

## Chapter 4 Introduction to Anthony Benoit Guise

In January 1941 Joan had her 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday, she had become of age and so it would be reasonable to assume that her life and her finances were now under her complete control. Having spent 7 years under the control of the public trustees. She had just been through the Blitz, working in First Aid and Hospitals near Marylebone and had, for the moment, given up her training as a musician and probably her ambitions for the stage. By May 1941 the Main Blitz on London was over although, of course, bombing continued throughout Britain.



**Anthony Benoit Guise**  
5<sup>th</sup> April 1917 – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1944

A chance encounter in Scotland between Anthony Guise and Don Haycraft, Joan's cousin from Nottingham, who was training as a Sergeant, resulted in the introduction of Joan, and later, her brother, to the Guise family at 4 Pinfold Road, in Streatham. – May 1941.

As we shall see, within a week she met Anthony Benoit Guise, Tony, resulting in a radical change in her life.



**Don Haycraft**  
**Born 1916**

In April or May 1941 while at Middlebank House Inverkeithing, Fife, just north of the Forth Bridge, before moving on to Turfhill Camp in Kinross, Tony had, by chance, met with Don Haycraft, Joan's cousin, in training and encouraged him to visit his family on his next visit to London. Tony wrote home to his mother, Vera, known as Mater or 'The Mater', asking that he should be welcomed.

*" Darling V,  
Introducing Donald ... pal of mine. Has met Gertie, the Andersons and Stevenson's – we do things together. Fix him up with bath & meals etc and get Widdy to show him the local dumps and tell the girls to look after him. Know you'll all like him, he is quite used to me".*  
Don was in training as a Sergeant. The girls were of course Tony's two sisters of 22 and 20 years.

Also in the letter there is the statement that he should be home on leave on the 20th June 1941.

## The Family

This section is supported by Appendix 1 which gives summary details of 4 families associated with this book.



Yvonne

The two stunning young girls mentioned, were Yvonne and Marie, living with their Mother at Pinfold Road and as one can imagine all three doted on their beloved brother and son, Tony who at this time was 24 year old and training as an officer at Shrivenham. Yvonne was the eldest and was to marry in 1942 to Neil Callow, a few months before her brother.

Marie, the younger, never did marry but after the war worked her way up to the position of company secretary of a firm of specialist welding materials called Eutectic Alloys, and in later years cared for her mother at home, until she died.



Marie

Mater whose husband, Jules Guise, had died in 1939, the same year as his father, was the archetypal matriarch of the family with Pinfold Road acting a centre of activity for numerous friends, neighbours and members of the family.

As is discussed in the book “Aspects of the Fleuss and Related Families” Mater’s father in law, Jules

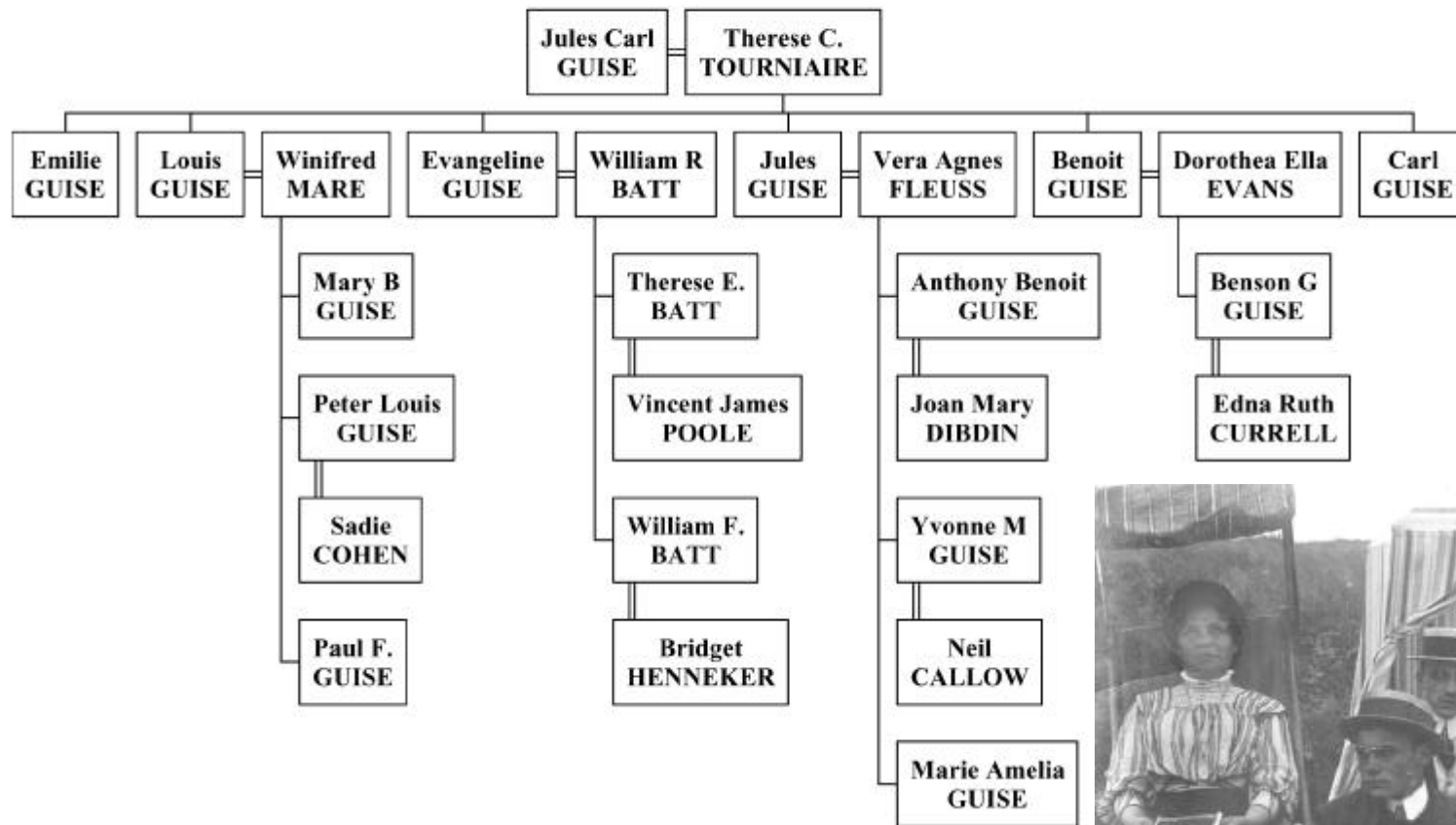
Carl Guise, immigrated from Denmark sometime before 1880 and had the surname Giese before changing it, at the suggestion of his new wife ,Therese Caroline Alexandrine Tourniaire of the French Tourniaire Circus family, which was directly connected to the start on the Moscow State Circus.

This recently acquired information from researches by Sarah Guise smashed the much relished myth that the Guise family were, on the wrong side of the blanket, descended from the Duc de Guise. It had been believed that this side of the family had escaped to Denmark during the French Revolution.



The Mater

Descendants of Jules Carl GUISE



Four Children of Jules Carl Guise  
Louise, Jules, Benoit, Evangeline





**Tony, Jules Snr., Marie, Therese, Vera, Yvonne, Jules Jnr.**

Photograph from about 1932 showing Jules Carl Guise (ie Snr. nee Giese) and his wife Therese Caroline Alexandrine TOURNIAIRE, their son Jules Guise (Jnr) and his wife Vera and their offspring Anthony Benoit Guise, Marie and Yvonne. Tony's younger cousin Therese may also be in the picture but it is more likely that the rest of the people are Fleuss family.

It is likely that at least two out of Vera's five sisters are in the photograph

This remarkable photograph shows three generations of the Guise family

Not only can we see the side view of Jules Carl Guise (Giese) but also his wife Therese Guise nee Tourniaire who one can imagine to being the original matriarch of the family.



Therese Guise

Tony at the age of about 15 is seen on the left hand side.

The Fleuss family tree is shown for completeness and also because through the narrative later in this book, there is reference to lines of the family particularly the Frankland and Perrier See Appendix 23 for some wedding photographs and Appendix 24 for more photographs.

The House, 4 Pinfold Road, in Streatham, with “the Mater” running it seemed to have been the hub for an immense amount of social activity. It was ideally situated for family and friends to drop in, just out of the central bombing zone and there was always a welcome, which would have included drinks and a party.



Mater’s over the top dramatic nature seems to have derived from her ancestral family which included many from the artistic world and she and her sister, Dorothy, had before the first World war been performing on the stage.

From the archive material, details of Tony’s life slowly came to light and from letters to his mother and lover / wife and from many other letters and official documents it has been possible to put together some idea of the man.

Over time more and more archive material in the form of letters has come to light and the internet has been a source of information and most excitingly, because of the history website, a number of new relations have been found and communicated with. Particularly important was the work of the wife of Chris Guise a second cousin, previously unknown to me, Sarah Guise, who contacted me and gave me a definitive history of the Guise family and the Demark connection, showing that in fact Jules Carl Guise arrived in England with the name Giese, and changed it to the name Guise after persuasion by his young wife Therese Caroline Alexandrine Tourniaire, who was born into the French Circus Tourniaire Family. This finally closed down the myth of the connection of the to the Duke de Guise.

The acquisition of this history is tinged with sadness due to the death in 2014 of Sarah Guise and at very young age with cancer.

Later, in 2015, some archive material collected by Richard Michael Stenning, who had direct marriage connections to the Fleuss family, and so I was able to assemble a fair history of both families and other related ones. From the book “Aspects of the Fleuss and Related Families”, can be gleaned some idea of Tony’s family background and particularly the strong artistic and dramatic drive within the Fleuss family.

Most significant are the insights that can be gained about those members of both families, and in particular the strong family relationships between the cousins of Tony’s generation. The letters that have been studied in recent years from many family members to the Guise Family emphasise the deep feelings of love and admiration that many had for Tony drawing out in dramatic detail the way that he was probably adored by the three immediate women in his life, Vera, (The Mater) his mother and his two sisters Yvonne and Maria.

The reader will find most of these letters in Appendices 8 & 9.

## Tony's Youth

So who was Anthony Benoit Guise? What sort of person was he? What was his family background. ?

Just before first edition of this book was written, I had assumed that there would be great difficulty in answering these questions as it seemed that there was very little documentation to go on. Only snippets of information have been gleaned regarding Tony's childhood

We have a letter by Tony from E1 Ward as a young child where he was poorly, maybe with chest problems:

"My Dearest Mummy and Daddy ....."

This is the first letter in Appendix 3

This type of illness may have been repeated a couple of times in his youth.

There is reference to such a serious illness in a letter from Shetland during the war in which where he mentioned another bout of illness when he was in his teens.

There is reference to him being a good scout and impressing his Parish Priest to such an extent that he was to refer to him in a booklet about the local scouts.

It is known that Tony went to Camberwell Art College. Examples of his art work from an early age indication that he was obviously highly talented, although he suggested in a letter of 1944 at the age of 28 that he had not put pencil to paper for 10 years and that pencil and crayon were not his forte.



Examples of his early drawings are, I think, exceptional.



Painting by Tony, 1932 at the age of 16 years old.

Some books have been found that were given to Tony when a youngster by his local Parish Priest. The first in 1931 when Tony was 15 and refers to him being a boy scout.

"Scout A.Guise from Fr. Milton Easter 1931" – A copy of The story of Blessed Thomas More"

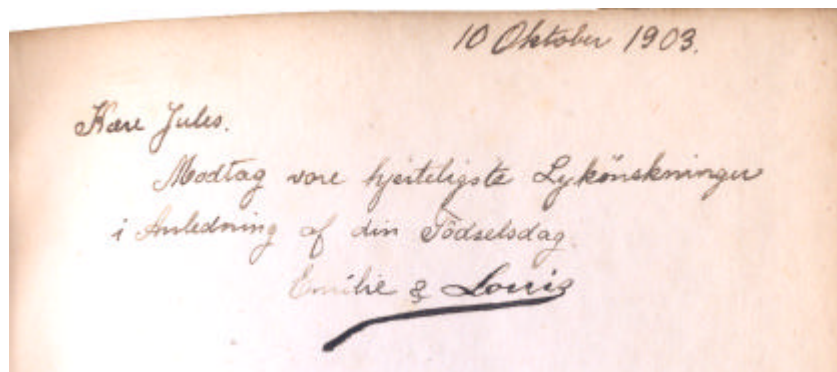
This was followed up by a limited edition facsimile copy No.54 /290 of

"THE MIRROR OF VERTUE IN WORLDLY GREATNESS IN THE LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE, KNIGHT BY HIS SON-IN-LAW WILLIAM ROPER"

To "Scout A Guise XLI<sup>st</sup> Lambeth Holy Week 1934 ORA PRO ME – A.M."

A third book, strangely, is a French copy of a catalogue of the Royal Museum at Le Hague 1914 "Musee Royale De La Haye (Mauritshuis)" and given to Tony Guise "From his affectionate friend Bernard Kelly Oct 27/36".

It is assumed that Bernard Kelly is the same Fr. Kelly referred to



by Lt.Col. K.C.Sharpe R.A. 13<sup>th</sup> Ind H.A.A. Regt 1A South East Asia Command in his letter to Joan on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1944 regarding a book about the local Streatham Scouts.

The fourth book to Anthony Guise "from his affect. Friend Rev Bernard Kelly April 1937" - A Dictionary of Terms in Art.

Another book was given by Bernard Kelly in September 1937 – Seven Discourses on Art by Sir Joshua Reynolds 1891, inscribed "Tony Guise from his affectionate Bernard Kelly"

It needs to be noted somewhere that somehow Tony obtained possession of a book belonging to his Aunt Emelie Guise and given to her on her 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept 1904 by C.J.W. This book is titled "Falaise – the Town of the Conqueror"- 1901. Census records list the Aunt as Emilie M Guise.

Also a book to:

Hare Jules from Emilie and Louis on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1903 - The Swiss Family Robinson. This must have been to Jules Guise in his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday from his older brother and sister.

There is also a book to Nita from Father Keating, Xmas 1910, "What the Old Clock Saw" by Sophie Maude

There is an anecdote that when Tony was 21 he was working for Burns, Oates and Washburn in the Catholic book shop in Victoria and borrowed a set of three candelabras with seven candle holders on each. For whatever reason these were never returned and are still held by the family. Serendipity is such that in about 1985 one was repaired, as an honoured favour, by the head of Technology at Tong School, Bradford, Brian Stevenson, who had lectured at Goldsmiths and was recognised as a top craftsman in the field of metal and jewellery.

Tony's father Jules Guise died in June 1939.

His Grandfather, Jules Carl Guise, (Giese) also died in the same year.

Recent information from newly acquainted members of the Guise and Fleuss family, has given some insights into the people that were in touch with the family at 4 Pinfold Road. The sympathy letters written after Tony's death enable one to get a clearer idea of those who were in close contact and that Tony would have known well.

While Tony was at Camberwell Art College he met up with Vincent Poole another art student of about the same age. He took it upon himself to introduce Vincent to his first cousin, Therese Batt, for whom, there is no doubt, he had a special affection.

Therese and Vincent married in 1941.

Letters from Tony after he had joined up indicate that he managed a close relationship with his mother and somehow was at ease with the effusive language that pervaded conversations in that household. Mater was ever dramatic, so during the wartime, her flamboyance and welcoming manner draw young people into the family circle.