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FAMILY HISTORY

This was all transcribed from a very scratchy tape recording so lots of bits are confused or missing

Audrey (ALH) 1988 Side Abt

"I would not know where they were all born, just where they lived."
Audrey remembered her grandfather James "Jamie" Adams but was a very small child. She did not remember Jessie (Clara)

"Jessie died of cancer. Terrible death. I remember hearing Mother talking about the treatment she had to have, in those days they had no treatment at all for cancer, they used to give her hot iron treatment on the chest through brown paper to get heat into the body.



Clara "Jessie" Chatfield

"James and Jessie (Clara) lived in Chambers Road, Southport, in a three or four storey large Victorian House. They kept a carriage and pair

"James was in the paint industry.

"At one time he was Mayor of Hastings.

"I don't know where they were living when he fell ill. Daisy had married Alfred Gardner, Annie had married Harry Dowell. Jessie "Grandma" was ill and died and he then fell ill and the doctor said he needed to be high up with lots of fresh air (TB?) so Violets (Elsie) took him to Mold in North Wales for a rest and a holiday and they never left. Elsie ended up there. They went as paying guests, and when her father died Elsie wanted to stay there because she adored her

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father so she stayed on and on. It was a farm called Tyd ny Gwynt and she did all sorts of farm work with them ,Hay-making etc and always looked terribly healthy and she used to come and stay with Alfred Gardner because Daisy was always so ill, coming and helping. Alfreds two sisters, who Audrey knew were both absolutely useless. So often the case, wasn't it, that the man had to look after the two unmarried sisters. Well he did and he paid for them, gave them an allowance a week. He was very kind my father. Never heard a word against him whatever. He had a hell of a life really. He was a very kind man.

Clive:" So you reckon he was born in Southport as well.

A: "No, I don't know where he was. I think he was born in Wallasey. I don't know.

Clive: It would have been in the north though?

A: "It will have been in the north—Wallasey, in Wirral I think. I don't know.

Clive:" Because originally they came from Gloucester didn't they, the Gardners?

That's the story, but I'm telling you I don't know what was the name of my Grandfather, whether it was Thomas or Edward or what. I mean James gets his name Edward from somewhere, Edward James Chatfield. I should think it was Edward probably, because having got the name James from James Adams, he probably got the name Edward from Father's father.

That's a clue. It's the first time I've ever thought of it as a clue. He never talked to us, you see, about anything.

C:"He didn't?

A:" No. He never told us anything. I don't remember anything from Father at all. Only business things like Old Rat Cadman and the ship broking affair and he really got quite well to do.

C:"Cadman was the one who cheated him?

A:" Cadman Took advantage. I think Dad probably started drinking and Cadman took advantage of him. I only guess all this.

C:"He died, basically, of old age, didn't he? Alfred?

A:" No he didn't. He was only in his 60s. He died of Cancer.

C:"Seems to run in the family, doesn't it?

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A:" I don't know about his family, but Mother's family because her only brother, Percy Adams, he died of Cancer. He was in the Scottish Regiment. During WW1, Well, I'm sorry I can't tell you.

C:"I wonder if Joan and Jessie know.

A:"I wanted to go and see them but they weren't ready. They had some decorators coming in. It was Anthony's house anyway. Now I hear that Sadlers Wells is going to Birmingham.

I would like to see them, because quite honestly they are 80, 81 and 82, I don't know. They certainly are 5 years older than me at least and they could go at any time for all I know. I think I would like to see them before. I know they have quite a lot of information written down somewhere about the family."

This next section is recorded on Sunday 19th down at Joan and Jessie's Dowells house in Eastdean, near Eastbourne. Anthony Dowell had bought it for them and they have been living here for 12 years. It's a lovely little house, tiny, converted barn. The antique furniture inside is beautiful. All the rooms are very light as Anthony had had new windows put in which gave maximum light on everything. Fire burning in the grate when we came and a beautiful Chippendale-type table laid with silver and fine cut glass. Joan and Jessie look more like 60 years old rather than 84 and 83 respectively.

A:"This picture is of Denottir Castle and Daisy was always talking about it— I asked Joan, was Daisy just rambling. She was always talking about Scottish sayings, and also about Thurston. We called our house in Meols, "Thurston". And Mother hated it, because she said, 'We've got a thirst on'. She was very dramatic, Mother. She was very funny. She never stopped talking. When she had been to a opera or theatre, she was so dramatic about it. 'Oh, it was sooooo....' . Amazing character my mother. Absolutely.

So Moncur was her mother's mother.

A:":(showing a photo) "That's Sir Frederick Ashton, Princess Margaret and that's Ninette de Valois. She was on the ship when we went out to America on the Queen Elizabeth.

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....mantelpiece in his bedroom. I can remember...

Now talking about Mrs Jones

I have an idea

Well, she couldn't have had a Gardner place, because she was a Jones, at least that's what I seem to remember. Mother told me all this.

Joan or Jessie. I have an idea it was just a short jacket, to the waist wasn't it

It may have been the case. I don't know, but she was in black, bonnet...I tell you what we might do, we've got a tin trunk out in the farm which has the old family bibles in and whether that would sort of help you over anything.

Family tree when you find it.

No.

Well, this library seat is the family tree, of the whole family.

I'm putting you on tape here if you don't mind. I'm very interested.

There's another branch.

Jessie: Are you taping us all...

C: Absolutely.

J: As long as you are not taking my photograph.

C: No, I've got one of those.

J: All these suicides. Doesn't sound very good, does it?

A: "I just did not know. Father never talked very much, indoors or out and there was only Mother who was not well, and half the time she was so ill I was looking after her, and then when I was going out, Cecil he never left me alone, so after... To tell you the truth, I was so fed up with the whole lot of them, I was absolutely up to here with the whole household, everybody. I mean Cecil was to me, absolutely marvellous.

C: "The Adams family, though, fascinate me. I would love to have known James Adams. Sounds a terrific character.

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Joan "you would have loved grandfather Adams
He was a marvellous fisherman too.

C:"Grandfather Adams was a great fisherman was he? Where did he fish?

J: When they went from Edderton House in Southport, to a house in Ainsdale, I can't remember and then from Ainsdale I think was it the war? Something, things began to get a bit difficult for him. Elsie wasn't I think probably a tower of strength, because she had never done anything very much. Look at that. What was it? It's a girl collecting the envelopes for those poor children.

In the tin trunk in the family bibles would connect.

I think it's the Dowell family, and not the family bible. Daddy's side you see.

Well, I've got a picture of Grandpa. I've got it In his fishing outfit.

Yes, those were Percy and ?????

[226-228 cannot decipher] ... Daddy and Mummy?? Holiday?? Wonderful place??

David's got a broad face. David grew a beard. I've got the wide face.

Betsy Coed.

Very round, I think.

What was the name of, Tyd ny Gwnt?.

Tiddly Grint. Yes.

At Tyd ny Gwint Went to live there because it was a lovely place, very big and he and Auntie they had bedrooms and a sitting room of their own and then Ben, Jane and all of them used to look after them. The old Bishop, was it Denbigh, used to give Grandpa the rights of fishing.

The square of the village.

The old Bishop did as well. But anyhow he used to fish down there.
He was a fly fisherman ?

Oh yes. he absolutely loved it. Spent most of his time there doing that.

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And he was pretty good in the kitchen, wasn't he. Mother used to say go into the kitchen. Would get a ham and boil it.

I didn't know that.

A: In my blood. All these three boys of mine. Better than me.

Aunt Elsie, no good as a cook or anything else. And Grandpa had to keep a housekeeper, maids. If anyone was away Grandpa used to go in and I always remember he had a marvellous game cellar downstairs. Pheasants were hung up. Had to hang so long.

So many days. That's right, yes.

Until they were tasty

We try to fry a pheasant now as we like it, people look on us as if, we like it high. You like it..

So do we. David shoots you see. I don't know who he shoots with. Pheasants at Christmas.

The reason we've got so many, all hanging around...

No, no, no..We get them all, which is absolutely lovely. Hang them until they are really high. My kids don't like them very much, high, very much an acquired taste.

We were waltzing outside the garden here.

It's a great big building.

And games store in there. Do you get venison? Hazel hen, Partridge and capercaillie

Tell you something awful. We bought a brace last year and when we started to dress them, only washed it up?????

When I told him about it, he looked at me as if to say what can you expect?

Well we didn't charge for them.

We had them nesting in the hay at????, just outside the garden

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Pheasants.

It was lovely hearing them.

You didn't buy a catapult, no?

Clive gave up shooting just before he left school, got his shotgun. Father trained them all, to hold a gun, break it and hold it properly. We had a loft at St Michaels. We put tln cans up. All lined up. He taught them to shoot at tins you see. Well, Clive was accustomed to this. We went to the Whitehouse, the big conservatory I don't know if you remember and then one day Clive had got his shotgun and he saw a bird on the lawn, absolutely just ready to be shot at. And he never thought what it was and my dear, it was a Hoopoe.

One of the rarest birds in the cpntry...

Well we had all these bird watchers. And they were all coming round knocking at the door. They didn't tell me. .I thought there was a secret round the dining room table, all whispering. And Clive was clutching something. Then the bell went, and I went and they said 'Oh we are looking, have you seen a lovely bird round here.' Bird watchers society. I felt so guilty. All of a sudden, there was a funny sort of feeling round the table. I went into the sun room and there were feathers all about. People come round looking for..really was a nightmare.

I thought it was a jay, not unlike that in colouring, about the same size as a jay but it was completely unmistakable for anyone who knew about birds, and I didn't.

I was fainting.

Beautiful black and white crest, that's right.

Was it in the book ?? gave us, the bird? Is it an American?

No, resident, but very rare. When I say English resident

I had a friend a House surgeon, a mad Scotsman down at the local hospital and he used to come up...Six years older than we were and always he would play with his friends. We did almost more or less everything with them. We didn't mix with the girls very much, but I think we got....

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Well, there's something we said and you said 'You can't shoot you see'. This chap said to us I'll teach you. So he had a writer's candle and a bolster and one of these chairs. And there was a box room where mother kept all her clothes. And we Took one out one day and it was shot to pieces.

Stanley used to play with my dolls and broke quite a few. I had a black one
How much older was Stanley than you were. It was James, Stanley, Audrey,
John

James, Audrey, Stanley, John

Stanley was younger than you were?

Three years younger. We were very fond of one another.

I liked Stanley. He was very quiet boy.

What happened to Stanley?

He went down South. Father went to the wedding. Then he had a little boy. When we were at at Wincote in Column Road West Kirby. I'd got two and as you know nobody helped us. As you know father didn't give us any money. We managed on very very little money. 35 shillings a week to live on when we first got married, and to have two children was about all we could cope with. Stanley rang me up, could I have his little boy Richard because his wife had kicked him out and I said 'Stanley, we can hardly look after two, not another one' and that was the end of that. I don't know what he did with that child. Difficult to think about it.

His name was Richard, wasn't it?

And then I sent him a toy for Christmas. I can't remember after that. I often wonder what happened to him...I've got a picture of him when he was a boy.

Stanley was a very quiet boy.
Beyond that, I don't know

The only one I knew at all was James because I spent a lot of my time out in the Far East and I met him when he was out in Hong Kong and he retired officially from the Mansfield Airways. He was their local director. It was a shipping part of Mansfield..no, he was connected with the other Holts, the George Holts, based in Liverpool and it was I think P and O were involved, he must have, partly a shipping line, the director. You have to retire very early out in the Far East and he retired at 55 but he did not want to come home so he went on and became

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what he described himself as the office Mother hen. This was with Peat Marwick and Mitchell one of the accountants. He was an officer in fact but it was a bit beneath James' ability I think. He used to be a great one with the girls I think. But Marjorie kept him on a very very tight rein, but he was an absolute terror I believe in Malaysia. That was after the war. He had the most frightful time in the Japanese prison of war camp. He got wounded in one of his kidneys and he went through hell

no he was never on the Burmese Railway, no that was one of his friends. He was in Changi Hospital or jail whatever it was and he said it was just like going through a long dark tunnel through those last years of the war, but he survived and he came out like a skeleton, 6 stone, I mean a huge man, 6 foot 2 or 3, whatever he was, but then he just painted the town red after that. Apparently there are stories of pulling up ships anchors and dropping them sort of thing. The curious thing is that when he died, well first of all I went out and saw them in Hong Kong, had a lovely time, and then he came home to the Isle of Mann where he lived out his days there. I think it was all to do with tax and things, had some, I don't know what the problem was, but he had to live out on the Isle of Mann so then Margery died of Cancer when they were on Isle of Man and he lived on some years and he never came to the Mainland. Might for a day or two, but it was something peculiar and then after he died, Rodney and I and David went over there to sort things out with Mum. Isle of Man, Douglas and found the amazing collection, of what I can only describe as spy equipment, microphones and things. I reckon he must have been either in MI5 or something. I don't know what it was, but it was quite extraordinary what we found. Receivers and things. Could have been, I don't know.

John threatened to cut her throat. Was really frightened of John

Robert said to Audrey "I'll have the whole lot of the on my hand if I'm not careful.

Joan took a job at Edmund Hall. Jon was the head matron and I Jessie was the under matron and I loved it.

Audrey (ALH) 1988 (In car) Side B

Elsie adored her father?

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Yes, absolutely. That's why she stayed ?????? because she wanted to be near where she buried him in Hove. She became like a ???.

Yes, I remember you saying. So she died very poor didn't she.

Yes, just stayed on and on and on at the Farnhams and they gave her ??? and she went to live in ?????. They were only farm people. Welsh, they spoke Welsh together you see.

So Elsie must have learnt Welsh?

Well a bit.

I thought it was the other one. Elsie was the one who was called Violets.

Yes.

So there was Nan and Daisy, Elsie. Wasn't there a fourth one? Or just the three?

Percy.

Percy. That's right, yes. I thought the story about the gold handled cane, James Adams gold handled cane, was good. Did you hear that one?

No.

He used to go into the butcher's and he used to survey the scene and he used to lay his gold handled cane on one of the joints, say to the butcher, looking him directly in the eye 'What does your conscience allow you to charge for that piece?' The butcher then told him whatever it was. Four and sixpence. He would then say 'Well, I am afraid my conscience will not allow me to pay that price.' And then sending in Joan and Jessie to ask for a pound of liver lights and no ??????

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