life I’d always known I was going to be a Medical Doctor. Mum was, Dad was, everybody important was, it was the only possible job. What else was there to do? I was an arrogant little shit (I still am, you will have noticed) and I was convinced I would get direct entry to Medical School (for which very good grades were required in my last year of High School). The good grades were guaranteed, of course, as I was very very clever, and I didn’t need actually to do any work. So I didn’t. I went to parties instead. And at the end of the year, quite predictably, I failed. I can remember being absolutely shattered. The results came when I was up at the house at Livingstone. I couldn’t believe it. I was humiliated. My friends had done better than I did. They had got direct entry to Medical School and I hadn’t. I’d come second. I’d lost. They were cleverer than I. I can remember lying awake at night thinking about this, worrying. I was a sad little twit in many ways, as well as being an arrogant little shit. Still am, you might say.

Oh, and by the way, the house at Livingstone is an old house at, well, Livingstone, that Mum and Dad bought when I was about 14 or so. We always, ever since I can remember, would go to the country for our summer holidays, mostly renting houses here and there. I remember well a house at Tapanui where we spent summers for a few years, and then another house at Tapanui (maybe Kelso?) where I broke my arm riding piggy-back on Duncan Watts, and having a piggy-back fight with sister Mary who was riding Janet Watts. I was pushed off and broke my arm. I guess sister Mary won that round, but I’m sure she must have cheated. Next we rented a house at Livingstone, just south of Duntrone (in the Waitaki valley) and at the beginning of the road over Dansey’s Pass. That lasted a few years I suppose before Mum and Dad finally bought a house just up the road, in the township of Livingstone proper. By township, I mean close to the old Livingstone Hall, built in the late 1800s and now derelict. There isn’t much else at Livingstone. I love that place, which Mum and Dad still own. I went there every summer until I left the country, and if I lived closer I’d still go every summer. Swimming and fishing in the Maerewhenua, sliding down the hills on bits of cardboard, walking to the frog pond at the bottom of the gully; Livingstone is a wonderful place.

When I went to University, having done poorly at school, I was competing against all the other plebs who didn’t get direct entry to Medical School either; those at the top would be accepted, those not at the top wouldn’t. I realised I had a pretty simple choice; either I could work hard and maybe go to Medical School, or not and not. So I worked hard. The thing is that, the harder I worked, the more I enjoyed doing mathematics, and the less appealing Medical School sounded – cutting up
dead bodies, sick people, hospitals – so by the end of the year I didn’t want to go anyway. So I did mathematics instead. Never regretted it for a second. Quite the reverse in fact. Not getting direct entry to Medical School was the second best thing that ever happened to me. If it hadn’t been for uncle Alfred, though, I’m not sure I would have had the courage. I had no idea what mathematicians actually did, but Alfred was one and he managed, so obviously it was possible. And if it was possible, I wanted to try.

So at Otago I did mathematics, chemistry and classical studies. I’ve always been interested in history and the classical studies was purely for fun. After my BSc I went to New York University, to the Courant Institute to do my PhD. A Dunedin boy, a country bumpkin, off to the big city. I bet my mother was nervous, but I wasn’t. Not at all, as I remember. Just excited. I do remember having an image in my mind of a street in New York City; you know, lawns out the front, letter boxes all lined up, carefully tended gardens, just like suburbia. I knew there were skyscrapers, of course, I’d seen them on TV, but way up on 13th St.? No way. They were all downtown, around Wall St. or something. Had to be suburbia up there. You can imagine my surprise.

I’ve never left academia. Post-doc in Oxford, followed by University jobs at UCLA (in Los Angeles; 1990–1994), Canterbury (in Christchurch, New Zealand; 1994–1997); University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Michigan; 1997–1999); Massey University (in Auckland; 2000–2002) and finally at the University of Auckland (2002–present). Very boring. No imagination at all. Currently we live at 55 Penzance Road, Mairangi Bay, Auckland, just 5 minutes up the hill from the beach. It’s a lovely spot, and I never want to move again. I’ve had quite enough of dragging a family around the world, thank you very much. Too much bloody effort.

When I was about 12 or so, maybe 13, I can remember Mum saying to me oooh look at the new family that has moved into the neighbourhood, and those two little girls, like as peas in a pod, such pretty things, walking down the road holding hands, blah blah blah, you know what mothers are like. That was Monique Bahizi and her sister Jeannette. Little was I to know that one day I was to marry one of them. Monique, thank goodness, or I think I might have shot myself by now.

Monique Isabelle Nyangoma Bahizi, to give her full name. And if you think my family history is complicated, try hers. It’s a whole different ballgame. Unfortunately I don’t know very much about it, as most of it is written in French (which I cannot read properly) and stored in archives in Brussels (which I can’t get to easily), but I hope that one day someone will do the work and enlighten me. Somebody really ought to write an entire book on this family. Hell, I’d buy it.

If you think that Bahizi is an unusual name for someone in New Zealand, you’re right. It is. It’s from the Eastern Congo, from the Kivu region.¹ Monique’s father, Gervais Protas Kirrema Bahizi was a highpowered Congolese diplomat in the time of Mobutu. He was born in Busanza, Rutshuru, Kivu Province, Congo, on the 19th of June, 1924. His family were the local chiefs, and his first marriage was to a daughter of the Ndeze family, an arranged marriage between the two most important families of the area. The Ndeze family, I believe, owned the land which later became the Albert Park, now the Virunga National Park. Gervais was a diplomat; the Ambassador to London, the Ambassador to Nigeria, and the Congolese Chargé d’Affaires at the United Nations. He moved in the highest circles; he met Queen Elizabeth for example, something that I’m quite sure none of my ancestors ever did, and certainly not my father.² With his first wife he had three daughters; Marie-Josef, born on the 24th of September, 1947, Annonciate, who married Steve and now lives in Perth, and one other, who suffered from mental illness (possibly fetal alcohol syndrome) and whose name I don’t know. I know Marie and Annonciate well; we visited Marie often when we were living in the U.S. (she lives just outside of Washington D.C.).

The first marriage to an Ndeze didn’t last, and while Gervais was in New York, at the United Nations, he met Mary Chevinsky, the descendant of Chinese and Lithuanian immigrants to the United States, and a strikingly beautiful woman. They married and ended up having four children. The eldest, Paul Jean-Pierre Robert, born in June, 1962; Monique Isabelle, born on the 24th of September, 1964, Jeannette Marie-Therese, born in December 1965, and Michelle Marie-Louise, born in

¹There are different theories as to what it means; some say it means ‘hunter’, others say it means ‘competitor’. I certainly couldn’t say.

²Just the mere thought of my father meeting Queen Elizabeth sends shivers up my spine. It could only happen in an alternate universe. Certainly not this one.

Monique was born in Lagos, Nigeria, while her father was Ambassador there, and later lived in London when he was the Ambassador to the Court of St. James, as I believe is the appropriate title. When they returned to Africa, it was first to Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire (as it was still called then), and then a year later they moved to Gisenyi, Rwanda, where they lived in a huge pink house on the shores of Lake Kivu. She had an incredibly privileged childhood in many ways, but a terribly deprived one in others. Financially, she had everything you could imagine; cooks, gardeners, chauffeurs, maids, fancy houses, expensive cars. Emotionally, it was a different story. Gervais and Mary separated when Monique was quite young, and the children were taken away from their mother to live with their father and his new wife, Yvonne Valentine, a New Zealander.¹ I cannot really imagine how terrible it must have been for Mary, to have her children taken away from her like that by an all-powerful and unfaithful husband. The children were sent to boarding school, a place of which Monique tells the most horrific stories. I have often thought about this, and concluded just how lucky I was myself. We had enough money, not to buy fancy cars, but to live very comfortably, and I had a secure and stable loving family. I know which is more important.

African politics is, as we all know, a volatile and dangerous thing. Even more so when you work for a nutcase like Mobutu. By the time Monique was 11 or so, her father had fallen out of favour² and had to flee the country to save his life. He only just made it, escaping from prison at the last possible minute and getting to Belgium one step ahead of Mobutu’s thugs. The family became destitute and her father became a hunted man. For Yvonne, being from there, New Zealand was an obvious place to go, and so the entire family ended up in Dunedin. Monique, her elder sister Annonciate and her younger sister Jeannette, flew out to Dunedin on their own at the end of 1985; they stayed with Yvonne’s sister, Karen Valentine, for a few weeks until Yvonne and Gervais arrived. And this is where my mother spied the two Bahizi girls, walking hand-in-hand down the street. When her parents arrived, Monique’s family moved out to Lookout Point (Ryehill St.) which is where they lived when I first met her.

Monique’s two other siblings, Paul and Michelle didn’t go to New Zealand but went to New York to stay with their mother, Mary, who finally got some of her children back.

Gervais must have thought he’d stepped off the edge of the world. From the centres of world politics, from incredible wealth and privilege, from the company of the most powerful people in the world, he ended up living in little old Dunedin, on the edge of absolutely nowhere, completely lacking in both style and substance. It’s no wonder he spent the next few years gallivanting around the world as much as he could, trying desperately to play a part, to work in opposition, to fight for what he wanted. He fought too hard and attracted too much attention; Mobutu’s killers finally caught up with him in Paris, in October, 1976, and he died, the story goes, to poison administered in a cup of tea.

Monique went to school with my little sister, Catherine, and that is how I first met her. She was then, and still is now, one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. As I said, her mother was strikingly beautiful, and Monique has inherited that. Let me hasten to add that, as a father, I can assure you that good looks are a pain in the arse. Our children have inherited their mother’s looks, and daughter Sarah, now 18, is the most popular little socialite around. It is, to be honest, a worry. Ah well, I guess I’m not the first father to worry so, and won’t be the last.

Anyway, I met Monique when we were both in high school – I at Kings and she at Queens, just across the fence – but didn’t actually pay her much attention to be honest. I was too busy playing music, doing stuff, and beautiful girls were rather out of my league. Why waste the time just to be humiliated? Still, a few years later I screwed my courage to the sticking point and asked her to a party at my student flat. The rest, as they say, is history. Trite, but true. I have never looked back. I said before that not getting direct entry to Medical School was the second best thing ever to happen to me. Well, you can guess the first. It is, of course, marrying Monique.

¹And thus does New Zealand finally enter the story.
²This is described in detail in the memoirs that Gervais wrote. In French, unfortunately. One day I will pay to get them translated and, I hope, published properly. I cannot possibly do them justice here.
Our first child, Sarah Helen Bahizi, was born in Los Angeles (3rd of May, 1991). For some weird reason she seems to be very proud of this. Quite frankly, I’d be embarrassed if I’d been born in the same country that elected George W. Bush twice. Still, it takes all sorts I guess. Our son, Paul Kirema Bahizi, was born there also (14th of April, 1994). And Katherine Malaika was born in Christchurch (22nd of August, 1996). So much for my children. They will, no doubt, tell their stories for themselves if they ever wish to.

Catherine Adair

I was born in Nashville, Tennessee on 27th October, 1965. Mum and Dad were over there at the time – Dad working at Vanderbilt University and Mum working as a cytologist, I believe.

The family moved back to New Zealand when I was two, and my earliest memories are of growing up in the house in Cliffs Rd.

When I was a kid, the area wasn’t as developed as it is now, and up the road and round the corner, there was a stand of macrocarpa trees. Mary and James and I built a treehouse in one of these trees. I remember being deeply upset when the trees were chopped down to make room for more houses.

The beach was the best thing in the world. I loved living by the beach. I loved playing in the sand, building sandcastles with cousin Michael, who was a year younger than me, braving the ice cold water in the heat of the summer, and climbing on top of the remnants of the old wooden piers and watching the waves swoosh by underneath them.

I went to kindergarten on Forbury Rd., at Helen Deem kindergarten, which is still there, I believe. I remember playing “What’s the time, Mr. Wolf?” in the playground, and hiding books under the blanket to read when I should have been napping. Mum always told me that when I was at kindergarten, I used to talk very seriously about the lions that lived in the school playground, but as I approached my fifth birthday, these lions mysteriously disappeared.

My best friend at primary school was Julia Adams – we were inseparable all the way through high school. Her family was in to riding horses. I fell off one of them once – a little pony called Minty – and ended up hanging upside down on a barbed wire fence. I don’t remember actually falling off, I just remember coming to my senses when I was upside down on the fence.

St Clair Primary school. Miss Mann took me in to the special room with all the books in it and let me choose what I wanted to read. Oh, how I loved Miss Mann.

MacAndrew Intermediate. Thoroughly forgettable.

Bayfield High School for two years. Not great. I was shy and a bit geeky, and Robin Berry made it her life’s work to make me miserable. She was always threatening to beat me up. It is one of the biggest regrets of my life that I didn’t take her up on one of her countless offers to “scrap it”. I would have been desperate and frightened enough, I believe, to have done her some well-deserved damage.

Salvation came in my third year of high school when I went to Queens High, the local girls’ school. I loved it there, especially the extra Shakespeare classes in the headmistress’s office.

You are probably sensing a bit of a theme here already – books. Funnily enough, I did a degree in English literature at university.

I learned the cello when I was a kid, but it never really stuck. I swapped to the double bass when I was fourteen, and that stuck slightly better. I actually quite liked my bass. But I was never really a musician and didn’t care about music all that much. Not interested in science, not that keen on music – I occasionally felt a bit out of place in my science-loving, music-loving family.

When I was seventeen, I met Terry Gibbs, a fellow bass player at National Youth Orchestra camp. At nineteen, I followed him over to England and worked in a pub and then as a statistical package programmer for a market research company. At twenty-one, we were engaged. Luckily, I returned to Dunedin, went back to university, and a year and a half later, was back on the market again.
Then I met Bernard Coombs, a colleague of my sister, Mary, and eight months later we were married. He was intelligent, good-looking, and could be very charming, and I desperately wanted children.

I got what I wanted: Alice Tarrant Sneyd was born on my 24th birthday, Elizabeth Jane Coombs (Lizzy) on 6th June 1991, Douglas Graham Sneyd Coombs on March 30, 1994, and finally Samuel Bernard Coombs Sneyd (Sam) on 25th July 1996. Before we were married, I had made a deal with Bernard that the girls would be called Sneyd, and the boys Coombs. Then when I had two girls in a row, I relented and allowed the second girl to carry the Coombs name. Of course, then having two boys in a row, I demanded that the second boy be a Sneyd.

It wasn’t a good marriage. Though he liked the idea of being the patriarch of a large family, Bernard came to resent the time that looking after the children took me, as it was time I couldn’t spend attending to him. He also suffered badly from depression and found it difficult to keep a job for very long. We had moved to the US when Lizzy was just turned one, and I had little in the way of family support and found it difficult to start a career of my own over there.

After ten years of marriage, I left the US and brought the children back to New Zealand, where I had the offer of a good job – a project manager with Telecom NZ. Bernard came out a few months later, but couldn’t settle. He moved back to the US, and at the last moment, I decided not to follow him, but to divorce him instead. It was the best decision I have ever made. I had known Brent Lewis vaguely though work for some months. He was a dead ringer for Freddie Mercury from Queen, and I have always thought Freddie Mercury was just fabulous. After I left Bernard, Brent left his wife, and shortly afterwards we got together.

I work as a consultant in IT now. I quickly got bored with teaching college students and went into business, which I find much more interesting and dynamic. For fun Brent and I write romance novels with lots of sex in them. And we both love boats and scuba diving and yachts and making sandcastles.

Brent and I moved to a house by the beach in Raumati South, and our bedroom window looks out over the ocean. Pretty damn close to perfection, if you ask me.

Family genes have reappeared in our kids. Alice has an artistic bent and paints beautifully. Lizzy has chosen to study biology and statistics, and has a flair for design. Doug and Sam are both mad about music and will practise until their fingers blister and bleed. None of those genes come directly from me!

Elizabeth Sarah Neal

I was born in Dunedin on the 4th of August, 1968 at Queen Mary’s Hospital.

Some of my first memories are of family holidays at Tapanui. I remember porridge on frosty mornings and river walks with Argus, our black Labrador. At home at Cliffs Road in the big bedroom upstairs I remember enforced afternoon naps in the white wicker cot which was awfully hard to get out of.

I went to Helen-Dean kindy in St. Clair where the visiting nurse would ask me to lift up my singlet and tut tut over my eczema. I always wanted to have a nap and do painting like the big kids but Mum would pick me up before lunch. I would play with cards (Mrs. White the Baker etc.) or the magnetic trains while Mum had a nap stretched out on the green carpet in the dining room. (I bet Mum still has the cards somewhere in a complete set for when her grandchildren visit). Every so often I would go into the kitchen to tell her what the time was from the square clock. Square clocks always puzzled me. Once I went to Grandma Kate’s place after kindy - a funny poky little place with a cookie jar in the shape of a man with a hat and a squished up face. She was always very jolly and kind and fuss ed over me a lot.

I liked pottering around after Mum as she chose taps for the bathroom or carpet for the hallway. Mum would wash the yellow and white diamonds on the kitchen floor every morning. We would
listen to the radio and I would turn the stools upside down to make a bus or a train. In my twenties, my flatmates would often accuse me of having a floor cleaning fetish. Luckily it passed. I never clean floors now until I stick to them.

When I got sick, one slightly forced cough would bring Mum sprinting into my bedroom in her pink quilted dressing gown. (Even I won’t let her throw that one out). She would sing to me and sometimes hop into bed with me.

We always had the coolest birthday parties with fancy food, games, and the obligatory new clothes Mum had usually sewn herself. I was not the fastest at growing up, and remember being crestfallen when I got to the age that Mum suggested it was time to have ‘friends around for dinner’ instead.

I have a lot of memories of Ma, Mum’s mother when I was little. We would often run up the hill with her dinner under a pot lid. (Christ, if I asked my kids to do that, the dinner wouldn’t last the first corner). Freda frequently announced that she thought my legs looked like spurtles.

We had a concrete path around the house which seems pretty small now, but was a positive highway when I was four. I would devise elaborate road rules for the trike, and always made sure I had enough petrol (mud, slaters and geranium leaves) to last the journey. I particularly missed the trees and the stream during Dad’s sabbatical in Wales when I was six.

I do remember being terrified of starting school despite the new dress and green canvas school bag, as I wasn’t confident that I had this reading thing sorted yet. After all, on the Peter and Jane books I’d only made it up to 2B, and that was a struggle. I was looking forward to maths though, and was pretty devastated when all I got was a few coloured blocks in shades of magenta, orange and dull turquoise. One was supposed to place the blocks together to uncover the secrets of addition. Mrs. Man was my teacher. I thought that was a strange name and no doubt told her so. Mr. Frew’s Primer 4 class followed. He was tall with a bright red face. Sometimes he would shout. I was pretty scared, which is why I copied Kathryn Clapham’s maths from her exercise book. You had to put an oval around a bunch of dots and then join the bunches together to make an oval with even more dots. I didn’t get it. Mr. Frew caught me at it, and shamed me in front of the class. I don’t believe I have ever cheated since.

Primary school was not particularly memorable. I don’t think the teachers liked me even though I tried hard, and I couldn’t quite work this out. I asked lots of ‘silly’ questions in maths, like what was the difference between round and curly brackets.

I started playing the violin around the time I started school. The G major scale was a bit of a challenge the first time I picked it up. At the Saturday morning music classes they kept telling me it sounded great. Personally I think it sounded like crap.

I was interested in numbers from early on and remember vividly spending an entire weekend trying to find a pattern for the prime numbers I was convinced there had to be one. I was also fascinated at an early age by a proof of Pythagoras’s theorem.

I loved to draw, but could only copy pictures. Mum, on the other hand, could draw a horse or a bee without even looking at a picture of one. This intrigued me. She would do pencil drawings on the blank page of Cathy’s school ‘topic’ book which I envied.

I went to Macandrew Intermediate, and hated every minute of it. Luckily it was truncated by Dad’s sabbatical in Nashville. In my new class there was weedy little guy who drew pictures of the insides of aeroplanes and wanted to be a Boeing engineer. He gave me a gold necklace. I was disgusted, tried to cut it with scissors, failed, and threw it in the garbage can instead.

(Jesus! There’re four paragraphs that begin with ‘I’).

My secondary education was at Queens High School. I enjoyed nearly all my subjects except English, which terrified me because I had no way to check if my answer was right. In the sixth form I spent a month in Germany on a Goethe Society scholarship. The following year I got a university scholarship as I was a good girl and did my homework.
I lost a bit of momentum with violin during high school. Although I still liked to practice, I was frustrated by not being able to perform well. I lacked the insight to appreciate that lack of technique was holding me back. Although I was quite methodical in my other studies, I didn’t have the discipline to make real progress on the instrument.

I adored Livingstone where we went for holidays. I would help out on the farm over the long Christmas break, doing errands and chasing sheep. I loved long hikes to the river, liloing down the rapids, sliding down the hill, spying on wild cats, and of course the rare but prized horse ride. Now I get to enjoy it all over again with my own kids!

Dad would sometimes get up early to go fishing and take me with him. I was never particularly disappointed if we didn’t catch anything ’cause it was really the walk (always with wet feet by the way) and the special time with Dad that I loved.

Dad tried his hardest to interest me in science (successfully I might add). We would bike to his work together to develop photographs in the darkroom. He would show me his experiments in the laboratory, or give me a quick demo of something. As I got older he would occasionally give me a formal chemistry or physics lecture in the tearoom.

Physics was my main interest when I left high school and I went to Canterbury University to study it. I skipped the first year courses and had to work my butt off. The academic work was suddenly exciting. I soon gave up violin lessons with the university tutor, as he wanted more commitment to music than I was ready to give at the time. I did however play in the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra.

My first husband was my physics lab partner. I found him tactless and unattractive at first, but admired his analytical thinking and grew to enjoy his companionship. We had a close-knit group of friends, and had many fun times together in Christchurch.

After the first year at Canterbury, Shayne and I both switched our majors to maths. I do sometimes wonder whether I would have done the same on my own. We both got first class honours degrees and looked to post grad studies in the States. In our letters of applications we mentioned our intention to get married. Dad found out for the first time when he read the letter to proof it. When I told Mum I think she cried (and not from happiness).

Shayne and I married in Dunedin at Mum and Dad’s place, shortly after we returned from a few months Euro railing. Mum bought me a beautiful blue silk dress back from England (which still hangs in my cupboard), as in some insane moment I had had made a really quite revolting dark green velvet dress gathered up one side. We had a vegetarian lunch at the Palms Caf, and I gave some awful self conscious speech I still cringe at the thought of.

We left for Madison-Wisconsin around my 22nd birthday. Madison was home for seven years. I studied violin performance for fun, and maths supposedly to get my PhD: only I spent much more time practising than solving theorems. After a year or so it was clear that I had to choose between my marriage or the music, as Shayne was irritated by the noise of the violin. Needless to say, I chose the latter.

I studied violin for five years, played in the Madison Symphony orchestra, the University orchestra, and led a few smaller ensembles around town. It was with huge reluctance that I eventually quit performance studies to try and complete my maths degree.

In Madison, I generally preferred the company of musicians to mathematicians, although in later years I hung around with the Russians in the maths department. I studied Russian language for a couple of years and wasted way too much mental energy breaking up and getting back together with Tolya Karp, a fellow PhD student and junior chess champion of Kazakhstan. In 1996, after a visit to the doctor to explain I was getting abnormally tired and finding it hard to run my usual distance I found out I was pregnant (duh!). The father was Igor Boronenkov (aka Boroda or ‘bearded-one’). Boroda was a molecular biology PhD student who was the life and soul of every party. He was also alcoholic. Boroda wanted me to have an abortion. I told him where to go.
Getting pregnant suddenly gave me focus. For nine months I worked at my maths like I had never worked before. After I got too fat to walk the distance home, I would work every evening till midnight in the computer room, and then call a taxi. I found the theorems flowed thick and fast when I put my mind to it, and rather regretted the monumental stuffing around for the past six years. I had to resign myself to the fact that my thesis would be adequate, but nothing more.

When I was six months pregnant I spent a night in a prison cell after Tolya called the cops during an argument in which I chased him all over town and bent his glasses. I was charged with some horrible sounding crime and Mum and Dad came to the rescue with several thousand dollars for legal bills. The case was dismissed at a court hearing. Several months later I had made up again with Tolya, and he attended the birth with my girlfriend.

Mum and Dad came to Madison to help with baby Alexander James Sneyd (Sasha). I think it is fair (albeit a bit corny) to say it was the beginning of the happiest time of my life. I defended my thesis when Sasha was three months old, with milk creating great wet patches on my white silk blouse. It was first time I had left Sasha alone with Tolya.

I left the USA around my birthday in 1997. New Zealand seemed so rough and quaint after Madison, but it felt good to be at home, and I knew that was where I wanted Sasha to grow up. After missing out on an academic job at Otago I got a job in Corporate Services, Telecom in Wellington, and for the first few weeks enjoyed dressing up in real clothes and going to important meetings. Soon afterwards the mind-numbing boredom set in. I remember one afternoon feeling so pissed off that I printed colour pictures of trucks and cars for Sasha instead of adding up the numbers I was supposed to. A bunch of other silly little analyst-based jobs with grand titles and lots of money followed. Briefly, at ESR, the Environmental Science and Research I thought I might have stumbled on a new career, but I found that lacking both a medical degree and a degree in epidemiology, I was forever stuck in the role of subservient number cruncher.

I met Craig Utting in 1999 while rehearsing a ballet with the Wellington Sinfonia. He was the tall dark and handsome viola player, whose case would somehow always end up next to mine. He was utterly open, trustworthy, and kind and as different in character from my Russian boyfriends as possible. I skipped work to bring him roses. He won me over by staying not only the night but for breakfast as well, and two weeks later we moved in together. Craig’s wife had left several months before. They had two young children Rowan (born in 1997) and Morgan (born in 1994). The children shuttled backwards and forwards between the two of them as custody arrangements were frequently fought over or renegotiated. I never found it easy to help Craig care for his two children, and have not always managed the task particularly well. Craig, on the other hand, has cared for Sasha like his own child and is Dad in every sense of the word.

On 3rd January, 2001 Benjamin John Sneyd-Utting (Benny) was born by Caesarean section. Catherine Rose Sneyd-Utting (Kitty) followed the next year on April 20th. Daniel Graham Sneyd-Utting (Danny) was born 24th February 2004, and lastly (!) Edward Craig Sneyd-Utting (Teddy) on 24th July 2008.

Both Danny and Sasha are most at home with a soccer ball or a piano (and are very close mates); Benny dreams of becoming a poet and a composer; Kitty’s greatest treat is going horse riding; and Teddy is all the above rolled into one.

In 2006 I took the plunge, quit a high paying job which made my original Corporate Services job seem exciting and set up the Music Learning Centre with Craig. In 2008 we started another company Virtuoso Strings a violin shop. Both businesses are centred around our rapidly dilapidating (is this a word?) home. But we see lots of the kids, each other, and love what we do. I never intend going back to working in someone else’s office.

It is 2nd October 2009. I lie in bed with the laptop at 1:30 am in the morning thinking of Craig and Sasha who have flown to Chicago to meet Boroda and his mother Svetlana for the first time. It is the school holidays, and I have spent the week going to pools, gyms, parks and movies with the other kids. I feel very lucky.
John Graham

John Graham Sneyd. No, not Dr. John Graham Sneyd. That’s what sets me apart from the others. Just John Graham Sneyd. And you have to say it all.

October 9 1972. John Lennon turned 32 that day. I was born. Not even Google can find anything else interesting that happened. Later that year they passed the Unit Titles Act and now thirty-seven years later I spend half my waking hours working out how we should replace the damn thing. It was probably boring back then, too.

Earliest memory? At the hospital – in Wales, I’m told – looking at Dad in bed. Apparently he was quite sick. I thought he was just lying down. But so many stories – and that one in particular – have found their way into family legend that I don’t know if I remember them or whether I have just recreated a memory from the telling and re-telling and then telling again. I mean, sometimes I think I remember being left in the washing basket at Livingstone as the rest of you drove home and I was only 6 weeks old. And I swear that I remember as clear as a bell telling Aunty I was just getting the spiders out of the sugar when she caught me eating it – I was kneeling on the blue balloon back chairs in the dining room at Cliffs Road, and Aunty was looking through the hatch – but that was in Wales too.

But I do remember lots of things. Kindy at the church on Forbury Road and eating an apple and sucking my tummy in so that it folded over on itself and just knowing it was my turn for the policeman’s helmet at playtime. First day at St Clair School and getting the Cat in the Hat for a present and sitting on the top step by Mum and Dad’s room reading it. Running across the playground with my Tiger Tim lunchbox and it bursting open and my pear bouncing beside me as I ran and then trying to eat it and feeling the dirt in my mouth. Mum always serving me first on the blue china plate that used to be Liz’s and saying, it wouldn’t matter if the Queen was here, I’d always give Johnny his first, accompanied by a little cuddle. Alex Gilks, my first best friend. Getting hit on the knee by Paul Macandrew the first time I tried to play cricket and crying all the way back to the classroom pretending it hurt when actually I had been given out lbw before I had hit anything at all. I think back then we thought you were automatically out if the ball hit your leg; it didn’t matter where you were standing.

Somewhere along the way Mum and Dad started me on the violin. It was just so unfortunate, in so many ways. Mostly, it was unfortunate for me that I followed Liz in the family order; Liz had a passion and talent for the violin that even a dedicated pupil would have struggled to match, let alone me with my semi-interest and lack of natural ability. Poor Sydney Mann; he did not anger easily, but I could drive even him to the occasional outburst when it became apparent that my practice that week had been half-hearted at best, and completely misdirected. Every so often, just because he was so disorganised, he would simply forget that we had a lesson that day and when that happened, I felt like I had been given a reprieve from the inevitable humiliation.

The writing about my musical career should have been clearly on the wall the night of the great concert. God knows where it was – I have a vague memory of somewhere down towards Port Chalmers – but Liz and I were playing a duet. Three times I started at the wrong time, and each time Sydney Mann hustled forward, hunched in embarrassment for me, and apologetically started us again. Fourth time, Liz snapped. Bang, went her bow on my head. Bang, bang, two more. Sydney Mann hunched forward again, desperately trying to keep the peace, almost panicking. To complete the humiliation, I had to carry on, racked by heaving after-crying sobs.

There was that year in Nashville. I learned to ride a bike and throw a football and use a baseball glove. Sometimes Dad and I would see the Nashville Sounds baseball team get beaten – in my memory it is always by the Knoxville Bluejays. Those nights under lights at the Nashville stadium were so glamorous; it was the most exciting thing I had ever experienced and I remember Dad sitting next to me grinning at me hopping around wearing my Sounds cap and shouting. And then afterwards I would hold his hand and we would squash into the stream of people flowing from the ground and talk of how it didn’t really matter that we lost. My teacher at school had been to New Zealand and remembered it for the Bell Tea.
Intermediate school at Macandrew – I found sport. Got my first cricket bat. Got my first soccer ball. Got my first squash racquet. Every lunch time I would play cricket with the tough boys; it was strange that they just accepted this scrawny red-headed little nerd into their midst because I could play cricket with the best of them.

Intermediate school ended with a spell in hospital with my legs tied to weights and an IV drip of antibiotics to deal to the osteomyelitis in my hip joint. The infection developed the night after I played my one and only game for the Otago junior cricket team in Oamaru. On the way back we got fish and chips with a donut in Palmerston and I puked it up when we got home.

I think me being in hospital was probably a pretty hard time for Mum and Dad, as I am sure they were worried sick, but for me – other than the first few days when I felt pretty bad – it was nothing but a holiday. Video games and tv all day, tv and visitors at night. Mercifully, the 6-week break also painlessly euthanized my relationship with the violin, and I haven’t picked one up since. Every day Mum and Dad would come and see me, sit on my bed and talk to me, bring me books, watch Big League Soccer with me on Sunday lunchtimes. Sometimes, when the hospital food got too much to bear, they would sneak me in a pizza. I still love olives and anchovies on pizzas because it just makes me think of Mum and Dad conspiratorially sneaking into the ward clutching the Smithies pizza box. They did the best job they ever could have of not letting me worry; certainly they never told me of their fear that I wouldn’t play soccer again. Instead, they bought me a golf trainer because they thought I could take that up instead.

1985, and I was off to high school with my legs still skinny and white from hospital. I remember that Mum was worried that I would overdo it, and Dad was just soothing her in the way that Dad used to do all the time when Mum fussed. Got my first tennis racquet, a Donnay. I remember choosing it with Dad at the Otago Sports Depot on George St. Dad wanted me to get a Wilson, because that’s what he had used. Beat one of the tough kids who lived up in Corstorphine and who used to give me shit about being posh, and he became a friend after that.

I really just meandered through high school showing no remarkable talents. The only thing that really interested me was sport. And Mum and Dad recognised that, and they couldn’t have been more supportive. Every Saturday morning, every Sunday morning, they would take me to games and practices in Mosgiel, or North East Valley or God knows where else. Every time I played for Otago – and often when I was just playing for my club – they would be there on the sideline, shouting “useless!” at the top of their voices. All the other parents thought they were hilarious. I particularly remember the kids v parents end of season game for the Otago team one year, when they declined to play but at every break in play rushed on to the field with buckets of water and copious bandages, swathing the nearest person from head to toe.

All through my childhood I went fishing with Dad at Livingstone. Hours and hours walking up the banks of the Maerewhenua, or standing beside the Waitaki at night watching the sedge crowd round the lantern and listening to the fish rise just beyond casting distance. Every so often we would see a water rat or some interesting birds. Sometimes at night I would just curl up on the bank and sleep. Going back in the car I loved to see moths getting caught by the headlights, small points of light flashing past. I seldom caught anything – 2 fish, to date – but I always knew that I was lucky to have something that Dad and I did together.

Now that I have my own family, I look back at those years and I wonder how on earth Mum and Dad kept the family running – and much as I love my Dad and recognise his multiple virtues, it was probably mostly Mum. Dinner on the table every night, an ironed shirt for me the next morning (what the hell were you thinking Mum?), and I was never late for a soccer practice. With only two kids I sometimes think there is just too much to do to keep the mechanics of daily life turning and with five, I just don’t know how they managed. I would have turned into a shrieking harpy inside of a week but despite the odd flash of steel, Mum and Dad never lost the plot or seemed to resent the time they spent running around after us.

The only area of significant neglect was my school lunches. I was left to my own devices in this regard from about age 10. Being of only marginal motivation, inevitably as I was dashing out the door I would throw two pieces of bread and a piece of cheese into the front pocket of my bag. Often I didn’t bother to wrap them before throwing them in. Then, of course, lunchtime would come, the
deconstructed sandwich would look entirely unappealing, and I would either go home for lunch or go hungry. The accumulated graveyard of bread and cheese would be left in the front pocket of the bag for weeks – and I suspect even months – and I can still remember the pungent organic smell with a hint of cheesy sharpness that came from the pocket whenever it was opened. Visually it was spectacular – blues and greens and even purples began to become apparent even through the canvas of the bag. I was motivated to do something about it only after Matthew Perriam did his nut at me after getting the cricket ball from my bag and going into the wrong pocket.

1988 and Dad and I moved to Belgium for 9 months while Dad was on sabbatical. Mum stayed in NZ for the first 6 months, and we missed her terribly. Dad was always positive about things, but I could tell that he did really miss Mum and he used to fret when he couldn’t get hold of her on the phone. But he and I had a great time for those 6 months; it was a real celebration of two boys living together. Every Sunday we would take the tube to the Marche du Midi, buy a rotisserie chicken, a baguette, some strawberries and a token amount of asparagus and sit at home watching football and eating everything except the asparagus. We explored all over Belgium – Bruges, Ghent, Leuven, and further afield, to Paris a couple of times. We bought a deep fryer and ate frites most nights, often with monstrous pork chops. We went to the football, to see Anderlecht play, and once to see Belgium play Hungary. We watched Malcolm Marshall demolish the English batsmen on BBC.

The day before Mum was due to arrive from New Zealand we filled the fridge with vegetables. The next morning Dad was like a child before a birthday party. He couldn’t stop smiling all morning and I remember was too excited to even drink his tea. We were at the airport way too early and Dad practically skipped his way through the airport to the arrival gate, carrying a huge bunch of flowers we had bought the previous day from the Roodebek shopping mall. That day I realised just how much he loved her and how much he had missed her, and from then on, when I thought of what might be to come in my life, I always thought that I wanted to find someone I could love like that.

Once Mum had arrived, we had even more fun. Mum had some work to do in some odd places and so I would take time off school and she and I would hit the road together. Since I had been at a French school for the past 6 months, nominally I was accompanying her as translator – but in reality all the business people spoke better English than my French so I was really just along for the ride. Metz, staying in a run-down hotel on the main street, between two sets of traffic lights listening to the trucks slow down and rev up all night, and peeing in the basin in the morning because the loo was down the hall and we didn’t have a key. But it was worth it because her “work” the next day involved lunch at a superb restaurant where our host admonished Mum for bringing down the tone by drinking beer with lunch instead of wine. Driving down a footpath in Utrecht in Holland on a Sunday morning. Accidentally taking a motorway turnoff into the middle of Amsterdam in rush hour. Staying at a charming canal-side hotel in Edam in northern Holland, and the whole town going insane because Holland beat Germany in the final of the European Cup. After not seeing Mum for so long it was just lovely to be able to spend some time with her.

And then there were the trips the three of us took together. To Paris again. Driving through France, through the Alsace and into Luxembourg and Switzerland and then down into Provence – Avignon, Cavaillon, Gordes, Roussillon, Fontaine de la Vaucluse, the Camargue.

I think poor Mum thought I was destined for crushing failure in my seventh form year. I can understand that there probably wasn’t much evidence of me taking schoolwork seriously – not that I was doing much else of note. In fairness to her, Mum actually managed to hide her concern pretty well. It was only when I was idly looking at my results at the end of the year – a very comfortable A Bursary, but still some distance from a scholarship – a very comfortable A Bursary, but still some distance from a scholarship – that she looked over my shoulder and snorted “well you could hardly expect any better than that with the amount of work you did”. I remember protesting that I thought an A bursary was ok and she came back with, “A Bursary my ass with marks like that”. She was reading the code numbers for the subjects, not my marks – “016 Classical Studies, 027 History, 041 French” and so on. I still find that story hilarious.

I think much of her worry then though came from Mum and Dad’s decision to move overseas, to Fiji, at the start of the following year. Even back then, as a seventeen-year-old boy with the emotional maturity of a gibbon, I could see that Mum was quite tortured about her decision to leave me. Looking back now I realised I could have made things so much easier for her; I was actually
CHAPTER 10. ABOUT US CHILDREN

relatively unconcerned. Of course it was going to be a change but on the other hand it gave me the
opportunity to spread my social wings, which I really had not done before.

So after a few months of living with Cathy and Bernard and a very young Alice – who had moved
into Cliffs Road – I moved into a flat in the middle of the student area on Castle St.

I am not sure why I chose to do law; I think it came from my impression that practising law was
simply a more serious form of debating, which I had been pretty good at. It wasn’t, of course, but
I found enough in there to keep me interested. I also did Philosophy, which I was very good at, but
which I hated – partly because I instinctively distrusted any discipline that I could do so well at with
such minimal effort. It made me feel like it wasn’t real work.

But quite apart from my studies, in 1991, in my second year at university, my life changed
fundamentally and irreversibly in a way that I never could have imagined. I’d known Ravithri in
our first year and we had always got on well. At the end of that year, I asked her if she wanted to
move into the flat Hamish, Bec and I shared. We became close friends and then one day – and I still
remember the exact moment with total clarity – I just fell in love. In a way that left no room for
doubt. And now, eighteen years later, she still takes my breath away.

She is smart and beautiful with an irrepressible sense of fun, and a smile and laugh that could
stop you in your tracks. I was not exactly a bronzed Adonis, and getting that girl was punching way
above my weight.

Ravithri changed my life. She broadened by horizons, helping me realise that there was a world
beyond Dunedin and beyond New Zealand. She broadened my mind, constantly challenging the
conservative white middle class attitudes and beliefs I had developed almost by default, never before
having had to look beyond my own knowledge and experience. She taught me about community,
about faith, about friendship, about tolerance and acceptance, and about making lists. I asked her to
marry me every day for three and a half years before she said yes, almost with a tired resignation
and realisation that I wouldn’t just go away if she ignored me.

In our final year of university Ravi moved to Christchurch to do journalism while I finished my
law degree in Dunedin. And then, after a brief interlude in Queenstown, for another 18 months we
lived apart, me in Dunedin, Ravi in Oamaru. We got married in the middle of that time and despite
the hassle we still had a lot of fun in the weekends. Ravi was working at the Oamaru Mail and
I worked first for Roy Somerville as a researcher on his civil litigation and resource management
cases, and then for Judith Ablett Kerr as a junior criminal law barrister. The first was uneventful and
rather dull; the second was far from that. Judith was a superb criminal advocate – I have not ever
seen anyone better – but her brilliance was tempered with unpredictability and a fierce temper.

We left New Zealand in January 1997 on our OE. Two years, mostly in Europe, working in pubs
and backpacking. I am sure Mum and Dad thought we were throwing away all the hard work of
our degrees. We, on the other hand, we having a blast. I may be the only one of the family not
to have Dr before my name, but I would challenge any of my siblings to simultaneously pour four
Guinnesses, water down the Bacardi, pour the overflow beer back into the keg, and only ring some
of the purchases up on the till as part of the landlord’s tax fiddle, all while keeping half an eye on the
stripper in the corner entertaining a stag do. This, of course, while the bar is six deep in pissed Poms
who think they are God’s gift to mimicry shouting “throw another shrimp on the barbie cobber”.

That two years is so full of good memories. Perhaps part of it was that after spending the better
part of two and a half years apart, Ravi and I were thrown together 24/7 for two years, working
together, eating three meals a day together, hanging out together in our spare time. Some of the
memories from that time will stay with me forever – ten days of solid eating in Singapore, the
indescribable experience of Sri Lanka and Ravi’s extended family, camping with the naked hippies
on the beach in Turkey, the heart-stoppingly powerful Flanders fields in Belgium, biking through the
Loire Valley to the chateaux, the pizza in Napoli, the medinas in Fez and Marrakech.

But by the end of 1998, we were ready to come back to New Zealand. Four months later, sleeping
on Ravi’s mum’s couch, we weren’t so sure. But we decided to move to Wellington, and everything
just seemed to fall into place.
I picked up a job at a large commercial law firm and Ravi worked for a group of community newspapers. We lived in Johnsonville – not far from Cathy and her kids, which was lovely. I hated the law firm, of course, because I had been telling myself for years that commercial lawyers were bad, bad people, and only especially wicked people worked for the large firms. It didn’t help that my professional confidence had never had a chance to convalesce after the mauling it had taken working for Judith, or that I didn’t know crap about commercial law. But I muddled along for two years, and there were no tears on our parting, on either side.

Ravi meantime was working on the start-up team for stuff.co.nz, which has developed into a huge brand for Fairfax media. I am so proud that she was right in the thick of creating that. Now Ravi is a communications consultant with her own business contracting to mostly public sector entities, and also doing some freelance writing – she’s superb at it and it allows her the flexibility to combine being a professional and being a fabulous mum as well.

I did find my niche in the law in the public sector, and now I can say with a lot of satisfaction that I am a good lawyer and a good manager. For two years I have been the chief legal advisor at the Department of Building and Housing; surprisingly the work we do is pretty interesting. At the time of writing, I have been offered the chance to move back into private practice and, having finally come to terms with the fact that not all private sector lawyers are inherently awful, am seriously considering it.

We bought our funny little house – 3 Old Bullock Road – in 2001 and are still here 8 years later. We love it. We are surrounded by bush and birds and peace, our pohutukawa blooms most years and the kaka and fantails and tui and bellbirds and morepork and even the odd saddleback are well established around. It looks loads better than when we bought it.

One fine Saturday morning in Spring 2002 Roshi made his grand entrance, in our lounge. He looked around with enormous eyes for the first ten minutes, and then went to sleep for a week. He couldn’t look less like a Sneyd. There is something about the de Silva genes; all the cousins on the de Silva side look like siblings, seemingly having eliminated any trace of the other contributing parent.

He is a truly remarkable boy, Roshi. Two things are responsible for this, mostly. First, he is enormously intelligent. But equally, all his life he has had a mother who stimulates him, challenges him, nurtures him, really talks to him and who has instilled in him a love of the joyous things in life like books and music and dance and friendship and learning. From me he seems to get little other than his love of football and cricket. And he’s good at them, too.

He taught himself to read when he was three and since then has continued to astound us with his thirst for books and his ability to express himself. He also has the mind for maths – he works out patterns and rules in a way that often leaves us somewhat puzzled until we think hard about it and realise that he is absolutely right. He makes friends naturally and easily and at age 7 has a circle of close mates who he loves to hang out with. He has good Indian wrists with his precious Grey Nicholls bat, whipping my bowling from off to leg. But above all, he is a caring, thoughtful and insightful little boy. He is very aware of people’s feelings and is enormously affectionate.

Srian is no less remarkable, we think. He’s three now and has benefited not only from the same maternal nurturing as Roshi has had, but he has also had Roshi as his big brother. He has an ability with language and expression that can defuse our anger in a heartbeat. Unmistakably another de Silva – the spitting image of Roshi at the same age – and again with the same gregarious personality and irrepressible nature. Despite being almost four years apart, the two of them are inseparable at home and adore each other fiercely.

Sri has two main passions at age three – drawing and families. Any time there is quiet at home, Roshi can be found with a book, and Sri labouring over a detailed picture of his “new family” – they live on a farm in Auckland. Phoenix and Olivia are the parents, Ruby and Bree the little babies. Any situation will be turned into a domestic role-play – “the tomato sauce is the daddy, the rocket sauce is the mummy and the salt and pepper are the little babies”. Like Roshi, he is also enormously affectionate and a constant delight.

I will never apologise for making out my kids to be fantastic. They are.

So here we are. Its 2009, I am 37 and I suppose in many ways my life has been unremarkable. I’m
not famous and I haven’t changed the world. But in other ways my life has been quite remarkable. How many people remember their childhood as a time of happiness and togetherness and laughter? How many 15 year olds from New Zealand have shared with their Dad the perfection of a Jan Ceulemans penalty slotted neatly inside the post at Heysel Stadium, and sat on the tube munching a waffle and talking about it all the way home? Who has biked around a Dutch fishing village with their Mum, almost uncontrollable with laughter at her attempts to avoid sending both the bike and herself into the canal?

Mum and Dad have given me so much. There are so many memories from growing up crowding me, catch-phrases popping into my head randomly (you fry the cabbage with just a little bit of butter), things they have taught me coming back at odd times, that I can’t define or confine exactly what it is they did for me in a paragraph or a page or even probably a book.

But there is one thing they showed me – every day of their lives – that was the richest thing they could ever have done. They showed me that they loved me. They loved each other. They loved our family. And it was just so obvious.

And so now I have my own family and I love my boys and my wife indescribably and I just hope they feel loved and see love like I felt it and saw it when I was a boy.

Happy anniversary, Mum and Dad. I love you both very, very much.
Appendix I: Maps
Map 3: The West March and the Debatable Land. Stolen from the web, but I can’t remember where from.
Map 4: The Debatable Land in more detail. Reproduced from Google maps.
Map 5: Hayton and its environs. Edmond Castle is marked by the red circle. Useful for the Grahams of Edmond Castle, in Chapter 5. Reproduced from Google maps.
Map 6: Parts of Sussex and Kent. Useful for the Grahams of Edmond Castle and the Curteis family, in Chapter 5. Windmill Hill is very close to Herstmonceux, but isn’t actually labelled here. Reproduced from Google maps.
Map 7: Castelnau and its environs. Useful for the Boileau de Castelnau. The original Boileau castle is at Castelnau-Valence, to the west of Uzès. Reproduced from Google maps.
Map 8: New York and its environs. Useful for the Jessups. The approximate positions of Newton and West Farms are marked with red dots, Newton to the south, West Farms to the north. Reproduced from Google maps.
Appendix II: Things written
Did my grandmother really want to be saddled with me plus hangers-on – always one, often two, once even three primary school kids – every school holidays? Kid-like, I was sure of my welcome. Grandma spent many weeks alone on the farm which was worked by a son who, with his family, lived nearby but never spoke. Neighbours were a long walk away over the hill. And Grandma and I were real mates. We both liked walking, and hangers-on had to like it or lump it.

*Lucknow*. Sun, wide open spaces, much to explore and endless delight. It must have rained occasionally but I don’t remember it. In my memory the farm always baked under a hot sun in a pale blue sky, the far hills shimmered in the heat, the grass was yellow-brown and any breeze kicked up the dust from the dirt road.

We kids would leap out of bed and rush outside while the dew was still on the grass. We, like Calvin from the comic strip, had serious playing to do. On hearing the big brass bell we’d race back inside for porridge with cream, and homemade bread, at the long, marble kitchen table with the wide crack right through the middle.

After breakfast, back outside. There was never a shortage of things to do. Maybe we’d play on the old dray in the yard, or sail our flax boats in the creek over in the Magic Forest, or maybe we’d make bows from willow and arrows from toi-toi sticks. (We had fanciful names for our arrows – I remember Genevieve and Bernadette. Would boys do that or was it just a girl thing? Were we perhaps foreshadowing a desire for our own family?)

Collecting pine cones up under the row of pine trees bordering the cow paddock, and piling them in the woodshed was a favourite occupation. (Why is it that girls like to gather and not hunt?)

There were other things to gather too. We loved to pick flowers from the once-fine, now-neglected garden. Grandma loved flowers too and mostly had fresh flowers inside, even if only one daisy in a tiny vase on the kitchen window ledge. She had the bad habit (I thought) of throwing them on the rubbish heap down by the motorshed before I considered they were properly dead. We would trawl through the rubbish, pick out the good ones, cart them round and sit on the front verandah with our feet on the splintery front steps and make button-holes.

But if the garden was neglected the house certainly wasn’t. It was always immaculately clean, light, sunny and airy from the open windows and French doors, and smelled of soap. Fashionable in its time, it still spoke of the well-off farmer, with its two-foot high china vases graced by pale shepherdesses in bucolic Eden, huge etchings – one of a gloomy young man seated at an organ contemplating in wonder the angels floating round him – on the wall, oak suites in the dining room and main bedroom, and a seldom-used front room with a green plush horse-hair sofa, a gramophone (which didn’t work) with his master’s voice and dog on it, and a piano. This room was taboo for us, except occasionally when we were allowed to roll up the carpet square and dance on the polished floor. I don’t remember clearly but I’m guessing that on a wet day when, not knowing how to dissipate our energy, Grandma decided this was the least of many evils.

Even if the garden had seen better days it was productive. Apricots, pale pinky-orange and juicy, fell into waist-high grass from the old trees in the orchard. Maybe they were Moorpark. Whatever, they were the best in the world. After we’d stuffed ourselves, Grandma would stew some for breakfast or make pies or jam.

Blackcurrants and redcurrants grew in a wire enclosure by the back door. We spent hours picking
them and still there were thousands more. Spreading them out on the table, we’d sit on bentwood chairs, fingers and clothes stained purple, and top and tail them ready for jam or pies.

On that marble table Grandma made pastry for her pies from heaven. Pie and cream! I’m salivating now!

The highlight for me of any holiday at Lucknow was to pack the day’s food in a basket and set off across country. We might go over Aroha’s Hill to the Dollars’ farm or south to the foot of the Haldanes or north to join the main road at the Lion’s Back and on to Seddon. Grandma always had a rough walking stick, and each of us had a pair of flax sticks (hobby sticks we called them) to enable us to leap over wide creeks.

The basket was emptied at lunch time, and shortly afterwards, ravenous again, we might call on a neighbour for afternoon tea. As we walked over the cattle stop and up their gravel drive to the front door, Grandma, no doubt with similar occasions in mind when we descended like a pack of locusts and demolished all food in sight, would make each of us promise not to eat any more than two pieces of anything which might be offered. Frantic sign language from Grandma (two fingers in the air, a frown and shaking of the head) when our hostess had her back to us refilling the teapot, never succeeded in keeping us to our promise. Well fortified we’d set off again. If we were lucky they’d take pity on us and drive us home.

These walks broadened our education. Nature in the raw was novelty to us townie children and we plagued poor Grandma for a full explanation of a bull mounting a cow. Sensing her embarrassment, and half knowing anyway, we’d persevere. But to no avail; she successfully dodged every question.

We couldn’t walk to any shops – the nearest was at least five miles away – but Grandma wasn’t entirely isolated. She had a telephone attached to the wall in the front hall, with a long black earpiece hanging on the side and a handle for ringing out. The line was shared by about six others in Tetley Brook and I suspect many secrets were spread abroad by ‘accidentally’ picking up the phone and listening. We were threatened with dire punishment if we ever did such a thing. We didn’t.

Grandma’s call was two long, ear-piercing rings. Others might be a long and two shorts, or three shorts, or short long short, etceteras. Get the picture? When supplies of basics got low Grandma rang the store in Seddon and we’d all set off for the mail box at the junction with the valley road (about a mile and a half, or did it just seem that far?) trundling the wheelbarrow. Smaller items could be looped by their string over a stick between our shoulders.

It must have been hard work looking after us. After lunch Grandma often rested her head on her arms on the marble table and had ‘forty winks’. She was over sixty then and even though she was one tough lady, we probably wore her out.
While she slept we’d clear the table, fold the table cloth and put it through the big mangle which stood against the wall opposite the green Beatty washing machine and wooden tubs with a hand wringer between them, in the wash-house off the back concrete. There was a dairy too out there with a seldom-used separator. And on the dark wall, a meat safe with half a lamb carcass hanging from an ugly meat hook. The large Kelvinator in the kitchen didn’t work so keeping food in summer was a problem. Jugs of milk and dishes of butter, covered with crocheted doilies, sat in enamel bowls of cold water in the dairy to keep them fresh.

Two doors opened from the house into this covered back concrete, one each end of the U-shaped hall with its richly patterned red carpet runners. Although forbidden, the temptation to race round this circuit was great.

At the apex of the U was a large entrance hall with stained glass paneled door leading out to a deep verandah from which wide steps led down to a graveled area. All very gracious still, even if the gravel was weedy. Inside the U were the bathroom and the fourth bedroom; outside the U the living rooms on one side and the bedrooms on the other.

Just inside the back door on the kitchen side, hanging on big old hooks, were two child’s capes, one red and one pale blue. These were Nita’s, the fourth child, who died when she was nine, some twenty years previously. The dark, back bedroom housed Nita’s old pram which we weren’t allowed to play with. Nita’s ghost turned up in other ways too. I was told she died by eating mushrooms/falling down the well, depending on what I was being cautioned about. Actually she died of pneumonia, I suspect tuberculous from a house cow, because my mother had two tuberculous toes removed when young. The ghost of Nita (‘Wee Petty’) loomed large in my youth and it vaguely worried me that I found it impossible to connect the photos of the round faced, freckled, smiling child with death.

With Grandma awake we’d dry the dishes on the wooden draining board and put them back on the dresser. I still have eight fruit-patterned bowls, too crazed and special to be used. I can’t bear to risk breaking my memories. Another of my treasures surviving from Lucknow is a set of crystal dessert boats with a wavy edge which encourages overflowing. We didn’t use these when we were on holiday; they were reserved for special occasions. Perhaps my greatest treasure is a small brass bell, the size and shape of half a cricket ball, which usually stood on the dresser but was given to me to put beside my bed to summon Grandma on the odd occasion I was sick. Now I use it to summon Sam for a cup of tea when he’s upstairs at the computer or down the garden.

Each evening we’d feed the chooks and collect the eggs. Down a narrow concrete path, through a paling gate held shut by a loop of wire, over a couple of boards spanning a narrow gully, a nervous look round to see where bully and the cows were, and up the hill to the fowl house. The hens mostly roamed free and only returned to their house to roost or, if we were lucky, lay. Then back down with the eggs in a billy.

A billy was a universal receptacle in those pre-plastic days. Once a day we’d collect a billy of milk Uncle Ranji left hanging on a pine branch in the yard. (Ranji, my other uncle, Algy, Lucknow. No prizes for guessing my Grandfather was a cricket enthusiast.) A billy held the chop bones we’d take to the dogs tied up by the orchard. These dogs were working animals and not allowed to forget their place; we were forbidden to pat them because of hydatids, a real worry at that time.

In winter evenings, played out, we’d make toast from homemade bread in front of the hot embers in the cross-cornered fire place in the dining room. There was skill in this. The bread had to be skewered firmly enough on the prongs of the fork not to fall into the fire but with not so much enthusiasm as to break the bread. Balancing the bread on top of the fork was mostly disastrous. But what did a few embers or a bit of charcoal matter when we spread the toast with little pats or curls of Grandma’s own butter (I still remember the ache in my arms from turning the handle of the butter churn) and put great dollops of her apricot or blackcurrant jam on top?

At the end of the day we’d clean our teeth with salt and wash off the obvious dirt in the inside bathroom lit by a skylight, and go to bed in what had been Uncle Ranji and Uncle Algy’s room. If there were more than two of us, the overflow had to sleep in the big brass bed in the middle bedroom which had been my mother’s.

All bedrooms had chamber pots but we would have died rather than use the rose patterned one which lived in our wardrobe. The lavatory was outside down a concrete path in its own little house.
decently shielded from view at the back door. No such frills as toilet paper. Little squares cut from anything handy were the only offering and they had to be put in a bucket when used for fear of blocking the septic tank.

Before being delivered back to our mothers we would be washed thoroughly in the big bath. Grandma, herself, bathed in cold water every morning, but we had hot water from kettles on the fire. Grandma would wash our hair and then towel us vigorously until our skin smarted (to stop us catching cold by going to bed damp).

Occasionally, feeling very daring, we’d plan a midnight feast and secrete bananas and some of Grandma’s black fruit cake pinched from where it was wrapped in a teatowel and stored in a stone crock in the back cupboard. Grandma must have known – how could she miss the black cake crumbs or the smell of banana skins? – but she never said anything. I seem to remember these occasions being something of an anticlimax and not at all like the tales in the Girls Crystal. It was almost impossible to stay awake long enough for starters.

Sometimes we slept outside on the wide verandah which almost wrapped round the house on three sides. The nights were pitch black and starry and we’d scare ourselves silly with the sound of hedgehogs snorting in the grass at the edge of the verandah.

Grandma moved to town when I was thirteen and I haven’t been back since. I have driven in from the valley far enough to see the curve of the road leading to the house in the distance. That’s as far as I wanted to go. I believe it’s all changed now. Veranda built in, iron lace gone, back concrete done away with; in short, ruined.

Just as well no-one can tamper with my memories. The smell of porridge, or lamb chops, or gum trees or pine trees; or the sight of pine cones, or those bowls, and I’m back at Lucknow sitting at the marble table or walking the hills.

Thank you, Grandma.

Now, at the other end of my life, I’ll ring the little brass bell to summon Sam for our morning tea.

Rosalie Sneyd
Memory does not recall a continuum, but a series of vignettes like shafts of light through the fog of time. Trivial, judgmental, childish these memories may be, but they are mine, unedited, and precious. How else can I know myself as a child?

Our street, being about five blocks from town, boasted tar-sealing and a footpath – both sides. It was just inside the limit for such amenities because past our corner the road was dirt with no proper footpaths. This was almost no-mans land to me at the beginning; the street towards town was the familiar bit.

On the far side of us lived the Ratchetts. He was retired I think. Their son owned a shop and a grown-up daughter who had a faint moustache lived with them. Their brick house was ruthlessly neat and regiments of yellow pom-pom marigolds filled the front garden. Everything about them was respectable and great was my horror when I saw the daughter, Margaret, Drinking Beer after mowing the lawn. Alcohol was not allowed in our house. Or rather bought alcohol wasn’t. Actually my father was very interested in making grape wine, or parsnip wine or honey mead and I well remember the barrel tilted on its side in the garage with a glass up-turned over the bung-hole and a white crust round its edges. My father would kneel down and cock his ear to the hole and listen intently, I don’t know what for. To jiggle the barrel was a heinous crime. All his efforts must have been worth it because the local MP, when treated to a glass, was reported as saying it was better than the wine in Bellamys. It was certainly explosive stuff as evidenced by the fountain which occasionally sprayed the whole kitchen when a bottle was uncorked. Anyway this wine did not seem to count as sin and it’s true that I hardly ever saw my father drink it. He just liked to treat visitors.

Mrs. Hope lived on the other side of us, nearer town, in a cottage set as far back from the road as our house, and dwarfed by a huge conifer (soon to become an enormous stump in those days before protected trees) in the front garden. She was old and didn’t venture outside much but I can remember her scratching in the garden dressed in a faded floral dress and an orange cardigan. Her importance to me was the mulberry tree in her back garden. Mulberries don’t come as luscious now.

On her boundary, and shading our side veranda, grew the biggest copper beech I’ve ever seen.

The Bathans lived up from Mrs. Hope. Their bungalow was a step up from the usual as befitted a professional man, a solicitor or something. The family made no impression on me at all. Later I heard he’d had an Affair with one of my school teachers and I felt cheated about what I’d missed.

Up from them a curved path ran through a cottage garden to a story-book house with the highest gables I ever remember seeing. Aunt (or possibly Great Aunt, or even Great-great Aunt) Emma lived there with Cousin Mary to look after her. Dressed completely in black this ancient, wizened lady sat in a dark room in a high-backed wing chair with her feet on a stool. Although completely blind she managed to crochet clothes for my doll, Angelina. Even a complicated little romper suit (blue and white) she could manage by putting a safety pin at the beginning of the row so she would know when a row was completed. She could write a letter too by folding the paper and crossing her left hand over her right and feeling the fold in advance as she wrote. They had an outdoor dunny which she found by hooking her walking stick over a clothes line running from the back door to the outhouse. Early in my life she moved to be cared for by another relative when poor Cousin Mary was called home to look after her own mother. Aunt Emma didn’t live long after this and the another relative inherited the story-book house and built a horrid brick box in the cottage garden.
Round a slight bend, on the corner of our street with the main road to town, was a store. Mutt Webber presided there, standing behind his sloping-fronted, wooden counter. With a jolly face and a whitish apron whose strings crossed in the back and tied over his tummy he would hand me the bread with our name on it – maybe a three-penny loaf or a double sixpenny loaf – from the row of loaves on the open shelf behind him. I would clutch it in my hand (probably grubby) and run home with it. Mostly. History tells of the time I sat in the gutter and ate the middle out and took home the crust but I swear that’s apocryphal. I like crusts.

So across the street and back down the other side.

Old Mrs. Veal, my mother’s aunt, lived by herself in a small villa close to the road. My mother’s family were early pioneers, making the perilous journey from England. Having reached Nelson, several children fewer than when they set off, and made their way across to Blenheim, they obviously decided their travelling days were done. They settled on the land and procreated enthusiastically. My grandfather had eleven brothers and they fielded their own cricket team. So it was no wonder I was related to half the town – and these were just the ones I knew about. Although I doubt whether there were many strays. The family was known for its uprightness and, probably, faithfulness. Lack of imagination kept them good. This relative, Mrs. Veal, was short and fat and had many chins, swollen ankles and a ready, cackling laugh. Her daughter is one of the most beautiful women I know and I still search the memory of the mother’s face for signs of young beauty.

The Harringtons lived across the side road and kept to themselves behind a high hedge. Their only child, Michael, was a brash, curly-headed boy who would probably grow up to look like his father – big frame, brown tousled hair and a red face. Michael was a bit younger than me and therefore not worth noticing. Mr. Harrington had some sort of white collar job and I think the family had Pretensions, a foible my father deplored. He repeated to us with great delight how they had sent a photograph of the Seymour Square to friends, claiming it was their own garden. Unfortunately the friends later came to visit. I don’t know how Dad knew this but we chose to believe it.

Our own family was not blameless in this respect. My Father teased my mother over her penchant for acquiring bank manager’s wives as friends and exchanging afternoon teas complete with butterfly cakes on a tiered cake plate and fine china set out on a dinner wagon. Dad’s job as a teacher only qualified as an off-white collar job because he taught metalwork, and I think this rankled. He referred to himself as a College Master.

Next to the Harringtons was Mrs. Dow and her twins, older than me. There was no Mr. Dow in evidence although it was generally believed he was still alive. This gave the family an air of mystery and a taint of something Not Quite Nice. Contributing to this was her Rouge and Bright Red Lipstick and Dyed Hair which, surely by accident, was orange. I did not recognise it then as a brave face put to the world. Short and corseted (I assume) into an unnatural, inverted pear shape, she would mount her Mary Poppins bicycle to cycle into town. My skinny mother wore corsets too. I think every woman did then and they must have been not only stiff upper-lipped but stiff all over. Not very cuddly. Mrs. Dow’s dilapidated house was mostly hidden from the road by unkempt bushes and weeds. The one time I went inside I was staggered by the sight of a lawn mower in the bedroom. To me, who was accused of being slovenly if a rubber band was left on my dressing table, this was a different world. As a child I had her labeled and was later mildly surprised to see her daughter grow very beautiful and both children rise in the world.

One house down, on the corner, was a nice bungalow in which lived the Allens. I played with their only child, Beverley, and one day while pushing their swing from the front, I collected her shoe in my face and split my tongue. It’s not still forked. The doctor sewed it up. Beverley is still my friend.

So across the street again back to our house. You hardly had to look before crossing the road because there wasn’t much traffic. Many people didn’t have cars and those who did limited their use because of wartime petrol rationing. We had a big, square, brown Hillman with a spare tyre and a box for luggage fixed to the back, running boards along the sides and a crank handle in front. My mother, being frugal (she claimed it was a hangover from the recent depression – a permanent hangover as it turned out) so much objected to taking it out at all that my father sold it in disgust.

Now in our big, white paling gate. Early on, before milk bottles, I would leave our billy here for Mr. Bowman who would come by with his draught horse and cart and ladle milk into it from big
cans on the back of the cart. Each time he hopped up on the back board after replacing our billy by
the gate the cart would dip. He was a big man. Then up the long, gravel drive to our house. It was
the biggest in the street but don’t read too much into that. An old, rambling villa with bay windows
and iron lace round the verandas (which needed Scrubbing), it had known better days. A defunct
fountain with a chipped, concrete surround adorned the centre of the large front lawn (which needed
Mowing). Around the perimeter were heliotrope rhododendrons, stripy camellias, tulip, oleander
and snowball trees. My parents divided the house and rented half. They maintained it was part
of their contribution to the war effort, and certainly accommodation was scarce in the town, but I
suspect the contribution to their pocket was paramount. The back garden was even larger than the
front and contained, besides the kitchen garden, many fruit trees, walnut trees, two large glasshouses
for tomatoes (which needed De-shooting and Watering) and grapes, beehives, and a fowl house full
of chooks (which had to be Fed).

Our street was on the ‘right side of the tracks’ but not even small-town flash. It was a friendly
enough street in that everyone spoke, but each house was surrounded by a hedge or a fence and that
was the way they liked it. There was no hopping across to a neighbour for an egg or a bit of butter;
in a time of rationing I suspect that wouldn’t have been welcome.

Our street, my street. The quiet – broken in the mornings by our and our neighbour’s chooks, the
smell of the bread in Mutt Webber’s store, Mrs. Dow’s painted face, old Mrs. Veal’s cackle, the red
vinyl bag filled with tomatoes which I took up to Mutt Webber to sell in his store.

It isn’t like that today. But it’s safe, for now, in my mind. I rake deep hoping to trigger off more
vignettes. And do I know my childhood self better from this hotch-potch of memories? A little, but
not enough, never enough. Which I guess doesn’t matter to anyone but me.

Rosalie Sneyd
Ribbons in our hair

This was written by my mother, Rosalie Sneyd, some time in the 2000's I think.

I keep hearing about how dull, deprived, and boring it was in wartime New Zealand. Well, let me tell you, I was there and it wasn’t. Granted, shops shut all weekend, there were few places to go out and eat and no money for it anyway, there was rationing, we often had bread with dripping instead of butter and there was no television.

But who’s to say we were worse for all that? At least nobody needed to lock doors then, and I could sleep safely on the open verandah in summer. Think about that!

I remember long, hot summer days and me in a print frock with long sashes coming from the waist seam and tied behind in a bow, and bloomers to match. And in winter, frost glistening white and me bundled up in hand-knitted jersey, skirt, long woollen stockings, woollen coat, and pixie hat – a rectangle of hand-knitting folded in half, sewn down one side, strings attached to the free points to tie under the chin, and warmed in the oven of the coal range. This was before jeans or jackets or tracksuits or sneakers; boys wore shorts and girls wore skirts, and clothes were home-made.

Few fripperies, but summer or winter, my mother didn’t consider me dressed until she’d tied ribbons on the end of my plaits. Then off I’d run to school with my square, cardboard, school case. There was no question of being driven. This was war time. For most of my childhood we didn’t have a car anyway.

The Borough School was a string of eight single-storied classrooms with the headmaster’s office and staff room in the middle and the Dental Clinic perched on top. Every classroom opened right out on to a covered verandah and from there concrete steps ran the full length of the building (invariably sporting rows of discarded shoes, removed on arrival at school; mine mostly went home in my school bag) and led down to the large concrete playing area. Every morning the whole school lined up there, each class in a double stranded snake – one side boys and the other girls – facing their classroom, and after the announcements we all marched inside in a set pattern to the military music blaring from the loud speakers.

First thing, Miss Morecambe, our Primer One teacher, made us display our hankies. (No tissues then.) My mother sewed a pocket in my bloomers for my hanky and mostly I could thankfully display it and be a ‘fairy’ rather than, oh dear, a ‘sniffy’. The shame! At playtime we each helped ourselves to a quarter pint of creamy milk from a crate and a red delicious apple wrapped in tissue paper from an apple box, and then played catty-corner in the girls’ shelter shed which backed onto the lavatories at one end of the classroom block. By this time, in winter, my chilblains were itching.

So back into class to recite the times table, read out loud, practise printing with a pencil and, what an event!, finally graduate to a pen with a nib dipped in the inkwell at the top right hand corner of the desk.

Miss Hilliard was our teacher in Primer Four and I remember her for her kindness if not her truthfulness; she called me her ‘little prairie flower’. Now wasn’t that nice! I think she may have been visually challenged.

I also remember our Standard Four teacher, Miss Wastney, a homely, kind, older woman. And the teacher who took us for Gamesa nice, young woman with freckles, and, my father hinted, a ‘reputation’. What could that mean? My ears flapped. Most of our primary teachers were female,
and Miss rather than Mrs. It was no doubt considered a genteel vocation for young single ladies. A Mr. Pratt was the Headmaster, though. Of course.

I ran home for lunch except when the weather was really bad. Lunch at school was an exciting event. The teachers made us urns of cocoa, and the long narrow cloakroom stank of galoshes and wet socks. When I once stayed for some months with my grandmother while my mother was having one of her frequent bouts of illness, I went to the country school by bus and took my lunch every day, and the novelty soon wore off. My dominant memory of that time is lettuce and marmite sandwiches tasting of the greaseproof paper they were wrapped in.

On the way home from school my friends and I competed to see who could walk furthest on fences before being forced to put a foot on the footpath. Often I stopped off to play with a friend and was given an apple (everyone’s wash-house smelled of apples from the box kept there), and a glass of Mr. Poswillo’s home-made ginger beer which he sold round the town. When I got home, three or four ladies, white gloved and hatted, may be perched decorously on chairs in our rather dark front room, sipping tea and nibbling butterfly cakes or thin, diagonal sandwiches with the crusts cut off, from a selection of floral plates on a three-tiered cake stand.

Then off outside to play. We never stayed inside unless it was too cold or wet – or I had my practice to do. Twice a week, beginning when I was seven, I left home early to go to my piano lesson with an elderly lady who lived opposite school. Mrs. Stuart had a convulsive, facial tic and poked her index finger into my right palm while I was playing to maintain correct hand position. In time, no doubt thinking it was good for us to perform, the British Musical Society held a monthly Saturday afternoon meeting in a fusty, private drawing-room. Beverley and I would bike along to join other unwilling kids, and giggle through our piano pieces, longing to be outside.

To offset the B.M.S. the year was punctuated by events almost too exciting to be borne. Basketball tournaments. We didn’t have extras like school trips, but when I graduated from catty-corner to basketball our team played against the local Spring Onions (Springlands School) and the Convent Cats. (They called us Borough Pups, but with weight of numbers we were certain of our superiority.) I yearned silently for a basketball and for years indulged in the fantasy of throwing Valerie’s basketball up and miraculously seeing two fall down through the hoop – one for me.

The church August Tea, which involved a concert, food and much rushing round.

The annual school Fancy Dress party. I wore a red, peasant girl outfit which was too big the first year, okay the second and too small the third. Actually I desperately wanted to be a fairy like Valerie and Barbara. With a wand. I didn’t care so much about the wings. The school sports. I tried so hard but never shone.

The annual picnic when the whole school would pile on the train and go down to Essen’s Valley. Even the school Flower Show excited me. I took it very seriously and couldn’t understand why my parents didn’t. Every year I hoped in vain to have the red card against the shiny, dark green vase with my flower in it. Now, the scent of spring flowers (as well as the smell of apples and wet socks), still overwhelms me with nostalgia.

Small town, small events, great pleasures – and only little disappointments.

But school wasn’t all joy. Every so often we’d get the dreaded call to the torture chamber of the Dental Nurse. And I got the strap once for talking. It hasn’t warped me for life and probably shut me up effectively.

There were other hiccups in my primary school life. Rumour had it that a grubby, swaggering boy called Rex, who we girls viewed with trembling condescension, had sworn in the playground. He’d said, “Bum.” I was shocked to the core!

Then I found out a girl was adopted and I told. And a group of us misbehaved shamefully at Ngaire’s birthday party by taking turns to pee into a jam jar.

Small hiccups, small sins, big ructions.

Big sins were in another world. Even the flicks I saw at the Palace on a Saturday afternoon with Diane from over the back fence were only Judy Garland singing and dancing or Lassie or Walt Disney movies. At the beginning we all stood up for God Save the Queen, and before the picture began we saw unreal (to us) shorts of the war and a cartoon. Then there was interval during which Diane and I went next door to Payne’s milkbar to have a threepenny scoop of ice-cream in a dish, with a spoonful of flavoured syrup and a pink biscuit on top. We’d slosh it all up together into a
'pig-pie'. There were brightly coloured boiled lollies in a jar on the counter and sometimes we had some of those too. No other confections were on offer.

Being war time we were lucky to get that.

No fathers of my close friends were at the war. One of my mother’s brothers was in the Western Desert but it all seemed pretty glamorous to me – and hugely exciting when he brought me home a bracelet of tiny carved elephants and another made of linked medallions painted with Egyptian pictures.

My own father had three fingers missing from his left hand and was not accepted for war service. Instead he was in charge of a unit of the home guard. I wasn’t aware at the time but he told me later how he’d march the platoon round the corner and then order them to break rank into a ditch where they’d all hunker down for a smoke.

We dutifully did war drill at school, traipsing in a crocodile over the river to dug-outs on the far bank among the cows. By the time we all straggled over there any bomb would have long exploded. However it was a welcome diversion from sitting in class, except when one trod in a cow pat. At home we all observed the blackout and dug trenches in the back yard. Diane’s family trench was lined with wood, dry and clean. Ours was just a coffin-shaped hole in the ground, and dirty, wet and spidery.

I suspect that if the Japanese had arrived our whole town would have been a doddle.

The war overshadowed our childhood mainly by the shortages; petrol, meat, butter, sugar, tea and clothes were rationed and eggs were scarce. But, ever resourceful, each household grew vegetables and fruit trees and kept chooks. Sugar was hoarded for jam making and bottling, and spare eggs were preserved with ovaline. My father also had a (not very satisfactory) canning machine. And I always had pretty dresses because, being a home science teacher, my mother was good at sewing. All girls had ribbons in their hair. So the war was just background white noise.

I was particularly lucky to have an aunt in America who sent some pretty, blue material, ribbons and braid, and a full set of coloured pencils in glorious, subtly-graded colours. I rationed the use of those treasured pencils and consequently had outgrown and lost them before a fraction was used. But I got full measure of delight just looking at them.

Apart from the shorts at the pictures, the war came closest to me when I read The Weekly News, a magazine with a cover the colour of my father’s pink longjohns, and the centre few shiny pages filled with the pictures of war casualties. I’d sort out who I thought were the best looking and think what a shame they’d been killed, before returning to play with my paper dolls.

Were we dull? Bored? Heavens no!

Deprived? Not that we noticed. We had the basics and ribbons in our hair.

So, you younger people, spare us your pity. We had a grand time.

Rosalie Sneyd
Medical School reunion

Some years ago Mum and Dad went to (I believe they organised) a reunion of their Medical School class. Each person had to write a one-page description of their lives. Let me point out that this is the only way to get my father to write anything (apart from a scientific paper of course); he has to be forced. At gunpoint.

You see, the trouble with Dad is that, if he can’t write like Jane Austen or Shakespeare (and he can’t) then he bloody well won’t write at all. Our child Kate was like this; she refused to read because she wasn’t completely sure she knew all the words. We wondered what on earth was going on. Was she a slow learner? Dyslexic? Blind? Until, one day, she decided she knew all the words, and she started to read. With no mistakes at all. Weird. Actually, Kate is still the same. If she can’t do it perfectly, she won’t do it at all, and Hell itself won’t move her.

Dad is just the same.

Rosalie Sneyd (McPherson)

I confess I did not choose Medicine in order to “do good” – or rather not to anyone but myself. I chose it mostly to satisfy the curiosity, and lay the fear, produced by a chronically sickly mother, and because some stupid person in my home town, Blenheim, told me it was too hard for a girl.

I’ve never regretted my choice. It’s been interesting, and the prefix handy. (*Sorry I’m late, but I was held up* – saving lives, of course. Also I can assume the intellectual high ground in more intelligent company.)

Not that I’ve given much back to the profession. My family was, is, my life. I suffered from that career-crippling condition of always wanting one more baby. The final tally was five. Not record-breaking, but time- and energy- and money-consuming. Still are. Now the grandchildren (16 and rising) carry on the worries where their parents left off. No great-grandchildren yet. Whew!

The pattern was set early. Four days after graduation I married and promptly got pregnant and learned that there’s nothing like morning sickness to squash the self-importance and enthusiasm of a new houseman.

So began the ‘long sleep of motherhood’ (to quote someone – I’ve forgotten who). The next year I finally got registered and slaved at locums in Dunedin while Sam played at biochemistry.

Then I got pregnant again, took a little time off, and did some more locums. Three years of this and we left NZ on a boat to Miami and over to Nashville. The Pathology Dept at Vanderbilt needed a cytologist and trustingly paid me to learn.

Then I got pregnant. Baby #3 is an American.

Back in Dunedin after three years away the first thing I did was get pregnant. Then I carried on part-time doing cytology for five years. In the middle of this I – wait for it – got pregnant, so that when we went on Sabbatical to Cardiff in 1974 we carted an eleven month old baby together with the other four.

For some time I had been missing clinical medicine and on returning from the UK I went to work part-time in Student Health. In about 1980 we went on Sabbatical to Nashville and after this year away I moved over to Public Health to my first full time job. I wasn’t sure what the job was, and when I left a few years later I still hadn’t found out. I was, however, beginning to get interested in information systems.

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Administration at DPH furthered that interest and by the time I was made redundant from my position as Acting Medical Superintendent in 1989, I was convinced that what was needed in the NZ Health System was not a revolution in management but in information systems. I still believe this.

Nineteen eighty-nine was a year of upheaval for Sam too so we took off to work overseas and have fun. We spent a few years in Fiji (‘Let’s go to the tropics’), a year in Hong Kong (‘Let’s live in a really big city.’) and then a year and a half in Kuching (‘Let’s look at Asia.’). And we had a ball.

I indulged my interest in the bird’s eye view of medicine working for WHO in Fiji, and had disquieting insight into Pacific Island information systems and WHO statistics. In Hong Kong I odd-jobbed a little, and in Borneo I fossicked in their information system and Public Health.

We’re content to be grounded in Dunedin now. Family, gardening, photography, music, writing, swimming in the hot salt-water pool and walking on the beach ensures that I’ll wear out and not rust out.

Sam Sneyd

When I left Dunedin I had no intention of ever returning. But here we are 45 years later, and still moaning about the climate.

We’ve had a number of breaks out of Dunedin. My year as a house surgeon in Auckland was enough to convince me I’d never make a clinician, and since I had to earn a living somehow, I came back to Dunedin to do a Ph.D. in biochemistry.

I finished this in 1964 and went to Vanderbilt University, again with no intention of returning to New Zealand, let alone Dunedin. But opportunities dictate one’s life and after a few years at Vanderbilt, back I came to Dunedin to the Chair of Clinical Biochemistry.

For the next 22 years I did the sort of thing a University Professor does – research (on the mechanism of action of insulin), teaching, sitting on innumerable committees looking wise,¹ and a bit of travel.

In 1990 I decided I had been doing the same thing for too long and I was in danger of becoming a boring old fart² (some people unkindly said I was already). So I resigned from the University and looked for other things to do in other places.

We went first to Fiji where the Medical School had collapsed after two coups. WHO had put the gun to their head – either pull your socks up or no more money from us. I helped design and teach a completely new medical course. Once it was up and running, we went to Hong Kong largely because we’d never lived in a big city. I worked there for a year in a conventional Hospital/University position.

Then finally we went to Kuching, in Sarawak, where the University of Malaysia was setting up a new medical school. Once again I was designing and teaching a new medical course. I have my prejudices about how medicine and medical science should be taught and these new courses let me indulge myself (when I could get away with it).

After a couple of spells in Sarawak we retired, once again back in Dunedin to the home and garden we now could not bring ourselves to leave.

¹Boy, he’s really kidding himself here. Trust me.
²I have to admit that my father often uses rude words.
Memories of ‘Granny’ (Ellen Octavia Bond)

This was written by my father’s cousin, Brian Tidmarsh, in response to the first edition of this book. Many thanks, Brian.

Although there are photos of Granny and Clive and Nell (my parents) and Alf and Cherry and my cousins Graham (Sam) and James at the old house in Victoria Ave, any confidence that I have in my memory is from the time after that when the Sneyds went off to Takapuna and my parents moved to a house in Koraha St. in Meadowbank. Having said that, there are two events that hover on the extreme limit of my memory. One, when I chased Graham down the hall and in attempting to escape from me he crashed into a glass door, resulting in a severe gash to his arm... I suppose there was lots of blood and I bet Aunt Cherry had something to say! The second event was the removal of Graham and James’ tonsils, performed by the GP on the kitchen table. I remember some screams! I wonder if there was a cheap rate for doing two at a time.

At this time Granny bought a small faintly art-deco-ish house in Stirling Street and some years later my parents built a house in Sonia Ave. Both of these were quite close to the old family home in Victoria Avenue and this proximity meant that I saw quite a bit of Granny when I was young. I have vivid memories of her house. There was a formal drawing room filled with the residue of the furniture she had brought from England. A large china cabinet with many small treasures, among them a set of pale green venetian crystal glasses which had a lovely ring to them when tapped and ‘sang’ beautifully when the rim was rubbed with a damp finger. My mother and Cherry took half each after Granny died and years later after my mother’s death I gave the survivors, two I think, to Cherry to replenish the attrition her share had suffered. There were the ‘Louis the Something’ chairs and the better of two long-case clocks that later went to Takapuna. There was a box of exquisite miniature doll’s house furniture of which more later.

Granny’s bedroom, or G-Granny as James would have it, contained two major points of interest. One was the commode, a throne-like mahogany chair which sat beside the double bed. A hinged lid covered the ‘business’ section beneath which there was a drawer which contained the enormous, heavy china piss pot. This was not emptied as regularly as it should have been, a fact which announced itself as soon as one entered the room. On one wall hung a photograph of James Shiner Bond in an oval wooden frame. I well remember occasions when Sam and I, probably my cousin James too, took turns firing a bow and arrow with a rubber sucker to score points for hitting poor JSB. Many years later when I was cleaning out the house at Sonia Ave after my mother died I found this photo under the house, worm eaten and rotten. I nearly threw it on the large bonfire which I had burning merrily in the middle of the back lawn. The restorers did a great job on the photo itself and in a new mahogany frame today it hangs in my study in Dunedin looking just as impressive as it originally did.

At the sunny north side of the house was a small living room and an even smaller sunroom. The living room was where Granny Bond held court. I really do remember her with affection although it is true that when her patience had been tried by rambunctious young boys beyond the limit she could give a really impressive and scary tongue lashing. So that’s where my aunt Cherry got that gene I guess. This was not a common event however and mostly I remember her as a benign, amorphous large lump, always in black clothing, sitting, for she did not move easily, in an equally
large amorphous arm chair. She played games with us. ‘Snap’ which got noisier and noisier and frequently degenerated into arguments. During World War 2 a board game called ‘Sink-the-Nazi-Navy’ was a favourite, successful hits being accompanied by noisy shouted sound effects. Bombing the Nazi navy game had an unfortunate spin-off. Back to that beautiful dolls house furniture. Today these would be highly sort after collectors items such was the detail and fine workmanship. Did I do this alone or were some of my dreadful cousins also guilty, but I do remember bombing the furniture. How sad. Just as well Granny was a bit deaf. And it must be said forgetful. She never really knew who was who among her grandchildren and just used the first name she thought of or tried several in hope of one being right.

As I got older I would often walk around to her house, it was only five minutes away and spend time with her. For a while she was taking a correspondence drawing class and we would do some drawings together. She had much more talent in that direction than I. She told me stories from her past but these have left me now. One, which I suppose is verifiable if true (James could do it I’m sure), is that Granny was related in some way to George Leigh Mallory, the charismatic and enigmatic mountaineer who lost his life on Mt. Everest in 1924. Also that as a young woman she had been to Darjeeling, the setting off point for the long trek into Tibet that led to the northern approaches to Mt. Everest. I think she told me that she had even been on part of this trek but that does seem a bit unlikely. Nevertheless, it sparked my interest in Mt. Everest and over the years I’ve read just about every book on the subject and on George Mallory.

I used to cut her grass to supplement my pocket money and in my mid-teens I became one of her drivers. She had a rather nice Standard 14 saloon car although she didn’t drive herself. I think my mum used to take her grocery shopping and sometimes I would be called upon if I was home from boarding school to drive her up to the Victoria Avenue shops. Mostly to the chemist and the newsagent where I think she bought raffle tickets. This was in the days when the only lottery was in Australia and some newsagents and barber shop windows displayed the sign “We post to Hobart”. This was code for the lottery which I think was technically illegal.

My secondary school years were spent as a boarder at Kings College and so my visits to Granny became sporadic. Granny died in December 1955. At the time I was at my summer university recess job being a steward at the Milford Sound Hotel. I had not returned to Auckland for some time and didn’t know she was ill and nobody thought to tell me when she died. I am really sorry about that for I genuinely liked her and she not infrequently filled some emotional gaps in my own family life.

Brian Tidmarsh
I am my Brother’s Keeper

This was written by my grandfather, Robert Adair McPherson some time in the 1960s I think. My mother only found it again in 2007 or so.

It was a cold grey day near the end of March, 1916 – the exact date I cannot remember, but I recall, as a lad in my teens, looking out of the window and wondering how many more such melancholy days would continue before I saw the sun.\(^1\) It certainly was a raw, cold, damp and miserable day, typical, I thought, of Dunedin, my native city in the southern part of New Zealand.

I paused awhile, still looking from the window, and as my eyes scanned the bleak and leaden skies, I became conscious of a depressed feeling and a rather morbid outlook. I sought the excuse that such a mental condition was due to the weather. “Dunedin’s grey cold days always create such an impression” I thought as I turned and sat down by the fire. Was it that the excuse was the parent of a hypocritical thought? I still felt completely unsettled and agitated and finally decided to rouse myself and go for a walk. It wasn’t weather to induce anybody to walk God knows, but what else was I to do?

I was the third youngest of a family of four boys and a girl: my father was at work and we were left pretty much to ourselves, my mother having died a short time previously. With my mother – my guiding hand – gone, and my father fully employed in an effort to provide for a young family, I was left with nobody to direct me into cultural channels to fill my time. I had to think for myself. Yes, I would take that walk if it was only a short one. I decided to walk around the wharves and rising from my seat near the fire, I collected my hat and coat and left home by the back gate. Where I would walk did not enter my mind. Little do we know that our course through life is oftentimes mapped for us. Fate had already decided the matter for me.

I took the shortest route which brought me to the Victoria Wharf which is the first portion of the wharves passed by ships sailing up the Otago Harbour. At this wharf with her bow pointing seawards, her newly painted hull and her attractive emblem on her smokestack, lay moored the home liner S.S. Essex. To my young mind she appeared a very large ship, made more apparent by the fact that she was high above the wharf, since the tide was full and little cargo was left in her. Cargo was still being unloaded and I watched with a real interest the method with which the wharf labourers handled the various items coming down on the slings. After a time my interest waned and I walked to the stern of the ship and looked over. It surprised me to see that one of her propellor blades was protruding about nine inches from the water. “How could so small a blade move such a large ship through the seas?” I pondered this question for a moment when my attention was attracted to a shoal of small fish (we boys called them mullet) swimming near the stern. My whole interest was diverted to them. What fun I could have trying to catch some, but then, I had no line. Luck – or was it ill luck? – was with me, for I found, after a short search, a length of string, and by bending a pin to form a hook I had a line after all. Procuring a few worms from a nearby section, I returned to see, to my joy, the fish swimming near the propellor blade.

I quickly baited my improvised hook and threw in the line. My success was almost immediate, and despite my crude gear I had caught my first fish. But my line was rather short. I set out on another, more intensive, search for another piece of string. This was a failure, there being seemingly no more to be found. I was returning to continue my fishing when I noticed a man standing on the deck of the ship moored at a distance of about twenty feet from the stern of the Essex. Although

\(^1\)Lots. This is Dunedin.
I longed to ask him if he could find me a length of string, I was not a forward lad and did not have the courage. Momentarily I contented myself looking at the ship. What a little ship she was, so completely dwarfed by the high stern of the Essex. She was the Aurora of the Shackleton Expedition to the Antarctic and had just returned to the port of Dunedin, steering by means of a jury rudder.

I stood for a time looking at her, but my mind was more occupied with fishing. The small shoal mad moved further out but I resolved to try to throw my line far enough to reach them. I took it up, gave it two or three energetic swings in the air and in so doing, lost my balance and fell from the wharf into the sea.

I could not swim, the day was bitterly cold, and the wharf was practically deserted, except for the men working the ships. Nobody had seen me fall except one man. I was told later that I was struggling as a drowning person would, but I remember no such effort. I could recall only that all seemed calm. I was conscious of a deep green colour before me (probably my eyes were open) which gradually faded until all the colour had gone. A numbness silently crept over me and I remember no more.

My consciousness seemed vaguely to return for I became aware of a hazy daylight and the realisation of an increasingly intense pain as well as a frightful sense of sickness in my stomach. I was gasping for air and it seemed that I was getting only enough to fill a nutshell. I realised that I was lying on the Dunedin wharf, and then I overheard a man say: “He’s been threequarters of an hour here, but he’s coming to alright”. I had a faint recollection of a man kneeling beside me, his clothes dripping wet. Somebody spoke to him. “That was a close one Bill. Good job you were on deck.” The man beside me replied: “I couldn’t find him. He went in between the wharf and the ship, and the space was pitch dark”. I must then have lapsed into unconsciousness and on again recovering noticed the face of the man beside me. It impressed as a stern, but kindly face; the face of a good man.

When I recovered sufficiently Bill took me home. My father, who had been very worried, thanked my rescuer and offered to pay for new clothes for him. “Forget it”, Bill replied. “Your boy is the sixth I have saved and he was an easy job compared with two drunken firemen both overboard at once. It took me nearly an hour to get them out and by the time others came to my aid I was completely exhausted.” I was later to learn that Bill had also given a considerable amount of blood to save his wife’s life, an act thought quite heroic at that time.

The Aurora left Dunedin shortly after and entered the dry dock at Port Chalmers for repair. She was refitted with a new rudder, her leaking hull repaired, and when again made seaworthy she sailed for Australia. I did not know at the time the port of destination, nor did I know what became of Bill. I accepted the fact that he was still a member of the crew and I was content to leave it remain at that. But sometime later my father received a letter from a New Zealand soldier on his way to the war. The letter, posted in Sydney, stated that the soldier had met Bill there and he had told him, the letter continued, that the Aurora was again in dock and was leaking like a sieve. “She’s full of coal loaded from Newcastle and is making for the West Coast of America, but she’ll never see it” he had said.

History records that the Aurora, when repaired, left for her doom, never to be heard of again. A lifebelt, I believe, was found, but as for the remainder, the mystery must remain unsolved.

The reader will understand my sorrow when I heard the news of her loss. For two years after, I often thought of Bill and of the irony of Fate – that a man should save six people from drowning only to drown himself. Could this be the way of God I often asked myself.

Time passed on and the war ended. When walking in the street in Dunedin on fine afternoon during December, 1918, I was stopped by the soldier who had written to my father. I anxiously inquired of his meeting with Bill in Sydney. “Well”, I said, “Bill saved me from drowning only to suffer that fate himself. You know, Life is strange and God works in strange ways.”

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1This can’t be right, so Robert’s memory must be at fault here. The Aurora limped back to Dunedin in 1916, by which time Robert was 20 and his mother had been dead for seven years, neither of which is consistent with the rest of the story. It’s possible that the Aurora came through Dunedin on her way to the Antarctica, which could have been around 1911, but even then Robert would have been 15, a bit old for the story. Maybe. I suspect a poor memory at work here, especially given that this wasn’t written until 50 years after the event.

2She left Newcastle, Australia, in 1917, and was declared missing on 2 January, 1918. She is thought to have been a casualty of the war.
“God does work in strange way”, said my friend, “but I’ve kept a secret. I had to, but I suppose I can tell you now. Bill deserted the Aurora in Sydney”.

Where Bill ended I did not know. I had not heard of him again until April, 1960, forty-four years later, when I met the shipwright, Mr. Charles Mauger, who is still in Dunedin, and who made the jury rudder for the Aurora. “You know”, he said, “my theory is that her keel had been bent upwards and when she was placed on the straight blocks in the Sydney dock, the weight of coal broke her back”.

“You were with the expedition to the Antarctic?” I asked. “Yes”, he replied. “I was the shipwright and it took me almost all of an Antarctic winter to make that rudder”.

“I used just what was available. It consisted of three main pieces built arrow-shaped. The centre piece, a ship’s spar, and the two outer pieces, ten inch square planks on which the lifeboats rested. These were batten both sides with timber from the hatches and in between filled with cement which we had on board.

“You know”, he continued, “we were moored to the land by heavy cables at the spot called Scott Base. The pack ice gradually moved in and broke our moorings, carrying us with the ice drift. We were here to remain helpless for about eleven months.

“As the intensity of the ice pressure increased the rudder was twisted at right angles and the hinges broken. I thought we were doomed, but God was kind to us, for at the critical moment, the pressure ceased. Two foot more of ice movement would have crushed us completely.

“The Aurora was only a ship of 340 tons”, he said, “and built of oak with a three inch greenheart sheathing, yet the ice sprang her timbers and we were to find this out truly when we got clear and the ice melted in the leaks”.

I thought his story interesting since nothing appears to have been written of the eventful voyage. “She leaked badly”, he went on, “and hand bailing in a chain gang was necessary as the water was up to the stokehold. With the pumps repaired and steam raised, hand bailing was discontinued”.

“Is it as cold down there as they say?”, I asked.

“Yes”, he replied, “and a lot colder. We heard of the snowcats that fell into the crevasses in the Fuchs Expedition1, but nobody heard of the almost insufferable cold men had to withstand”.

“What did the men think of Shackleton?”, I ventured.

He paused a moment, and I wondered just what thought he was recalling. Then he spoke: “‘Shack’ was a fine fellow. A real man’s man who sought not and cared not a jot for notoriety. We thought him a splendid fellow.”

Then I made my final question which I had been waiting to ask after he had told me his story, “Did you know a member of the crew, a Bill Thompson?” I received the disappointing reply: “I cannot recall him, but I guess I know a man who would have known him.”


“Well, I can tell you that. Bill died in Auckland during the year 1933”.

A tinge of regret and sadness possessed me for I knew that Bill Thompson, by his kind and unselfish regard for others had altered my whole life by his example. His life to me has always been an inspiration.

Probably there are five others who still live to remember.

P.S. The true name of Bill Thompson was Bill Potter. Mr. Charles Mauger, now elderly, (Address: 152 London Street, Dunedin, New Zealand) has given permission to use his name. He says that only one other member of the expedition, an engineer living somewhere in Australia, is still alive. The man referred to me by Mr. C. Mauger is Mr. McKenzie, Harbour Master of the Otago Harbour Board, whose name I have not asked to use.

Robert Adair McPherson

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1English explorer Sir Vivian Fuchs used four Tucker Sno-Cats to cross the Antarctic in 1957-58. Sno-cats are truck-like things, designed for going through, you guessed it, snow.
The Despreaux John Boileau letter

On page 164 I said how Despreaux John Boileau, the brother of Ellen Leah Boileau, was known for his amusing sketches that he included in letters home. Well, here are fragments of the only one surviving. I’ve put the pages in order as best I can. You’ll notice that some are sequential, while others are clearly missing. You can transcribe it for yourself.
This page contains an excerpt from a handwritten letter. The handwriting is somewhat difficult to read due to the style and faintness of the script. The content seems to be a narrative or a letter discussing the lives of people, possibly in a distant or exotic location, given the use of words like "India." The text appears to describe daily activities, possibly in a rural or nomadic setting. The language suggests a late 19th or early 20th-century timeframe, given the spelling and phrasing used. However, without clearer visibility or more context, the full meaning and context of the letter cannot be accurately transcribed.
now or quickly that we soon got to our proper houses at a place called Mount where Uncle Jack is now living. And all the soldiers are in comfortable houses like this. Jack will now tell you all that he has seen here. The three days after my servants came running around and said, "Oh! Master party to cross coming. I ran out and saw numbers and numbers of very large grasshoppers like this. Is just a horrid looking animal. They jump a long way one put his back leg into eye and that not hair of pain! Well, there were so many of these that they looked like brown clouds. They did not come out of the ground but if they had they would have eaten up all my cucumbers. Beans, corn, all the leaves off my trees, for they are such hungry animals.
Merut 6th June 1863.

My horse is very naughty. I had to beat him the other day for he would kick his hind leg and knocked down the poor black man who was holding him and hurt his thumb. After he had knocked down the groom, he wanted to run away, and was just turning round to gallop off, when he caught his leg in the rope and stumbled over on his side. Uncle Jack ran up and caught hold of him. He got onto the saddle and made the naughty horse gallop and till he was quite tired. He has got some fly in his mouth cut a hole in his cheek and call the nasty flies bite it. There are so many flies in India they are quite troublesome and buzz in your ears and fall on your nose. If you want to keep them from being troublesome, you have to tie a lot of hair from a horse tail onto a piece of stick and make a little brush to whip them away.

Are not these curious birds? They run about my garden and play with one another, when they hold up their heads, they are as big as mama nearly. They eat barley.
This soldier is Sergeant Major Gordon. He has been in many battles, and a great many years a soldier. One of these round things on his coat are called medals. Here are several to him for fighting bravely. This morning he had a game of dice for good conduct. They are as big as half a crown, are made of silver, and have a very pretty piece of cloth fastened to them. He is the best in which clothes, because it is so hot. He's Uncle Jack learning by.
A.B.C., not like these letters but
The Blackman language all funny letters like this, written with a wooden pen. The man with a rope in his hand is pulling a big jar called a jorativ to blow about the wind and make the room cool.

This is another drowsy monkey. They are much great fun as the dogs do rolling for some of Master Jack's rice. And Uncle Jack has no more to tell the boys' pils so he sends his best love and live and hopes that they are all well and clever. Good Bye till another day. Of Wolmam, Uncle Jack.

Mr. Blackman.
Appendix III: Borese
The ancestry of Louise de Baschi d’Aubais; ten generations

Just for the record here is the ten-generation ancestry of Louise de Baschi d’Aubais. It could go on for a lot longer, but there’s little point. Any interested person should just look at the sources and figure it out for themselves.

It’s in ahnentafel format which can take a bit of getting used to. However, once you figure it out, the numbering system is very nice indeed. The subject of the ahnentafel is listed as #1, their father as #2 and their mother as #3, then their grandparents as #4 to #7, and so on back through the generations. In this scheme, any person’s father has double that person’s number, and a person’s mother has double the person’s number plus one. Apart from #1, who can be male or female, all even-numbered persons are male, and all odd-numbered persons are female. Using this knowledge, you can find out some things without having to compile a list.

Actually, for all you math nerds, the ahnentafel can be written in a cool binary way. Write down the digit “1”, which represents the subject, and, writing from left to right, write “0” for each “father” and “1” for each “mother” in the relation, ending with the ancestor of interest. The result will be the binary representation of the ancestor’s ahnentafel number.

So, for example, my mother’s mother’s father’s mother’s mother has the ahnentafel number 1110101 in binary, or 117 in decimal notation.

So, given an ahnentafel number, it is easy to work out what the exact chain of descent is, as long as you can convert the original number to binary. For example, 6, which is 110 in binary, is your mother’s father, while 25 (11001 in binary) is your mother’s father’s father’s mother.

Anyway, on his web page [58], William Addams Reitwiesner has given the ancestry of Louise de Baschi in much more detail than I’ve included here. Most of the sources are included. That was my own first port of call, and without Reitwiesner’s ahnentafel I doubt I would have got very far.

First Generation

1 Louise de Baschi d’Aubais[21], [50], 8G Grandmother. Born on 21 Mar. 1618. Louise died in Nîmes on 10 Aug. 1666; she was 48.

Louise is an excellent example of how annoying Chesnaye-Desbois can be. He gives her as marrying Jacques de Vignolles (in the Vignolles pedigree [C-D, XIX, 746] [21]), and gives the pedigree of her father in detail (in the Baschi pedigree [C-D, II, 443] [21]) but doesn’t actually mention that Louise was the daughter of Louis Baschi d’Aubais and Anne de Rochemore. After all, she was only a girl. Silly bugger. So if you only had C-D to rely on you couldn’t trace her ancestry. Fortunately, Lart gives enough details to identify her definitively (assuming one can believe Lart).

For some descendants of Louise and Jacques and how they connect to the rest of my ancestry, see page 207 and then the rest of this book.

On 24 Feb. 1637 when Louise was 18, she married Jacques de Vignolles, 8G Grandfather in Château de Prades [50]. They had the following children:

i. Louis [50]

ii. Louis (1640–1693)
iii. Henri [50]
iv. Françoise [21], [50] (1643–1700)
v. Charles (1645–1725)
vi. Alphonse (1645–)
vii. François [50]
viii. Alfonse (1649–1744)
ix. Henri (1650–1657)
x. Marguerite [50] (1652–1727)
xii. Louise (1653–1720)

xii. Edouard (1655–1680)
xiii. Louis (1656–)
xiv. Françoise (1657–)
xv. Gaspard (1659–)
xvi. Madeleine (1661–1727)
**APPENDIX III: ANCESTRY OF LOUISE DE BASCHI**

Second Generation

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2 **Louis de Baschi**, 9G Grandfather. Born on 22 Oct. 1595 [21]. Louis died in the château d’Saubais, on 13 Nov. 1646; he was 51. [C-D, II, 443] [21]. He inherited from his mother, becoming the Baron d’Aubais et du Caylar, Seigneur de Junas, de Gavernes, de Saussines & de Saint-Félix. Louis XIII gave him, on 14 Oct. 1629, a company of 50 Chevaux-Légers, and in 1632 he prevented the town of Nîmes from being taken by the Duc de Montmorency. He distinguished himself at the battle of Avesnes in 1635; and on 24 January 1638 the king gave him one of the premier cavalry regiments that had been raised in France. On 11 June 1642, the prince gave him a commission to command the cavalry of the army of Catalogne, in a capacity of Mestre-de-Camp-Général; he distinguished himself greatly at the battle of Lérida, on 7 Oct. 1642; he was made Maréchal-de-Camp on 31 December 1642, and died at the château d’Aubais on 13 Nov. 1646.

On 17 (14?) June 1614 when Louis was 18, he married **Anne de Rochemore**, 9G Grandmother [21].

They had the following children:

i. Charles [21] (1623–1668)

ii. Louise d’Aubais (1618–1666)

3 **Anne de Rochemore**, 9G Grandmother. Born on 21 Mar. 1618 [50]. Anne died in Nîmes on 10 Aug. 1666; she was 48 [50]. [C-D, XVII, 413] [21] in the Rochemore pedigree.

[C-D, II, 444] [21] in the Baschi pedigree.

Anne’s date of death is given as 17 Nov. 1667 in C-D.
Third Generation

4 Balthazard de Baschi d’Aubais, 10G Grandfather. Born on 27 July 1571 [21]. Balthazard died in Jan. 1598; he was 26.
   [C-D, II, 443] [21] Seigneur de Saint-Estève, de Barras, de Tournefort, & de plus grande partie de Thouard. Served in the
army of the king in Provence in 1589. He was made Gentleman Ordinary of the Chamber of Henry IV, on 18 Sept. 1595, and
drowned at the end of January 1598 in the river Vistre [?] next to Cayla.
   On 18 June 1591 when Balthazard was 19, he married Marguerite du Faur, 10G Grandmother [50], [21].
   They had one child:
   2i. Louis (1595–1646)

5 Marguerite du Faur, 10G Grandmother. Marguerite died on 9 Sept. 1609 in Nerac.
   [C-D, II, 443] [21] Dame d’Aubais, du Caylar, Zunas, Gavernes, Montleau. Remarried 29 Sept. 1607 to Jean de Peyre who
was killed in July 1608.

6 Louis de Rochemore, 10G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1626 [21].
   Maître de Requites, Président du Sénéchal de Nîmes
   [C-D, XVII, 412] [21].
   D’Hozier [45] (Register II, de Carrion de Nisas) mentions a Louis Rochemore (very likely this one) who was the com-
ppanion of François de Carrion I who was collecting an army in Languedoc in the beginning 1600s. My French isn’t good
enough to understand this completely.
   On 7 July 1587 Louis married Anne de Barrière, 10G Grandmother.
   They had the following children:
   i. François
   ii. Charles
   iii. Anne (1618–1666)
   iv. Claude
   v. François

7 Anne de Barrière, 10G Grandmother.
   Dame de Nages et de Solorgues. [C-D, XVII, 413] [21] doesn’t mention her parents for which I follow [RW] [58],
quoting nobody, unfortunately. One of the few times he lets us down.
Fourth Generation

8 Louis de Baschi, 11G Grandfather. Louis died on 18 Sept. 1574.
   [C-D, II, 443] [21]. Seigneur d’Auzet. He was made Captain of a band of 200 footmen. Henry III, being in Ferrare, in
   August 1574, ordered him to surrender to the Comte de Carces, in Aix. He obeyed, but was then assassinated in that town by
   a pistol shot, on 18 Sept. 1574.
   On 4 Oct. 1569 Louis married Louise de Varei, 11G Grandmother [21].
   They had one child:
   4. Balthazard (1571–1598)

9 Louise de Varei, 11G Grandmother. Wrote his will on 6 Aug. 1615.
   [C-D, II, 443] [21]. Dame de Monteyer et de Saint-André
   [C-D, VII, 789] [21] spells her name as Varey. The children of Louise and Charles formed the main branch of Seigneurs
   de la Serre & de Manteyer. She had one other daughter with Charles, but her name is unknown.

10 Charles du Faur, 11G Grandfather.
   [Lart] [50]. Seigneur de la Serre. Baron d’Aubais et du Caylar, in Bas-Languedoc.
   [C-D, VII, 789] [21]. Made Governor of Lunel during la Ligue [?].
   Charles married Jacqueline de Bozène, 11G Grandmother.
   They had one child:
   5. Marguerite (~1609)

11 Jacqueline de Bozène, 11G Grandmother.
   Dame d’Aubais. [C-D, I, 899] [21] gives a potted history of the Aubais title. Jacqueline (husband of Charles Dufour)
   was the grand-daughter of Jacques de Bozène, but her parents are not mentioned.

12 François de Rochemore, 11G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1572 [21].
   [C-D, XVII, 410] [21]. Sgr. de la Devèse, de Bordes, et Tartaguieres. Appeared in the Assembly of the Nobility in 1552,
   paid hommage to the King for all his lands the same year.
   On 30 Nov. 1536 François married Madeleine de Bozène, 11G Grandmother.
   They had the following children:
   i. Thomas
   ii. Jean
   6ii. Louis
   iv. Guillard
   v. Françoise
   vi. Claude
   vii. Madeleine

13 Madeleine de Bozène, 11G Grandmother. Wrote her will in 1573.
   [C-D, XVII, 410] [21]. Dame de Saint Laurent, de la Vernède et de la Bruguière.

14 François de Barrière, 10G Grandfather. Title: Seigneur de Nages.
   [C-D, IV, 605] [21] mentions only the daughter Isabelle. I follow [RW] [58], quoting nobody, for Anne.
   François married Catherine d’Arcier, 10G Grandmother.
   They had the following children:
   7i. Anne
   ii. Isabelle (~1647)

15 Catherine d’Arcier, 10G Grandmother.
   [C-D, IV, 605] [21]
Fifth Generation

16 Louis de Baschi, 12G Grandfather. Born aft. 27 Apr 1509 [21]. Louis died on 3 Jan. 1588; he was 78.
   [C-D, II, 442] [21]. Was a long time in Italy with the Cardinal of Frégose. Having succeeded his brother, he rendered
   homage to the king on 15 March 1542 for the lands of Saint-Estève, Barras, Tournefort & Thoard.
   On 27 Apr 1537 when Louis was 28, he married Melchionne de Matheron, 12G Grandmother [21].
   They had the following children:
   i. Frédéric (–1569)
   ii. Louis (–1574)
   iii. Octavien (–1579)
   iv. Thadée
   v. Alexandre
   vi. Honorade

17 Melchionne de Matheron, 12G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 4 Feb. 1557.
   [C-D, II, 442] [21]. Dame de Levens, d’Ayzet de Trevans et en partie de Barras, de Tournefort, d’Establon et d’Aiglun.
   Daughter and heiress of Antoine de Matheron.

18 Balthasard de Varei, 12G Grandfather. Title: Seigneur de Manteyer.
   [C-D, II, 443] [21]
   Balthasard married Authoronne de Guigonis, 12G Grandmother.
   They had one child:
   9i. Louise

19 Authoronne de Guigonis, 12G Grandmother.
   [C-D, II, 443] [21]

20 Michel du Faur, 12G Grandfather.
   [C-D, VII, 785] [21]. Seigneur de Pujols et de Saint-Jory. Juge-Mage of Toulouse in 1547, Conseiller au Grand-Conseil
   by a provision given at Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire on 11 May 1556 for which he took oath between the hands of the Garde des
   Sceaux, and to the Grand Council on 21 & 22 May. President of the Parliament of Toulouse from 29 Nov. 1557 to 1569,
   Chancellor of Catherine, Infante of Portugal.
   Michel married Élénore de Bernuy, 12G Grandmother.
   They had the following children:
   i. Pierre (–1600)
   10i. Charles
   iii. Jean

21 Élénore de Bernuy, 12G Grandmother. Wrote her will in 1575.
   [C-D, VII, 786] [21]

22 Jacques de Bozène, 12G Grandfather. Title: Baron d’Aubais.
   [C-D, XVII, 410] [21].
   [C-D, I, 899] [21].
   Jacques married Antoinette Gleon de Joncheres, 12G Grandmother.
   They had the following children:
   13i. Madeleine
   11ii. Jacqueline

23 Antoinette Gleon de Joncheres, 12G Grandmother.
   [RW] [58], quoting nobody. Bother him.

24 Pierre de Rochemore [21], [50], 12G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1532.
Seigneur de Bordes & Tartuguières &c. Both of Pierre’s wives are my ancestors, along different lines. His first wife was a Boileau, while from his second wife descended Ann Rochereau who married a Baschi, and from whom I descend directly. Isn’t that interesting?

So Pierre appears in two places in C-D [21], principally in XVII, 409, under the Rochereau pedigree, but also in III, 385, under the Boileau pedigree. He also appears in Lart.

C-D [21] says that in 1523 he was made exempt from all tolls on account of his ancient nobility.


They had the following children:

12i. François
12ii. Jacques
12iii. Françoise

25 Jeanne d’Orjolet. 12G Grandmother. Wrote her will in 1545.

[C-D, XVII, 409] [21] does not give her father. For that I follow [RW] [58], quoting nobody.

26 Jacques de Bozène. (Same as ahnentafel number 22.)

27 Antoinette Gleon de Joncheres. (Same as ahnentafel number 23.)
Sixth Generation

32 Thadée de Baschi, 13G Grandfather. Thadée died on 4 Aug. 1509. on 27 Apr 1509.
  [C-D, II, 441] [21]. Seigneur de Saint-Estève, de Barras, de Tournefort, & the majority of Thouars.
  On 7 June 1506 Thadée married Jeanne de Barras, 13G Grandmother.
  They had one child:
  16i. Louis (>1509–1588)

33 Jeanne de Barras, 13G Grandmother. Jeanne died in 1531.
  [C-D, II, 442] [21]. A Barras pedigree appears in [C-D, II, 355] but very few details are given, and lots of generations
  are skipped. It’s possible that our Jeanne was part of this family. Likely, really, since C-D calls them one of the most ancient
  families of Provence. This puts Jeanne in the right place, time, and social class.

34 Antoine de Matheron, 13G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 22 Dec. 1536 [21]. Title: Seigneur d’Auzet.
  [C-D, II, 442] [21] and [C-D, VIII, 348]. Spelled Materon also in C-D.
  [C-D, XIII, 371] [21] gives a potted history of the Materon family, Seigneurs d’Auzet. Very few details are given, but
  C-D refers to Artefeuil [5], Vol. II, p. 120.
  On 17 Nov. 1514 Antoine married Andrivette de Forbin, 13G Grandmother.
  They had one child:
  17i. Melchionne

35 Andrivette de Forbin, 13G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 22 Dec. 1536.
  [C-D, II, 442] [21] and [C-D, VIII, 348]. Dowry of 3000 florins, mentioned in her father’s will.

40 Arnaud du Faur, 13G Grandfather.
  [C-D, VII, 779] [21]. Seigneur de Pujols, de Saint-Jory, Procurator-Général of the Parliament of Toulouse.
  Arnaud married Bourguine de Bozène, 13G Grandmother.
  They had the following children:
  20i. Michel
  ii. Jacques (1511–1571)
  iii. Claire

41 Bourguine de Bozène, 13G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 2 Feb. 1544 [21].
  [C-D, VII, 780] [21]. In her will she left 10 livres each to eight poor girls of Saint-Jory. C-D does not give her parentage.
  On the web page http://perso.wanadoo.fr/didier.bouquet/bouquet/a321.htm it is claimed that Bourguine is the daughter
  of Jean and Marguerite. This makes good sense, but no reference is given and I have no confirmation of this.

42 Jean de Bernuy, 13G Grandfather. Title: Sgr. de Villeneuve & de Palsicat.
  [C-D, VII, 786] [21].
  [C-D, III, 20] [21] gives the Bernuy ancestry, but not much of it.
  Jean married Marguerite du Faur, 13G Grandmother.
  They had the following children:
  21i. Éléonore
  ii. Guillaume
  iii. Anne

43 Marguerite du Faur, 13G Grandmother.
  [C-D, VII, 786] [21].
  Her ancestry is uncertain. [RW] [58] quotes nobody for her.
  However, I found a genealogy on a web page (http://perso.wanadoo.fr/didier.bouquet/bouquet/a271.htm) showing how
  Marguerite was the granddaughter of Gratien du Faur and Honorate de Frere, with Jean du Faur as her father. It makes sense,
  but is it correct? Who knows.

44 Jean de Bozène, 13G Grandfather.
On 19 Jan. 1462 Jean married Marguerite de Bermond, 13G Grandmother [62]. They had the following children:

22i. Jacques

41ii. Bourguine

45 **Marguerite de Bermond**, 13G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 30 June 1482 [62]. Title: Dame d’Aubais.

[C-D, I, 899] [21]. Marguerite was an only daughter.

[ES, XIV, 39] [62] agrees with C-D [21]. Oh miracle wondrous to behold.

48 **Charles de Rochemore**, 13G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 21 June 1472. Title: Seigneur de Bordes.

[C-D, XVII, 409] [21]. The de Bordes estate came from his mother. In 1450 he and his brothers agreed to share the goods of their mother. He appeared at the Assembly of the Nobility in 1470.

In 1460 Charles married Jacqueline del Puech, 13G Grandmother.

They had the following children:

24i. Pierre

ii. Felise

49 **Jacqueline del Puech**, 13G Grandmother.

[C-D, XVII, 409] [21] calls her Catherine Delpuech and doesn’t give her father. For the father I follow [RW] [58] who gives no reference for Catherine, but quotes [C-D] as well as [L, I, 433] [60] and [ART, II, 563] [5] for her husband.

50 **Raymond d’Orjollet**, 13G Grandfather.

[RW] [58]

Child:

25i. Jeanne
Seventh Generation

64 Berthold de Baschi, 14G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 19 Oct. 1461.

[C-D, II, 441] [21]. Seigneur en partie de Vitozzo, Squire of Louis, King of Naples. He made several voyages to Italy after the death of his father, and negotiated with his cousins for the rights to the lands of Vitozzo, in 1426, 1428 and 1429. He bought, on 19 April 1422, from Jean de Barras, the Castle of Saint-Estève, and the majority of Thoard, Barras and Tournefort, in the Diocese of Digne in Provence.

His first marriage appears in [ES, XIV, 34] [62] and his second in [ES, XIV, 5].

On 22 Apr 1434 Berthold married Marguerite d'Adhémar, 14G Grandmother in château de la Garde [21].

They had the following children:

32i. Thadée (~1509)

ii. Perron [21]

65 Marguerite d'Adhémar, 14G Grandmother. Wrote his will on 25 July 1452 [21].

[C-D, II, 441] [21]. Marguerite is the major gateway to the upper reaches of the Medieval aristocracy; the Adhémar, the Anduze, de Poitiers, de Bourgogne, etc. As such she is crucial. Her ancestry can be traced through [ES], where she appears in [ES, XIV, 5] [62]. It was [58] where I first found this link. Without his work, it is unlikely I would have found it on my own.

Her eldest brother married an Agoult. I imagine a mere Baschi d'Aubais was a bit of a let-down.

66 Antoine de Barras, 14G Grandfather. Title: Seigneur de la Robine et de Mirabeau.

[C-D, II, 442] [21].

Antoine married Baudettes de Brignolles, 14G Grandmother.

They had one child:

33i. Jeanne (~1531)

67 Baudettes de Brignolles, 14G Grandmother.

[C-D, II, 442] [21].

70 Charles de Forbin, 14G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 24 July 1528 [58].

[C-D, VIII, 347] [21]. He inherited from his father the possessions he had in Marseille [then something about children of Palamède de Forbin and others]. He was elected first Consul of Marseille in 1502 and 1508, Deputy in 1512 to Françoise I, to confirm the privileges of that town. Chosen in 1524 from the most noble and distinguished gentlemen of Marseille, for the defense of that town, besieged by the Duke of Burgundy, who was made to lift the siege. [The date of his will is unreadable, 1??8]

On 5 Mar. 1489 Charles married Jeanne/Marie de Boniface, 14G Grandmother [21].

They had the following children:

i. François

ii. Claude

iii. Gaspard

iv. Marguerite

35v. Andrivette

71 Jeanne/Marie de Boniface, 14G Grandmother.

[C-D, VIII, 348] [21] has the marriage date as 1589 which has to be wrong. I follow [RW] [58] quoting [ART, I, 405] [5]. Well, [RW] also quotes [C-D] [21], but he sure as hell didn’t get his date there.

80 Gratien du Faur, 14G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1491.

[C-D, VII, 779] [21]. Seigneur de Pujols & de Saint-Jory, near Toulouse, de Bruguières, de Bouloc, Pompignan &c. Made Chancellor of the Count of Armagnac, Ambassador of King Louis XI to the Emperor, in Spain and in Berne. The King then created the position of Tiers-Président in the Toulouse Parliament, in Amboise on 22 Sept. 1483.

Gratien married Honorate de Frezze, 14G Grandmother.

They had the following children:
APPENDIX III: ANCESTRY OF LOUISE DE BASCHI

40i. Arnaud
ii. Pierre
86ii. Jean
iv. Jean

81 Honorate de Frezze. 14G Grandmother.
[C-D, VII, 779] [21].

82 Jean de Bozène. (Same as ahnentafel number 44.)

83 Marguerite de Bermond. (Same as ahnentafel number 45.)

84 Jean de Bernuy. 14G Grandfather.
[C-D, III, 20] [21]. Or Bernoye. Originally from Spain, but established in Toulouse by Jean de Bernuy, who had at least three sons. [They all seem to have been called Jean, which is weird. Thats why I don’t give them all here. I’m very sceptical of this information.]
Child:
42i. Jean

86 Jean du Faur. 14G Grandfather.
[C-D, VII, 779] [21]. Distinguished officer, killed in 1469, during a reconnaissance near Lisieux, commander of Cavalry under the orders of the Count of Dunois.
C-D does not mention any of his children, or a possible wife.
His identification as the father of Marguerite is highly tentative, relying only on an unsubstantiated web page. (http://perso.wanadoo.fr/-didier.bouquet/bouquet/a271.htm)
Child:
43i. Marguerite

90 Jean de Bermond. 14G Grandfather. Born bef. 1443 [62]. Jean died on 17 July 1486; he was 43.
[C-D, I, 899] [21].
[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. Baron de Boucoiran, Seigneur de Lascours de Cruvières etc.
On 4 Nov. 1443 when Jean was <1, he married Catherine de Bermond, 14G Grandmother in Aubais [62].
They had one child:
45i. Marguerite

91 Catherine de Bermond, 14G Grandmother. Catherine died on 30 June 1482.
[C-D, I, 899] [21]. Jean and Catherine were related, both being descended from Bermond II du Caila [ES, XIV, 39] [62], and hence the same name.
[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. Dame d’Aubais de Nages de Solorgues etc.

96 Hermengarde de Rochemore, 14G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 5 May 1438.
[C-D, XVII, 409] [21]. Governor of the town of Lunel, in 1427, for Yolande d’Aragon, Queen of Naples and Countess of Provence. Paid homage to the King in 1435 for the lands which he possessed in Languedoc and in Provence. Made a will the same day as his father.
In 1408 Hermengarde married Mandolie de Bordes, 14G Grandmother.
They had the following children:
48i. Charles
ii. Bermond
iii. Philippe
iv. Guillaume (>1490)
v. Jean

97 Mandolie de Bordes, 14G Grandmother. Wrote his will on 28 May 1449.
[C-D, XVII, 409] [21].

98 Armand del Puech, 14G Grandfather. Armand died bef. 1471.
[C-D, VI, 809] [21]. Seigneur du château Del-Puech, de Saint-Martin de Valgalgne, etc. He was at the presentation of the Nobles of the Seneschalship of Beaucaire & Nîmes, on 12 March 1454. On 13 May 1462 he exchanged certain lands and goods with the Abbey de Cendras.
However, there is no mention of a daughter Jacqueline, only of three other daughters. For Jacqueline I follow [RW] [58], who gives no reference.

Armand married Philiis de Moreire, 14G Grandmother.
They had the following children:
i. André
49ii. Jacqueline
iii. Dulcie
iv. Aliéson
v. Louise

99 Philiis de Moreire, 14G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 25 May 1471 [21].
[C-D. VI, 809] [21]. She left a legacy to her three daughters, confirming the settlement that she had made in favour of her son, André, leaving to his wife her pearl necklace and her collar of pearls with five rows.
Eighth Generation

128 Guichard de Baschi, 15G Grandfather. Guichard died ca. 1425. Wrote his will on 7 Sept. 1425 at Château le Thoard [21].

According to Lart [50]: Originally from Italy, Guichard de Baschi, co-seigneur de Vitozzo, settled in Provence (Test. 7 Sept, 1425).

[C-D, II, 440] [21]. Seigneur en partie de Vitozzo, de Marano, de Latera. Allied (?) with the Governors of Rome, of Vico and with the Farnèse, to conduct the war against the Siennois in 1384. He finally attached himself to Louis II d’Anjou, King of Naples, Count of Provence, who made him his shield-bearer, and went with him to Provence. [This seems to be how the Baschi family left Italy].

Guichard married Jacquette Farnèse, 15G Grandmother.

They had one child:

64i. Berthold

129 Jacquette Farnèse, 15G Grandmother.

[C-D, II, 440] [21]. Jacquette was the cousin of Guichard in the third or fourth degree, so they needed a dispensation from the Pope before they could marry. How wicked. Anyway, the way the Farnèse interbred with the Baschi I’m surprised they even cared.

[C-D, VII, 741] [21] gives a bunch of Farnèse, and a number were called Ranuce, and in the correct time frame. Obviously a family name. However, it’s impossible to tell from C-D whether they can be identified with Jacquette’s father.

130 Louis Adhémar, 15G Grandfather. Born bef. 1387 [62]. Louis died aft. 1427; he was 40.

[ES, XIV, 5] [62]. Seigneur de la Garde, co-Seigneur de Montélimar, Seigneur d’Ancone, de Ballons, de la Bâtie-Rolland, de Clansayes, de Cléon-d’Andran, d’Eygalagues, de Montfroc, de Savasse, etc. [C-D, II, 441] [21]. I can’t trace his pedigree back any further in C-D, who gives a pedigree of lots of Adhémar [C-D, I, 91].

On 1 Apr 1406 when Louis was 19, he married Dauphine de Glandévès, 15G Grandmother [62].

They had one child:

65i. Marguerite

131 Dauphine de Glandévès, 15G Grandmother.

[C-D, II, 441] [21] doesn’t give Dauphines parents. [ES, XIV, 5] [62] does, fortunately.

140 Jacques de Forbin [21], [45], 15G Grandfather. Jacques died in 1495. Wrote his will on 7 Apr. 1492 [21].

[C-D, VIII, 345] [21]. He acquired the Seigneurie de Gardanne on 11 Sept. 1482 from his elder brother, Palamède le Grand. Preméir Consul of Marseille in 1480, at which time Charles d’Ansou, the last Count of Provence, came to that town to receive the oath of homage from the Marseillais. He had the same position in 1490 and 1492. He joined his brothers in the reduction of Provence to the obedience of the King [terrible translation, I know], and declared Marseille for King Louis IX. He answered the call of ban & arrière-ban called by Charles VIII.

[DHF, 3] [45].

In 1452 Jacques married Marthonne Tenchevrière, 15G Grandmother.

They had the following children:

i. Michel

70ii. Charles

iii. Bellone

iv. Françoise

141 Marthonne Tenchevrière, 15G Grandmother.

[C-D, VIII, 346] [21]. Dowried with 1500 moutons d’or, and [advantaged?] with 200 more, a huge sum for that time.

142 Vivaud de Boniface, 15G Grandfather.

[C-D, VIII, 348] [21] gives him as Vinaud (?). Juge-Mage en Provence.
[C-D, III, 470] [21] (in the Boniface ancestry) has a Vivaud Boniface, Juge-Mage en Provence, with a son called Jean who married in 1508. This is almost certainly the same person, although there is no mention there of a daughter called Jeanne. But given the name, the position, the place, the date, and the son’s name, the identification is pretty secure. No detailed ancestry of Vivaud is given in C-D, only general comments about the family. A Pierre Boniface was mentioned in 1270, a Pierre II, living in 1327, and a Gilles Boniface, living in 1370.

Vivaud married Catherine de Remesan, 15G Grandmother.
They had one child:

71i. Jeanne/Marie

143 Catherine de Remesan, 15G Grandmother.

[C-D, VIII, 348] [21]. Sister of Jean-Baptiste, Chevalier de Rhodes and Bailli de Manosque. No other Remesans in [CD].

160 Jean II du Faur, 15G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1444 [21].

[C-D, VII, 779] [21].
Children:

80i. Gratien
ii. Jean

172 Gratien du Faur. (Same as ahnentafel number 80.)

173 Honorate de Freeze. (Same as ahnentafel number 81.)

180 Guillaume de Bermond, 15G Grandfather. Guillaume died in 1474.

[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. Baron de Combres et de Boucoiran, Seigneur de Lascours de Cruvières etc.
They had one child:

90i. Jean (<1443–1486)


[ES, XIV, 39] [62].

182 Antoine de Bermond, 15G Grandfather. Antoine died bef. 1453.

[C-D, I, 899] [21]. The second son.
[ES, XIV, 39] [62] Baron d’Aubais, Seigneur de Nages, de Solargues, de Boisseron etc.
On 6 July 1422 Antoine married Marguerite de Lauzières, 15G Grandmother in Clerment-de-Ledève [62].
They had one child:

91i. Catherine (~1482)

183 Marguerite de Lauzières, 15G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 15 Aug. 1459 at Aubais [62].

[C-D, I, 899] [21].
[ES, XIV, 39] [62] gives her parentage, which allows for identification in [C-D, XI, 797] [21] in the Lauzières family.

192 Jacques de Rochemore, 15G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 5 May 1438.

[C-D, XVII, 408] [21]. He gave security in 1380 at the marriage contract of Bertrand de Pierre de Bernis, Seigneur de St. Marcel, whose close relative, Guilmemette de Pierre, he married himself. On 26 Sept. 1408 she was proxy for the marriage of her son, Hermengaud, to Mandolie des Bordes, of the town of Lunel. [Sounds like Hermengaud was married very young]. Jacques made his will on 5 May 1438 before Rebull, the Notary of Lunel.

Jacques married Guilmemette de Pierre de Bernis, 15G Grandmother.
They had one child:

96i. Hermengarde


[C-D, XVII, 408] [21].
She was the close relative of Bertrand de Pierre (married 1380), who appears in [C-D, XV, 836], but I can’t find her mentioned explicitly there. I am going to be naughty and assume that Guilmemette was the sister of Bertrand. She was almost certainly a sister, or cousin, or aunt, in all of which cases the pedigree of Bertrand intersects almost immediately with hers. So, although there might be some local distortion, Bertrand’s grandfather and before should be correct. I know that no real genealogist would accept this argument which just goes to show I’m not one. So sue me.
194 Jacques de Bordes. 15G Grandfather.
   [C-D. XVII, 409] [21]: Seigneur de Bordes & de Tartuguières en Provence, lands which that house still owns today
   [well, in C-D’s day anyway].
   [RW] [58]: Frère du Cardinal Jean de Bordes.
   Child:
   97i. Mandolie

   [C-D. VI, 809] [21].
   Child:
   98i. Armand (~<1471)
256 Etienne de Baschi, 16G Grandfather. Etienne died in 1375. Title: Seigneur di Vitozzo.

[C-D, II, 440] [21]. ligna la Trève faite avec les Urfins, le 5 Mai 1355. So he signed the treaty with the Urfin family; but we he allied to them or fighting them? I’m not sure.

Child:

128i. Guichard (~ca. 1425)

258 Ranuce Farnèse [21], 16G Grandfather.

[C-D, II, 440] [21].

Child:

129i. Jacquette

260 Hugues Adhémar, 16G Grandfather. Born bef. 1360. Hugues died aft. 1389; he was 29. Wrote his will on 26 Sept. 1387.

[ES, XIV, 5] [62]. Seigneur de la Garde, d’Ancone, de Montélimar-en-partie, de la Batie-Rolland, de Cléon-d’Andran, de Clansayes, de Lachau, de Montboucher, de Montfroc, de Porte, de Rac, de Roussas, de Roynac, de Saint-Gervais, de Suze, de Tullins, de Vers, etc.

On 26 Oct. 1349 when Hugues was <1, he married Mabile de Puy, 16G Grandmother.

They had one child:

130i. Louis (<1387->1427)

261 Mabile de Puy, 16G Grandmother.

[ES, XIV, 5] [62].


Sgr. de Purrières, Seigneur de Cuers.

[C-D, IX, 331] [21] has this Isnard (clearly the same one, with the same date of death, and the same nickname, Le Grand), and he mentions three wives. [RW] [58] quotes [ART, I, 493] [5], and [ES, XIV, 38] [62] for the Anduze wife.

[C-D, IX, 331] [21]: He was made Lieutenant-Général in Provence. Marie de Blois gave him command of the lieux de la Montagne [?], against the rebel Turenne (Beaufort Rosières), by letters dated 6 July 1391. He gave great service to the Counts of Provence, to whom he paid homage for his lands in 1399, and died in 1409, being enterred in l’Eglise des Frères-Prêcheurs d’Aix, with great magnificence. The Bishop of Grasse performed the office. His wives were Alix de la Voulte, Isoarde de Roquefeuil, and Béatrix des Balbs. Alix de la Voulte is almost certainly the same as Audis d’Anduze, as the father of Audis was Seigneur de la Voulte.

bef. 1376 Isnard “Le Grand” married Audis d’Anduze, 16G Grandmother [62].

They had one child:

131i. Dauphine

263 Audis d’Anduze, 16G Grandmother. Title: Dame de Saint-Montan.

[C-D, I, 496] [21] has nothing on Anduze at this early date, only entries from 1539 on, and not many of them.

[ES, XIV, 38] [62] has the details.

280 Jean I de Forbin, 16G Grandfather. Born in 1380 in Marseilles [58] on 2 Feb. 1453 [45].

[DHF, 3] [45].

[C-D, VIII, 308] [21]. Consul of Marseille in 1431 and 1443. He was appointed to take charge of the defense of Marseille, then besieged by the King of Aragon, and he arranged an exchange of Catalan and Provencal prisoners. Wrote his will on 9 Feb. 1453.

On 4 Dec. 1415, when Jean I was 35, he married Isoarde de Marin, 16G Grandmother [45].

They had the following children:

i. Jean II

ii. Palamède Le Grand

140iii. Jacques (~1495)
APPENDIX III: ANCESTRY OF LOUISE DE BASCHI

iv. Doucette
v. Catherine

281 Isoarde de Marin. 16G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 19 Aug. 1464.
[DHF, 3] [45]. [C-D, VIII, 308] [21]. [C-D] differs from [DHF] in the name of her father; Claude according to [DHF], Pierre according to [C-D].
[58] gives no direct reference to Isoarde, only to her husband, for which he quotes [21, 3, 5] [C-D, VIII, 308; Anselm VIII:294; ART, I, 400].

282 Isnard Tenchevi`ere. 16G Grandfather.
[C-D, VIII, 346] [21]. Of Montpellier.
Child:
141. Marthonne

283 Jean du Faur. 16G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1444. Title: Senechal d’Armagnac.
[C-D, VII, 779] [21].
Child:
160. Jean II

300 Bermond Tussard du Caila. 16G Grandfather. Title: Baron de Combias.
They had one child:
360 i. Guillaume (–1474)

301 Hélène Hérail. 16G Grandmother.
[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. His second wife.

362 Jean de Combret. 16G Grandfather. Title: Sgr. de Broquiez et d’Aissenc.
[ES, XIV, 39] [62].
Child:
181. Tiburge (–1474)

364 Antoine de Bermond. 16G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 29 Nov. 1403 [62]. Title: Baron du Caylar etc.
[C-D, I, 899] [21].
[C-D, IV, 882] [21] gives lots of Caylar, and lots of Bermond du Caylar, but I can’t find this one.
[C-D, XIV, 819] [21].
[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. Baron du Caila de Montmirat et de Montlau etc.
On 29 Jan. 1380 Antoine married Jeanne Pelet, 16G Grandmother in La Verune [62].
They had one child:
365 i. Antoine (–1453)

366 Guiraud de Lauzi`eres. 16G Grandfather. Guiraud died bef. 25 Jan. 1414. Title: Sgr. de St. Jean-de-la-Coste.
[ES, XIV, 39] [62].
[C-D, XI, 797] [21].
Guiraud married Aude de Saint-Baulize, 16G Grandmother.
They had one child:
183. Marguerite

367 Aude de Saint-Baulize. 16G Grandmother.
[ES, XIV, 39] [62].

384 Jean de Rochemore. 16G Grandfather. Jean died aft. 1375.
In 1344 Jean married Marguerite de Jossaud, 16G Grandmother.
They had one child:

192i. Jacques

385 Marguerite de Jossaud, 16G Grandmother.

[C-D, XVII, 408] [21]

386 Pons III de Pierre, 16G Grandfather. Pons III died aft. 1383. Title: Damoiseau de Nîmes.

[C-D, XV, 836] [21]. Appears in an act of 1383, in which Guillaume de Pierre made a gift to Bernard de Pierre, his nephew, son of Pons III de Pierre, in the presence and under the authority of Hélis de Roy, the mother of Guillaume and grandmother of Bernard.

The identification of Guillemette as his daughter is uncertain. All we know is that Guillemette was a close relative of Bernard.
Children:

193i. Guillemette (–1408)

ii. Bernard

392 Seguin del Puech, 16G Grandfather. Seguin died aft. 1355.

[C-D, VI, 809] [21]. Paid homage on 15 January 1355 to the Abbot of Cendras for the fiefs for which his father, Pierre, had paid homage.

They had one child:

196i. Bernard (–1399)

393 Dulcie de Saint-Maximin, 16G Grandmother.

[C-D, VI, 809] [21].
APPENDIX III: ANCESTRY OF LOUISE DE BASCHI

Tenth Generation

512 Reinier de Baschi, 17G Grandfather. Wrote his will in 1367.

[C-D, II, 440] [21]. Seigneur de Vitozzo & de Montemarano. He was one of the principal Captains of the Army which
which Cardinal Gilles Albornos recovered Viterbe and many other lands of the church, in 1354. He waged war energetically
against the Ursins and the Farnèse and it was only after many and repeated entreaties from Nicolas, the Patriarch of Aquilée,
the natural brother of the Emperor Charles IV, and his Vicar-General in Tuscany, that he consented to make a treaty with
them, on 5 May 1355. He was General of the Pisans against the Florentines at the battle of Bagno at Véna, on 7 May 1363.
Bloody Italian politics. Messy stuff.

Reinier married Etienne Gatechi, 17G Grandmother.

They had one child:

256i. Etienne (–1375)

513 Etienne Gatechi, 17G Grandmother.

[C-D, II, 440] [21]. Of the Seigneurs of Viterbe.

520 Lambert d’Adhémar, 17G Grandfather. Lambert died bef. 23 June 1348.

[ES XIV:4] [62]. Seigneur de 1/4 Monteil 1340, Sgr. de Montboucher

[FM, 651] [55]

On 12 Apr 1325 Lambert married Douce Gaucelme, 17G Grandmother.

They had one child:

260i. Hugues (<1360–>1389)

521 Douce Gaucelme, 17G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 9 Nov. 1360.

[55][FM, 651] gives a different wife for Lambert, one Isoarda de Baux d’Orange, appears also in [FM,636]. But the date,
1315, is earlier, so she was possibly an earlier wife. [ES] [62] says that Hugues was the son of Douce Gaucelme, but doesn’t
mention Isoarda. Maybe one of the sources is just plain wrong. It has happened before. There is a Gaucelme family in [ES,
XIV, 81] [62], but no mention of Douce there.

The date of the will is from [RW] [58], giving no reference. It’s not in [ES].

522 Barlet de Puy, 17G Grandfather. Barlet died in 1361. Title: Seigneur de Montbrun.

[ES, XIV, 5] [62].

Barlet married Marguerite de Montauban, 17G Grandmother.

They had one child:

261i. Mabile

523 Marguerite de Montauban, 17G Grandmother.

[ES, XIV, 5] [62].

524 Guillaume Féraud de Glandevès, 17G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 4 Nov. 1359. Title: Baron de Glandevès & de
Cuers.

[C-D, IX, 331] [21]. He died before his father, having made his will in favour of his children. [RW] [58] quotes [ART, I,
493] [5] for him, but nothing for Louise.

Guillaume Féraud married Louise de Villeneuve, 17G Grandmother.

They had the following children:

262i. Isnard “Le Grand” (~1409)

ii. Louis

iii. Guillaume

iv. Béatrix

525 Louise de Villeneuve, 17G Grandmother.

[C-D, IX, 331] [21] says her mother was Bourguette de Sabran.

[DHSP, 154] [45] does not mention her as a child of Sibylle de Sabran.
That her mother was Sibylle de Sabran is mentioned nowhere in [62], [45] or [21]. Presumably [RW] [58] got this information from [ART] [5], but I haven’t checked this yet.


[ES, XIV, 38] [62]. His first wife was Aliénor de Poitiers, daughter of Aymar V, Comte de Valentininois.

In 1340 Bermond III married Marguerite de Tournel, 17G Grandmother.

They had one child:

263i. Audis

527 Marguerite de Tournel, 17G Grandmother.

With the ancestry of Marguerite we have severe discrepancies between [C-D, V, 393–4] [21] and [ES XIV:193] [62]. [C-D, V, 393] has her father as Odilon de Guerin IV de châteauneuf, Baron du Tournel, and her mother Yolande de Simiane, who appears in [C-D, XVIII, 601] as Isoarde de Simiane. [CD] has Marguerites grandmother Eleonore de Canilhac, wife of Odilon III. It’s likely that [CD] just got confused with the multiple wives of Odilon.

I shall follow [ES].

560 Guillaume de Forbin, 17G Grandfather. Born in 1330. Guillaume died in 1415; he was 85. Wrote his will on 17 Apr. 1410.

[DHF, 2] [45].

[C-D, VIII, 303] [21]. Lived in Marseille and mentioned in many acts.

On 15 Dec. 1379 when Guillaume was 49, he married Gauffride Borgarelli, 17G Grandmother.

They had the following children:

280i. Jean I (1380–)

ii. Dragonet (~1443)

iii. Bertrand (1385–)

561 Gauffride Borgarelli, 17G Grandmother. Wrote his will in 1434.

[DHF, 2] [45] gives Guillaumes wife as Durande de Rossi, or de Rous. However, he gives almost no details, while [C-D, VIII, 303] [21] gives lots, so I shall follow [C-D]. Dowried with 100 gold florins of Florence, and with 237 florins and half the goods of her father.

562 Claude de Marin, 17G Grandfather. Title: Sgr. de Bourg-Franc.

[DHF, 3] [45]. Conseiller du Roi & Ambassadeur en Savoie.

[C-D, VIII, 308] [21] differs from [DHF] [45] in the name; Claude according to [DHF], Pierre according to [C-D].

Child:

281i. Isoarde

720 Jean Decan, 17G Grandfather. Born bef. 1351. Jean Decan died in 1369; he was 18. Title: Baron de Combas.

[ES, XIV, 39] [62].

Child:

360i. Bermond Tussard

722 Déodat Héraill, 17G Grandfather.

[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. Sgr. de Busarengul et de Lugans.

Child:

361i. Hélène

728 Bermond III du Caylar, 17G Grandfather. Born in 1329. Wrote his will on 1 Aug. 1361 at Le Caila.

[ES, XIV, 39] [62]. Baron du Caylar, de Montmirat de Montlau etc.

Bermond III married Elips de Landerre, 17G Grandmother.

They had one child:

364i. Antoine

729 Elips de Landerre, 17G Grandmother.

[ES, XIV, 39] [62].

730 Raymond V Pelet, 17G Grandfather. Wrote his will on 18 July 1374 [62]. Title: Sgr. de la Vérune.

[ES, XIV, 147] [62]

[C-D, I, 898] [21].
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[C-D, XIV, 818] [21]. Not the heir of his father, who left everything to the children of his second marriage, but was instead the heir of Guillaume de Fredol, Seigneur de la Vérune, his maternal grand-uncle, who had no children, and left to Raymond the lands of Vérune and all its dependencies. Raymond died after his father. By what I can make of C-D, if he had no male heirs, he left all his goods to Raymond Adhémar, Seigneur de Saint Gervais, his cousin, or to Raymond’s son, or finally to his cousins, Bérenger Gauclin, Seigneur de Graveson, and Jacques, his brother. This was under the condition they carried his name and arms, and he absolutely excluded any of his daughters. [He sounds like a pompous bloody twit, calling himself Raymond Pelet, Damoiseau, magnifique & puissant Seigneur...]

In 1359 Raymond V married Marie de Langussel, 17G Grandmother. They had the following children:

i. Elzéas
ii. Bernard
365iii. Jeanne
iv. Isabelle (–1425)

731 Marie de Langussel, 17G Grandmother. Wrote her will on 23 July 1391. Title: Dame d’Aubais.

[ES, XIV, 147] [62]
[C-D, I, 898] [21]. Inherited the Aubais lands from her brother, when he was killed at the battle of Poitiers.
[C-D, XIV, 819] [21] In a will of 1391 she gave to her sons all her rights in the possessions of her mother, of whom she was the heiress.


[C-D, XI, 797] [21]. Seigneur de St. Jean-de-la-Coste, de Saint-Guiraud, etc. He made many pious gifts, according to [CD]. Golly gee. Lucky old him, eh?

Anglesian II married Martrete Joenine, 17G Grandmother. They had one child:

366i. Guiraud (<1414)

733 Martrete Joenine, 17G Grandmother.

[C-D, XI, 797] [21]. My word. What a strange name.

734 Guyon de Saint-Baulize, 17G Grandfather. Title: Sgr. de Saint-Beaulize.

[C-D, XI, 797] [21].

Child:

367i. Aude

768 Guillaume III de Rochemore, 17G Grandfather. Guillaume III died aft. 1316.

[C-D, XVII, 408] [21]. Chosen in 1308 by the nobility of Beaucaire to do something I’m not sure about. Qualified as a Noble homme in the oath of fidelity taken, in 1316, by the Consuls of the town of Nîmes, to Philippe de France, Regent after the death of Louis.

Guillaume III married Anne de Romieu (Romeau), 17G Grandmother. They had the following children:

384i. Jean (–1375)
ii. Maurette

769 Anne de Romieu (Romeau), 17G Grandmother.

[C-D, XVII, 408] [21]. Of the town of Arles.


[C-D, XV, 835] [21]. Qualified as Damoiseau in acts of 1344 & 1347. Bertrand II married Hélis de Roy, 17G Grandmother. They had the following children:

386i. Pons III (–1383)
ii. Guillaume (–1396)

773 Hélis de Roy, 17G Grandmother.

[C-D, XV, 835] [21].

[C-D. VI, 809] [21]. One of the Seigneurs of the Seneschalship of Beaucaire and Nîmes. He took an oath of loyalty to
the King on 22 March 1321, and paid homage to the Abbey of Cendras on 8 January 1328 for the lands which his father had
also paid homage for.

Child:

392. Seguin (–>1355)
Bibliography


[5] Artefeuil, Histoire Heroïque de la Noblesse de Provence. Artefeuil is the collective pseudonym of Gaillard de Longjumeau, Armand de Rousset and l’abbé Capris de Beauveser, who together compiled this armorial in 1776, and published it in three volumes. Republished by Lafitte Reprints, Marseilles, 1970. It’s not usually considered reliable, but is sometimes the only source there is, and thus is often referenced.


[9] William Berry, County Genealogies: Pedigrees of the Families of the County of Kent, London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1830. I have only a photocopy of the relevant Beale page, sent to me by Geoff West. William Berry (1774–1851) was an English genealogist who wrote an unfinished A Genealogical Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland, and then an Encyclopaedia Heraldica, which was more popular. He is best known for his county genealogies published in small folio volumes, at five or so guineas a volume. These were Kent, 1830; Sussex, 1830; Hampshire, 1833; Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Surrey, 1837; Essex, 1839; and Hertfordshire, 1842. The three latter volumes were printed by means of lithography from the handwriting of the author. The first portion of The County Genealogies, Kent, was severely reviewed in The Gentleman’s Magazine, leading to a libel suit against the publishers, which Berry lost.

[10] BBB, or The Chronicles of the Family of Boileau known as de Castelnau de la Garde de Sainte-Croix de Boiriac. Compiled by Digby Whicher Boileau over many years until his death at the age of 82, in 1976. Subsequently the work was continued by his brother, Thomas Whicher Boileau, who produced the first version of the book before his own death at the age of 85. This later, more complete version is now “owned” by Peter Mudie Boileau, son of Digby and nephew of Tom. It has never been properly published, although it ought to be; electronic copies circulate around family members. It’s a detailed, and very well sourced, history of the
Boileau family. With thanks to Vincent O’Grady for sending this to me. As a chronicle it’s heavily weighted towards military matters, which are described in loving detail. The wives and daughters get less attention, except when they impinge briefly on more manly pursuits, like killing people.

[11] BBC, or The Big Boileau Chart. This is the chart of Boileau descendants that was compiled in December 1867 by Jane Alicia Innes, and a copy of which is still in the possession of Chris Read, who sent me a copy. It has handwritten additions from the 1890’s on. There’s a picture of it on page 145.

[12] Barry F. Buckley, Sails of Suffering: the story of the ‘Lloyds’, an original emigrant ship to Nelson, 1841–1842, 1990. This isn’t even really a proper book, just a bunch of papers in a cheap spiral binding, and only obtainable from Barry Buckley’s widow. However, I managed to get a copy, and it’s worth every cent I paid. A lot of good information, copies of original documents, and the like. It seems like a reliable piece of historical writing.

[13] Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français; Documents Historiques inédits et originaux XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles, 1861, pp. 306–318. This is an account, begun by Daniel Collot d’Escurey, and completed by his son, Henri, of the history of the family during the French Wars of Religion. The Société de l’Histoire du Protestantisme Français was founded in 1852, still has its headquarters in Paris, and is still publishing the Bulletin, many of whose volumes are available online, at the Gallica site (the digital section of the National Library of France).


[15] Burke’s Commoners, or Landed Gentry, is a complicated wee book. First written by John Burke, it was published in four volumes from 1833 to 1838, and called A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland. The expression “Commoners” was quickly replaced by the more flattering description “Landed Gentry” in a new edition of 1837–1838. Burke’s Landed Gentry continued to appear at regular intervals throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, driven, in the 19th century, principally by the energy and readable style of the founder’s son and successor as editor, Sir John Bernard Burke (who, according to Wikipedia, “generally favoured the romantic and picturesque in genealogy over the mundane or strictly correct”). The last three-volume edition of Burke’s Landed Gentry was published between 1965 and 1972.


[21] François Aubert de la Chesnaye-Desbois, Dictionnaire de la Noblesse, third edition in 19 volumes, 1863–1866, edited by the Schlesinger brothers. The original edition was published in 1757. François-Alexandre de la Chenaye-Aubert (or La Chenaye-Aubert, La Chesnaye-Aubert, Aubert de la Chenaye-Desbois) lived from 1699 to 1784 and was an enormously prolific writer of everything from animal dictionaries to agriculture dictionaries to gardening dictionaries to military dictionaries to that referenced here, a dictionary of the French nobility. He was not at
all wealthy, and was (and still is) renowned for not checking his facts properly, if at all. He was, after all, mostly writing what he was told to write, and was dependent on this for whatever income he could make. It’s not surprising he didn’t argue about the genealogies provided to him.

[22] James Clark Saunders, The Clarks of Crichton, 1967; revised 1985. This is a typed manuscript, never formally published even in a vanity press. Clark sent me a copy in 2009. Although it concentrates mostly on the descendants of George Clark (the brother of my Adam Sprott) it contains a great deal of information about the early Clarks in Crichton. It refers to original documents wherever possible.


[26] Samuel Alexander Ossory Fitzpatrick, Dublin: A Historical and Topographical Account of the City, Illustrated by W. Curtis Greene. Methuen, London, 1907. This is the only book that Fitzpatrick wrote. The description of Captain Desbrisay appears on pp. 186–187, and Fitzpatrick references “The recollections of John O’Keeffe”. A little further down the page we learn that John O’Keeffe was an actor, who himself dressed magnificently, or so he claimed. I know nothing more about this John O’Keeffe who observed the flamboyant Captain Desbrisay.

[27] Susannah Proctor Flory, Fragments of Family History, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1896. This was a limited print run, essentially a vanity publication. It’s very difficult indeed to get a copy of this; I’ve never managed, although I know it exists. However, I have copies of some of its pages.


[38] T.H.B. Graham, The Debateable Land, Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquities and Archaeological Society, N.S. XII, p. 33, 1912


[44] Edward Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 7, 1798. Hasted was born in London in 1732. His grandfather, Joseph Hasted, had been employed as chief painter in the Royal Navy at Chatham dockyard, but he was also a skilled financier and as such was able to establish an annual income of £1,000. Hasted’s father, Edward, became a wealthy barrister. The young Edward also started off as a barrister but got into financial trouble, ran off to France with a woman who wasn’t his wife, got booted out of France when Napoleon came to power, returned to Britain and was popped straight into debtor’s prison, where he stayed for almost seven years. When he came out he was given a job as Master of an Almshouse. He died in 1812. I learned all this from Wikipedia. Pretty cool, huh?


This is another complicated book, or set of books. On the promulgation in 1696 of an edict directing all who had armorial bearings to register them on payment of 20 livres, Charles Réné d’Hozier, the uncle of Louis-Pierre, was employed to collect the declarations returned in the various regions, and thus established the Armorial général de France. The collection (now in the Bibliothèque Nationale) consists of 34 volumes of text and 35 of coloured armorial bearings, and in spite of its deficiencies is a useful store of information for the history of the old French families. However, this is not the book I’m referring to here.

The nephew of Charles Réné, Louis-Pierre, published the Armorial général, ou registre de la noblesse de France, which should not be confused with the publication written by his uncle; it related solely to noble families and was not an official collection. Complete copies of this work, which should contain six registres, are rare. A seventh registre, forming Vol. xi, prepared by Ambroise-Louis-Marie, nephew of Louis-Pierre, was published in 1847 by comte Charles d’Hozier.

DHSP (used as an abbreviation in Appendix III) refers to the pedigree of Sabran-Pontevès, which is in Register VII (Vol. XI), pp. 609–815.

DHF (used as an abbreviation in Appendix III) refers to the pedigree of de Forbin, which is in Register VII (Vol. X), pp. 683–689.


[54] *Graham’s Home was their Castle*, an article by W.T. McIntire, published in *The Cumberland Press*, in 1939. It was reprinted on 2 July, 2010. This contains some useful information about the early history of Edmond Castle.

[55] Florian Mazel, *La Noblesse et l’église en Provence, fin Xe-début XIVe siècle. L’exemple des familles d’Agoul-Simiane, de Baux et de Marseille*, CTHS, Paris, 2002. This has lots of genealogical tables in the annexes, which don’t always agree with other genealogical tables (from [62], for instance). This makes life puzzling at times. However, it’s chock full of interesting information about the early history of these families, and other early Provençal history.

[56] Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century: comprizing Biographical Memoirs of William Bowyer, Printer, F.S.A. and many of his learned friends; an incidental view of the progress and advancement of literature in this kingdom during the last century; and Biographical Anecdotes of a considerable number of Eminent Writers and Ingenious Artists. By John Nichols, F.S.A. Volume IX. London. 1815, page 672.

[57] Notes from *Shadows of the Past*, by Hester Peel, Tenterden, Kent. Possibly written in 1913, possibly just written out by P. Leslie in 1913, Im not certain. This was never a formally published book, as far as I’m aware, just the jotting of some local historian. I got this information from some photocopied pages that were sent to me from the East Sussex County Office, and there’s also a copy in the National Archives. It deals (briefly) with the early history of the Curteis family, adding little to what Burke says, but agreeing on most points.


[62] Detlev Schwennicke, *Europäische Stammtafeln: Stammtafeln zur Geschichte der Europäischen Staaten, Neue Folge*. This huge reference work was started by Wilhelm Karl, Prinz zu Isenburg (1903–1956), continued by Frank, Baron Freytag von Loringhoven (1910–1977), and is now done by Rev. Detlev Schwennicke (1930–). There are now 26 volumes I believe. It’s widely considered to be the most reliable starting point for the study of European noble genealogies, but is difficult to find and expensive to buy.
[63] Samuel Smiles, *The Huguenots: Their Settlements, Churches and Industries in England and Ireland*, London, 1867. Smiles was Scot who lived from 1812 to 1904, and, believe it or not, is best known for the self-help books he wrote. Well, he also wrote some well-known biographies of engineers, so I exaggerate a little. However, he selected the topics of these biographies to illustrate his self-help philosophies, so I’m only exaggerating a little.

