

The family of Isaac and Harriet Yeo - a (not so) brief history

John Yeo (b. 27th March 1807 at Sampford Courtenay, Devon) married Mary Banbury at Kingsteignton, Devon in 1835. They had four children; Selina (b. 1836), Thomas (b. 1838), John (b. 11th July 1840) and Isaac (b. 23rd of August 1842). This brief history largely concerns the fourth child Isaac Yeo.

John Yeo, Isaac's father, was a shopkeeper in Sampford Courtenay and he is varyingly described as a grocer, shopkeeper, game dealer and tailor in local directories (Piggott's, Kelly's). From 1844 he is also described as the sub-postmaster a position he retained until he died in 1877. When Isaac was two years old, his mother Mary died (1844). Later that year, his father John re-married; his wife was another Mary (Brealy) and this union was to result in another child William (b.1847).

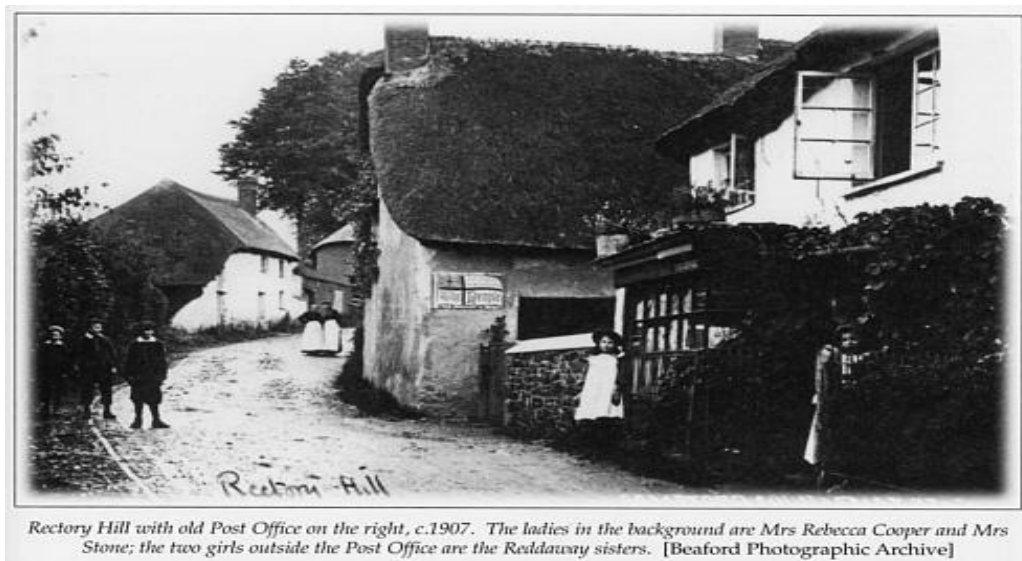


Figure 1 Sampford Courtenay Post Office

Of Isaac's siblings:

Selina Yeo moved to Liverpool between 1851 and 1861. She married James Edward Clayton, a clerk but they had no issue. They lived in 95 Sutton Street, Vue Brook, Liverpool. Selina died in 1896 and James Edward Clayton in 1904. James left bequests to his niece Selina in his will made in 1898. This Selina being one of the daughters of his wife Selina's younger brother, John Yeo.

Thomas Yeo went on to own a tailor's shop at 17 Fore Street, Okehampton. He married Eliza Endcott and they had several children. Thomas died in 1895.

Chatham, Oct 1870

Mr. Thos. Whitcraft

Dr. to THOMAS YEO,
TAILOR, DRAPER AND HAT MAKER.

May 5	Making coat	5 6
	Threads ditto ditto	1 1
July 20	Making horse trousers	2
	Threads ditto ditto	5
	Making small trousers	2
	Threads ditto ditto	5
	Making male trousers & vest	11
	Threads	2
Sept 6	Making male vest	2 6
	Threads & threads	6
11	Making male vest	3 6
	Threads & threads	2
	Threads & threads	6

£ 4. 1. 7

Paid
Thos. Yeo
Oct 11 1870

John Yeo followed his sister to Liverpool and married Martha Ann Wood in 1875. They had several children including the daughter mentioned above, named Selina who married a Thomas Cookson. John Yeo died in 1905.

William Yeo: I have not yet traced William, but I don't think that he married. He is in the 1861 census, but then seems to disappear.

The 1841 census lists the household in Sampford Courtenay as John aged 30, Mary aged 30, Celeanna [sic] aged 5, Thomas aged 3 and John aged 11 months. The house was either the Old Forge or Fairview and both lie near the New Inn public house in Sampford Courtenay.

By the 1851 census, the household lists John aged 43, Mary aged 46 and all the children, except for Selina and Isaac. Confusingly, this is not the same Mary of course although the ages are similar. Selina is described as a servant in a nearby house and our Isaac appears (aged 8) in the household of his uncle Isaac Yeo in Cleeve, Bristol.

Our Isaac (b. 1842) never appears in the household of his father in any census year. I wonder whether he actually knew his father at all. There could be numerous reasons why Isaac is not with his father, but one postulation is that when his mother Mary died in 1844, his father was left with a young family of 4 (including Isaac as a two year old) and a business to run which was providing his livelihood. Although he had several family members living close by, Isaac appears to have ended up with his father's elder brother, also named Isaac (b 1799). This uncle appears to have been a property dealer/holder with land at Sampford Courtenay and Cleeve. Was old Isaac helping his brother out by taking the two year old off his hands? Perhaps old Isaac was looking for an heir to carry on his business. In the 1861 census, my Isaac (aged 18) is living with his uncle in Orchard Street, Weston super Mare along with their loyal old housekeeper Grace Yendall.

Back in Sampford Courtenay in 1861, John Yeo, aged 53, is described as a grocer and tailor. His wife Mary is 57 and sons John aged 20 (a joiner) and William a 13 year old scholar.

In 1868, Isaac Yeo married Harriet Palmer in Weston super Mare. Harriet was the daughter of George Palmer publican, coal-dealer, shopkeeper, baker, businessman, and small-time property speculator of Weston super Mare. The following year, their first child Isaac George Yeo (known as George) was born. Over the next few years, several other children followed: Ellen Harriet Selina Yeo (known as Nellie, born 1870), Florence Kate (born 1872), Walter Henry (born 1874), Emily Beatrice (born 1876), John Courtney (born 1878), William (born 1882) and Alice Nellie Yeo (born 1884).

During the 1860s Isaac was a volunteer in a local militia. These units were established across the UK throughout this time and a unit (about 50 volunteers initially) was established in Weston super Mare. Isaac and his wife's brother William John Palmer were members of this militia. It became known as the "Old Sixth Volunteer Rifles". Isaac's obituary records how he was a marksman and on one occasion how his perfect 7/7 "bulls" won his team a competition by one shot.

On 20th October 1871 old Isaac died in Weston super Mare. His estate was valued at under £200 but he left a considerable amount of property in his will. A year earlier, Isaac had submitted plans to build 9 houses opposite Meadow Road. In his will, his bequests covered many of his nephews and nieces, but the bulk of his estate went to his nephew and executor, Isaac Yeo. This included the house in Great Orchard Street. The house that Isaac and family were living in at Alma Street from 1868 (where Isaac George was born) was left to Grace Yendall, until her demise. Then it would become the property of Isaac. Other houses owned by old Isaac were a property near the Bristol Arms Inn in New Town, Weston, a house in Railway Parade, a house in Sampford Courtenay, a house and land at Stoke Cannon, Devon and a close of freehold land at Yatton. These were left to various relatives of old Isaac. At the time of the 1871 census, Isaac and Harriet were living in No.5 Palmer Street, Weston super Mare. Isaac is described as a carpenter.

During the 1870s, Isaac seemed to hold a portfolio of properties in the Weston super Mare area and by 1877; Isaac was landlord of the Ship Inn at Uphill and is also

recorded as a coal dealer. On 3rd May 1877, his father-in-law George Palmer retired from his coal dealing activities and sold his public house The White Hart in Hopkins Street, Weston super Mare to Richard Tancock for £900. When the mortgage had been paid off, this netted George a figure of £200. Although listed as a public house, it seems that George operated a number of enterprises from it, including coal dealing, bakery and general shop. It appears that George had been operating out of the White Hart since 1854.



Figure 2 White Hart newspaper clipping

George Palmer also had an involvement with building speculation. Plans for 4 houses in Palmer Street were drawn up in 1870. It is also noticeable that several related families lived in Palmer Street at various times. Isaac lived in No. 5 in 1871, Harriet's brother lived in No.4 at the 1881 census and 20 years later Harriet's sister's daughter and husband were living at No.4

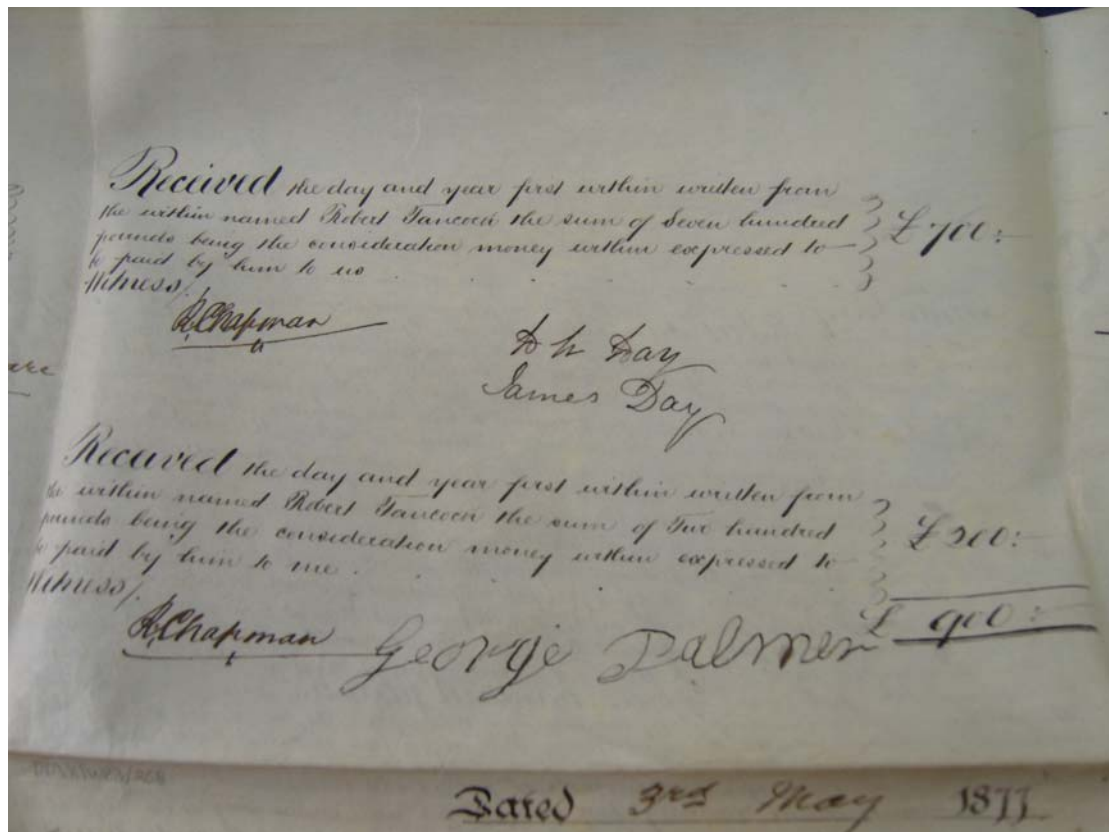


Figure 3 George Palmer's signature

On 26th September 1877, Isaac's father John Yeo of Sampford Courtenay died. The executor of his will was his eldest son Thomas, who lived in nearby Okehampton. The value of John's estate was recorded as under £200.

In the 1881 census, Isaac and his family are living in the Ship Inn, Uphill. Isaac is recorded as a coal dealer in Kelly's directory of 1875 operating from the Ship Inn. The family appear to have lived here between 1875 and 1881. Although there was the coal dealing business, Isaac's granddaughter recalled how there was also illegal contrabrand smuggled in at Uphill Wharf in the dead of night and taken to the Ship Inn! From there it was distributed to pubs in Banwell and Weston.

Despite a significant property holding and businesses in Weston super Mare, Isaac and his family decided to sell-up and move to Manitoba, Canada. The local newspaper recorded the sale of 4 plots of land in Weston Town, 2 in Moorland Road and 10 lots in Uphill in October 1882. However, the family must have moved prior to this because the local newspaper also recorded the death in June 1882 of **Henry Walter Yeo**, the son of Isaac and Harriet aged 8 at St Andrew's, Manitoba (near Winnipeg). Around this time, Isaac and Harriet had another child, William born 1882. The 1891 and 1901 census returns provide conflicting details on where William was born (1891- Weston super Mare, 1901-Canada). The Manitoba Archive service has no record of William's birth but neither does the British BMD indexes. Perhaps he was born and registered en route to their destination or not even registered at all.

Isaac is recorded as a carpenter in the Henderson directories in Winnipeg from 1883-85. In 1884, he is recorded as living at 141 Jemima Street, Winnipeg with 3 other people living there and in 1885 he was recorded at 3 Lusted Place, Winnipeg with 2 other people living there. A local newspaper in Manitoba also reported that Isaac had to pay a fine of 1s for drunkenness in September 1882.

Family tragedy struck again on the 2nd November 1884 when the eldest daughter **Ellen Harriet Selina Yeo** died of consumption (TB), aged 14. The death certificate indicated that she had suffered with it for a year and a half prior to her death. Could this disease also have caused the death of her brother Walter? Harriet was pregnant with her last child at the time of Nellie's death and when this child, a girl, was born on 15th December 1884, she was named **Alice Nellie Yeo**. She was known as Nellie in deference to her recently deceased sister. At the time, the family were living in Winnipeg and owned some land. Years later, Nellie's daughter recounted how her mother told her about lost property deeds to this land, which would have been worth a considerable sum of money. Other tales of early Manitoba include seeing wild buffalo roaming on the plains and encounters with the local Indians.



Figure 4 Alice Nellie Yeo (later Scutt)

No other references to Isaac and his family in Canada exist after 1885. Was this when they returned home? Sometime during this period, the family did return to the UK. Nellie, the last-born child had become seriously ill and it was felt that she may suffer

the same fate as her brother and sister had the family not returned to the UK. Fortunately, Nellie survived and later married a Robert Scutt. They lived in Axbridge for a brief spell before moving to Greenwood Road in Worle. Only a few doors away lived Isaac and Harriet. Nellie and Robert had three children Edith, Edward and Marjorie. Nellie died on 6th September 1975.

At the 1891 census, the Yeo family were back in Weston super Mare, living in Harriet's father's house at 65 Orchard Street. George Palmer was by now retired, but alone; his wife Elizabeth having died in 1888. George died in 1900 leaving his considerable estate (approx £2500) to be split equally between his children, except for the £17 advance already made to daughter Eliza and the £400 advance already made to son George!

In 1896, Isaac and Harriet's daughter, **Florence Kate Yeo** (known as Kate) married Thomas James in Weston super Mare. The following year she was expecting a child which was born in June 1897. Sadly, Kate died giving birth to her baby daughter; who was duly christened Gwendoline Kate James. Her husband promptly disappeared, leaving Isaac and Harriet to deal with the practicalities of raising a granddaughter as their own child. At this stage, they would have been aged 55 and 52 respectively. Thomas James was never to see his daughter again. Gwen lived with her grandparents until her marriage to Francis (Frank) Lancaster in 1919.

Gwen and Frank only had one son, Mervyn Lancaster. He married Kathleen White and their daughter Janice was one year old when Mervyn's bomber aircraft was shot down by enemy fire during the Second World War. Gwen retained many links with several branches of her extended family including various Yeo's, Ivy Burns, the Kirkbrides and other Palmer descendents. Gwen and Frank both died in 1978.



Figure 5 Yeo Family

The Yeo family portrait taken about 1899-1900 is one of the earliest photographs of the family. It is also my favourite and it is the only one I have ever seen showing my great grandfather, Isaac George Yeo. It captures Isaac and Harriet and, in between them sits, their young granddaughter Gwendoline Kate James (Kate's daughter) aged about 3. John Courtenay, Alice Nellie and Isaac George are standing at the back. Amy Beatrice and William are flanking Isaac and Harriet.).

Taken slightly earlier is the photograph below, which depicts Harriet, Amy (sitting), Nellie (standing) and baby Gwendoline Kate James. Gwen is about a year old which would date it to approx 1898.



Figure 6 Harriet, Amy, Nellie and Baby Gwen

However, there is an even an earlier photograph, which depicts Nellie Yeo aged about 11 and showing 6 other women. The approximate date of this photo is 1895 and it may also show Amy Yeo and Florence Kate Yeo, the sister who died in childbirth. It is not known who the other women are at present, but this type of photograph was typically taken for someone who was moving away. Could it be for Florence Kate's wedding? The definition is not clear, so it's hard to tell the age of the woman seated in the centre. Could it actually be Harriet or even Florence Kate?



Figure 7 Nellie Yeo (later Scutt) kneeling in front

In 1897, **Isaac George Yeo** married Bessie Every from Bleadon. George was injured as a child and walked with a limp or used a stick. The tale was that George's parents had a nurse to look after the baby and that she dropped him. Despite being recorded as a "cripple" in the 1901 census, he was an excellent swimmer. He was a tailor by profession and worked for Salisbury's the tailor in Clevedon. The family also lived in Clevedon, at 93 Old Street. George and Bessie had 9 children (including Sidney George Yeo- my grandfather) before George died in September 1914 aged 45. George fell heavily on the way home from work one evening. That night, he could not be roused from his sleep and subsequently died of a punctured lung as a result of his fall. The inquest recorded accidental death. At the funeral, Bessie's relatives offered to help by taking various children away with them. Consequently, she was left with baby Ronald aged 1. Bessie was also left with a parting memento from husband George; she was pregnant with their ninth child. This child, subsequently named Bessie died aged 3 in 1917.

Two of George and Bessie's daughters, Ivy and Kate Yeo went to live with their grandparents Isaac and Harriet, although Kate later returned to her mother. The others lived with their Every relatives having varying lifestyles and upbringings. Sidney Yeo (my grandfather) and his brother Ken went to live with Oliver and Mary Every in the Rhondda. My father recalled that Oliver was very quiet, but that Mary was not! Sidney Yeo worked in his uncle's fish and chip shop in Cwmparc, Rhondda initially, where he would peel the potatoes. After a brief stint working in a colliery, Sid followed his uncle into greengrocery in Treorchy, Rhondda where he used to sell produce from a cart. Later he moved to more permanent premises with a shop. Sid married Gwenllian Morris in 1927 and she later came to work at the shop. Ken Yeo's experiences on the other hand were not such happy ones. He began work at Abergorchy Colliery, Treorchy but in the 1920s he left the Rhondda and vowed that he would never return. Ken went to live back with his mother who had re-married at this stage and had two other children by her second husband, Jim Davis. Ken did return to Treorchy briefly (once) in the 1950s together with his daughter Sheila, to visit Sid.

Of the other Yeo children, Herbert (aged 3) went to live with Henry Every a dockworker in Newport. He was not well treated and Bessie was told that her son would be better off living her with only a crust to eat, than continue living with his uncle. Fortunately, Bessie's sister Florence (Woolf) also lived in Newport. She was looking after Bessie's daughter, Olive Yeo, and when she realised how poorly Herbert was being treated, she had him to stay with her and his sister Olive. He never went back to live with Henry.

The eldest child was Gertrude Hilda Yeo (known as Hilda). She was 16 when Isaac George died and was already in service with a family called Champion in Bournemouth. Hilda married Harold Wilfred Eaves and they lived in Parkstone, Dorset. They had one daughter Gwen who married Tom Bailey. Hilda died in 1943.

It is probable that when Bessie's daughter was born and with Ronald aged only 2, Bessie agreed that Ronald would be cared for by another Every relative. Bessie's eldest sister was Ellen Every who married Edwin Bailey. One of their three daughters, Dora, married Alfred Turner but they had no children. Consequently, Ronald was brought up by Dora until she died. He then had little contact with his siblings. Some efforts were made to find him in the 1970s by his brother Herbert, but he did not succeed. Ronald had also adopted the Turner surname but kept Yeo as a Christian name. He was Ronald Arthur Yeo Turner, but was known as Ray Turner. Ronald served in the Royal Army Service Corps during Word War Two and reached the rank of Major. Ronald married Nancy Montgomery in India in 1942 and he died in 1982.

Emily (Amy) Beatrice Yeo was born 15/03/1876. Although she had been registered as Emily Beatrice Yeo, she became known as Amy from an early age. In the 1881 census, she is at the home of her grandparents, George and Elizabeth Palmer in Orchard Street, Weston super Mare. She is recorded as Amy, aged 5. When the family returned from Canada, they lived at various addresses in Weston including 65 Orchard Street in the 1891 census, 16 Osborne Road from at least 1903-9 and then back to Orchard Street, this time No. 61! In 1913, Isaac, Harriet and Amy moved to 2 Branksome Villas, Greenwood Road, Worle. Next door in No 1 lived a wheelwright,

Francis George Lloyd (known as George). On 30th September 1914, George Lloyd and Amy married in Worle church. The two witnesses were George's Lloyd cousins from Bristol. George and Amy later moved to East Bristol and kept a draper's shop. This was at 18 Allington Road. Amy and George had one child, a daughter named Ivy Beatrice Mary Lloyd who was born in 1916. Ivy worked at the draper's shop when young. She went on to marry William Burns, who she met on Weston super Mare beach, and they had one son named David. George died in 1969 and Amy in 19??



Figure 8 Amy Beatrice Yeo (later Lloyd)

John Courtenay Yeo married Nellie Florence ????. He became involved in the gold mining boom in Ontario, Canada during the 1910s. There were many gold mining companies established during this time and one was the Duck Lake Mining company in which John held 2000 shares. He also owned the mineral rights to a plot of land which the mining company was exploring during 1918-1919. Unfortunately, John did not make his fortune and returned to Weston super Mare. They lived in Coombe Road, Weston super Mare and ran an antique shop. However, stories seemed to suggest that the shop may have been a “front” for an illegal bookie! Also, that John brought back fool’s gold, thinking that it was the real thing. John and Nellie did not have any children. Janice King, Gwen Lancaster’s granddaughter, recalled how she took John’s papers to the solicitor’s when John died. It included the mining certificate.



Figure 9 John Courtenay Yeo

narrow down his regiment. There are five William Yeo's listed in the Royal Artillery, but there is no other detail to try and tie him in with any of them. What happened to him is a mystery, he seems to disappear. He only kept in contact with one of his family, his sister Amy. He was not present at his father's funeral in 1924, but he did attend his mother's in 1928. I do not know what happened to him after that.



Figure 11 William Yeo Royal Artillery

Isaac Yeo died 8th July 1924 and was buried in Worle graveyard. Harriet died 27th October 1928 and was buried with her husband.

Descendents of George Palmer

George and Elizabeth Palmer had six children:

- A) Emma was born 1847 married Frederick Stephens, a butcher of Banwell. They in turn had six children: Emily, Frederick, Alice, Harry, Fanny and Algernon. Fanny and Emily were spinsters, Alice died aged 9 and Frederick died aged 35. Algernon and Harry married but Algernon had no issue. Harry was the only one who had children and contact has been made with one of his granddaughters.
- B) Harriet, born 1848 was my great, great grandmother. Her history is documented above.
- C) Eliza, born 1850 married William Morgan. They lived in Weston super Mare where Eliza was described as a boarding house keeper. She died in 1908. They had 3 (maybe 4) daughters. Ella May, Frances Alice and Winifred (also possibly Ethel Maud). Winifred was a spinster, but Frances Alice married Phillip Ablett and they moved to Southampton. Contact has been made with the grandson of this couple. Ella May, I believe married and had two sons. One was named Mervyn Heatly, last heard of in the Sketty area of Swansea. The other son was Cuthbert William Heatly.
- D) George, born 1852. He married Mary someone. Apart from having a few children, I have not researched this line yet.
- E) William John, born 1855. He married Ellen House and they had one daughter, Lilly Palmer. At one time they lived almost next to Eliza in Salisbury Terrace. Lilly married Cecil Clark and, very late in life Richard Board. They lived at 9 Severn Avenue, Weston super Mare. William died in 1944 and his daughter in 1970. There is a question over whether there were any children. Lilly's will has a Gretia May Clark as executrix and there is also a mention of a William Leslie Palmer Clark. Could they be step-children or nephew/niece?
- F) Sarah Ann known as Sarann, born in 1855 married twice. Firstly to William Hobbs by whom she had four children (Bessie, William Walter, Kitty and Lewis) and later James Kirkbride by whom she had another four children (George, Emily, Arthur and Stanley). William Walter Hobbs lived in Canada for a while and joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. He married but they had no children. Lewis Hobbs married and had two sons Jack and Frank. Frank was killed during action in the Second World War. Bessie Hobbs married James Hack and had two children. Contact has been made with her granddaughter and great granddaughter. Kitty Hobbs had three children, two of whom died quite young. Her surviving daughter was Emily who married Austin Lavis. Both

Kitty and Emily retained contact with many of the family. Emily died in 2008. Regarding the Kirkbride's, Stanley was killed whilst serving with the Somerset Light Infantry during the First World War. Arthur married Nell Faulkner, but they had no children. Emily Kirkbride married Len Horman and they had one son Derrick. Derrick married Eva Fausch but they had no children. The remaining child of Sarann's was George Kirkbride. He married Gertrude Bosley and they had two children; Jim and Audrey. Contact has been made with descendents of both.

Written by Julian Yeo November 2008.
Contributions from many family members
Photographs courtesy of John Pyne and David Burns
Mining certificate courtesy of Janice King
Family Tree courtesy of John Pyne