

The Life and Times of the Dibdin - Aglio Family
A summary setting the family in a historical context
1745 - 1925

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Introduction

"and what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

		1700				1750				1800				1850				1900		
Thomas Dibdin (Sailor)	1726-1780																			
Charles Dibdin	1745-1814																			
Charles Mungo Dibdin	1768-1833																			
Thomas John Dibdin	1771-1841																			
Thomas Frognall Dibdin	1776-1847																			
A.Aglie Snr	1777-1857																			
T.C. Dibdin	1810-1893																			
John Absolon	1815-1895																			
A.Aglie Jnr	1817-1885																			
WJ Dibdin	1850-1925																			

In March 1929, a member of this family, Lewis G Dibdin, a distant ancestor, produced a Dibdin family tree that went back to Thomas Dibdin, Parish Clerk of Holy Rood Southampton 1736-1759 who was married to Sarah Wesgarth. These were the parents of Charles Dibdin, a well known and referred to member of the Family who was an actor and songwriter. Further research by members of the Dibdin Family took the tree back one generation to Nicholas Dibdin 1670 – 1715 and his wife Penelope.

This tree came into the author’s possession in about 2004 and as a result, there began a journey of research using material that arrived from other new found members of the family but also from archives that came to light over the next few years. A copy of this original family tree had gone into another branch of the family and I was contacted by Simon Dibdin, another descendant of Charles Dibdin. Simon’s family had developed the tree to include about 1500 names.

It became apparent that not only was there material available about the Dibdin Family, but also a significant amount of

documentation about the Aglio family that married in through William Joseph Dibdin in 1878. Amongst the material, there are not only portraits, paintings, drawings, and other artefacts but also biographies, two autobiographies, letters and other significant documents. Much of this material can be seen on the Family History Website at www.guise.me.uk.

It is noticeable that most of what has been written about the family, to date, is either cold factual information such as dates of births, deaths and marriages, or biographies. These tend to focus on the lives and activities of individuals and seldom put these lives in context with what was going on at the time, events that may have had a significant influence on their lives.

The uncovering of an album of about 100 letters mainly to Agostino Aglio and his son Augustine during the period 1828-1878 lead to the idea of striving to see the lives of some of the members of the family in a historical context taking into account the political and social influences of the time.

This has been quite easy to do for the life of Agostino Aglio who lived and worked through the Regency and some of the Victorian Era and so much of this booklet focuses on him and his family, however for the sake of continuity and completeness, an attempt have been made to include members of the Dibdin family back to Charles Dibdin born in 1745 and William Joseph Dibdin who died in 1925, both of whom contributed much to life in London during their time.

This article is not an attempt to research ‘The Life and Times of the Family’ in an academic way, but only to pull together a few strands of history during the period of nearly 200 years so as to give a flavour of life for some members of the family.

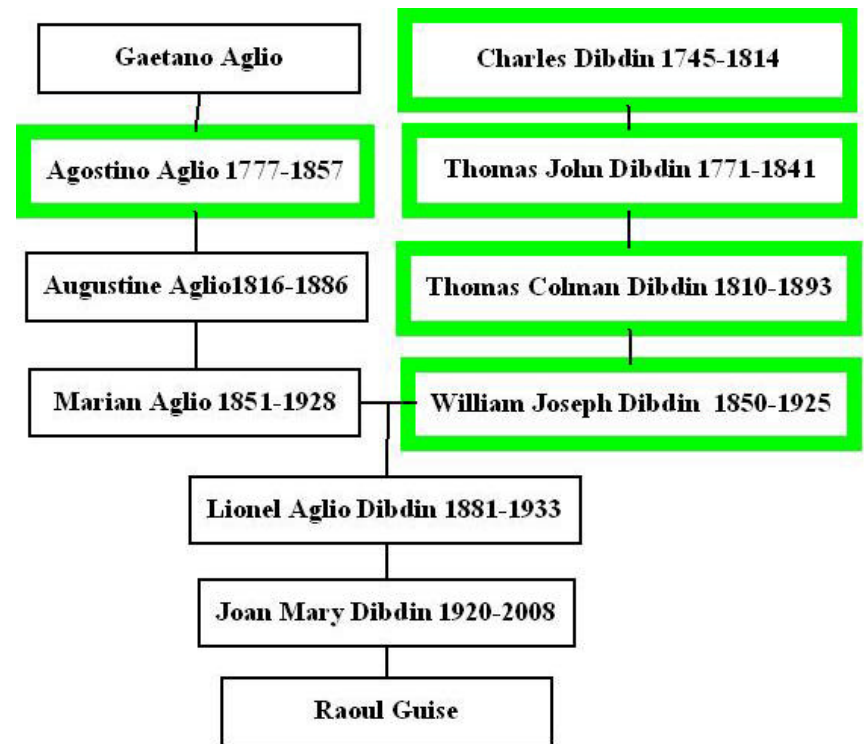
The choice of events and people during this period is based on those of particular interest to the author or to those that appear to be relevant and have turn up at the top of the pile during research. Time and again there have been coincidences of events or situations that have spanned the generations and it is these that have triggered interest. Some years ago an article was written exploring these coincidences across time and one such was the story of Camilla Lacey and Fanny Burney. Camilla Lacey was the last estate bought for development by Lionel Aglio Dibdin in 1933 before his death in an airplane crash. Fanny Burney was the owner who moved in during the 1700’s and in fact had a romantic relationship and married Alexandre D’Arblay, a refugee from the French revolution who had settled at Betchworth just round the corner of Box Hill. Thomas Colman Dibdin, Son of Thomas John Dibdin and Grandson of Charles Dibdin was born in that village and so there is every chance that they would have met up particular as Fanny entertained, in London, the likes of Ben Johnson, David Garrick, Edmund Burke and Richard Sheridan. T.C.Dibdin did a painting of Juniper Hall on the side of Box Hill. This was where a number of refugees were settled and where Fanny and Alexandre had romantic interludes.

The author spent a very intense week at Juniper Hall in 1974 studying biology and field work in preparation for teaching science.

It was these amazing coincidences coupled with the acquisition of so much primary source material that motivated the writing of this family history.

In this booklet, emphasis is on the five characters in green however reference will be made to others within and outside the family.

Summary Family Tree



The process of searching for details about individuals, so as to further set their lives in context, has led to the unearthing of more information about people than was known before. Particular it has been found that Aglio was committed to Debtors Prison in 1811 and that he had a son by a Jane Tomlinson in 1816. Not only did he have a son and two daughters by his wife Letitia but also a second son, John William Emilius, who died a couple of years old. Further genealogical details can be seen in the appendix.

In the appendix is a collection of biographies from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies.

These are included as being probably the most accurate and academic available, although a more detailed knowledge and understanding of the life of Agostino Aglio, referred to as Augustine Aglio by Oxford, can be assembled by reading the mass of material available on www.guise.me.uk.

A further understanding of the Dibdin Family could be obtained by thoroughly processing all that has been written about the two Charles and four Thomas Dibdins. Sadly it is difficult to find any direct detailed biographical information about Thomas Colman Dibdin, the artist, but some idea of his life can be extrapolated from our knowledge of his residences, his works of art and references from other sources such as his son's autobiography.

Most biographies and for that matter autobiographies tend to centre on the individual and his or her activities and take for granted the environment and society lived in, other than when it is necessary to develop a particular line of study. It is left to the dramatists of TV and Film to fill in the background as accurately as possible as we see with many period dramas and dramatized documentaries. There seems to be little reference to family life.

Nowadays to travel from London to Manchester for the day to attend a meeting is not an issue but to read that Agostino Aglio went to Manchester to decorate the Town Hall or that Thomas Dibdin put on a play in Cheshire, leads one to ask how did they travel? What did they take with them? How dangerous or unpleasant was the journey and how long did it take? What impact did the introduction of Steam engines have?

This little booklet has endeavoured to answer some of these questions as it pieces together some aspects of the families lives.

Starting life in South London and spending 30 or so years in West London, I always considered myself as a Londoner, but it is only recently had I realised how deep rooted the family was in Central and South London. Without realising it, and probably without any conscious effort by my mother, I got to feel an affinity towards not only Central London but also to areas of Surrey that carried a ring of comfort, Sutton, Banstead, Box Hill and Dulwich. As will be seen the family lived in many of these areas.

For the reader who works through this book continuously, there may seem to be repetitions and in some respects I apologise for this, however it seemed, when writing, that many of these repeated comments were of significance in each specific context. The author is juggling between the approach that can be offered by short article web pages with hyperlinks and that which is demanded by the sequential format of a book.

Raoul Guise.
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