

Christopher Man and Frank Man: 1937

My father Frank Man left England for Singapore to work as an Import-Export merchant for Edward Boustead & Co. in October 1936.



On his way to Singapore from left to right: Eleanor (Man) Lloyd (his sister), Frank Man, Nora (Loeck) Man (his mother)

The company that he worked for was founded in 1828 by Boustead and Frank Man's (maternal) great great uncle Gustav Schwabe as Boustead Schwabe.

While he was in Singapore, he wrote on a weekly basis to his mother Nora in England. I have transcribed these letters on to Word up to 1941. They end in 1953 when his mother died.

In November 1937 Christopher Man past through Singapore on his way to Hong Kong and I have selected the passages from Frank's letters that mention Christopher.

Given that the visit was very short, so are the mentions. Also, it appears that Frank had to work in the office during the day that Christopher was in Singapore.

I have also included Frank's references to Christopher's father (Morrice) and Christopher's sister Janet. At the end I have added some family photos relevant to the letters. Janet was the godmother of Eleanor (Man) Lloyd's daughter Janet.

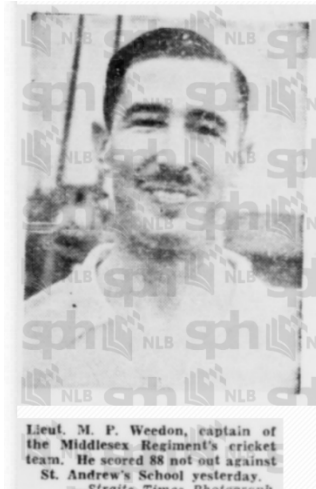
12th January 1937

I took a girl out for a dinner and dance that evening [New Year's] for the first time since I've been here. Her name is Elizabeth Haley-Bell¹, aged about 18 and only been out here

¹ Elizabeth married Mark Madden and her sister Mary married the English actor John Mills.

about three weeks. I met her and her sister [Mary] through Poyntz-Roberts². The funny thing is that these girls and their family used to live in Tenterden and they knew Uncle Morrice³ and all his family quite well. I mentioned that I was of Kentish stock⁴ as well so we were friends immediately.

[Below, Mark Weedon and Elizabeth Hayley-Bell with her first child and Mark Weedon]



Lieut. M. P. Weedon, captain of the Middlesex Regiment's cricket team. He scored 88 not out against St. Andrew's School yesterday.
Straits Times Photograph



February 1st, 1937

... in the evening there was a large ball at Raffles Hotel, which everyone attended. I went along in a party of six with two fellows from the mess⁵ and the Hayley-Bell sisters, who know Janet [Christopher's sister]. It was a great success, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself as I had not been out for some time.

² Elizabeth married Mark Weedon in 1939 and her sister Mary married the English actor John Mills.

³ Father of Christopher, Andrew, Peter, David, and Janet Man

⁴ Up to a point – depends on how you'd define 'stock'.

⁵ The mess was where Boustead & Co. housed their young unmarried employees.



Balmoral - The Boustead's Mess

Monday, March 29th, 1937

Your news about Christopher coming here with his regiment was quite new to me as Janet had not mentioned it in her letter to me. I am awfully glad to hear it, when does he arrive? Is there any chance of Andrew and Ursula coming out as well?

Monday April 19th, 1937

How typical of uncle Morrice to send you some money for Dad's tablet, he is a marvelous man, and we have so many things to thank him for. I expect you'll be glad when the business of this tablet is over, it seems to have dragged on for an incredibly long time, and all for such a very simple thing.



Memorial Tablet to Harry Morgan Stoe Man at Halstead Church

Monday August 2nd, 1937

There was a short article in our local paper yesterday about Chartham rectory, this is what it said “Parishioners of Chartham⁶ church in Kent were at the church fete in the old-world rectory gardens buying fancy goods from stalls. They were interrupted by a loudspeaker invitation to test gas masks in a chamber filled with tear gas erected in the rectory gardens. Bottled samples of liquid poison gas were on view”. I have sent the actual cutting to Janet as a matter of interest. I expect it was in the London newspapers as well, however I think it is rather amazing that news should have spread all the way out here. It certainly is rather a queer form of entertainment for a village fete, I expect Andrew and Christopher were behind the idea.



The Straits Times 1937 August

Tuesday August the 24th, 1937

It seems now that Christopher is definitely not coming to Singapore but that he will be passing through here sometime in October on his way to Hong Kong, I shall make a point of looking him up and show him around the town.

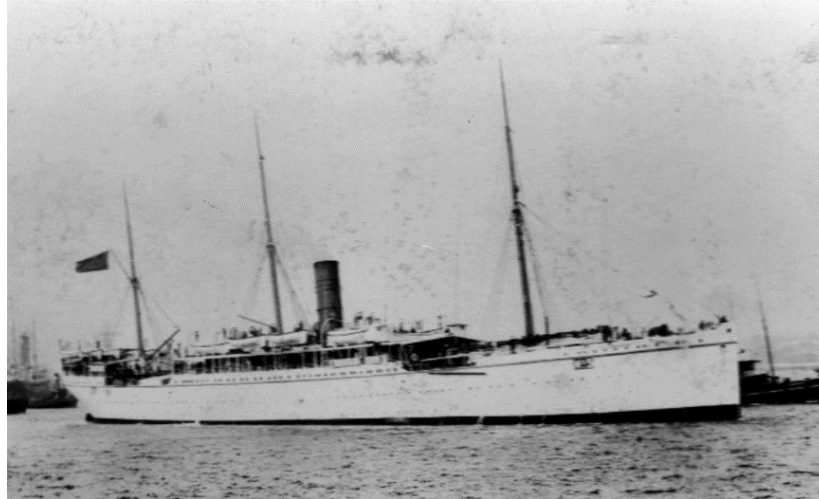
Tuesday October the 19th, 1937

.... and also a letter from Janet telling me the date of Christopher's arrival in Singapore.

Tuesday November 16th, 1937

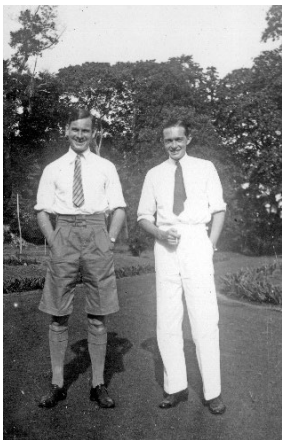
⁶ Morrice Man was the vicar of Chartham and lived in the rectory there.

The great event of the week was of course Christopher's arrival in Singapore. He came on a troop ship the Dilwara which arrived here at 7:00 AM on Monday morning (yesterday).



Troopship Dilwara

I went down and met him and brought him back here for breakfast⁷. It was grand seeing him again and we had a long chat about home. I thought he was looking extremely well and happy and most amusing. Unfortunately the ship sailed again at lunchtime so I could not do very much with him, however a friend of mine [Pat Wood] spent the whole morning with him taking him around the island in his car and showing him all the sights. I am very glad he was able to see something of Singapore as I could not get away from the office especially on a Monday morning. I took some photos of him and I am going to send them to Auntie Dora⁸ along with the letter as I am sure she would like to know how he is looking.



Christopher and Frank



Pat Wood, Christopher, and Frank



Christopher

⁷ Balmoral, the Boustead mess.

⁸ Dora (Lucas) Man – Christopher's mother.

February 2nd, 1938

Poor dear Luce⁹ how I do pity her and I admire her all the more for her loyalty, but what a waste. If things do become serious we at least have our relations to turn to especially uncle Morrice and his family, and I think if Eleanor does want to leave John [Lloyd] (if things get any worse she definitely ought to) she ought to separate from him and go and live with the children at Chartham, and if he comes to fetch her back as he has done once before and tries to win her back with his mincing ways and promises, she must take no notice of it and live away from him for a month or more.

August 21st, 1938

My dearest mum,

My friend Pat Wood tells me that his parents met Janet at Canterbury Cricket week and had a long discussion about us, apparently Janet spoke pretty well of me (boosting up the family!) so Pat says there must be some people who find me quite nice after all. It is rather amazing how these two families should meet, you remember I wrote to you some time ago saying that Pat's sister had met Janet down in Devonshire.

Frank Man plans on going to visit Hong Kong.

20/9/1938

At the moment I have no plans as to where I shall stay in Hong Kong, I shall leave that to chance and see what happens. I shall of course make a point of seeing Christopher and perhaps he can put me up, if not then he might be able to recommend some place to me. My leave only lasts three weeks which is not really very much and I won't get any more until I leave for home – Nov 1941 -- a dreary thought -- three more long years.

3/10/38

My local leave to Hong Kong was of course cancelled the day before the steamer was due to sail, the naval authorities would not let me go also the firm. I had already written to Christopher asking him to meet me, so I had to write again and put him off.

In the end Frank Man did go to Hong Kong.

⁹ Luce was the nickname for Frank's sister Eleanor who married John Lloyd from whom she was divorced during the war.

Hong Kong 20/10/38

I have of course already got into touch with Christopher, we had tea together; He has arranged a party for tonight and is bringing along some of his girlfriends. He is looking extremely well but he says he loathes Hong Kong which I expect one does after the novelty has worn off. I hope to see more of him before I leave. It is a very nice feeling meeting one of the family again, every time I do meet any of them I always think what a fine lot we are.

Back in Singapore.

October 31st, 1938

I hope you got my letter written from Hong Kong. I had a grand time there and I was really sorry to have to leave, Christopher came and saw me off, I came back on a cargo boat called the Gleneagle it can take about 12 passengers, luckily there were only six altogether so I had a cabin to myself and was very comfortable

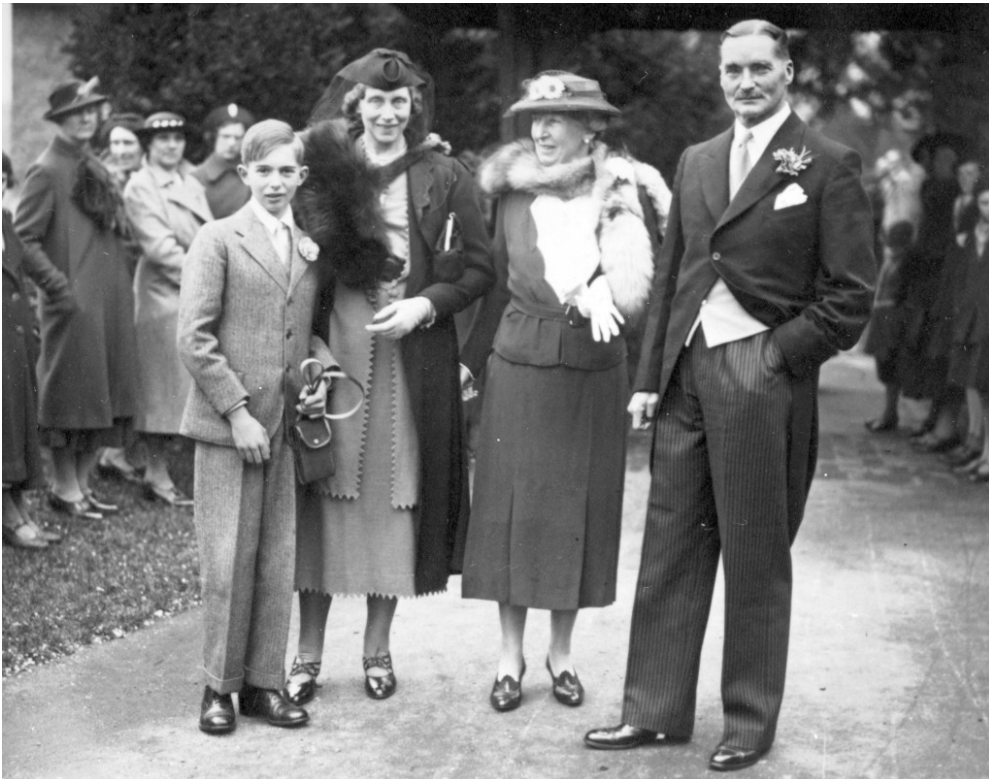
November 26th, 1938

I enclose the newspaper cutting from the local rag showing some of the parties at the Raffles hotel Poppy-day dance. It is not a very good picture of me, but you can get an idea of the Hayley-Bell sisters whom Janet knows.



Tuesday April 25th, 1939

I received a long letter from Janet this week and very glad I was to hear from her again. I do think she is a very nice girl, and if I can find somebody as nice as her I think I will get married provided she will have me. A lot of changes seem to have taken place in their family since I left, Andrew has left for Palestine, Christopher is being transferred to Malta, David is going to Cambridge, and Janet herself has now started some nursing business. Looking back I discover that six of the family had got married since I left, Pat, Peter, John, Joyce, Tina, and Bunty¹⁰. If they carry on at this rate there will be nobody unmarried by the time I get back.



Peter Man's wedding on 23 April 1938, from left to right: Henry Man, his mother Nora (Loeck) Man (the wife of Harry Morgan Stoe Man), Beryl (Holberton) Man (the wife of Hubert William Man), and Michael Leland Crosthwait whose mother was Katherine (Kitty) Rosa Man

Monday December 4th 1939

I received a very nice letter from Janet last week, she seems to be doing her stuff all right, she is a sweet girl. Poor old Peter, I understand has had some bad luck and given up his business and now he is joining up, what happens to his wife? Is Christopher still in Hong Kong?

¹⁰ Patrick Man son of Hubert, Peter brother of Christopher, John Man son of EJFG Man. Joyce, Tina and Bunty are the Matthews sisters. The Man and Matthews family connect via Edward Garnet Man's marriage to Katherine Jane Matthews. EGM was the father of Morrice, Hubert, Harry, etc.



1920: Morrice Man stands between his aunt Victoria Matthews holding the umbrella, his mother, and his father

At Chartham August 1937:



Front row, left to right: Janet, Morrice, Dora, lady with infant, Andrew, Eleanor (Luce)
Back row, left to right: Man in glasses – possibly David Man, A Lady, Christopher, Unknown Man



1936: Dora (Lucas) Man, Eleanor (Man) Lloyd with her daughter Janet and Morrice Man.



1936: Christopher Man and Janet Lloyd the daughter of Eleanor (Man) Lloyd (Luce).



Christopher with his mother Dora (Lucas) Man and his wife Topsy

Chartham August 1941

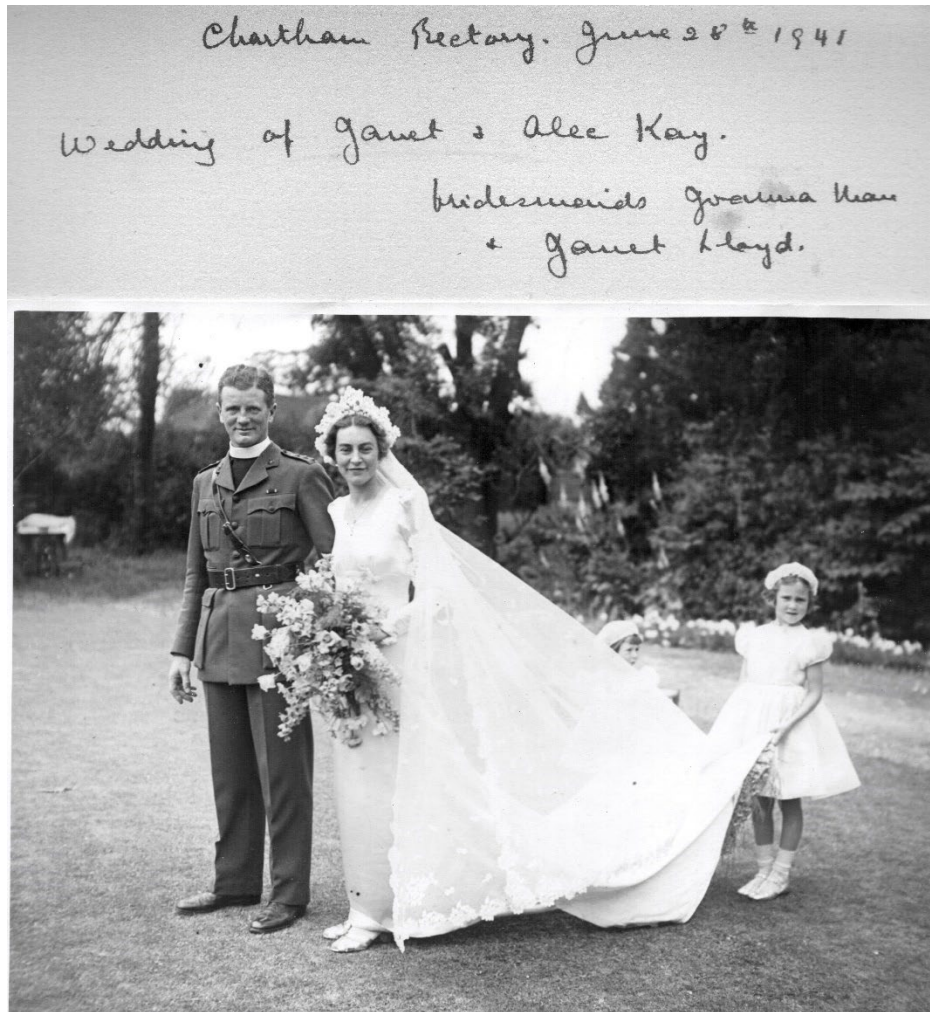
Charham Aug. 1941



R. S. L. Gerald Leet, Barbara Chalcraft, Uncle Morrice Man, Janet K. Henry, Self, David
Janet Lloyd, Mrs Chalcraft, Renee, A. J. Ma, Katherine Man -



Gerald Leet (Artist), Barbara Chalcraft (?), Uncle Morrice Man, Janet Man, Henry Man, Self (Eleanor (Man) Lloyd), David Man, Janet Lloyd, Mrs Chalcraft, Renee, ??ma , Katherine Man (daughter of Andrew and Ursula Man).



George Alexander 'Alec' Kay was the son of Thomas and Fanny Kay.

He graduated with an MA from Oxford University and was ordained as a priest in the Church of England. He was granted an emergency commission in the Royal Army Chaplains' Department on 2 October 1940 and volunteered for airborne forces in 1943.

He qualified as a military parachutist which ran at RAF Ringway in November 1943 and subsequently served as the chaplain to the 8th Parachute Battalion, where he was held in high regard.

'Alec' Kay was killed during the early stages of the Normandy campaign by machine gun fire while driving a jeep out to collect wounded personnel; in spite the fact that it was marked with Red Crosses and flying a Red Cross flag.

Reverend 'Alec' Kay died on 7 June 1944, aged 36 years, and is now buried in Ranville War Cemetery, Normandy.

A memorial plaque to Alec Kay has been placed in the parish church of St Bartholomew, Shapwick, Dorset, where his father served the church during the war years.

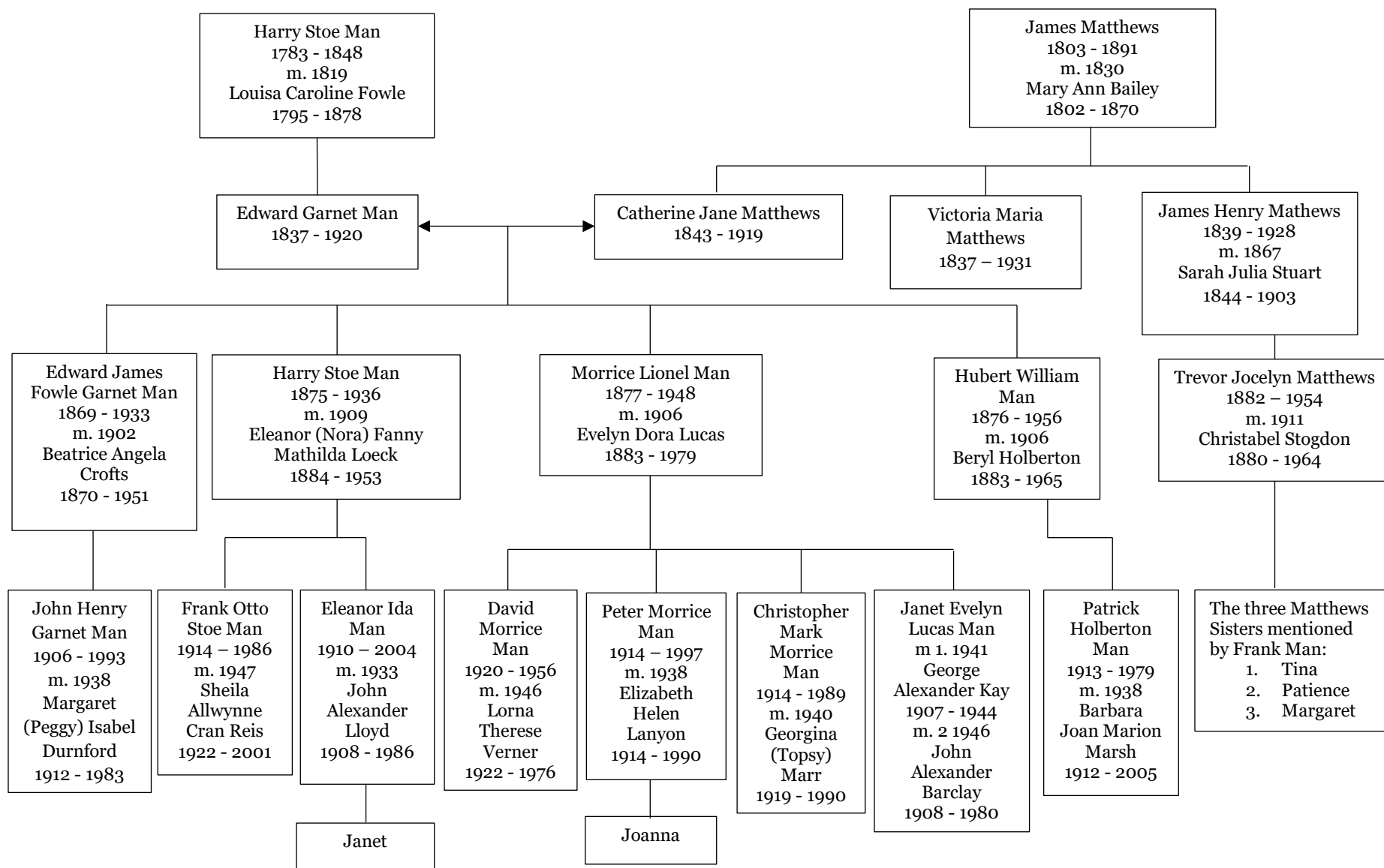


George Alexander Kay's Gravestone at Normandy

Gerald Leet: A Friend of the Man Family

A portrait painter in the neo-Romantic style, Gerald Mackenzie Leet (1913-1998) was educated at Goldsmiths College, The Royal College of Art and the Courtauld Institute. He was given his first teaching appointment at Ealing School of Art. He spent the Second World War mainly in South Africa and Egypt, when Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India came across his work and organized his appointment in 1945 as an official war artist, based in New Delhi. After the war, Leet became assistant drawing master at Eton until, towards the end of the forties, he began teaching part-time at Brighton College of Art.

Leet painted many portraits of famous people, including aristocracy and royalty; in 1948 he was commissioned to paint the Queen (Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, the late Queen Mother) and members of her staff at Windsor Castle. and exhibited at, amongst other galleries the Eton Art Gallery, the Isobar Gallery in Hampstead and the Halifax and Manchester City Art Galleries. He was a noted collector of paintings and particularly of rare books, and well-known too for the idiosyncratic and entertaining figure he cut in his social circle. His long but often troubled friendship with Denton Welch, who had been an art student at the same time as Leet, was incorporated into several of Welch's books, and Leet painted a portrait of Welch (1935).



For the most part, only those who are mentioned in the letters or who appear in the photos are recorded here. Little known facts: 1. Dora Lucas was born at the same address in Brighton where James Matthews died: Grand Avenue Mansions. 2. Trevor Matthews was Harry Stoe Man's best man at his wedding in Hamburg. 3. Tina Matthews was godmother to John Morgan Man (1948 – 2004) son of Frank Man.