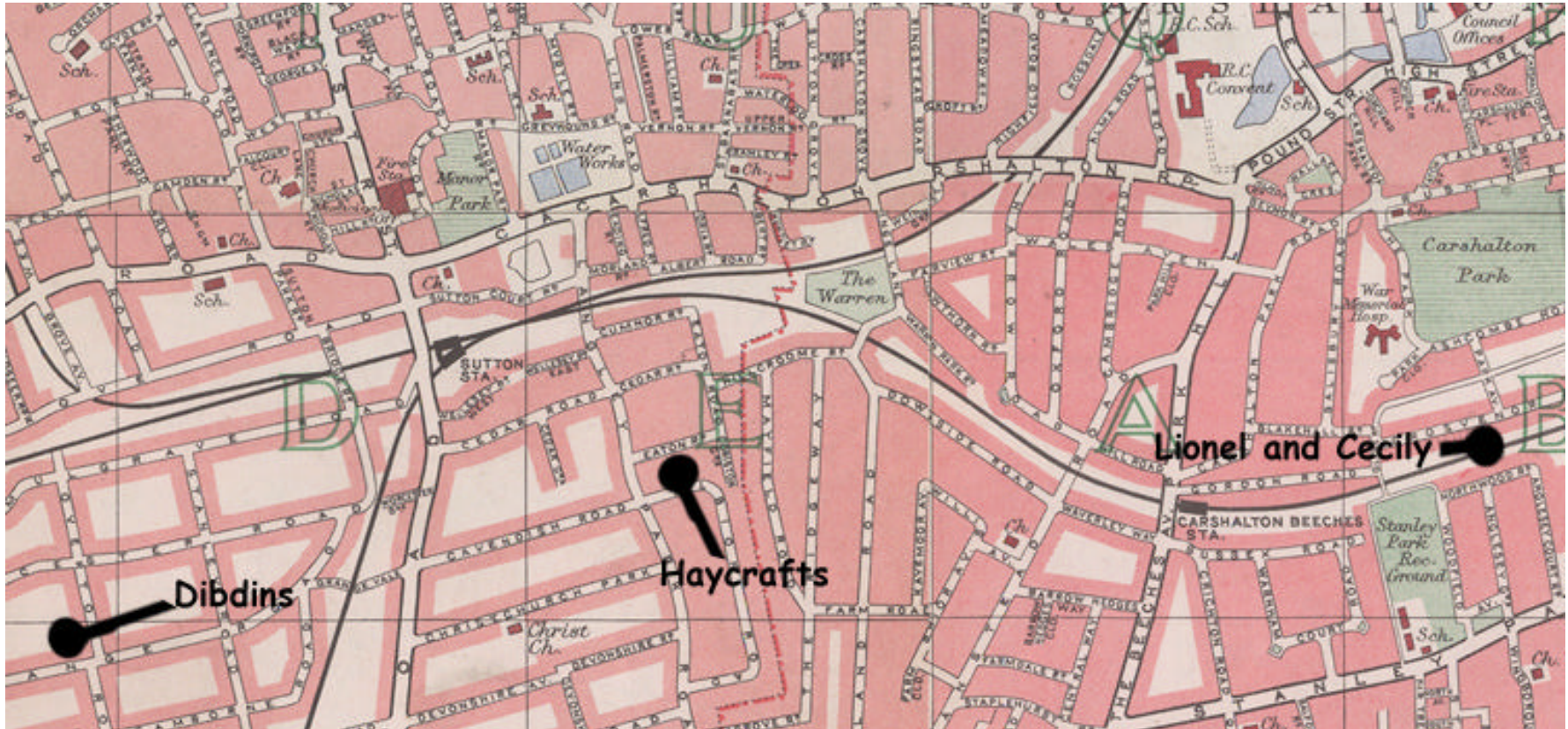


Chapter 11 Enter the Haycraft Family



Map of Sutton and Carshalton showing various abodes.

In the 1900s the Dibdin family was living at the house called Mayfield in Sutton. Less than half a mile away in a house called Medmenhan in Eaton Road lived the Haycraft Family, Samuel Willetts Haycraft, his wife, Frances Georgina and their 6 offspring. Samuel was about 8 years older than William although his wife was a little younger than Marian Dibdin.

Although there may be other earlier connections between William Joseph Dibdin and Samuel Willett Haycraft, it would seem that the connection between the families developed through the School life of their respective daughters. From the inset it can be seen that at least 4 Dibdin girls and all 3 Haycraft girls went to Sutton High School in the 1890's and as the school was a new small Public School there is every reason to suppose that they knew each other well.

The school was positioned equidistant between the two households.

**From the Sutton High School Jubilee Register
1884 -1934**

(Dibden, Annie Eliza 1887-1897)

Dibdin, Ethel Margaret 1890-1897 Mrs Moore

Dibdin, Marian Alice 1890-1898 Mrs Paul Montford Two daughter and one son.

20 Bruce Street Toorak Melbourne Victoria.

Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House Five Years Scholarship
Silver Medals for Modelling and Drawing from Life. Royal Drawing
Society Drawing Teaching Certificate. Miniature and Portrait Painter
in London and Victoria. Exhibitor R.A. Member of the Victoria
Artist's Association , Melbourne. At present constantly engaged in
collaboration with her husband in Sculpture Studio and painting
portraits.

Dibdin, Laetitia 1894-1899 102 City Road EC1

Nursing Profession (*records indicated that she was also opera
Singer*)

Dibdin, Winifred Mary 1896-97

Dibdin, Christine 1896-1899 1905-1906 Mrs Thomas One daughter
Sunningdale 35 Queen's Ave Meols Cheshire

Dibdin, Joan Mary 1929-1932 Avondale Grosvenor Ave Carshalton
Now at Ancaster House School Bexhill

Haycraft, Edith Mary 1890-1894 The Towers Saltburn Yorks.

Studied Languages and Teaching Methods in Germany 1896 – 1897
Languages Mistress at the Towers School for Girls 1897, until taking
over the School in 1905

Haycraft, Cicely Grace 1891-1898 Mrs Dibdin Two sons and a daughter

LRAM Performer's and Teacher's Diploma Professional Pianist.
Killed, with her Husband in the crash of the Imperial Airways Liner
"City of Liverpool" March 26th 1933 in Belgium

Haycraft, Ethel Gertrude 1895-1901 Mrs Davis Three sons

Ridgeway Reigate Hill Reigate

Ouin, Helen Humphrys 1923-1932 Yarner, Devonshire Road Sutton

Clerk in the Bank of England

The School was founded in 1884 and it is reported that at the start there were 80 pupils. It seems that some pupils stayed for up to 7 years with ages of 8 to 16 years old.

The conclusion from this is that classes were small and it was reported that the headmistresses made great efforts towards cohesion within the school community.

By 1934 the school had classes from Kindergarten to Upper Sixth with up to 36 pupils in a class.

Cecily Haycraft was probably a contemporary of Marian Dibdin and Gertrude Haycraft a contemporary of Christine Dibdin.

In a letter written some years later to Peter Dibdin, Lionel's Son, in 1933, Bernard Haycraft refers to knowing Lionel since he was 15 years old, that is in 1896, so there is every reason to suppose that the families spent time together.

Lionel and Cecily

We have no further evidence of a connection between the two families until 1904.

A sequence of letters starting on 9th June 1904 give wonderful insight into the interaction within the families and the impact that music had on their lives.

From Cecily Haycraft (age 22 years old)

Dear Lionel

Mother has just told me that you telephoned to Bernard this morning asking if I would act as accompanist for you tomorrow at the hospital. Bernard (aged 27) did not give me a proper message from you. If your accompanist has disappointed I shall be pleased to take her place.

Excuse haste Kind regards

Yours sincerely Cecily Haycraft.

17th June 1904

Dear Miss Haycraft

Could you or your sister come up to town by 5.20pm this afternoon to play, as you will see by the enclosed card that there will be nobody. It is quite possible to catch the 8.35 pm back to arriving at Sutton 9.13pm

I should be awfully glad if you could.

Yours in haste Lionel

I shall be at this office by 4.40pm if you can leave message or note.

Written on Hornblower & Flower Auctioneers, Land Agents notepaper.

Written on the back of another letter from Lionel letter.

Dear Lionel

Please excuse this scrawl. I am sorry but I could not possibly come up tonight as this evening is the last date for the tournament and I must play it.

Mother says come up instead to tea.

Yours in haste C G H.

The next letter we have is written on Saturday 23rd July 1904 from Cecily to Lionel and gives not only some insight into the style of life that Cecily was used to but also the growth of her passion for Lionel just 6 weeks after the first letter that we have in the archive. The young girl, referred to as May, could well have been Lionel's youngest sister, Margaret. I have a memory from somewhere that the name, May, was used for her in the family and she would have been 8 years old. It is unlikely that May was one of Cecily's sisters.

"In my Berth"

SS Grange Out at Sea.

My Darling Lionel

Thanks you so much for that dear little note. I could see you for a long long time up on that thing waving. It was horrid saying good-bye but I shall see you again soon. The chocolate was so nice darling thank you so much.

We have had a jolly time so far. We had supper almost directly and I eat a tremendous meal. Then I played the piano and about 10 o'clock May and I got two deck chairs and sat up on deck till just now 12.30.

It was lovely darling with the moon shining on the water and quite warm.....

Forty years later her daughter Joan was writing in her diary about the moon and wondering if her new husband could see it too, while in India during the Second World War.

Cecily was on her way to Portpatrick in Stranraer via Edinburgh and Glasgow with a friend called May meeting up with her sister Edith in Glasgow.

Edith was working in Saltburn as a teacher in the small school for young ladies called the Towers where Cecily had attended as a student during 1901. During 1900, she had passed her Senior Music exam in Middlesborough which is not too far away, when she was about 18 years old. At their encounter in Glasgow, Edith was with her friend Laura who was teaching in the same school in Saltburn as her,

It is clear that by 1904 Laura Gerrand had settled as a teacher at the Towers and it was she and Edith that are referred to in letters about their times in Glasgow and Portpatrick.

Laura Lucy Jane Gerrand was from Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright, was three years older than Edith and had

previously worked in a school in after working in Scarborough as a Governess in 1901



Edith Haycraft and Laura Gerrard

These two stayed together until Edith's death in 1944 and must have been well known to Joan Dibdin, Lionel and Cecily's daughter, during the years that she stayed with them in the 1930s.

The letters from Cecily, particularly those from her on holidays, give the impression of a very "Jane Austen" world. Cecily was still a young girl, obviously with considerable capability and a drive to be active but with no thought of having to go "out to work". Her letters indicate her seriousness about piano playing and how much she enjoyed sporting activities.

There was still another 10 years before Cecily and Lionel were to experience the tragedy of the First World War.

Five years later in 1909 Cecily and Lionel married and probably started married life at Avondale, Grosvenor Road, Sutton which they will have rented for some time until after the war years.

It is clear from the letters between Lionel and Cecily that they were very much in love from early on in their relationship and it is surprising that they did not marry for another five years.

It is clear that during this time Lionel was writing to Cecily but we have no letters whereas we have a number of letters from Cecily from this period but they are chiefly during times when she was on holiday. These include from Portpatrick, Bruges and later from Swanage in Devon. One can tell from these that Cecily had quite a sense of fun as well as her love of piano. The letters from her when she was at home are to Lionel when he was travelling round the country, no doubt doing engineering work for his Father, sorting out Sewage Treatment installations. Such places include St Albans, Dunstable, Auchtorhouse nr Dundee, Lynmouth in Devon and on a couple of times while he was at camp in Gosport and Newhaven. The letters indicate that Lionel was always pleased to have him around and was grateful for his singing contribution at musical evenings.

Lionel was clearly working very hard for his father and seems likely that their honeymoon in late 1909 was a working holiday. Within a couple of months we have letters from Lionel working in Ireland on drainage at an army camp, near Curragh.

Historical note:

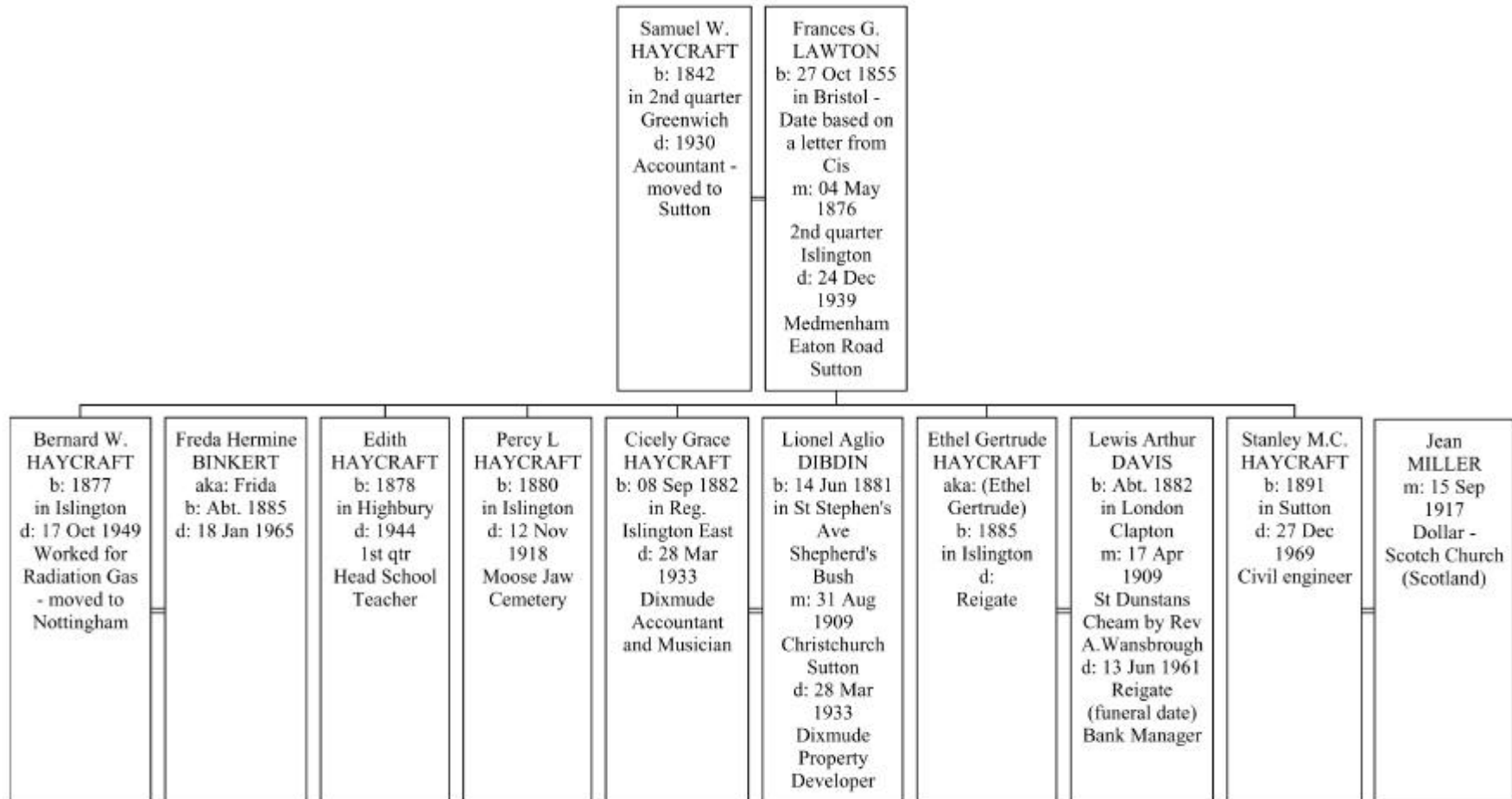
Whereas it has been assumed that Joan for reasons that are explained elsewhere, packed up this enormous archive of material and never referred to it, it should be noted that many of the letters from her mother to her father, Lionel, have been sorted and packaged by date and there are notes endeavouring to date and sequence events in her family's lives.

It is sad that her feelings and views about her family and her early life were never really shared.

About the Haycraft Family.

Although not much is known first hand by the author about the Haycraft family, many bits and pieces of information have been gleaned from letters written during the early 1900s.

These coupled with the anecdotes and letters from the 1930s from Joan Dibdin, have enabled some sort of picture to be assembled of this family that was the other half of Joan's life.



More information is available about the history of the Haycraft family on the history website www.guise.me.uk

A few comments of each member of the family may help put comments and references in letters in context.

Samuel Willetts, the father.

It is not clear what he did for an occupation although there is every reason to believe that in 1901 he was connected with the glass industry as a merchant. In previous years he had been a merchant related to East India. His father Dr. William Tutin Haycraft was involved in the design of steam engines as well as acting as a medical practitioner. Further back in history the family was involved in gun manufacture. See the short history written by Julian Haycraft in the appendix.

Bernard

Although not too much is known about Bernard, he did play a significant part in the life of the family. He worked as a sales manager for the Sutton Gas Company before and during the WW1 and during that time it was suggested that he was interested in moving to Bristol. In 1908 he married a Swiss girl, Freda or Frida.

During the period between the two world wars by 1933 he and his family had moved to 2 Brunel Terrace, Nottingham. The family there were well known to Joan Dibdin and she was grateful for the friendship and support during some of her bleak years after 1933.

Edith

Edith was four years older than Cecily and her name crops up a lot in Cecily's early twenties and she then has a significant role to play later as her daughter, Joan's guardian in the 1930s. In 1901 when she was 22 years old, she was a teacher at the Towers in Saltburn and Cecily was a student there and in fact was there for another couple of years taking her piano exams from the school which had about 20 students between 12 and 20.

Later Edith took over as Joint Head of the school with Laura L J Gerrand (born 6 Mar 1875 died 22 Jan 1953). Laura, ten years before, had been a teacher in a School in Scarborough.

Percy

We know little of Percy except that he went to America arriving at Portland Maine on 7th March 1914, possibly to become a farmer. We have no census record for him in 1911 but in 1901 at the age of 21 he was living at home and working as an insurance clerk.

It seems that he recruited into the British Army on 14th July 1916 at Aldershot. No. 414759. He was in the Royal Engineers and was listed as a driver. Something happened and in March 1917 he is in hospital in Glasgow having his nose unblocked. The next we know of him is that for some reason he died in Canada 12 Nov 1918 and was buried at Moose Jaw Cemetery. During some of the narrative in letters during world war 1 there is reference to Percy's motorbike which is used by Stanley.

Cecily Grace

Cecily, because she married Lionel Dibdin, will be the focus of many of the chapters of this book, however it is worth noting that at the age of 18 she was registered in the 1901 census as being a student at the Towers in Saltburn with her sister Edith was a Teacher there. She was, from an early age, an exceptional pianist. From a young age she had a driving licence



Ethel Gertrude (Gertie)

Known as Gertie, she was the young sister of Cecily and both spent much time together before and after they had both got married which was in 1909 within six months of each other.

Gertie married Lewis Davis who worked as a Bank manager and they had three sons. The family lived in the local area, Gertie and Lewis settling in Reigate.

The Davis family had a significant role to play in the life of Joan Dibdin while she was a child and after 1933 as will be seen later.



Sam Haycraft with Gertrude and Cecily
and with two Haycraft lads behind
Sam Haycraft was Gertrude and Cecily's father



Haycraft family at tea . Sam in the middle with
Lionel and Cecily on the right hand side.

Stanley Muirhead



Stanley with a camera

From the 1922 Who's Who in engineering

Lieut. R.E. (S.R.), M.C., Assoc.M.Inst.C.E., Civil Engineer, c/o Ministry of Public Works, Cairo; b. 1890; s. of S. W. Haycraft, Medmenham, Sutton, Surrey; m. Jean, d. of the late John Miller, Alloa, Scotland. Articled pupil, Erith Works, Vickers, Sons & Maxim, 1907-11; then Brighton Railway. Joined Egyptian Dredging Co., Cairo, in charge of dredging in Gharbieh Province on Lord Kitchener's scheme of drainage of Delta, 1913-5. Present Position: Assistant Director of Works, Irrigation, Egypt. Member of Turf Club, Cairo. War Services.—Officer-in-Charge Section, Camel Transport Corps, Suez Canal, 1915; Lieutenant, Royal Engineers (Special Reserve), 2nd Field Company Royal Engineers in France, 1915-7.

In February 1916 he was elected as a corporate member of the Institution of Civil Engineers while engaged as 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers

Lt. Stanley Muirhead Haycraft, R.E., Spec. Res. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in organising the collection of wounded under repeated bursts of shrapnel, machine gun and rifle fire. He himself carried in three wounded men, although severely strained by falling into a shell hole. On several occasions during attacks he exhibited great courage and untiring energy.

In June 1927 he and his wife, Jean, whom he married in 1917 went by ship to Rangoon in India.

Because of his close relationship with Cecily during World War 1 Chapter 4 is devoted to some of his time during the War and the strong connection he had with Lionel. More of his energy and nature will become apparent in that chapter.