

Email to Richard Gardner from Clive in 2021. Long lost cousins reunite!

Richard! I can't tell you how thrilled I was to get a copy of your correspondence with Rod. I have been wondering and looking for you for many years. So before we do a zoom or teams meeting lets do some catch-up by email.

1946-49. The story Mum told me started with your birth in 1946 when I was 5. Stanley asked Mum if she could take you because his wife had left him but Mum couldn't as they were still living with Grandpa Robert and Lucy Holt. This was because Robert had commandeered their house in West Kirby to take in wartime refugees from Liverpool (Nice!). Mum was really embarrassed by having to refuse Stanley and yet found it difficult to do anything because it wasn't her house that she and Cecil were living in. James was out in Singapore released from Changi jail after some hellish years captured by the japs and surviving in spite of losing a kidney to shrapnel. John had been in Bomber command and came home suffering from schizophrenia brought on by the trauma of being a rear gunner in a Wellington. He never recovered and I only met him once on a bus in West Kirby when he came and sat beside me and introduced himself. When I told Mum she threw a panic fit and she was always fearful of him escaping the asylum. He wrote many letters to her and they were so sad to read. I found them after her death and they were written as if by a child of twelve writing home from school. Grandpa Alfred had been virtually alcoholic since his partner Cadman cheated him out of his business in the timber trade. (They imported pit-props from Sweden). He was a really lovely man and I remember him clearly. Tall, kind and fun. The first time I remember meeting him was in 1947 after we moved back to a house in West Kirby. As you know Daisy died very young of pernicious anaemia. Mum said they gave her the wrong blood and this caused her death. So at age 14 in 1928 Audrey said she had to leave school to look after Alfred, Stanley and John for a few years as James had already moved out to Singapore. She married Cecil in 1938 just before war broke out and you need to fill in the next bit because I don't know what happened to Stanley.

1949-82

James was very successful in Singapore. He worked for Mansfield Airways and then was promoted to Head Honcho in Kuala Lumpur. He married an English girl called Marjorie but they had no children. He was decorated by the Tunku of Malaysia and was highly respected in the expat community. He spoke Malay. I only met him a few times but he was by far my favourite Uncle and had a great sense of humour. He was very tall and good looking. In the 1970's he had to retire (company policy) and he moved to Hong Kong and joined Price Waterhouse where I met him and Marjorie on one of my business trips out there. He called himself the office Mother Hen and it was clear he was very popular although one of the eldest in that office. He then came back to the UK in the late 1970's and settled down in the Isle of Man in a house called Dream by Geay in the hills outside Douglas. He came to see Audrey who was then living in Sonning. (Cecil died in 1969). Then Marjorie died of cancer and he died in 1982 leaving everything to Audrey. When Rod, I and D went over to Douglas for the funeral and to clear up the house we found it full of Chinoiserie and curiously I also found a some old spy-type electronic equipment in one of the desk drawers – bugs, recorders, mini-cameras etc. So I'm guessing he may have been part of MI6 or similar at some point while out in the East. John was in an asylum in Chester and there was no further contact – Audrey was quite afraid of him. I have no idea when he died but he had a dreadful time there undergoing unsuccessful electric shock treatment. No wonder he was always trying to escape!

I have photos of and family trees which I can send.

My family

Cecil 1922 and Audrey 1914 m. 1938

They had three of us – Robert Clive, Derek Rodney and David Cecil

I got married very young to a Swedish girl and we had three children. Jeremy 1964, Justin 1967 and Miranda 1969. I spent 7 years in Holts then 10 years travelling the world selling chemicals till 1982 but now work in software and have my own small company. My first wife died in 1916 and I upped sticks and moved out here to Chongqing in Western China. I now have a Chinese wife.

Jeremy has 5 kids, Phoebe 26, Molly 24, Lucy 23, Amy 21 and Mike 19. He divorced his first wife, remarried and now lives in Turkey, Dalyan. He is a partner in a small software company specialising in Helpdesk software

Justin has 2 boys, Edward 25 and Matthew 23. In and around Braintree. Justin repairs antique clocks.

Miranda's children are Daisy 16 and Mark 14 in Sydenham. She is an accountant and her husband Patrick is in the finance industry doing compliance consulting.

Rod will tell you his own story

David first married Josephine a society girl and had two children, Katie 43 and Jonathan 41. He then divorced and married a French girl, Marie Claire and went to live in Guernsey. They had a child Chloe 29.

So that's the potted history and when we meet on Skype or Zoom, we can fill in more details about what they all do and where they are then we can put your children/grandchildren in touch.

If you use Skype, my skype name is clive.holt and its registered under email address admin@britsoft.com, (my company).

Look forward to your news

Cousin Clive