1 ANTECEDENTS

Thanks largely to the researches of my brother Richard from 1994 onwards; we have now become reasonably well informed on some aspects of our family ancestry. At the change of the millennium this work is still in progress, and will be summarized separately. My main intention here is not to present a detailed genealogical account, but to start with my personal experiences, then outline what we know of how any of us came to be available to have personal experiences.

The Eden line

My father's knowledge of his origins was sketchy in the extreme. He was not a secretive person, just a man of rather few words, and those reserved for matters of consequence. 'Dick' to his sisters and 'Arthur' to his wife, his full name was James Arthur Israel Eden, there having been a rather brief tradition to put the 'Israel' one further Christian name back in each generation; his own father was James Israel Eden and his grandfather Israel Eden. My mother, however, thankfully insisted on a break with this particular tradition. It is my belief that my father was unaware that his great grandfather, the father of Israel, was named James Eden, and that the name James therefore goes back farther in the lineage than the name Israel.

As an only son my father might have been expected in the sexist early Twentieth Century days to have come into possession of family documents and certificates, but this does not seem to have been the case; at the crucial time he was surrounded by a decidedly female-dominated entourage, one of whose members moreover, as I shall later explain, took it upon herself to destroy the family bible.

In the event the only document of any antiquity to reach me was a hand-written marriage certificate from the 'Parish of St Martin in the Island of Jersey', recording the marriage on 21 June 1771 of 'George Froom of Winfreth in Dorsetshire and Elizabeth Brown of Letten Cheney in the same county'. On the basis of having come into possession of their marriage certificate it did not take much effort to guess that these two were probably Eden ancestors, and in fact we have now established that their youngest child, Mary, married James Eden and produced 12 children, of whom the 11th was Israel. The Frooms were a well known Somerset family, but as a high proportion of them were called George it has not yet been possible to establish the position of our particular George Froom in the hierarchy.

My father mentioned he had been told he had cousins in the South West with whom contact had been lost, and the existence of these cousins does indeed appear probable, since the 12 siblings were mostly born at Hadspen in Somerset and most if not all survived to adulthood.

As a child, I glimpsed only the faintest of faint personal echoes of a Mrs Israel Eden, based on no more than my father's report that the two parents of James Israel Eden presented him, their eldest son, with a gold fob watch on his twenty first birthday. The watch has now come to me, the eldest son of the eldest son of James Israel. It bears the initials JIE and, well rubbed from usage, the date Octr 1867, which was indeed his 21st.

We have a single 'positive on glass' photograph from my father's collection, of a type which dates from the 1850s. It shows a proud gentleman with dark sideburns, a bow tie, light coloured chequered waistcoat and trousers, and a dark jacket. He appears distinctly Dickensian. The anxious but academic looking ?ten year old lad standing by his side bears a noticeable resemblance to the one authentic photograph of a middle aged James Israel and I am inferring that the proud gentleman must be Israel. The authentic photograph of James Israel shows him standing with a dog at his feet. He was dark haired and bearded, mild and responsible, with the chain of the famous fob watch in evidence. A copy came to me via Joan née Cooper, daughter of my aunt Nessie, the youngest sister bar one of JAIE, so how it came to her we do not know - it seems likely Nessie was around when her mother, my grandmother, Mrs Elizabeth Jane Eden, died in 1916.

JAIE's birth certificate records that JIE was in 1888 an Assistant Surveyor to the Metropolitan Police, living in May Cottage, Nottingham Road, Wandsworth - according to my father he was an architect, responsible for the design of many of the late Victorian police stations in London - substantial if anonymous memorials. Nottingham Road is a shortish street mostly of middling Victorian terrace houses with bay windows. In 1990 May Cottage was not identifiable, but this exercise needs to be repeated, as it subsequently transpired that part of the earlier Nottingham Road has since been renamed.

JAIE was the owner of a nice little library including a complete bound and crumbling set of the Waverley Novels. We still have a shelf full of the more interesting looking of the books, but I fear that my brother Richard and I dispersed much of the library on the grounds of lack of space, although my father had conscientiously preserved it and later anxiously enquired if it was still intact.

One of the books in the library was 'Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson', printed 1865, and its flyleaf carries a beautifully illuminated inscription, the work of a thoroughly professional hand: 'Miss C J Woodcock, a Birthday Present from JIE.' Cecilia Jane Woodcock was to become the first wife of JIE, and mother of his two eldest daughters, Annie and Maudie. In 1865 JIE would have been 19.

Cecelia Jane died in 1878, and in 1881 James Israel was married again - to Miss Elizabeth Jane Collings, the niece of his first wife, who bore him six more daughters and one son, JAIE. In order these were Lillie, Millie, Gertie, Dick (JAIE), Carrie, Nessie and Winnie.

One of the forebears of Dick has to his credit a chunky but precisely crafted wooden bookcase, for a long time relegated to the garage of Dick, then to my own garage, then - cleaned and resuscitated - to the conservatory of Robert David, and after about 1992 to his office. There is also a handd made chest of drawers and a wooden chair with curly arm rests, possibly by the same hand. My current guess is that these were the work of Israel Eden, but only because the inferred Israel of the plate glass positive looks more capable of carpentry than does his son.

It seems likely that with eight sisters the young Dick was thoroughly spoilt, especially as an early photograph in sailor gear, when he was aged around three, shows him to have been spectacularly good looking in a soulful sort of way, with long blonde locks. If it

comes to that most of his sisters, too, were poppets in their youth, although in some of her photographs Carrie looks decidedly tough - it was she who destroyed the family bible. In fairness to her, though, it has to be said that in 1881 it was apparently illegal for a man to marry a niece of his wife, and Carrie might have been fearful of the consequences of this relationship becoming generally known.

James Israel died at Hastings on 15 March 1898, aged only 51, and was buried in Wandsworth Cemetery. Dick, born 23 January 1888, was therefore left fatherless at the age of ten. Elizabeth Jane with her children moved back to her native Southampton, where she had at least one brother, Dick's 'Uncle Jim'.

Uncle Jim was a master plumber, who conducted his business using a pony and trap for transport. Sometimes he was accompanied by the young Dick, who remembered being consigned to his own devices in the trap for long periods when there was work in hand.

Elizabeth Jane must have been left with a small capital when she was widowed, and this was used to acquire a row of five terrace houses in Cecil Avenue, Southampton. These provided a small rental income, and were still standing at the end of the Twentieth Century. She also had a grocery shop on the corner of Cecil Avenue and Beulau Road, which has since been converted into a house (presumably No 50 Cecil Avenue). The shop was not a success. She moved then to Foundry Lane, and by 1914 was living in a different house in the same lane (the latter was a red brick house, the second away from the corner of Heysham Road). Finally she moved to 25 Lumsden Avenue. All this information came from Monnie, son of Millie, who had a phenomenal memory, recollecting events datable to when he was three years old. (Regrettably Monnie died in January 1993.)

Dick later took over the administration of the income from the five houses and reported that all the females earlier involved had made a hash of it. The row was sold in the mid-1930s and Dick's £60 share was used to purchase a much loved greenhouse at 17 Valley Green. In 1985 my maternal second cousin Gilian Clark mentioned to me that she had, in her role of solicitor, just completed the sale of a Southampton terrace house of which the deeds showed a Mr Eden as a previous owner.

Elizabeth Jane died in 1916, a year after the marriage of Dick and Dora. Her resigned looking photograph always remained on the bedroom mantelpiece of Dick (who became Arthur at his wife's behest) and Dora. Her last photographic appearance was at the wedding, dressed in widow's weeds 17 years after her husband's death, her hands ensconced in a black fur muffler.

The only other early Eden picture I have (a mental one) is of the young Dick walking with his father in the New Forest. The father finds and uproots a small straight holly tree with a curved rootstock. 'This will make a fine walking stick.' He skins off the bark as he walks. For years his find remained about the house of his widow as a knobbly yellow walking stick, until she had it stained, lacquered, and fitted with a silver ferrule and cap together with a small ornamental plaque bearing the initials JAE, as a memento of his father. In his latter years Arthur used this stick as his favourite support, for the most part firmly rejecting the tubular aluminium devices which had by then become the norm for elderly folk - it had the advantage of being more readily brandishable.

And as a child that was just about the totality of my knowledge of the earlier members of the Eden line. The eight sisters all married, and five had families of their own - we remained in touch into the 1990/2000s with one or two cousins on that side, notably Joan and Monnie, also Don, brother of Joan, and Audrey, granddaughter of Lillie.

The extended family of my father held together more or less well until 1939, although the move of my parents to north London when they were married on 3 April 1915 was part of the slow process of breaking up. There were twice yearly car trips to Southampton between the wars. We always stayed at one of the larger houses of members of my mother's more affluent family, but regular visitations took place.

Sadly I fear that as a child I took it upon myself to make a point of having a problem in distinguishing between my paternal aunts, and it may well have showed. The second eldest, Maud, and the youngest, Winnie, stood out to me as characters, perhaps partly because - like my parents - they migrated to the London area, where we saw more of them. The others seemed to look rather alike, with comparable husbands and comparable houses.

Maud was in the habit of giving us - Richard and myself - enthusiastic, damp and very cheerful kisses. With a large mouth, lively eyes, a mass of dark hair done up in a small bun, and a small chin, she was my favourite, although I never told her so; I always wished though that her kisses could have been less damp.

In addition to my father's eight sisters there was, too, Auntie Bine, a frail maiden aunt from the previous generation; sister of Elizabeth Jane. She produced voluminous hugs and kisses as wet as those of Auntie Maud when she came to baby sit for my mother. I seem to remember in my very early years selecting Auntie Bine as the first person with whom to be a conscious pest. The absence of any steel fist in that particular glove was an opportunity too good to be missed. My sins, though, mostly consisted of absenting myself for unauthorised periods when Auntie Bine was in charge - my enjoyment lay in riding out the reaction produced.

There is little detail available about my father's early upbringing. Like many children he had a stamp collection which was curated with a degree of care for a number of years. From 1900 onwards to 1914 (aged 26) he was in the thick of his schooling and academic studies, and numerous resulting certificates have survived; perhaps initially due to the custodianship of his mother. From these it is clear that he was educated at Southampton Taunton's Trade School from 1900 to 1904 or perhaps 1906, and at Southampton Day Training College from 1906 to 1908.

Rightly or wrongly, the concept I have is that after the family of James Israel was demoted from reasonable professional status to near penury as a result of his demise, it was to the young James Arthur Israel that the female relatives turned to redress the situation, and James Arthur Israel responded with the dogged determination which is endemic in some members of the family. He set himself to climb up the ladder of professional qualification, no doubt encouraged first by his mother, and later certainly by his wife. The result is an impressive roll of certificates recording step by step his academic achievements - there appears in those days to have been a great emphasis on the issuing and gathering of certificates

Amongst the earliest of these (in 1903, when he was aged 15) was a first class certificate in the examination for Drawing on the Blackboard, issued by the Board of Education, South Kensington, and in the same year a second class certificate in the Advanced Stage of Inorganic Chemistry (Theoretical). Dating from 1 August 1908 he was awarded recognition by the Board of Education as a Certified Teacher for Public Elementary Schools.

He obtained his London Matric in 1905 in English, Chemistry, Maths, French, plus Electricity and Magnetism, and his London Intermediate Science in 1906. In 1908 he passed his final examination in Teaching and Music, this latter surprising in view of his apparent lack of any noticeable sign of musical ability in later years. Other certificates relate especially to organic and inorganic chemistry and to maths, mostly second class but sometimes first class. In 1914 he received a first class certificate in the Advanced Stage of Commercial Correspondence, issued by the National Union of Teachers.

The 1914 certificate was followed by a hiatus. Dick (James Arthur Israel) had become aware of Dora - and she of him - in about 1905, apparently at church. For two years, however, no word was exchanged, and Dora's private name for the young man became 'the blushing rose'. The first Eden family residence in Southampton was located about a mile from that of the Clarks (assuming that the Clarks were then living at 51 Howard Road, which is by no means certain) and each successive move of Elizabeth Jane plus her brood brought the two households closer together. Dick, however, may well have started his teaching career in London soon after his qualification in 1908. His speciality was mathematics.

Southampton is readily accessible by train from London, and there must have been a good deal of commuting. Dick seemingly somehow overcame his initial reticence in respect of Dora, although marriage did not ensue until some ten years after their first meeting.

During those ten years group photographs record that Dick became an enthusiastic footballer, although for which club he played I do not know. Curiously, he must at one time also have been in the Territorial Army, since he appears in the uniform of a corporal in a photograph dated 1910. He never mentioned this aspect of his youth, and presumably must have left the TA before the start of World War I, since he continued in his employment as a teacher until well after it had begun.

In the pre-war years Dick became confirmed as a life-long teetotaller on account of the suffering which he saw demon drink inflict on many of the children with whom he came into contact. He observed husbands drinking away their week's wages on a Friday evening, leaving little or nothing for their unfortunate families. He placed the blame for this situation squarely on the shoulders of the brewers, and his hatred of the brewers was in consequence equal to his sympathy for those who suffered in the interests of their profits. In no way did he intend ever to contribute to those profits.

Arthur's military career is recorded somewhat briefly in the 'LCC (London County Council) Record of War Service' as follows:

> **Eden, James Arthur** (1915-19); Sapper, R.G.A. and R.E.; France 1 year.

This means that he joined the army - I understand he volunteered, no doubt with some reservations - not so long after his marriage to Dora on 3 April 1915, her twenty-fifth birthday. On marriage they moved into a brand new house at 22 Blake Road, New Southgate, near Wood Green, North London, but when Arthur entered the forces Dora moved back to the Clark household in Southampton and reverted to her job of teaching for the duration.

At the time of his enlistment the headmaster of Arthur's school was a gentleman called Robert Poulson, after whom I was later to be named and who remained a family friend until the end of his life in the 1930s. This Robert Poulson lost all his male teachers in a short space of time in the recruitment campaigns of 1915, and was obliged to struggle on 'unaided' (? surely there must have been female replacements) for the remainder of the war. Although not a professional biologist he took a keen interest in lichens, publishing several papers on the topic and other botanical matters, and presenting a number of specimens to the British Museum collections, the acceptance of which gave him inordinate pleasure. Of Robert Poulson more later.

Arthur used to explain that as he had palpitations due to nervousness during his army medical he was graded C3; this did not, however, prevent a posting to active service in France. He was appropriately antipathetic to `the Jerries`, but also fairly thoroughly out of sympathy with the British army hierarchy, and indeed with most available hierarchies (an apparently genetic trait).

Arthur rarely spoke of the war. As a technically oriented person he was allocated to an artillery unit concerned with sound-ranging on German guns. Microphones were strung out behind the lines and connected to a central point by wires. By triangulating on the arrival times of sound from a particular gun it was possible to pinpoint its position. A favourite story was that whilst laying out wires in a cornfield with a companion he heard a shell arriving and dropped to the ground, remaining concealed when it had exploded, with the result that he was thought to be a 'goner'.

Dora was of the view that the war changed Arthur considerably; she believed it to be on account of what he had witnessed and was unwilling to talk. Certainly he was the sort of person whose reaction to an emotional situation was to erect a barrier around himself. Maybe his military experience coincided with his growing up. He ended the war as a Lance Corporal (or was it Lance Bombardier? – anyhow, one stripe).

When the Armistice was declared an early reaction of the War Office was to decide there was no need for troops on leave in the UK to go back to France. Arthur happened to be on leave at the time and thereby obtained early release, although this policy was later reversed on account of the disorganised demobilisation to which it led.

The obligatory military moustache was soon shaved off; 22 Blake Road was re-occupied; Arthur returned to his teaching career and his studies. In order to become a head teacher he knew he must possess a BSc degree, and it was to this goal that he applied himself as an external student at London University. He finally became a graduate in 1923, aged 35.

As a technically oriented person of his time, Arthur tended to be in the vanguard in respect of innovations. In the 1920s he was building his own wireless sets: 81 years

later I still have a box of the very solid brass terminals which he used, fitted onto bakelite bases. He personally installed electric wiring in 22 Blake Road, replacing earlier gas lighting. For a while he was a keen photographer, using a plate camera which he later passed to me, and doing all his own developing and printing. He was an early DIY enthusiast, making basic but serviceable furniture including a workshop bench and ladder which I still have, and doing his own painting and decorating to professional standards.

In about 1926 he acquired his first car, ML 2940, at a time when car-ownership was still exceptional – it permitted us to be ground breakers in respect of holidays in isolated locations. He did all the car servicing, including himself stripping the engine down to its basic components. Both of my parents, as teachers, were thoroughly convinced of the value of education, and thoroughly determined that my brother and I were to be pushed as far as our abilities permitted.

The Clark line

The Beckford strand

One of the props to the morale of the confident and successful Clark generation which included my mother was a knowledge of its descent on the maternal side from Sir William Beckford, Lord Mayor of London in 1762 and again in 1769, and reputed to be one of England's wealthiest citizens at that time. A romantic story was available within the family to explain the change in financial status - I will come to this later.

Not surprisingly the Beckford strand is the one which can be followed the farthest back, a procedure assisted by the consideration that most of the small number of English Beckfords of the time, or at least those who left Wills, seem to have been related.

The parish of Beckford in Gloucestershire appears in the Doomsday Book as terra regis in the time of Edward the Confessor, but the first Beckford of whom I have knowledge was the Sir William Beckford of that parish who was stated to be a principal supporter of Richard III.

Richard III, as Duke of Gloucester, is credited with the murder in 1483 of his nephew, Edward V, aged 12, prior to seizing the throne for himself; authorities seem to have little doubt that he was responsible also for the deaths of the two princes in the Tower in the same year. William Beckford fought - and it is believed died - for Richard III against Henry Tudor in the Battle of Bosworth Field on August 22nd, 1485, the last battle of the Wars of the Roses and occasion of the founding of the Tudor dynasty. Moreover the last time the crown of England changed hands on the field of battle.

The site of the battle can be accessed today off the M69 between Coventry and Leicester. There is a well illustrated battlefield trail with the help of which the scene and tactics of the fiercest fighting can be readily identified and visualised. Curiously, Sir William Beckford is not listed amongst the knights who fell.

On the basis of four generations per hundred years - and excluding any allowance for duplications - I personally had approximately 1,048,576 ancestors living just before the

time of this battle; my children had 2,097,152, my grandchildren had 4,196,304. William Beckford of Beckford is likely to have been one of them.

A much later William Beckford, author of the novel 'Vatek' and brother of the probable Clark ancestor Rose Beckford, gave considerable attention to the construction of a detailed and somewhat dubious family tree which is probably the one reproduced in a book called 'History of Fonthill Abbey' by Britton. I believe that anyone wishing to research the earlier Beckford lineage would do well to start at Brodick Castle in the Isle of Arran, where the papers of the 'Vatek' Beckford may have come to rest.

My own researches, such as they are, leave me with a gap of over 100 years between the 'Bosworth' Beckford and Peter Beckford of Clerkenwell, whose dates are unknown but who had a son, also Peter, born in 1643. By the time of these Peter Beckfords we are on firmish ground.

Peter Beckford of Clerkenwell emigrated to Jamaica, where in 1669 his son, now Colonel Peter Beckford, was granted 1000 acres in the Clarendon Parish. This later Peter Beckford became Lt Governor and Commander in Chief of Jamaica under William III, dying as a wealthy man on 3 April 1710. Lt Governor Beckford had the reputation of being a ruthless and violent individual, 'thinking himself the greatest man in the world, carrying and using, too, a large stick on very trivial provocations'. A contemporary referred to him as 'one of the greatest incendiaries here', an assessment perhaps confirmed by the manner of his death - he fell down a flight of steps in the course of a fracas in the House of Assembly. At the time of his death he had 24 plantations in Jamaica and 1200 slaves.

The son of Lt Governor Peter Beckford was yet another Peter Beckford - this one became Speaker of the Jamaican Assembly - and he too had a reputation for violence, being recorded as having murdered the Deputy Judge Advocate. How he got away with this I do not know, but ultimately he died peacefully in his bed in 1735, reputed to be the 'richest subject in Europe'. His eldest son, the fourth Peter Beckford of Jamaica, inherited but died childless about a year later, to be followed by (Alderman) William Beckford, his younger brother. For the record, the mother of Alderman William Beckford was Bathsheba, daughter of Colonel Julines Heering of Jamaica.

The future Alderman and Lord Mayor was born in 1709, and in 1723 came to England to be educated at Westminster School, where the headmaster is said to have stated 'he was one of the best scholars the school ever had'. From Westminster he moved to Baliol College. Later he headed the West India interests in politics and finance. A rhyming advertisement in support of his election to represent London in 1761 read:

> London, awake; behold Pitt's generous friend,
> Whom all the Patriot Talents recommend;
> In choosing Beckford be your wisdom shown,
> Secure his voice and Freedom is your own

Alderman Beckford's achievements included standing up to George III in his speech of 25 May 1770 - the words are engraved on his statue in the Guildhall:

> 'Permit me, sire, to observe that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour by false insinuations and suggestions to alienate your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the City of London in particular, and to withdraw your confidence in and regard for your people is an enemy of your Majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy constitution as it was established at the glorious and necessary revolution.'

Other achievements of the Alderman were the purchase of the Fonthill Abbey Estate in 1736 and the building there of Fonthill Splendens after an earlier house was burnt down in 1755.

On his death, though, H Walpole wrote of the Alderman, 'the papers make me sick with talking of that noisy vapourising fool'. To add insult to injury he was later recorded (J W Oliver, 1932) as 'an unattractive character, ambitious, pretentious and overbearing, and licentious in his private life to a degree which seems to have scandalised even his none too squeamish Eighteenth Century contemporaries'.

These judgements sound somewhat personal opinions, especially as the private irregularities of Alderman Beckford were not without their positive side - since this is where we seem to come in. He sired no fewer than eight illegitimate children before marrying in 1756, aged 47, and producing the one legitimate child - 'Vatek' William Beckford - who was to inherit 'a million in money and £100,000 a year'.

It was VWB who was to claim in later life that he was through one branch descended from Mervin, 2nd Earl of Castlehaven, and on the strength of this claim he adopted Mervin's motto 'De Dieu Tout'. The family circumstances of Mervin, a former owner of the Fonthill Abbey Estate, no doubt appealed to the Beckford appreciation of the odd, as Mervin was executed for immorality in 1631, having been denounced by his own son. Mervin is a hare I have not felt motivated to follow, hence I do not know if he fits into the maternal or paternal line of VWB - if the latter he would fit into the ancestry of the Edens too.

All eight of the illegitimate children of Alderman B took the name Beckford, and each received the handy sum of £5000 when he died on 21 June, 1770. With £5000 in those days one was a person of substance. Our man must seemingly have been No 4 son, Rose Beckford; his mother was the Alderman's principal mistress, Mrs Hannah Thwaites, 'otherwise Maxwell'. She herself was allocated an annuity of £200pa in his Will.

I am guessing that Rose was born around 1750; it might have been later but is hardly likely to have been much earlier since in the Will of Alderman Beckford drawn up on 19 June 1765 he is described as being "now at a boarding school at (?Peckham) in the county of Surrey".

We jump from his birth to his death, because of his life little seems readily visible; even his death is obscure - Richard and I have so far been unable to find any trace of his Will. It seems likely that it was never proved, and this would be in line with a family tradition that the executors of the Beckford ancestor of the Clarks absconded to Australia with his funds. The Will of his brother John Beckford, dated 15 August 1810, has a phrase which states "including property I am or may be entitled to from the estate and effects of my

brother Rose Beckford". The Will of another brother, Thomas Beckford, dated 24 February 1814, refers to "a legacy of £(?)3000 plus interest from my late brother Rose Beckford Esq.' Thomas and Rose shared the same mother

This is not the place to go into details, but there seems no doubt that Rose died between 1794 and 1802, when he was in his late 40s/early 50s, and he left significant sums to two of his brothers, sums large enough to suggest they may have constituted the bulk of his estate - surprising in the case of a person whom we are inferring to have had a family.

Now we have a problem. Rose Hannah Beckford unquestionably married Henry Dunning Harvey on 19 October 1813 - it is recorded in the Harvey family bible and in the parish register of St Mary of Lambeth, and we have a copy of her portrait so she was brought up in reasonably affluent circumstances. The Lambeth register records that both bride and groom were 'of this parish'.

Hannah was the name of the mother of Rose - surely the young lady given the names Rose Hannah Beckford must have been his daughter. To date there is no documentary proof, but the coincidence of names is striking, as is the fact that she appears to have received no name from her maternal side. The tradition in the family was that Rose Hannah married below her status against the wishes of her family - and as a result was disinherited. The dates do not fit with the disinheritor being Rose, but it could very easily have been his brother Thomas, whose (very bleak) Will was dated 24th February 1814, four months after the marriage of rose Hannah. There are reasons for believing that Thomas was unlikely to have been the father of Rose Hannah, but it does seem probable that she was brought up in his family - perhaps as an orphan child of his brother. Probably living in Devizes. The absence of any evidence that Rose was married, the absence of any evidence of Rose Hannah's baptism, the fact that she carried only Beckford names, and the circumstances of the Will of Rose, all suggest that Rose Hannah was his daughter, and very possibly illegitimate.

This is our provisional conclusion, but the exact position of Rose Hannah remains unproven, and further work is required, although all the obvious channels have up to year 2001 proved unproductive.

The position is complicated a little by there being two other Beckford sisters around at the same time - the daughters of 'Vatek' William Beckford, inheritor of the main Beckford fortune. The elder, Maria Margaret, married in 1811 aged 26 and the younger, Susan Euphemia, in 1810 aged 24. The hints which seem to have reached the highly moral late Victorian generation of my mother were that one of these two was Rose Hannah.

No such luck. They were her cousins. Susan Euphemia married the 10th Duke of Hamilton, and this is the reason why the Beckford papers ended up in Scotland. Curiously, though, it is the case that Maria Margaret also found herself estranged from her family when she eloped with an impecunious Colonel Orde - she died young, only seven years after the run-away wedding and following a last minute reconciliation with her father.

Then there is the Jane Austin connection. Miss Beckford of Basing Park, Hants, is stated to be mentioned several times in the letters of Jane Austin, who wrote a poem

concerning her on 7 February 1811. Could this Miss Beckford have been our Rose Hannah? It seems very unlikely. All the Beckfords appear to interconnect, though, so since she was probably a relative - and since the poem is so bad that it deserves preservation - let us include it here.

I've a pain in my head
Said the suffering Beckford
To her Doctor so dread
Oh! what shall I take for't?

Said her Doctor so dread
Whose name was Newnham,,
For this pain in your head
Ah! what can you do Ma'am?

Said Miss Beckford, Suppose
If you think there's no risk
I take a good Dose
Of Calomel Brisk.

What a praiseworthy notion
Replied Doctor Newnham.
You shall have such a potion
And so will I too Ma'am.

The Harvey strand

The Harvey family bible is dated 1804 and originally belonged to John Harvey Jnr of Weymouth. John Harvey and Sarah (probably nee Dunning, because that name keeps cropping up in later Christian names) were the likely parents of the Henry Dunning Harvey who won Rose Hannah Beckford in 1813. The bible became labelled as their family bible, and their marriage ('by licence') was its first entry.

Let us record that the portrait of Rose Hannah shows her to look pleasant enough in a homely sort of a way; a bit youthfully judicial perhaps, with dark hair plaited firmly across the top of her head. Not the sort of person who might expect to get herself into scrapes, but had she become fed up by constant reminders of her inferior social and financial status she might have been relieved to find a way out.

No 1 child of John Harvey and Rose Hannah duly appeared at 6.30 am on 28 August 1814 - it was Henry Beckford Harvey, our man, later to be Captain Harvey of the Paddle Wheel Mail Steamer Normandy. Wilkins was the surgeon. The birth took place at Fontwell near Shaftsbury, curiously not all that far from Fonthill, but his baptism was not until 23 January 1818, at St Mary's Parish Church, Weymouth

John Harvey himself was described as a 'merchant' living at 'Ridgeway' in the parish of Upwey, Weymouth. Lambeth .. Salisbury .. Weymouth - these young folk certainly got around!

There were at least five other children, mostly with Beckford as a Christian name and mostly born in the Weymouth area; No 3 was another Rose Hannah - Rose Hannah Beckford Harvey; No 4 child got his or her name erased from the bible; No 6 child was born in Southampton in 1833 - the Harveys must by then have closed in to their Southampton destiny.

Henry Beckford Harvey rose to his captaincy from 'before the mast', and at some unknown date married a severe looking lady named Eliza Blake. He himself in his later years was cheerily benevolent and bearded - this is the first generation in the Harvey strand of which we have photographs. Between them Captain Harvey and Eliza set about playing their role in the Victorian population explosion, producing eight children - six girls and two boys.

This was another point at which we experienced a crucial stroke of luck. Our girl was not only No 8, but she arrived on the scene a full thirteen years after her youngest sibling. We had every right to breathe a sigh of relief when Cecilia Beckford Harvey made her tardy appearance.

Cecilia grew to be an attractive young lady with a mind of her own, but by the time she was in her teens she had lost her father, who chose to go down with his ship after preventing a panic amongst his passengers when the Normandy collided with the Screw Steamer Mary off the Needles.

I have written elsewhere about the events of that night of 16/17 March 1870, when Captain Harvey - thanks to Victor Hugo - secured himself a place in the annals of Victorian chivalry. He also secured himself a granite obelisk in the harbour of St Helier, Jersey, put up by public subscription. The inscription starts: 'HARVEY. To noble heroism.'

However, should the truth of that night be sought I do not recommend the pages of the eulogy by Victor Hugo (called simply 'Le Capitaine Harvey'). The record of the proceedings of the enquiry into the collision by the Admiralty Court, published in the Times dated 5-20 April 1870, read a great deal more credibly. I fear the Court concluded that the fault lay with the Normandy, and the fact that the Captain was off duty and asleep at the time did not wholly exculpate him.

Cecilia Beckford Harvey married James Frederick Clark probably in the late 1870s. We possess a little memento of their courtship years - a book of the poems of William Cooper inscribed, 'Miss C B Harvey. A Birthday Gift from Fred 4/12/76.' The writing is expansive and carefully executed, although not in the class of the inscription by James Israel Eden, also in a book of poems.

Eliza Harvey, mother of Cecilia, eventually died in 1889, nineteen years after her husband but still aged only 72; she was buried in Southampton Cemetery. It is interesting that the Harvey family bible went to Cecilia, the youngest child. From her it passed to my cousin Harvey Clark, eldest son of the eldest son (Fred) of Cecilia.

The Clark strand

We know quite a lot about the Clark strand, at least in terms of names, mainly because they were systematically researched by Alan Lawrence, my third cousin. His tree, though, does not stretch back to the 'first' of the Clarks, William Clark, baptised in Ladykirk in 1722.

One day someone may discover how William relates to the first Clark of Alan Lawrence, namely John Clark (or Clerk) 'wright' of Coldstream, Berwickshire, who on 7 November 1758 married Jannet (Jean) Waddell in Eckles, Berwickshire. Jannet was the daughter of William Waddell, who was married in 1740, also in Ladykirk, and indeed Jannet was born in Ladykirk. There is a distinctly Scottish feel about these early Clarks.

Adam Clark, son of John and Jannet, was born in Coldstream, but that was the end of the Scottish connection for quite a few generations, because he moved south to Southampton. It must have been a long way to move in those days. The motivation? He was a 'carpenter and plane maker'; it seems reasonable to suppose the reason for the move may have been the construction of the British fleet for the Napoleonic wars.

At all events Adam married Sarah Strugnell of Hamble, Hants, on 11 December 1794 at Southampton. Adam, in fact, was appropriately the founder of the Southampton Clark clan, which is still going strong two centuries later.

Adam and Sarah begat four boys and three girls; the third in line was John Clark, born Southampton, profession 'joiner', ie he followed his father's trade. John Clark stayed put in Southampton, marrying Mary Wayt at Whitchurch, Hants, in 1830.

John and Mary in their turn begat a girl and three boys; our man, James this time, was again the third in line, again he followed the family trade - he became a master cabinet maker - and again he remained put in Southampton.

James Clark is the first of the physically real Clarks in that we have both his photograph and a sample of his handwriting. Photographs taken in his old age show a stout, benign, white bearded, well dressed gentleman; his handwriting was neat and precise. He appears with hands clasped above his tummy in two four-generation family groups of which I myself knew the members of the last three generations.

In 1857 James married Mary Francis Morley, a neighbour in East Street, Southampton - she was a relative by marriage, her younger sister Lydia having in 1856 married Giles Clark, the older brother of James; ie, the Clark family, woodworkers in East Street, were linked by two marriages to the Morley family, bakers in East Street. East Street is still to be seen, near to the Bar Gate. It has some precinct shopping development, but there remain plenty of small shops - no bakers or joiners though.

The Morley strand

Our knowledge of the Morleys begins about 1758, when William Morley married 'Betsey'. They had five children of whom Robert Morley, No 5 and born in Hursley, Hants, was our man; he was a farmer, no doubt following in the footsteps of William. In around 1802 Robert married 'Hannah' and in due course eight children resulted. The

eldest child of Robert and Hannah was William, also born in Hursley. Hursley must have been the family home.

William Morley, though, was to leave Hursley and the farming tradition. In 1828 he married Mary Tyler in Southampton, and eventually he became a master baker in East Street. William and Mary produced no fewer than twelve children. Mary Francis was No 3, probably born about 1831. What is it like to be No 3 in a family of twelve?

At this rate of fecundity over three generations it is not surprising that there was at least one distinguished Morley in this batch - Archbishop Morley no less. Since I have not researched him I do not know exactly how he fitted in, but he was prominently involved with Winchester Cathedral.

The Clark strand (continued)

We have photographs of Mary Francis Clark, nee Morley, but only as a relatively young woman, her hair parted severely in the middle and distinctly unsmiling, but also not at all bad looking. The photographs of James Clark, on the other hand, show him to have been a comfortable and somewhat relaxed-looking individual. The family of James and Mary Francis was limited to six, and I have speculated elsewhere that Mary may have been more than a match for James when it came to family planning.

It is, though, with the first of their children that we are concerned - James Frederick Clark. Mary Francis, who was something of a poetess, composed this acrostic on his name, copied by himself into my mother's autograph book:

> Jesus the Captain of the Host
> Arm thee with power to fight
> Make thee a soldier of His cross
> E'en all things else to count but loss
> So that thou may'st win Christ
>
> Forward the watchword of the day
> Ready thy master's call obey
> Enemies thick around may rise
> Doubt not the grace His strength supplies
> Every foe must vanquished be
> Rest not till gained the victory
> Into the thickest thou must go
> Christ will be with thee fear no foe
> Keep near thy Captain's side
>
> Cheering to hear him say Well done
> Lay down thy sword the victory's won
> Arise from earth my bliss to share
> Reap thy reward of toil and care
> Kneel and receive thy crown.

Not at all bad really, even if in this version the reader is left to supply any punctuation felt appropriate. There is another brief poem by Mary Francis in my mother's autograph

album, in this case fully punctuated and transcribed in the careful hand of her husband James Clark. It is entitled 'God's Providence':

> How sweet the thought, that come what may,
> Come joy or sorrow, we can say,
> Our heavenly father wills it all,
> Who marks the helpless sparrow's fall.

The six children of Mary Francis and James Clark - four boys and two girls - were, in order of age, James Frederick, Kitt, Ernest, Jessie, Grace and Bert. Where they lived we do not know, but they must have been familiars of East Street.

All the siblings were married in due course; the two girls were childless, and as the three brothers of James Frederick fathered only girls he became the sole custodian of our branch of the Clark family name. He addressed himself effectively to the needs of the situation by marrying Cecelia Beckford Harvey probably in the late 1870s.

Here originated the Great Clark Family sensu stricto - a well-knit sympathetic organism, now at the change of the millennium beginning to fray a little at the edges but many of its members still in contact and taking part in occasional family reunions.

It has to be said, though, that the driving force in the family seems to have been Cecelia Beckford rather than James Frederick (Grandpa Clark). She became a large motherly matriarch, somewhat immobile in later years, around whom lesser mortals circulated; he became a smallish man with a moustache, semi-sheltering under her wing. His standard trick in facing the embarrassment of dealing with a small child (me, for example) was to close his eyes whilst the child was required to hold up one hand for about a minute, after which he felt both hands and pronounced which had been held up.

I cannot claim to have known Grandpa Clark well, but I believe him to have been a gentle person who was basically shy at heart although caught up in a whirl of energetic family activities. In his later years he was notably fearsome and usually clad in a dark grey dressing gown. According to Harvey Clark he was sufficiently concerned about the potential terrors of the after-life to cause trepidation to an impressionable teenager.

My understanding is that during his working life Grandpa Clark held a post of some consequence in the administration of the booming docklands of Southampton - Secretary, I believe, to the docks company. He also involved himself in inventing such things as couplings for railway wagons. This was at a time when the construction of the New Docks, by reclamation of a large area behind a two-mile long sea wall, was being planned and almost certainly commenced, but I do not know what part he played in this development. At all events his income was adequate to secure a higher education for such of his children as wanted one. There were seven in all - Cissie, Fred, Belle, followed by a gap, then Ethyl, Dora, Cyril and Leslie.

The Clark family home of my childhood years was at 'Rodney', 51 Howard Road, a largish semi-detached house still to be seen in Southampton, although now divided into two flats and looking much less self assured. It is no longer labelled 'Rodney'. At the time of our twice yearly visits between the wars it was without electricity, and at bedtime

we reported to the kitchen for a candle. We then retired to bed via a long windowless corridor to a first floor room at the back.

The walled back garden was separated into two parts - a lawn at the front end and an orchard behind - by a low wall. My brother Richard and I collected snails from the orchard - snails bigger than any we knew in Hertfordshire - and raced them against each other, sitting on this dividing wall.

Grandpa Clark was a musician of some little note. That is to say he composed several small pieces which have come down to us. Maybe they are the tip of an iceberg. One of the pieces was, possibly still is, the song of the Everton Football Club of Liverpool. It is of interest that on the published (but undated) score the address of James Frederick Clark is detailed as 77 Shirley Road, Southampton. There must have been a move at some stage.

The possibly somewhat tendentious words of this song were composed by an Edward J Page:

Play up my Lads

There is a game we Britons play,
A game that wants true British hearts,
A game that makes old England`s fame
Ring in the earth's remotest parts.
Sometimes at Yachting we are beat,
Sometimes at Cricket get a fall,
But there's a game John Bull can win,
The glorious game of Football.

Then play up my lads! Play well together!
Stick to the ball lads, combine all you can!
Stick to each other lads in all sorts of weather,
Play the game fair and square and not play the man.

And when there is a cup to win,
When party feeling is so rife,
Still play the game as sportsmen should,
Without bad feeling, without strife.
And when you take the field my lads,
And win the trophy or the cup,
Remember some are looking down,
When you my lads are looking up.

Then play up my lads! .....

Then let this be our motto lads,
When playing through the game of life,
That we can lend a helping hand,
To those who're worsted in the strife.
And when at last the whistle blows,

And life has run its little span,
Let it be said we played the game,
Like a brave hearted Englishman.
Then play up my lads! .....

In my mother`s autograph album is another musical composition, a short score without words entitled `Thy will be done` and initialled JFC. I wonder if Grandpa Clark was the medium through whom some members of later generations received their musical talent?

Meal times at Rodney during visits by the Eden family were ceremonies. The assembly was busily collected round the large table, grace was said meaningfully by the senior male or his delegate, and the joint was carved on the sideboard. Vegetables were passed round in oblong aluminium dishes; boiled sprouts, boiled parsnips and roast potatoes. No doubt the twice yearly visitations of Dora, Arthur and the boys from London were used as opportunities for get-togethers of the Southampton Clarks, since by this time all were married and away from the parental home.

Those oblong dishes disappeared from view after my grandparents died, but many years later, when we were winding up the home of my parents, two of them emerged from a cupboard, wrapped neatly in faded newspaper, having been unused (but not discarded) for a generation..

Because of the existence of the family centre at Rodney I knew the Grandpa/Grandma Clark children, my uncles and aunts, a good deal better than most of the James Israel Eden children, also my uncles and aunts.

Belle moved away on marriage to another Fred, Fred Woodrow, whom I do not recall since he spent much of his life in Nigeria where he became a senior civil engineer. In her youth Belle was clearly, well, belle, but in later years she became a large kindly widow of limited mobility like her mother, but with something of the facial appearance of my own mother.

Fred was the second - energetic, athletic, compact, red faced and pipe smoking, always with a twinkle in his eye and always refilling his pipe; he smelled strongly of tobacco.

He was a small family grocer when I first knew him, but later his shop at 330 Shirley High Street was enlarged by a backwards extension, and it must have become a comfortable business. By 1992 it had transformed into a pizza bar. I was very fond of Fred's wife Nancy, indeed everybody was fond of her - she was one of those soft personalities who radiate warmth. She seemed to be physically soft, too, with a damp embrace and still the traces of good looks. Later she became bedridden with arthritis, but earlier had a very respectable skill as an artist and a grace which would have served well for a dancer. We remained in touch with Harvey and Doris, children of Fred and Nancy, until they died. Over the years they came to remind me increasingly of their parents - although in the case of the former without the smell of tobacco.

Cissie completed the elder segment of the family group. I have to describe her as gushing, with enthusiasm for this and that. She also became large, but she seemed never to loose her enthusiasm. For many years our Christmas was spent in the biggish detached house of Cissie and her husband George somewhere in the suburbs of south

west London. It had a gravel drive and a turning circle in front; inside was a large basement playroom with a piebald rocking horse and a pogo stick. The use of the pogo stick indoors was not encouraged.
George was rotund and cheerful, with a lightly waxed rather military moustache, a pin striped dark suit, a pipe, and I am sure a bowler hat. He presided in the spacious lounge, dispensing drinks in front of a cheerful fire with an ornate brass fender. From time to time a young lady in a black dress and white lace hat entered to tend the fire.

After Cissie came the younger family group. Firstly Ethyl and my mother Dora. Ethyl unfortunately died quite young; she had been my mother`s special pal. Her photograph shows a real poppet, but I do not recollect ever having met either her or her Belgian husband. Her two children, Marian and Joan, came to stay with us from time to time, Marian very much a substitute mother for Joan. I fear that we (I) used to tease Joan unless restrained, and she was sometimes in need of a degree of protection during these visits.

Next was Cyril, living in a substantial elongated house with a good cover of adhering greenery. He was a senior engineer at Southampton docks, sufficiently senior to have access to a tug which took us on visits to calling ocean liners - all very grand and large and to me much of a muchness, but including the Queen Mary with her four funnels - a frequent sight on the skyline beyond the New Docks.

These New Docks were partly constructed at the time, and behind the long line of the new quays lay lagoons which were being reclaimed by pumping a dredged mixture of water and silt in from the seaward side and allowing the water to run back at low tide. A familiar sight in pre-War II days was a low fountain of mucky water issuing from an outlet in the middle of an expanse of mud round about the place where the Southampton Boat Show is now held. A lot of the reclaimed area was still dreary wasteland as late as my last visit there in 1985, but it was undeniably land.

Leslie was the baby of the family. Quiet, with level appraising eyes and a thoughtful look, perhaps pondering his status as an afterthought. He became a radiographer and married wee Auntie Doris, who by 1993, when she died suddenly, had long been the sole survivor of her generation. Wee Auntie Doris grew weer but not noticeably older as the years have passed - very much a bluestocking, she was still thoroughly alert and keenly interested as she drew close to her hundredth year. Her daughter, Rosalind, started off like many horse riding young ladies, but has developed into a slightly larger replica of her mother; she will no doubt shrink with time. Her son, Philip - once an uncertain lad - is described by my brother Richard as a `distinguished surgeon`, and indeed he has that look of confirmed distinction.

I have said little about the upbringing and training of my mother, partly because so far I have found little detail of it. My mother was born on 3 April 1890. We have a few photographs of her from age about three onwards, including a number showing her as a member of classes of very acceptable young ladies at the teacher training college where she finished her education.

She must then have taken a job as a teacher, presumably in Southampton, in about 1911, retiring on marriage on her twenty fifth birthday in 1915. Her retirement was, however,

short lived, since she returned to Southampton to teach when my father joined the forces not long afterwards.

Her second and final retirement was undoubtedly abrupt, when immediately after the armistice of 11 November 1918 my father obtained unexpectedly early release from the army, and they were able to take up again their interrupted life together. In those days there was in peace time no such person as a married lady teacher, and in any case work was not appropriate to the wife of such a respected member of society as a teacher. It is of interest that the house to which they first moved in 1915, 22 Blake Road, was of a size, quality and general status which would be well beyond the reach of a 27 year old elementary school teacher in the latter part of the century.

The deeper roots

The ancestral James Eden who married Mary Froom in 1799 was born in 1770 in the hamlet of Hadspen, Somerset. His mother was Ann Eden, born 1750 but no father's name declared, daughter of Mary Eden. (née Coles) who had been born in 1712. Mary Coles married Dragoon Thomas Eden in 1735, but in the case of Ann, also, no father's name was declared, suggesting that Dragoon Eden was not the father. There were therefore apparently two successive generations with missing fathers, and it seems the name Eden is not to be taken as indicating any blood link with a wider Eden super-family.

Mary Coles, born 1712, was the descendent of a line of six John Coles, stretching back to a John Coles (1545? - 1620) who married Edith in, it is believed, 1565 in Brunton, Somerset. John and Edith Coles were approximate contemporaries of William Beckford of Beckford and were therefore two more of the approximately 1,048,576 forebears who represented my generation at that time.

The Coles and the Beckfords are the two most remote roots we have so far traced, and both are firmly located in the Anglo Saxon heartland. The Clark line seems to have originated in an Anglo Saxon fringe of Scotland, but if it started with any Scottish blood it has subsequently got itself pretty thoroughly diluted by Anglo Saxon admixture. I think I can claim to be as pure Anglo Saxon as the animal comes.