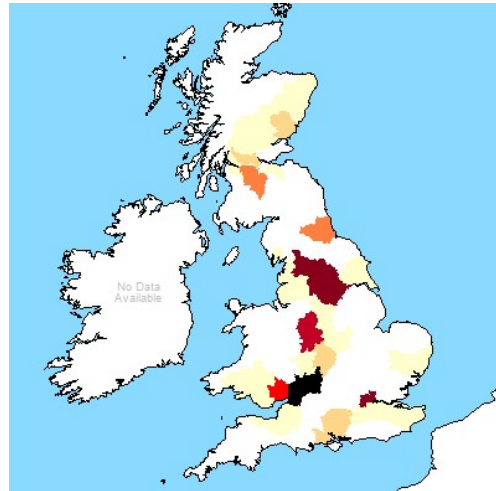


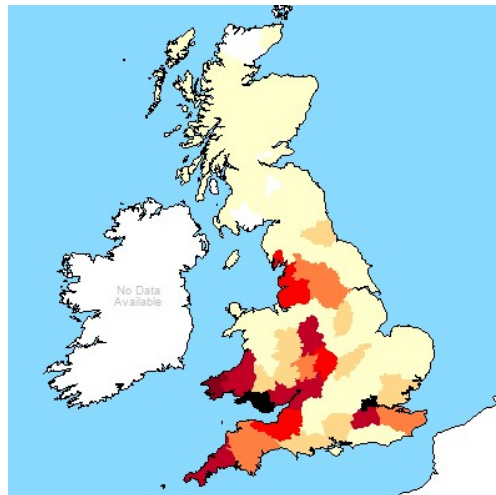
Kear

David Kear, who has undertaken a great deal of research into the numerous Kear families in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, believes that they may all stem from Adam de Keyrlun, who was born about 1235, came to the Forest of Dean from the Caerleon area of South Wales and had established a forge in Staunton by 1282.¹ Reaney suggests that the surname means 'key-maker', which would be a different derivation entirely.² Particularly in the early years, Kear has a number of variant spellings, Keir, Keare, Keere and so on, the same person often appearing with more than one spelling at different times. For the purposes of this account, the standard spelling Kear has been adopted. In 1881, 60% of all Kears were in Gloucestershire.³



Distribution of the Kear Surname³

The Forest of Dean is a fascinating part of the world and there is more background information about the area in the paper about the Court family.⁴ The earliest confirmed ancestors in this line are 4x great grandparents, **Thomas Kear** and **Sarah James**, who were married in Newland, Gloucestershire on the 8th of June 1767.⁵ These could easily be confused with another Thomas Kear and Sarah James who married in Newland seven years later but fortunately, both Thomases and one Sarah left wills, which help to clarify matters and confirm the line.⁶



Distribution of the James Surname⁷

The surname James is predominantly found in south Wales and Gloucestershire.⁷ It is a patronymic surname, meaning 'son of James'.⁸

¹ Information from David Kear in *Forest Footsteps*, the journal of the Royal Forest of Dean Family History Society 13 Autumn 1993.

² Reaney, P.H., *A Dictionary of Surnames* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1958.

³ *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software 2003.

⁴ See Court paper. The Will of Sarah Kear 1816 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

⁵ Bishop's Transcripts for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁶ Bishop's Transcripts for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office. The Will of Thomas Kear 1814 (proved 1824) from Gloucestershire Record Office. The Will of Sarah Kear 1816 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

⁷ *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software 2003.

⁸ Reaney, P.H., *A Dictionary of Surnames* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1958.

Allegedly,⁹ the burial registers give Thomas' age, which the Bishops' Transcripts do not and this suggests that Thomas' parents were probably another Thomas Kear and Anne née Edwards but this needs further research.¹⁰

Thomas and Sarah had five children, four daughters and a son, all of whom were baptised in St. Briavels, Gloucestershire. Mary was baptised on the 4th of April 1768¹¹ and almost certainly died young. Elizabeth was baptised on the 30th of July 1769.¹² She married Thomas Prichard on the 16th of June 1791 at St. Briavels.¹³ Elizabeth was not mentioned in her parents' wills and is almost certainly the Elizabeth Prichard buried in St. Briavels in 1795, which means that she pre-deceased them.¹⁴ Thomas and Sarah's daughter, Sarah, was baptised on the 2nd of August 1772.¹⁵ On the 13th of May 1815, Sarah married James Proctor Howell at Hewelsfield, Gloucestershire.¹⁶ Mary was baptised on the 29th of October 1778¹⁷ and married Thomas Watkins.¹⁸ There was then a eleven year gap before the baptism of **Thomas** on the 13th of July 1789.¹⁹ Although Sarah would still have been of childbearing age in 1789 and this is, on paper, the correct family, it is rather a large gap. The possibility of Thomas being an illegitimate grandchild, rather than the child of Thomas and Sarah, must be considered. If he was being raised as a child, whilst actually being a grandchild, then his 'sister' Elizabeth seems the most likely candidate as his mother. With no firm evidence to the contrary however Thomas and Sarah remain as Thomas junior's parents.

3x great grandfather Thomas Kear married **Mary Ann Court**²⁰ in St. Briavels on the 5th of April 1809,²¹ only three weeks after his father's burial.²² This haste may suggest that his father disapproved of the marriage, or that the death of his father gave Thomas junior the financial stability to marry. Not least of his reasons for marrying at the age of nineteen may well have been the fact that Mary Ann was at least three months pregnant. Thomas and Mary Ann's eldest child, 2x great grandfather **Thomas** (the third), was baptised on the 1st of October at

⁹ Information from David Kear.

¹⁰ The Baptism and Burial Register of All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire, via David Kear.

¹¹ Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹² Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹³ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁴ Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office. The Will of Sarah Kear 1816 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

¹⁵ Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

¹⁶ The Marriage Register of St. Mary Magdalene, Hewelsfield, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁷ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire. The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office. The Will of Sarah Kear 1816 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

¹⁸ The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office. The Will of Sarah Kear 1816 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

¹⁹ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire. The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

²⁰ See Court paper. The Will of Sarah Kear 1816 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

²¹ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²² Bishop's Transcripts for All Saints, Newland, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

St. Briavels.²³ His story is told below. The next child was William, born the following year and baptised on the 25th of November 1810 at St. Briavels²⁴ and then, after a long gap, Charles Joseph Grimes was baptised on the 26th of October 1817, at which stage his father, Thomas, was described as a farmer.²⁵ Charles Joseph Grimes appears in later documentation as 'Grimes'.²⁶ The origin of Grimes is as yet unknown. The use of family surnames as middle names begins in this generation of the Kear family and continues for a century. Grimes has yet to be identified as a family name and may yet prove to be the clue to earlier generations.

A poll book of 1811 confirms that Thomas owned a house and garden in St. Briavels.²⁷ Two years later he owned and occupied a malt house and a property called Plumleys in St. Briavels that he had inherited from his father and was renting a property called Whitepools.²⁸ In 1841, Thomas, a yeoman and Mary Ann were living in St. Briavels with a servant, Maria Hawkins.²⁹ On the 19th of December 1848, Mary Ann died of dropsy at St. Briavels. Although her husband was still alive, the death was registered by Charles Harris 'in attendance'.³⁰ There is no indication that he was a doctor, so he may have been a neighbour. Mary Ann was buried in St. Briavels on Christmas Eve.³¹ She is commemorated on the same gravestone as her great grandparents, Thomas and Sarah Court.³²

In 1851, Thomas was still described as a yeoman and remained in St. Briavels with a servant, Sarah Elley.³³ In 1861, Thomas was a yeoman living in St. Briavels, accompanied by a Sarah Shingles, who was described as 'wife' and a one year old 'daughter', Ann Shingles.³⁴ Investigation shows that this was not an indiscretion by the elderly Thomas but that the child, actually Elizabeth Ann, was the daughter of James Shingles,³⁵ who was presumably temporarily absent. Thomas died of old age on the 26th of January 1869 at St. Briavels, his grandson Charles was in attendance.³⁶ He was buried at St. Briavels on the 1st of February.³⁷ Thomas left a will which gives his address as Boot Cottage, St. Briavels.³⁸

²³ Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²⁴ Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²⁵ Bishops' Transcripts for St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²⁶ 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 6.

²⁷ 1811 Poll Book for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²⁸ 1813 Land Tax for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Will of Thomas Kear 1809 from Gloucestershire Record Office.

²⁹ 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 6.

³⁰ The death certificate of Mary Ann Kear 1848, from the local registrar.

³¹ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

³² Memorial Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

³³ 1851 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 2443 folio 641.

³⁴ 1861 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG9 3979 folio 6/7.

³⁵ The index to the Baptism Register of St. James, Bream, Gloucestershire via www.findmypast.co.uk.

³⁶ The death certificate of Thomas Kear 1869, from the General Register Office.

³⁷ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

³⁸ The will of Thomas Kear 1869 from the Principal Probate Registry.

Thomas and Mary Ann's second son, William Court, followed the calling of many of his mother's family and was variously referred to as a mercer, tailor and draper.³⁹ In 1841, he was living in St. Briavels with his maternal grandfather.⁴⁰ The following year, on the 24th of February 1842, he married Maria Allen at St. Briavels.⁴¹ William Court and Maria had six children, three of whom did not reach adulthood and were buried at St. Briavels, where all six children had been baptised.⁴² Mary was born on the 10th of November 1842⁴³ and baptised on the 18th of December.⁴⁴ She married William Webster Broadhead on the 16th of July 1867, also at St. Briavels.⁴⁵ Sarah Maria was born on the 4th of November 1843,⁴⁶ baptised on the 3rd of December 1843⁴⁷ and buried on the 26th of May 1864.⁴⁸ William Court junior was born on the 13th of May 1845⁴⁹ and baptised on the 24th of May. John Allen was born on the 27th of February 1847⁵⁰ and baptised on the 29th of March.⁵¹ John Allen's burial is recorded as taking place on the 27th of March 1856.⁵² Ann Court was born on the 10th of December 1848⁵³ and baptised on the 29th of January 1849;⁵⁴ she married William Murdock in 1874 in Ross, Herefordshire registration district.⁵⁵ 1851 found the family living in St. Briavels.⁵⁶ Hannah was born on the 2nd of May 1851,⁵⁷ baptised on the 29th of May⁵⁸ and buried on the 9th of June 1864, just two weeks after her older sister Sarah Maria,⁵⁹ suggesting perhaps that they both died from an infectious disease. William Court senior was buried at St. Briavels on the 27th of July 1854,⁶⁰ leaving his widow with six children, aged between three and eleven. Maria was buried on the 11th of November 1858⁶¹ and the surviving five children were presumably cared

³⁹ 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 6. 1851 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 2443 folio 633. The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁴⁰ 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 4.

⁴¹ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁴² The Baptism and Burial Registers of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. 1851 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 2443 folio 633.

⁴³ The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁴⁴ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁴⁵ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁴⁶ The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁴⁷ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁴⁸ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁴⁹ The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁵⁰ The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁵¹ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁵² The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁵³ The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁵⁴ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁵⁵ The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

⁵⁶ 1851 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 2443 folio 633.

⁵⁷ The Family Bible of William Court and Maria Kear née Allen in family possession.

⁵⁸ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁵⁹ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁶⁰ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁶¹ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

for by relatives. Letters of Administration were finally taken out by William Court junior, in respect of his father's estate, in 1870.⁶²

Thomas and Mary Ann's youngest son, Charles Joseph Grimes, described as a farmer, married Ellen Dorrington, a dressmaker, at St. Briavels.⁶³ Their daughter, Maria, was baptised in St. Briavels on the 6th of October 1839.⁶⁴ She married Henry Hulin.⁶⁵ In 1840 'Grimes' was occupying the Plough Inn and surrounding land in St. Briavels.⁶⁶ The Plough was situated on the west side of the High Street.⁶⁷ The 1841 census confirms that Grimes was an Innkeeper in St. Briavels.⁶⁸ Grimes and Ellen had two sons, Charles Joseph Grimes, known as Joseph, born on the 26th of September 1842⁶⁹ and baptised at St. Briavels on the 22nd of October and Tom, baptised on the 23rd of October 1842.⁷⁰ In February 1843, Grimes was declared bankrupt and described as being 'out of business'. His declaration reads as follows: *"I Charles Joseph Grimes Kear (commonly known as Grimes Kear) at present and for three months past residing at St. Briavels in the county of Gloucester, and being out of business, previously for seven months of Bream in the hundred of St. Briavels, in the said county, farmer's assistant and previously for four years of the Plough Inn St. Briavels, victualler, and licensed to let flies to hire, and during part of the time occupying land as a small farmer, do hereby give notice that I intend to present a Petition to the Commissioner of the Bristol District of the Court of Bankruptcy."*⁷¹

Grimes' bad luck did not end there. He was buried at St. Briavels on the 10th of July 1846 and the burial register entry reads, 'killed by a wagon'.⁷² Nothing about this incident has been found in the newspapers.⁷³

To return to Thomas and Mary Ann's eldest son, 2x great grandfather, Thomas James Kear. He was baptised as 'Thomas' on the 1st of October 1809 at St. Briavels.⁷⁴ The use of the middle name James has only been found on his death certificate and burial record⁷⁵ and on the marriage register entries for his daughter Mary Ann Court Kear and son Exton Turner Kear.⁷⁶ In fact he is 'Thomas Henry' on the marriage records of his son William and daughter Ann.⁷⁷

⁶² Principal Probate Registry Indexes.

⁶³ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁶⁴ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁶⁵ The will of Thomas Kear 1869 from the Principal Probate Registry.

⁶⁶ 1840 electoral roll for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

⁶⁷ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol5/pp247-271> accessed 12 October 2020.

⁶⁸ 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 6.

⁶⁹ Memorial Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

⁷⁰ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁷¹ *Gloucestershire Chronicle* 4 February 1843 p. 1 col. d..

⁷² The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁷³ British Newspaper Library Index via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁷⁴ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁷⁵ The death certificate of Thomas James Kear 1882, from the local registrar. The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁷⁶ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Marriage Register of St. Andrew's, Earlsfield, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁷⁷ The marriage certificate of William Court Kear and Sarah Grace Sweetingham 1887, from the General Register

In 1841 Thomas was living at the Plough inn in St. Briavels, with his brother Grimes (Charles Grimes).⁷⁸ On the 9th of November 1846, Thomas married **Hester Mudway**⁷⁹ at St. Woollos, Monmouthshire. He described himself as a farmer of Newport. The witnesses were Charles and Elizabeth Hulin and both Thomas and Hester signed the register.⁸⁰ The Mudways were another St. Briavels family and the couple returned there before their eldest child was baptised, apparently remaining there for the rest of their lives. Thomas may have retained a smallholding but his major occupation became that of haulier.

Thomas and Hester's eldest child was Ann, who was born in the summer of 1847⁸¹ and baptised on the 1st of September 1847 at St. Briavels.⁸² She was with her parents in St. Briavels in 1851 and 1861.⁸³ Ann, known as Annie,⁸⁴ married Edward Moulton on the 25th of December 1876 at St. Briavels.⁸⁵ The marriage was witnessed by Thomas and Hetty Kear who could have been Ann's parents or siblings. Comparing the signatures with those on the certificate of Ann's parents suggest it was her father and sister.⁸⁶ Edward and Ann had no children of their own but they adopted Ann's nephew Thomas Albert 'Tom' Davis, after the death of Ann's sister Mary.⁸⁷ They lived in Coleford, in the parish of Newland.⁸⁸ Ann died in 1922 in Monmouth registration district.⁸⁹

Thomas and Hester's eldest son was John Milson Kear, who was born at the end of 1848⁹⁰ and baptised at St. Briavels on the 15th of February 1849.⁹¹ As Milson Kear, he married Fanny Smith in 1873 in Monmouth registration district.⁹² No children have been found for the

Office. The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Marriage Register of St. Michael's, Croydon, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁷⁸ 1841 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 364/3 folio 7. 1840 electoral roll for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire. *Gloucestershire Chronicle* 4 February 1843 p. 1 col. d..

⁷⁹ See Mudway paper.

⁸⁰ The Marriage Register of St. Pauls, St. Woollos, Monmouthshire via www.findmypast.co.uk. The marriage certificate of Thomas Kear and Hester Mudway 1846, from the local registrar.

⁸¹ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

⁸² The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁸³ 1851 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 2443 folio 641. 1861 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG9 3979 folio 6.

⁸⁴ 1891 census for High Street, Coleford, Newland Gloucestershire RG12 4338 folio 43. The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁸⁵ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁸⁶ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. The Marriage Register of St. Pauls, St. Woollos, Monmouthshire via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁸⁷ 1891 census for High Street, Coleford, Newland Gloucestershire RG12 4338 folio 43. 1901 census for Underhill, Coleford, Newland, Gloucestershire RG13 4920 folio 44.

⁸⁸ 1891 census for High Street, Coleford, Newland Gloucestershire RG12 4338 folio 43. 1901 census for Underhill, Coleford, Newland, Gloucestershire RG13 4920 folio 44.

⁸⁹ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

⁹⁰ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

⁹¹ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁹² The marriage indexes of the General Registrar. 1881 census for 19 Gloucester Road, Newland, Gloucestershire RG11 5223 folio 63.

couple.⁹³ In 1881 they were living at 19 Gloucester Road, Newland and John was working as a saddler.⁹⁴ John died in 1925 in Westbury on Severn registration district.⁹⁵

Esther, who was known as Hetty,⁹⁶ was born in the summer of 1850⁹⁷ and baptised on the 25th of August 1850 at St. Briavels.⁹⁸ By 1871, Hetty had left home and was a cook in the home of barrister Thomas Prothero, at 2 Bloomfield Villas, Richmond on Thames, Surrey.⁹⁹ Her move to this area is significant, as it may have been she who motivated her two younger brothers to move. Ten years later, still working as a cook, Hetty was living at the home of tea merchant Francis Sabonadieu, 26 Courtfield Gardens, Chelsea, Middlesex.¹⁰⁰

On the 2nd of February 1882, Esther was married, as Hetty, to Charles Henry Holden, who worked for his father's cab hire firm in George Street, Croydon, Surrey.¹⁰¹ The couple moved to Croydon, where Charles had been born.¹⁰² In 1891, they were living at 7 Church Path and Charles was still a cab proprietor.¹⁰³ They had seven children, six sons and one daughter in nine years, all born in Croydon.¹⁰⁴ The eldest Harry Charles was taken back to St. Briavels for baptism on the 25th of June 1882.¹⁰⁵ The other children were all christened at St. Michael's in Croydon, in two batches. Albert Edward was born on the 1st of August 1884, Walter William on the 25th of August 1885, Marion Ida on the 2nd of November 1889, William Thomas on the 20th of September 1889, Percy Robert on the 21st of April 1890 and Alfred Robert on the 9th of November 1891.¹⁰⁶ In 1911, the family were still living at 7 Church Path with Charles running his cab business.¹⁰⁷

In 1851, Thomas James and Hester, their three eldest children and their servant, Ann Williams, were living in St. Briavels where Thomas was working as a haulier.¹⁰⁸ Their third daughter, Mary Ann Court, was baptised at St. Briavels on the 15th of February 1852.¹⁰⁹ On

⁹³ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

⁹⁴ 1881 census for 19 Gloucester Road, Newland, Gloucestershire RG11 5223 folio 63.

⁹⁵ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

⁹⁶ 1881 census for 26 Courtfield Gardens, Chelsea, Middlesex RG11 49 folio 15. The Marriage Register of All Saints, Upper Norwood, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁹⁷ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

⁹⁸ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

⁹⁹ 1871 census for 2 Bloomfield Villas, Richmond on Thames, Surrey RG10 809 folio 47.

¹⁰⁰ 1881 census for 26 Courtfield Gardens, Chelsea, Middlesex RG11 49 folio 15.

¹⁰¹ The Marriage Register of All Saints, Upper Norwood, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk. 1881 census for George Street, Croydon, Surrey RG11 813 folio 54.

¹⁰² The Marriage Register of All Saints, Upper Norwood, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁰³ The birth indexes of the General Registrar. 1891 census for 7 Church Path, Croydon, Surrey RG12 588 folio 118.

¹⁰⁴ 1911 census for 7 Church Path, Croydon, Surrey RG14 PN 3301 SN20. The Baptism Register of St. Michael's, Croydon, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk. The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁰⁵ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁰⁶ 1911 census for 7 Church Path, Croydon, Surrey RG14 PN 3301 SN20. The Baptism Register of St. Michael's, Croydon, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk. The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁰⁷ 1911 census for 7 Church Path, Croydon, Surrey RG14 PN 3301 SN20.

¹⁰⁸ 1851 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire HO107 2443 folio 641.

¹⁰⁹ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

the 8th of October 1878, Mary Ann Court married Albert Davis, a mason, at St. Briavels. They both signed the register and the witnesses were Mary Ann's brother Charles Grimes Kear and Celia James, who would later marry Mary's brother Thomas.¹¹⁰ They had two sons, both born in St. Briavels. Exton Turner Davis was born in the summer of 1879¹¹¹ and baptised at St. Briavels on the 14th of September.¹¹² In 1881, Albert, Mary Ann Court and Exton were living in St. Briavels village, where Albert was a mason.¹¹³ Thomas Albert 'Tom' was born in 1883¹¹⁴ and baptised at St. Briavels on the 28th of February.¹¹⁵ Mary Ann died in February 1883, presumably in childbirth and was buried at St. Briavels on the 16th of February 1883.¹¹⁶ Exton went to live with his maternal grandmother.¹¹⁷ As has already been mentioned, Tom was informally adopted by his mother's sister Ann.¹¹⁸

Thomas James and Hester's second son was Charles Grimes Kear. He was born on the 27th of January 1853¹¹⁹ and baptised at St. Briavels on the 11th of March 1853.¹²⁰ He appears to have spent all his life in St. Briavels, working as an agricultural labourer¹²¹ and a grocer's porter.¹²² He died on the 29th of July 1920¹²³ and was buried at St. Briavels on the 4th of August.¹²⁴

Thomas Harper Kear, the next child of Thomas James and Hester, was born in 1854¹²⁵ and baptised at St. Briavels on the 25th of June 1854.¹²⁶ In 1871, he was apprenticed as a carpenter and living in the house of his master, Henry Hulin, in St. Briavels.¹²⁷ Henry's wife, Maria, was Thomas' cousin, daughter of Charles Joseph Grimes Kear and his wife Ellen.¹²⁸ Thomas Harper Kear and Celia James had eight children born in St. Briavels between 1883 and 1901.¹²⁹ Although, on the 1911 census, they claimed to have been married for 28 years¹³⁰ the marriage

¹¹⁰ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹¹¹ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹¹² The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹¹³ 1881 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG11 5222 folio 24.

¹¹⁴ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹¹⁵ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹¹⁶ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹¹⁷ 1891 census for Jassamine House, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG12 437 folio 125.

¹¹⁸ 1891 census for High Street, Coleford, Newland Gloucestershire RG12 4338 folio 43. 1901 census for Underhill, Coleford, Newland, Gloucestershire RG13 4920 folio 44.

¹¹⁹ Forest Families manuscript by David Kear.

¹²⁰ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹²¹ 1891 census for Jassamine House, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG12 437 folio 125. 1901 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG13 4919 folio 61.

¹²² 1911 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG14 PN31710 SN104.

¹²³ Memorial Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

¹²⁴ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹²⁵ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹²⁶ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹²⁷ 1871 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG10 5297 folio 8.

¹²⁸ The Marriage Register of St. Mary the Virgin, Lydney, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. 1871 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG10 5297 folio 8.

¹²⁹ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. 1891 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG12 4337 folio 128.

¹³⁰ 1911 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG14 PN31710 SN48.

A REGRETTABLE CASE.

Coroner's Statement at St. Briavels Inquest.

MAN MISSING FOR A MONTH.

Mr. M. F. Carter, Coroner for the Forest of Dean Division conducted an inquiry at the Assembly Hall, St. Briavels, on Wednesday afternoon, concerning the death of Milson Kear (28), a chauffeur, residing at Springwell Cottage, St. Briavels, whose body was recovered from the River Wye at Bigsweir on Monday evening after he had been missing from home since November 13th.

BROTHER-IN-LAW'S EVIDENCE.

Charles Henry Fox, a labourer, and brother-in-law of deceased, stated that on Sunday afternoon, November 13th he had a dispute with the deceased over a mouth organ, where upon the deceased got in a temper and went upstairs. Witness told him that if he did not leave things alone in the home he would have to get fresh lodgings. Various articles had been stolen in the past and they had fallen out at times over money that was missing.

The Coroner: In other words your brother-in-law in your opinion was a thief?—Witness: Yes, sir.

Let you say you were on friendly terms with the deceased?—We were as far as it was possible. I could not very well take police court proceedings against my brother-in-law.

Do you know anything about his love affairs?—I only know of a letter which passed between him and a girl at Birmingham. She wrote to my wife accusing me of opening Milson's letter.

Did you know that a letter was written to this young lady stating that deceased was keeping company with another girl?—My wife told me she had written a letter to this effect.

Was this done out of spite?—No, sir.

Speaking of a letter which had passed between witness and Miss Redgrave, of Birmingham, the Coroner asked: Isn't it because you fell out with your brother-in-law that you wrote to Miss Redgrave as you did, and upset your brother-in-law by trying to cause trouble?—No, sir.

Evidence was also given by other witnesses, and Mrs. Berg, by whom the deceased was employed, stated that he was one of the finest servants she had ever employed, and possessed an extraordinary sunny disposition.

did not take place until 1923.¹³¹ Their children were Charles born in 1883, Annie born in 1885 and Celia Ida who was born at the end of 1888 and buried at St. Briavels on the 29th of June 1889.¹³² He next child, William Milson, also died as an infant, being born in the summer of 1890 and buried at St. Briavels on the 27th of November 1890.¹³³ Thomas James was born in 1891, he joined the Devonshire regiment and was killed at Arras, France on the 18th of March 1917.¹³⁴ The three youngest children were Hester 'Ettie' born about 1895, Milson born about 1898 and Celia Marion born on the 20th of March 1901.¹³⁵ Thomas Harper died on the 11th of June 1926 and was buried at St. Briavels, His wife died the following year.¹³⁶ Thomas Harper and Celia's son, Milson, was convicted of damaging crops and a wall in St. Briavels.¹³⁷ The following year, Milson was lodging with his newly married sister, Hester and her

THE CORONER'S OBSERVATIONS.

In recording a verdict of suicide whilst of unsound mind, the Coroner said it had been a most miserable story to listen to, and to his mind it should never have occurred. While not wishing to go into the question of correspondence or other aspects of the case, he thought it was unfortunate there were those petty quarrels with the deceased's brother-in-law. Notwithstanding such petty quarrels it was the duty of the man, knowing that his brother-in-law was missing, to have made himself responsible for making enquiries but he failed in that respect. He seemed to have been forgotten entirely by the man and his wife and but for the steps taken by the police officer and Mr. Berg it seems that very little at all would have been done. The whole case, to his mind, was a most regrettable one. In expressing thanks to those who had assisted the police officer in recovering the body, the Coroner said he understood the task was an arduous one and he much appreciated the assistance of those who took such an effort at a grave risk to their own lives.

It is understood that owing to the high rocks in the river at the place where the body was found it was necessary to lower a man suspended to a rope over the rocks down on to the water. Had the rope given way the man would have been precipitated into the river below. The descent was made by Mr. James Parry, a fisherman, who discovered the body, and who is a septuagenarian.

¹³¹ The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

¹³² The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹³³ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹³⁴ Memorial Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

¹³⁵ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. 1891 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG12 4337 folio 128. 1911 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG14 PN31710 SN48.

¹³⁶ The birth and death indexes of the General Registrar. The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk. Memorial Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

¹³⁷ *Gloucestershire Journal* 14 August 1926 p. 6 col. e.

husband Charles H Fox at Springwell Cottage in St. Briavels. The brothers-in-law had a disagreement over some missing items, which it was believed that Milson had stolen.¹³⁸ Milson's love life was also not going smoothly. He had been keeping company with a Miss Regrave of Birmingham and it seems that his brother-in-law had interfered in that relationship, perhaps telling Miss Redgrave that Milson had turned his attentions elsewhere. On the positive side, Mrs Berg, who employed Milson as a chauffeur, gave him a glowing reference, saying that he possessed an 'extraordinary sunny disposition'. Milson died on the 13th of November 1927, having drowned in the River Wye at Bigsweir, being asphyxiated by his false teeth. He was judged to have taken his own life, being 'not of sound mind' at the time. His sister and brother-in-law were censured by the coroner for not having reported Milson missing.¹³⁹

Thomas James and Hester's youngest daughter was Ellen Milson, who was born about 1856 and baptised at St. Briavels on the 11th of January 1856.¹⁴⁰ She was buried in St. Briavels on the 15th of February 1858 as Helena.¹⁴¹

Great grandfather **William Court Kear** was born on the 27th¹⁴² of March 1857 at St. Briavels.¹⁴³ He was baptised at St. Briavels on the 10th of April as William.¹⁴⁴ His middle name was adopted later in life. His story is told below.

The youngest child, Exton Turner Kear was born on the 2nd of June 1858 at St. Briavels.¹⁴⁵ In 1881 he was a border in the home of William J Nicholls in Cinderford, Westbury on Severn. He was working as a civil assistant with the ordnance survey.¹⁴⁶ By 1891, he was a sapper with the Royal Engineers, stationed at Brompton Barracks in Chatham, Kent.¹⁴⁷ On the 12th of May 1894 Exton married Mary Ann Alice Fell at St. Andrew's, Earlsfield, Surrey. Exton was still with the Royal Engineers and they both gave their address as 11 Inman Road. Interestingly, Thomas James, although now deceased, is referred to as a horse dealer.¹⁴⁸ The couple had no children.¹⁴⁹ In 1911, they were living at 20 Westbourne Terrace, Harrow Road, Paddington and Exton was working as a house painter.¹⁵⁰ He died in Paddington registration district in 1928.¹⁵¹ His wife died in Kensington district in 1939.¹⁵²

¹³⁸ *Gloucester Citizen* 15 December 1927 p. 7. col. c..

¹³⁹ Index to Gloucestershire Inquests, original at Gloucestershire Archives CO/4/27. *Gloucester Citizen* 15 December 1927 p. 7. Col. c..

¹⁴⁰ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁴¹ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁴² The family bible gives his date of birth as the 29th.

¹⁴³ The birth certificate of William Kear 1857, from the local registrar.

¹⁴⁴ The Baptism Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁴⁵ The birth certificate of Exton Turner Kear 1858, from the local registrar.

¹⁴⁶ 1881 census for Cinderford, Westbury on Severn, Gloucestershire RG11 2522 folio 123.

¹⁴⁷ 1891 census for Brompton Barracks, Chatham, Kent RG12 666 folio 93.

¹⁴⁸ The Marriage Register of St. Andrew's, Earlsfield, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁴⁹ 1911 census for Westbourne Terrace, Harrow Road, Paddington, Middlesex RG14 PN60 SN99.

¹⁵⁰ 1911 census for Westbourne Terrace, Harrow Road, Paddington, Middlesex RG14 PN60 SN99.

¹⁵¹ The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁵² The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

In 1861 Thomas and Hester and their eight surviving children were living in St. Briavels, between the George Inn and the Reading Rooms. Four year old William Court now has his middle name. Thomas was described as a Haulier/Carter.¹⁵³ Ten year later they were still in St. Briavels, with Thomas working as a haulier, Mary Ann Court, Charles Grimes, William Court and Exton Turner were still at home.¹⁵⁴ By 1881, Thomas senior was recorded as having 'no occupation'. Three sons were at home, Charles a labourer, Thomas junior a carpenter and William a gardener.¹⁵⁵ It may be that Thomas James was ailing as he died on the 20th of January 1882 of decay of nature. His death was registered by Hester and he was described as a haulier.¹⁵⁶ He was buried at St. Briavels on the 27th of January¹⁵⁷ and a memorial survives.¹⁵⁸

In 1891, the widowed Hester was living in four roomed Jassamine House, St. Briavels, with her son Charles and grandson Exton Davis. From the surrounding entries, it might be that this was the same house that they had inhabited since at least 1861.¹⁵⁹ On the 16th of January 1894, Hester died at St. Briavels of old age, angina of six days' duration and asthenia (lack of energy), which she had had for two days. Thomas Harper's 'wife' Celia was in attendance.¹⁶⁰ Hester was buried at St. Briavels on the 23rd of January.¹⁶¹

To return to great-grandfather William Court Kear. At some point between 1881 and 1887, almost certainly because his sister Esther was living there,¹⁶² William moved to Croydon. On the 3rd of July 1887 he married **Sarah Grace Sweetingham**¹⁶³ at St. Michael and All Angels, Croydon, Surrey.¹⁶⁴ They both gave their address as 62 Church Street, Croydon and both could sign the register. The witnesses were Sarah's sister Emily Louisa and Albert Holden, who was likely to have been a relative of William's brother-in-law. Church Street is in a commercial area, so it was likely that they were living above a shop. They remained in Croydon for the rest of their lives.

William Court and Sarah Grace Kear had ten children, two girls followed by five boys and then three more girls at the end of the family. Nine reached adulthood and all married but they provided William and Sarah with just eight grandchildren, four of the married children being

¹⁵³ 1861 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG9 3979 folio 6/7.

¹⁵⁴ 1871 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG10 5297 folio 7.

¹⁵⁵ 1881 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG11 5222 folio 31.

¹⁵⁶ The death certificate of Thomas James Kear 1882, from the local registrar.

¹⁵⁷ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁵⁸ Memorial Inscriptions at St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire.

¹⁵⁹ 1891 census for Jassamine House, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG12 437 folio 125.

¹⁶⁰ The death certificate of Hester Kear 1894, from the local registrar.

¹⁶¹ The Burial Register of St. Mary the Virgin, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁶² 1881 census for St. Briavels, Gloucestershire RG11 5222 folio 31. The marriage certificate of William Court Kear and Sarah Grace Sweetingham 1887, from the General Register Office.

¹⁶³ See Sweetingham paper.

¹⁶⁴ The marriage certificate of William Court Kear and Sarah Grace Sweetingham 1887, from the General Register Office. The Marriage Register of St. Michael and all Angels, Croydon, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

childless. These eight grandchildren were not very prolific either and William and Sarah had only twelve great grandchildren.

William and Sarah's eldest child was Ethel Grace, who was born on the 1st of June 1888 in Croydon.¹⁶⁵ She was baptised at St. John the Baptist, Croydon on the 1st of July. The family's address was given as 15 Westfield Road.¹⁶⁶ In 1901, she was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.¹⁶⁷ In 1911, Ethel was in service with the Bowes family at Stanmar, Landseer Road, Cheam, Surrey.¹⁶⁸ On the 12th of November 1911, Ethel married James Beake at St. Mary Magdalene Church, Addiscombe, Surrey. They had three children. Vera Grace 'Gracie' was born on the 18th of January 1913 and baptised on the 22nd at St. Giles', Camberwell, Surrey.¹⁶⁹ She was buried in Southwark on the 19th of March 1918.¹⁷⁰ James and Ethel's next daughter was named Winifred Frances at birth on the 28th of December 1914¹⁷¹ but was baptised at Frances Winifred at St. Giles', Camberwell on the 14th of January 1915.¹⁷² Her death was registered as Winifred Frances in Lambeth district in 1916.¹⁷³ James and Ethel's son, Harry James, was born in 1920 in Marylebone district.¹⁷⁴ During the second world war Harry joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and served as a flight sergeant, navigator, with 103 squadron.¹⁷⁵ According to an inscription on the back of a photograph, his plane went missing over Germany.¹⁷⁶ He is recorded as having died on the 10th of August 1943 and being buried or commemorated at Durnbach Cemetery, Bayern, Germany.¹⁷⁷ Ethel died in Croydon registration district on the 5th of November 1952.¹⁷⁸

William and Sarah's second daughter was Beatrice Hilda. She was born on the 14th of July 1889 in Croydon¹⁷⁹ and baptised on the 11th of August 1889 at St. John the Baptist, Croydon. By this time the family were living in Morland Road.¹⁸⁰ In 1901, she was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.¹⁸¹ Ten years later, she was a house parlourmaid for retired civil servant

¹⁶⁵ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

¹⁶⁶ The Baptism Register of St. John the Baptist, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

¹⁶⁷ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

¹⁶⁸ 1911 census for Stanmar, Landseer Road, Cheam, Surrey RG14 PN2943 SN481.

¹⁶⁹ The Baptism Register of St. Giles, Camberwell, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁷⁰ www.deceasedonline.com.

¹⁷¹ The Baptism Register of St. Giles, Camberwell, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk. The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁷² The Baptism Register of St. Giles, Camberwell, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁷³ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁷⁴ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁷⁵ British armed forces and overseas death indexes of the General Register. www.deceasedonline.com.

¹⁷⁶ Photo in family possession Jill Way née Mott

¹⁷⁷ Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org.

¹⁷⁸ The death indexes of the General Registrar. The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession.

¹⁷⁹ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

¹⁸⁰ The Baptism Register of St. John the Baptist, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

¹⁸¹ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

Peter Paget at 6 Wellesley Road, Croydon.¹⁸² On the 26th of December 1914¹⁸³ she married Felix Lawrence Parham at St. Mary Magdalen, Addiscombe. The witnesses were Vincent Parham and Beatrice's sister Dorothy.¹⁸⁴ During the first world war, Felix was a sapper in the Royal Engineers. He died in Mesopotamia on the 12th of October 1918.¹⁸⁵ Beatrice and Felix had no children.¹⁸⁶ Beatrice remarried in 1928, in Croydon district, to Albert Chandler Brown,¹⁸⁷ known as Bert;¹⁸⁸ he was twelve years her junior.¹⁸⁹ In 1939, the Browns were living at 9 Grant Road, just up the road from Beatrice's childhood home. Albert was a bricklayer.¹⁹⁰ Beatrice died on the 14th of March 1969¹⁹¹ and Albert on the 25th of May 1977 when his address was 9 Windermere Road, Addiscombe.¹⁹²

William Court and Sarah Grace's eldest son was Walter John Milson, who was born on the 10th of January 1891 in Croydon.¹⁹³ In 1901, he was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.¹⁹⁴ In 1911, he was still at 86 Grant Road, working as a fishmonger's assistant.¹⁹⁵ On the 7th of November 1915 he married Agnes Salter at Emmanuel Church, Croydon. Walter was a bacon store assistant living at Red Fox Farm. The witnesses were William Waldnett and Walter's sister Dorothy.¹⁹⁶ Seven months later, on the 28th of May 1916, their daughter Lilian Hilda was born. She was baptised at Emmanuel Church on the 2nd of July.¹⁹⁷ Walter joined the Welsh Regiment as private 55195 and served in world war one. In March 1918, he was invalided out of the army with tuberculosis. His medical report reads, *"Patient had a cough since March 1917. Condition has been gradually getting worse. Reported sick and admitted to hospital in July 1917. Sent to England in August. No history of previous lung trouble, Due to active service, stress and exposure."* He was sent to a sanatorium for six months and showed some improvement but he was declared permanently unfit for service and died on the 3rd of June

¹⁸² 1911 census for 6 Wellesley Road, Croydon, Surrey RG14 PN3295 SN98.

¹⁸³ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession gives the year as 1915.

¹⁸⁴ The Marriage Register of St. Mary Magdalene, Addiscombe, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

¹⁸⁵ Soldiers Died in the Great War via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁸⁶ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁸⁷ The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁸⁸ Information from Roger Frederick Few.

¹⁸⁹ 1939 register for 9 Grant Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1290H/005/39 CLJH.

¹⁹⁰ 1939 register for 9 Grant Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1290H/005/39 CLJH.

¹⁹¹ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession gives the year as 1915.

¹⁹² Principal Probate Registry Indexes.

¹⁹³ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey. RG13 640 folio 71. The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁹⁴ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

¹⁹⁵ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

¹⁹⁶ The Marriage Register of Emmanuel Church, Croydon, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

¹⁹⁷ The Baptism Register of Emmanuel Church, Croydon, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

1919.¹⁹⁸ He was buried at Croydon Cemetery, Mitcham Road.¹⁹⁹ In 1921, Agnes remarried to Herbert Rowland Collins in Sevenoaks district.²⁰⁰ They are not believed to have had any children.²⁰¹ Agnes died in Croydon district in 1979.²⁰² Lilian died in North Devon in 2003.²⁰³

In 1891 William and Sarah, with their three eldest children, Ethel, Beatrice and Walter and a lodger, William Scott, were living at 19 Fullerton Road, Croydon and William was described as a gardener.²⁰⁴ Fullerton Road was a typical Victorian terraced house.

The only one of William Court and Sarah Grace's children to die in infancy was William Court junior, who was born on the 10th of November 1892 in Croydon²⁰⁵ and died there on the 14th of July 1893.²⁰⁶ The next child was Albert George, who was born on the 3rd of January 1894 in Croydon.²⁰⁷ He was baptised on the 25th of March at St. James', Croydon.²⁰⁸ In 1911, he was living in the family home at 86 Grant Road, working as a gardener's lad.²⁰⁹ Albert served in the first world war and his bugle is still in family possession. A photograph, taken in Ireland in 1916, shows him on horseback. He was wounded at Vimy Ridge.²¹⁰ On the 26th of December 1922 Albert, a labourer, married Lily Emily Few St. James', Croydon. The witnesses were Albert's sister, Minnie Louise and Lily's brother, Frederick William Few, who was married to Albert's sister Dorothy. They both gave their address as 9 Dartnell Road,²¹¹ which was the couple's marital home.²¹² They did not have any children.²¹³ In 1937, Albert was the informant on the death of his mother.²¹⁴ The 1939 register records Albert and Lily living at Dartnell Road;

¹⁹⁸ Army Service Record for Walter John Milson Kear WO364 1746 via www.findmypast.co.uk. The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession gives his date of death as 2nd July.

¹⁹⁹ www.findagrave.com.

²⁰⁰ The marriage indexes of the General Registrar. 1939 register for 30 Purley Downs Road, Purley, Surrey RG101 1295E/020/38 CLKT.

²⁰¹ 1939 register for 30 Purley Downs Road, Purley, Surrey RG101 1295E/020/38 CLKT.

²⁰² The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁰³ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁰⁴ 1891 census for 19 Fullerton Road, East Croydon, Surrey RG12 593 folio 26.

²⁰⁵ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁰⁶ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁰⁷ Oral evidence from Roger Frederick Few. The Baptism Register of St. James, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁰⁸ The Baptism Register of St. James, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁰⁹ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²¹⁰ Photographs in family possession.

²¹¹ The Marriage Register of St. James, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk. The family Bible mistakenly gives their year of marriage as 1924.

²¹² 1939 register for 9 Dartnell Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1290D/002/39 CLJE.

²¹³ The birth indexes of the General Registrar. Oral evidence from Roger Frederick Few.

²¹⁴ The death certificate of Sarah Grace Kear 1937, from the local registrar.

Albert's occupation was warehouseman.²¹⁵ Lily died in 1951²¹⁶ and Albert on the 30th of April 1975, both in Croydon registration district.²¹⁷

Oscar William Kear was born on the 12th of March 1895.²¹⁸ He was baptised on the 28th of April at St. James', Croydon; the family were still living at Fullerton Road.²¹⁹ In 1901, he was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.²²⁰ In 1911, he was still living in the family home at 86 Grant Road, working as an errand boy.²²¹ On the 11th of December 1915, he attested for the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment and served for three years.²²² The Index to British Army Medal Cards suggests that he also served with the labour corps of the Royal Fusiliers.²²³ On the 18th of December 1937 Oscar married Celia Blanche Johnson in Lambeth District.²²⁴ They are not believed to have had any children.²²⁵ In 1939, Oscar and Celia were living at 6 St. Matthew's Road, Lambeth. Oscar was described as a moving contractor and Celia was a clerk.²²⁶ In September 1953, Oscar was appointed by the postal service as a cleaner at 'LTR SW'.²²⁷ Oscar died on the 18th of October 1962 in Croydon district²²⁸ and Celia in 1975 in Bromley District.²²⁹

William Court and Sarah Grace's youngest son was Thomas Henry,²³⁰ known as Tom.²³¹ He was born on the 31st of March 1897.²³² He was baptised as Thomas James at St. Mary Magdalen, Addiscombe with his younger sister on the 9th of October 1898.²³³ In 1901, he was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.²³⁴ Tom attended Woodside Infants and then, from 1905, Woodside Boys' School.²³⁵ In 1911, he was living in the family home at 86 Grant Road

²¹⁵ 1939 register for 9 Dartnell Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1290D/002/39 CLJE.

²¹⁶ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²¹⁷ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²¹⁸ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The Baptism Register of St. James, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²¹⁹ The Baptism Register of St. James, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²²⁰ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

²²¹ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²²² Transcription of the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment's Rough Register of Recruits 1914-1917 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²²³ Index to British Army Medal Cards WO372/11 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²²⁴ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

²²⁵ The birth indexes of the General Registrar.

²²⁶ 1939 register for 6 St. Matthew's Road, Lambeth, Surrey RG101/0358B/010/37 ANLV.

²²⁷ British Postal Service Appointment Books 1737-1969 via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²²⁸ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²²⁹ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²³⁰ His birth is registered as Thomas Henry but the family Bible gives his name as Thomas James.

²³¹ Photographs in family possession.

²³² The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²³³ The Baptism Register of St. Mary Magdalene, Addiscombe, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²³⁴ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

²³⁵ Admissions Register for Woodside Boys' School SCH158-2-8 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

and was still at school;²³⁶ he left school later that year to 'help at home'.²³⁷ On the 7th of August 1924 Thomas, under the name Thomas James Kear, married Rose May Ball in Godstone, Surrey district.²³⁸ Their only child, Joan, was born in 1925. In 1939 Tom and his family were living at 1 Mill Walk Cottages, Warlingham, Surrey and Tom was working as a gardener.²³⁹ Tom was buried at All Saints, Warlingham on the 4th of March 1963.²⁴⁰

Grandmother **Dorothy May**, known as Dol,²⁴¹ was born on the 15th of September 1898 in Addiscombe.²⁴² In 1901, she was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.²⁴³ She was baptised at St. Mary Magdalen, Addiscombe on the 9th of October.²⁴⁴ In 1911, she was still at 86 Grant Road and was at school.²⁴⁵ On the 30th of October 1920, Dorothy May married **Frederick William Few**²⁴⁶ at St. Mary Magdalene, Addiscombe. Her address at the time was given as 86 Grant Road. The witnesses were her father, William Court Kear and Thomas Alfred Mott, her brother-in-law.²⁴⁷ Her story continues under Few.²⁴⁸

William and Sarah's ninth child, Minnie Louise, was born on the 10th of May 1900.²⁴⁹ In 1901, she was at home with family at 86 Grant Road.²⁵⁰ From the 6th of April 1908, until the 23rd of May 1914, Minnie attended Woodside Girls' School.²⁵¹ In 1911, she was still at 86 Grant Road and was at school.²⁵² On the 27th of December 1924 she married Thomas Alfred (Tom) Mott at St. Mary, Addiscombe. Minnie's address was 86 Grant Road and Tom was described as a labourer. The witnesses were Minnie's younger sister Marion and Frederick William Burns.²⁵³ Their only child, Jill, was born in 1931.²⁵⁴ In 1939 the family were living at 180 Dalmally Road,

²³⁶ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²³⁷ Admissions Register for Woodside Boys' School SCH158-2-8 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²³⁸ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

²³⁹ 1939 register for 1 Mill Walk Cottages, Warlingham, Surrey RG101/1131C/006/10 CMJB.

²⁴⁰ The Burial Register of All Saints, Warlingham, Surrey via www.ancestry.co.uk.

²⁴¹ Photographs in family possession.

²⁴² The Death certificate of Dorothy May Few née Kear 1992, from the local registrar, in family possession. 1939 register for 53 Highbarrow Road, Croydon Surrey RG101/1288A/005/29 CLIM.

²⁴³ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

²⁴⁴ The Baptism Register of St. Mary Magdalene, Addiscombe, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁴⁵ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²⁴⁶ See Few paper.

²⁴⁷ The marriage certificate of Frederick William Few and Dorothy May Kear 1920, from the local registrar. The Marriage Register of St. Mary Magdalene, Addiscombe, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁴⁸ See Few paper.

²⁴⁹ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession.

²⁵⁰ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

²⁵¹ Admissions Register for Woodside Girls' School SCH158-2-1 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁵² 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²⁵³ The Marriage Register of St. Mary Magdalene, Addiscombe, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁵⁴ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

Croydon. Tom was working as an electric cable joiner's mate.²⁵⁵ Tom died in 1965²⁵⁶ and Minnie in 1980.²⁵⁷

In the 1901 census, the family were living at 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe; they had probably been there about four years by this time. 86 Grant Road was a substantial, three-story, detached, Victorian property and would have easily accommodated their growing family. The 1911 census says that it was a seven room property.²⁵⁸ In 1901, three rooms were inhabited by the Hersey family. All eight surviving children were at home and William continued to work as a gardener, as it seems he did all his life.²⁵⁹

The youngest of the family was Marion Ida, who was born on the 1st of February 1902.²⁶⁰ She was baptised on the 9th of September 1903 at St. John the Baptist, Croydon.²⁶¹ She attended Woodside Girls' School.²⁶² In 1911, she was living in the family home at 86 Grant Road and was still at school.²⁶³ On the 26th of February 1938, Marion married Samuel Saunders in Croydon registration district;²⁶⁴ he was twenty years her senior.²⁶⁵ In 1939, they were living at 104 Outram Road, Croydon; Samuel was described as incapacitated.²⁶⁶ Samuel died in 1956 and Marion in 1991, both in Croydon registration district.²⁶⁷

By the time of the 1911 census, the seven youngest children were still at home in Grant Road and William was described as a jobbing gardener.²⁶⁸ On the 9th of January 1928, William died at 86 Grant Road of aortic disease and bronchitis.²⁶⁹ He was buried at Mitcham Road Cemetery in Croydon,²⁷⁰ leaving an estate worth £608 6s 9d.²⁷¹ Sarah died on the 25th of January 1937 of heart failure and an enlarged goitre.²⁷² She too was buried at Mitcham Road.²⁷³

²⁵⁵ 1939 register for 180 Dalmally Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1288A/02/37 CLIM.

²⁵⁶ Principal Probate Registry Indexes.

²⁵⁷ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁵⁸ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²⁵⁹ 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

²⁶⁰ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. 1901 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Croydon, Surrey RG13 640 folio 71.

²⁶¹ The Baptism Register of St. John the Baptist, Croydon, Surrey via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁶² Admissions Register for Woodside Girls' School SCH158-2-1 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

²⁶³ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²⁶⁴ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession. The marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁶⁵ 1939 register for 104 Outram Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1288C/023.24 CLIM.

²⁶⁶ 1939 register for 104 Outram Road, Croydon, Surrey RG101/1288C/023.24 CLIM.

²⁶⁷ The death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁶⁸ 1911 census for 86 Grant Road, Addiscombe, Surrey RG14 PN3289 SN75.

²⁶⁹ The death certificate of William Court Kear 1928, from the local registrar.

²⁷⁰ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession.

²⁷¹ Letters of Administration for William Court Kear 1928.

²⁷² The death certificate of Sarah Grace Kear 1937, from the local registrar.

²⁷³ The Family Bible of William Court and Sarah Grace Kear née Sweetingham in family possession.