

THE HISTORY OF THE AUDCENT FAMILY

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**Mendip Road, Yatton, North Somerset,
United Kingdom**

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Preface

This work is the product of forty years of painstaking research by my uncle, David AUDCENT, and myself. Several members of the family have provided assistance along the way, including my great-uncle Gerard AUDCENT (1911-1981) and grandfather, Jacques AUDCENT (1912-1984). Particular thanks are also owed to my grandmother, Sylvia (1910-2007), who was intrigued by her husband's French family background and had the foresight, not only to preserve many of the family papers, but to write down the tales told to her by her husband's elderly relatives, before their memories were lost for ever.

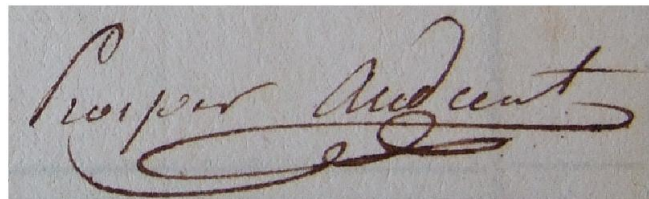
My aim has been to paint a coherent picture of the family's fortunes over almost four centuries, by telling a simple chronological story in a style that is as clear and direct as possible. I hope the result is of interest to the mildly curious, whilst informative and rigorous enough for the dedicated enthusiast. I have to say this required some editorial discipline on my part, as I struggled to resist the temptation to include ever more detail. An overload of information would have obscured the overall narrative and this work therefore presents only an overview of the family's history.

Anyone wanting to know more about individual family members, or the sources on which the family history is based, is directed to the series of stand alone biographies written by David and myself. These contain considerably more detail than could be included here, as well as footnotes to indicate the primary and secondary sources used. I am more than happy to supply copies of the detailed biographies on request.

It should also be mentioned that considerable research has been carried out by my uncle David and myself on other ancestral families (the results of which are outlined on David's website, and written up in the form of detailed biographies). These ancestral families include, amongst others, the following - FERNEY, PINOT DE MOIRA, D'ALLEBOUST D'ARGENTEUIL, MAURY DE LAPEYPOUSE, DE VILLESTIVAUD, ESTIENNE DE LA RIVIERE-MONTLUC, DE ST OUEN D'ERNEMONT and D'ETREPAGNY. The stories of these families are equally as fascinating.

Any additions, corrections, updates or suggested improvements to this family history will be accepted with gratitude.

Geoff Audcent

A handwritten signature in brown ink on a light-colored, textured background. The signature reads "Prosper Audcent" in a cursive script. The word "Prosper" is written in a standard cursive, while "Audcent" features more elaborate, flowing letters, particularly the 'A' and 't'. A long, horizontal flourish extends from the end of the signature.

The first known example of a man in the family using the spelling 'Audcent' - when Prosper signed the military conscription list, at the Hôtel de ville of the old Xe Arrondissement of Paris, in 1834.

1. Introduction

In 2014 the AUDCENT name belongs to 35 individuals worldwide. The surname appears to be unique as no one unrelated has been found using the name. In its current form the name was permanently adopted by the family in Paris during the 1830s. Before that members of the family were largely illiterate and their name was therefore spelt without consistency (see Chapter Severn).

This family history tells the story of eight successive generations in a single lineage from father to son. The focus on a single 'blood line' reflects the fact that between the French Revolution and the eve of the First World War, only a single male child in each generation survived childhood to continue the family line. Consequently, by the start of the twentieth century the name was in grave danger of extinction. For three decades (from 1881 to 1911) only three people used the name, two of whom were women. Fortunately, Henri AUDCENT (1875-1951) decided to marry in 1910 and had three sons, each of whom married and had sons of their own. As a result the name is now used by more individuals than ever before, in Europe, North America and Australia - all of them descended from Henri AUDCENT.

The family is of humble origin, although the earliest family members held occupations that placed them one rung above the mass of the rural peasantry and casual farm labourers who made up the bulk of the population in pre-industrial France.

It was the Industrial Revolution that helped the family to begin a gradual rise up the social scale, through employment in new and better-paid types of work - first in the textiles industry and later in the printing trade. This modest social advancement was assisted by a succession of 'advantageous' marriages: in 1782 Jacques AUDECENT married the daughter of a slightly more prosperous family, and his son Jean Pierre AUDCENT married the daughter of a timber and pottery merchant in 1810, whose forebears had noble antecedents and links to the royal family.

A third 'advantageous' marriage took place in 1835, by which time the family had risen sufficiently up the social hierarchy for Prosper AUDCENT to be accepted as a suitable match for the daughter of a respectable bourgeois family. However, whilst Prosper could reasonably claim to belong to the middle class *bourgeoisie*, he would still have been viewed as a '*parvenu*' (a newcomer to his social class), which may explain why he struggled to make the best of his opportunities. Despite a promising start and an advantageous marriage he increasingly lived the unconventional life of a '*bohémien*' (bohemian) and ended his days in a poorhouse infirmary, where he died in penury and squalor. His only-son (Arthur AUDCENT) was sent to sea as a cabin boy, presumably to avoid the expense of college fees.

After eleven years at sea Arthur AUDCENT overcame various traumas and setbacks to become a respectable businessman. He moved to England during the 1860s where he established himself as a wine and brandy merchant. He adapted well to his new life in Victorian England, rubbing shoulders with some of Bristol's leading citizens. However, he fell ill and was admitted to a lunatic asylum where he died in 1881, leaving his only-son Henri AUDCENT orphaned. Young Henri was then raised in genteel poverty by his maternal grandparents, becoming the first AUDCENT to go to university, although illness prevented him from completing his degree. He became a school master but struggled to live on his modest teacher's salary. His three sons

(Gerard, Jacques and Bernard) had to make their own ways in the world and - although they each faced the challenge of beginning their working lives during The Great Depression of the 1930s and served in the British armed forces during the Second World War - they pursued very different careers.

It is interesting to note how several generations of the family worked with new technologies - Jacques AUDECENT and his son Jean-Pierre AUDCENT worked in the textiles industry, which was the driving force of the Industrial Revolution. From the 1820s Jean-Pierre and his son Prosper AUDCENT worked in the new lithographic printing industry, whilst from the 1950s up to the present day it was the broadcasting industry that provided a living for five members of the family: Gerard AUDCENT worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Jacques and Tony AUDCENT were television repair engineers; Michael AUDCENT started out in television repair but moved across to the production side of television broadcasting, whilst his daughter Caroline AUDCENT is today a TV Production Supervisor for a company that produces and distributes television content. Paul and Geoff AUDCENT were both involved in rolling out computer technology into business and government administration during the 1980s.

Another recurring theme is the wine industry: in the 1740s André AUXEN worked as a *vigneron* to produce grapes for wine; Jacques AUDECENT and his wife owned three parcels of vineyard until 1821; in the 1860s Arthur AUDCENT went into business as wine and brandy merchant; and in the 1970s John AUDCENT established a wine consultancy business.

The AUDCENTs were a modest family, without wealth, fame or pretensions to grandeur. The story of the family nevertheless helps to illuminate several aspects of national and world history from the viewpoint of ordinary people. It provides an individual-level perspective on a number of major historical events and developments, such as:

- The impact of the Industrial Revolution, as people moved from agriculture into manufacturing, from small market towns into cities, and from traditional industries into new technologies;
- The emergence of the 'Bohemian' lifestyle in Paris from the 1840s;
- The growing social, financial and professional status of French women from the 1850s;
- The life of a sailor in the French navy during the 1850s and 1860s;
- French imperialism in the Far East;
- The treatment of paupers, invalids, orphans and lunatics in the nineteenth century;
- The development of the theatre and acting profession in nineteenth century France;
- the impact of the First and Second World Wars; and
- the growing popularity and impact of television from the 1950s.

Chapter Five is devoted to Henri PINOT DE MOIRA (1820-1909). Although he was not an AUDCENT he nevertheless had such a profound impact on the family, over a period of seventy years, that its history cannot be written without reference to him: As Prosper AUDCENT's brother-in-law, Arthur AUDCENT's uncle-come-father-in-law, and as grandfather and guardian of the young AUDCENT orphans, he had a towering influence on more than three generations of the family. He helped to pick up the pieces following Prosper AUDCENT's marriage breakdown in the 1840s; he was responsible for the family's migration to England in the 1860s; and he saved his AUDCENT grandchildren from the orphanage in the 1880s. He also left a longer lasting legacy because his house in Bristol remained a much loved family home for generations of AUDCENTS down to the 1970s. Indeed, the author owes his own interest in history to the many

occasions he stayed with his grandparents, who lived in the family home that Henri originally created. Henri also had a keen interest in family history. He preserved many ancient family papers, thereby helping to inspire and encourage a number of his descendants to research their family history.

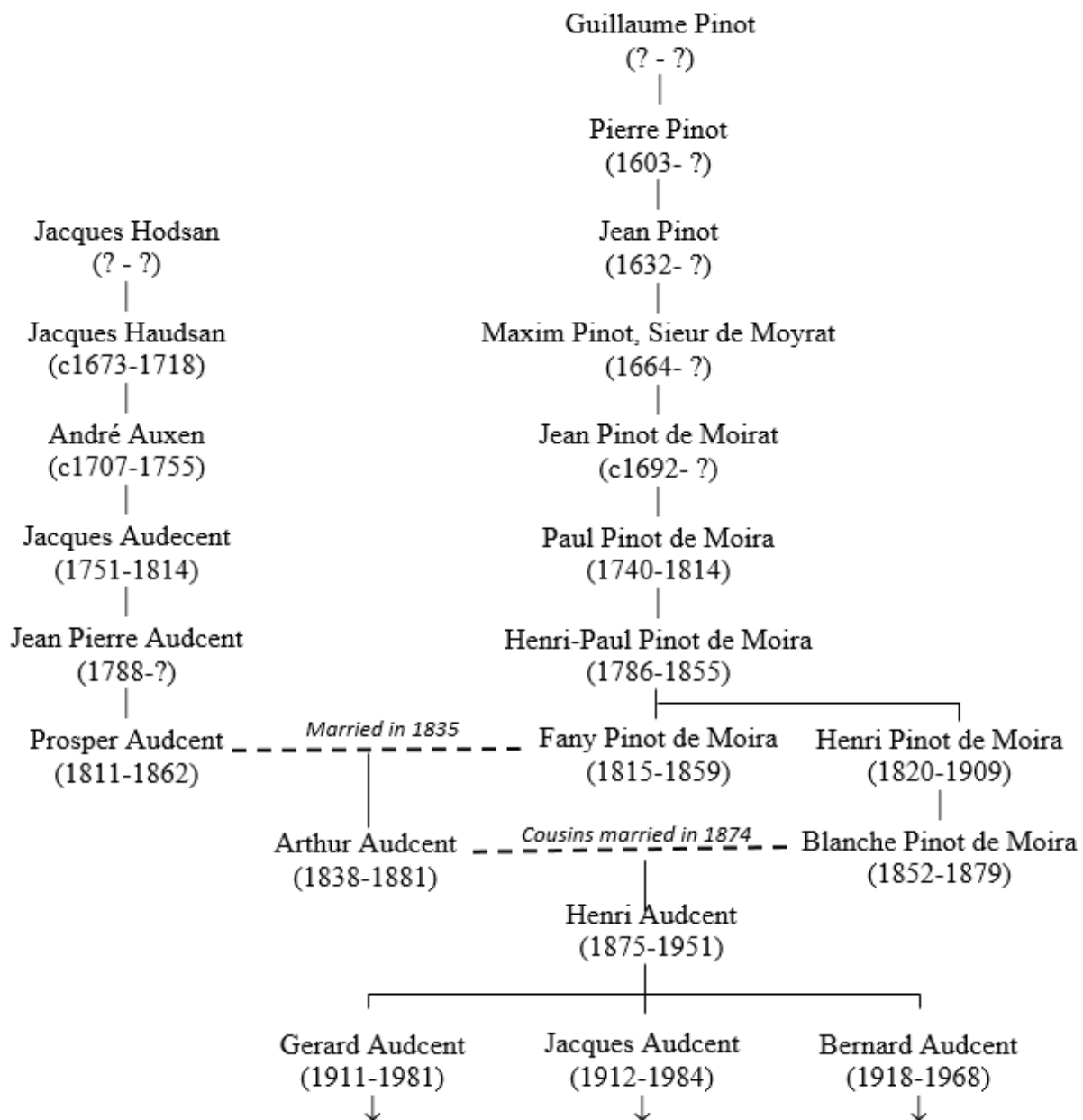
Henri PINOT DE MOIRA was an impressive character and true polymath. His biography reads like the story line straight from the pages of a Victorian melodrama. Besides his important role as guardian of the AUDCENT orphans and doyen of the family, Henri PINOT DE MOIRA was at various times:

- a trainee high court barrister in Paris and Limoges during the 1840s;
- a provincial solicitor in Normandy during the 1840s and 50s
- Mayor of the town of Lillebonne;
- a participant in the French colonisation of Algeria in north Africa;
- an international financier, banker and director of a Parisian investment bank;
- the founder and director of a Roman Catholic religious community in Belgium;
- an international and high society confidence-trickster, who used the false noble title of “Comte de Rochepaule” to deceive his victims;
- sentenced to several terms of imprisonment by the French and Belgian courts following convictions for embezzlement and fraud during the 1860s;
- dubbed the “Pious Speculator” by the British press because of his criminal modus-operandi, which involved using the guise of religious piety to extract money from his wealthy victims;
- an emigrant to England - apparently living in exile as a fugitive from justice;
- a language tutor, school master and educationalist in Taunton and Bristol;
- a regular columnist in The Clifton Chronicle newspaper;
- an amateur scientist whose work on improving crop yields through soil electrification was discussed by leading scientists of the Victorian Age and reported in journals around the world; and
- he was also an entertaining public speaker, devoted monarchist, clever chess player, angler and family historian.

The family history shows that many family members experienced mixed fortunes during their life times. It also shows how an individual’s destiny was shaped not only by their own efforts and decisions but also, and perhaps more so, by their background and the wider economic, social and technological developments of the times in which they lived. Random misfortune and good luck affected every generation, but that people’s reactions to the predicaments and situations they faced was perhaps the most important factor of all in shaping their destinies.

The family certainly had more than its fair share of misfortune - many men in the family died young, many children suffered the loss of one or both their parents, money was often in short supply and there were encounters with prisons, a poor house and a lunatic asylum along the way.

However, family members also made the most of the opportunities which came their way, whether by exploiting the business opportunities that followed emigration to England, betterment through study, education and training, or by mastering new technologies.



The AUDCENT lineage and relationship to the PINOT DE MOIRA family

Note - The spelling of surnames above is according to spelling adopted by individuals when signing their signature. Where that is not available, for example because of illiteracy, it is the spelling used in the record of burial.

2. The Audcent Arms



*D'argent avec six chevrons renverse
sable, un chef de gueules surmontee avec
trois croissants d'argent, et en base
un mantel de gueules, surmontee une grappe
de raisin d'argent, feuillée du mesme.*

The Arms of the AUDCENT family

Devised by David AUDCENT in the 1980s the arms follow traditional French heraldic practice, and are based on the following heraldic devices having relevance to the family history:-

- (i) The basic shield of silver with six black chevrons in reverse (*d'argent avec six chevrons sable renverse*) represent ink, drawing skills and printing, thereby alluding to the occupation of lithographer held by two generations of the family (Jean Pierre and Prosper AUDCENT);
- (ii) the three crescents (*croissants*) along the top are from the Arms of the town of Châteaudun, where at least five generations of the family resided from 1699 until 1821; and
- (iii) the grapes (*raisin d'argent*) allude to the family's link to wine-making: André AUXEN was a vineyard worker before the French Revolution; Jacques AUDECENT and his wife owned a vineyard up to the 1820s; Arthur AUDCENT was a wine and brandy merchant in Bristol during the 1860s and 1870s; and John AUDCENT was a partner in a Canadian wine consultancy business during the 1970s.

3. The Audcent Lineage

The lineage commences with:

JACQUES HODSAN
(*noted as deceased in 1699*)

Jacques HODSAN is the earliest ancestor in the AUDCENT family lineage from whom descent is documented with certainty. It is from him that all the men in the family have inherited both their surname and their Y-chromosome.

Little is known about his origins, other than he was born during the mid-seventeenth century, and that he probably originated from the town of Châteaudun, or the surrounding countryside, in the ancient French province of the Orléanais. He could be the brother of René HAUDESENS, which would make him the son of Leonard HAUDESENS (noted as deceased in 1669) and Nicole FERREZ (spelling of her surname uncertain). The evidence to support such a connection comes from the fact that this René HAUDESENS was married in the eglise de la Madeleine at Châteaudun. This was one of seven churches in the town, and was the same church in which Jacques's own son (Philippe) was married some thirty years later. A descent from Leonard HAUDESENS is therefore plausible given the mutual connections to this particular church, although no documentation has yet been found to corroborate such a link.

What is known for certain is that Jacques married Perrine BADRAU, sometime around 1663. They had at least two sons (Philippe and Jacques) who were born during the 1660s and 1670s.

Both sons became carpenters at Châteaudun but Jacques himself worked as a merchant, being (posthumously) described as a *marchand* at the marriage of his son (Philippe) in December 1699. His widow survived him and died some time later at a date unknown.

Both their sons went on to marry and have children of their own: Philippe (through whom an HAUDESSANT line continued up to at least 1752); and Jacques through whom the lineage continues:

JACQUES HAUDSAN (c1673-1718)

Jacques HAUDSAN was born around 1673 during the reign the King Louis XIV. Exactly when or where he was born and baptised is not known. He was one of two sons - probably the younger - of a merchant named Jacques HODSAN and his wife Perrine BADRAU. The first mention of him occurs in the parish registers of the eglise de la Madeleine, in the town of Châteaudun, in 1699 (when he attended his brother's wedding).

Around 1706 Jacques married Perrine NEAJEAN (alias JARRY or LATEL), by whom he had five children. Jacques and Perrine were both illiterate.

In France women officially retained their maiden names from cradle to grave, but Perrine appears in the parish registers at Châteaudun with five different surnames between 1716 and 1733 - NEAJEAN, NIATELLY, LATEL, JARRY and NADET. It is not clear why there was such confusion over her surname.

Jacques's surname also appeared in the parish registers with different spellings - HAUDSAN, HAUDSAN, HODSAN, HAUTESAN, ODSAN, OCCEAN and AUXAN - but at least in his case there was phonetic consistency.

In 1699 Jacques was described as a carpenter (*charpentier*) and from 1716 he was described more specifically as a sawyer (*scieur de long*). Working in pairs, sawyers cut logs and timber into planks and boards, using either a saw pit or by lifting the log onto trestles above the ground (as shown opposite). The work required physical strength, stamina, and an ability to saw quickly and accurately in a straight line.



From 1716 the couple lived in the parish of Saint-Aignan at Châteaudun. It is unclear where they lived before that - but perhaps a few kilometres south of Châteaudun in the small villages of Chapelle de Noyer and/or Thiville.

Jacques died at Châteaudun in 1718 after receiving the last rites. He was 45 years old and his body was buried in the cemetery of the eglise de Saint-Aignan in the presence of his widow and sons (Jacques and André). Perrine survived her husband and died between 1728 and 1733.

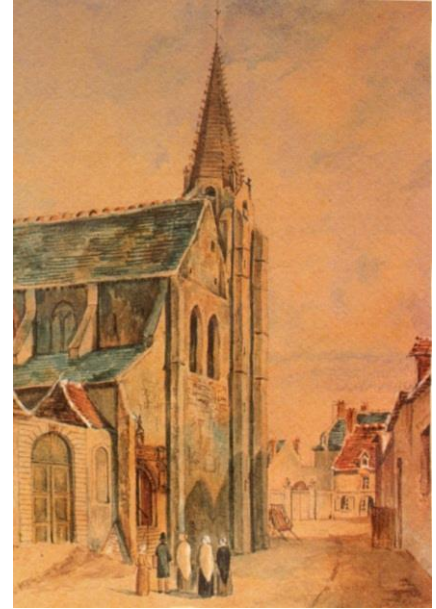
Jacques had three sons who each married and had children of their own: Jacques (through whom an AUDECENT line can be traced up to at least 1962); Louis (who had two children in the 1740s); and André, through whom the lineage continues:

ANDRÉ AUXEN (c1707-1755)

André AUXEN was born during the reign of King Louis XIV around 1707, the son of a carpenter and sawyer named Jacques HAUDSAN and his wife Perrine NEAJEAN. He may have been born and baptised at Thiville, a small village south of Châteaudun, as this is where his marriage banns were read. However, the parish registers at Thiville between 1707 and 1710 have been lost, meaning that his baptism there cannot be confirmed.

André was the son of a carpenter and sawyer, but suffered the loss of his father when he was only around eleven years-old, which probably explains why he did not follow him into the wood-working trade. Instead he made a living by labouring in the fields and vineyards that surrounded Châteaudun.

In 1733 André married Marie OUDIN, in the eglise de St Valérien (below) at Châteaudun. In fact the couple had known each other for at least five years, because André's brother had married Marie's sister five years earlier - it was therefore a case of two brothers marrying two sisters.



André and Marie had six children between 1733 and 1751, but sadly at least half of their children died young.

André was hired to work on other people's land, being described in the parish registers as a *journalier*, and more specifically as a *garçon de labour* and *vigneron*. In 1738 and 1748 he was described as a *journalier* indicating that he was hired on a casual basis as an agricultural labourer. In 1742 he was described as a *garçon de labour*, indicating that he was still working as an agricultural labourer but was employed on a more secure basis, with a bond of loyalty and trust between him and his master. *Garçons de labour* enjoyed a regular income and could expect help from their master in times of illness or famine.



A more specific description of André as a *vigneron* in 1742 reveals that he worked in the local vineyards to produce grapes for winemaking. There were around 400 hectares of vineyard at Châteaudun, some owned by the *vigneron* families themselves, but mostly owned by the more prosperous inhabitants of the town, who employed *vignerons* to cultivate their vines for them. There often existed close personal bonds between the vineyard owners and their loyal *vignerons*, but the life of a vineyard worker was nevertheless exhausting and back-breaking. The work involved not only pruning and cultivating the vines, but

also weeding and hoeing the land (opposite), picking the grapes, transporting them to the press and a range of other manual chores.

Usually dressed in linen smocks, trousers (*coulottes*), woollen caps and clogs, the *vignerons* in this region of France generally inhabited small thatched cottages built of cob and mud on the edge of town, where they formed close knit communities and preferred to marry amongst themselves. They also had a reputation for being devout Catholics.

André and Marie lived in the parish of St Valérien, which at the time was a semi-rural suburb on the edge of Châteaudun, and the location of most of the town's vineyards. In 1743 André and Marie purchased a small thatched cottage and garden in rue Forâche, which remained the family home for nearly eighty years, until eventually sold by Jacques's grandson in 1821.

Rue Forâche was located within the parish of St Valérien and was where most of the town's *vignerons* traditionally lived. It was just outside the line of the old town walls, putting it beyond the area in which the local seigneur had the right to collect a feudal tax on wine. Most local wine was therefore produced, stored and sold in rue Forâche as a way to avoid tax. Even the street name, which was first recorded in 1585, refers to this practice: '*Fors*' from the Latin for 'outside of' and '*ache*' being the name of the feudal wine tax.

André was illiterate and his surname was spelt in various ways in the parish registers, including: HAUDSAN, HAUDESAN, HAUTESAN, HODSAN, ODSAN, OCCEAN and AUXAN.

André died in 1755 after receiving the last rites. He was 48 years-old, and was buried in the cemetery of the eglise de St Valerien in the presence of his eldest son, brother and nephews.

Marie survived her husband by at least ten years, and died sometime between 1765 and 1782. However, for some unknown reason their estate was not legally divided (with a 'partage de succession' passed before a notaire) between their surviving daughter and son for several decades. Only in 1803 did the family engage a notaire to carry out the legal formalities, by which date the value of their thatched cottage - which consisted of one room with fireplace and chimney, attic and a passage leading to the rear of the property - was assessed as 700 francs.

The lineage continued through their son Jacques, who follows:

JACQUES AUDECENT (1751-1814)

Jacques AUDECENT was born in the town of Châteaudun in 1751, the youngest son of a vineyard worker (*vigneron*) named André AUXAN and his wife Marie OUDIN. He was baptised the following day in the eglise de St Valérien.

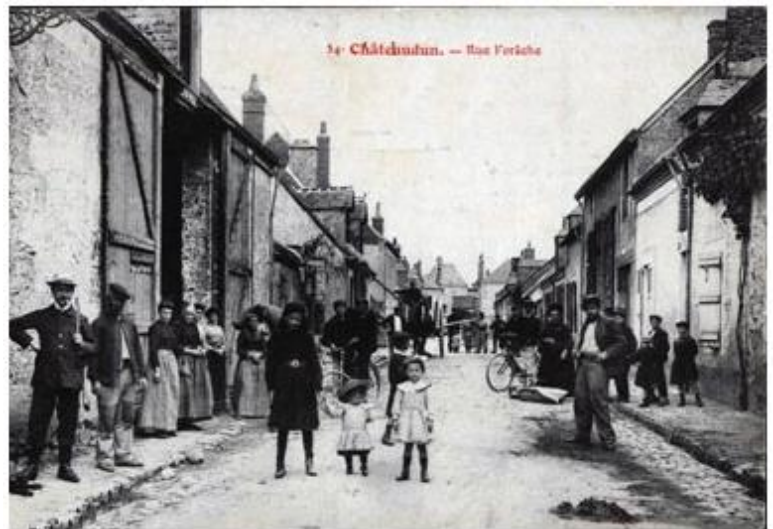
Jacques was born into the close knit community of *vignerons* at Châteaudun, but in 1755, when he was just four-years-old, his father died.

Nothing more is heard of him until 1782, when he married 'Marie' Francoise PITOU, who was herself descended from at least three generations of *vignerons* dating back to at least 1675. For Jacques the marriage appears to have been socially and economically advantageous, and his wife's more affluent background was reflected in the fact that she was literate, whereas Jacques had never learnt to read or write.

Jacques and Marie had seven children, but were remarkably unlucky parents because just one of their seven children survived childhood. Sadly, the other children died aged 3 weeks, 2 months, 3 months, 5 months, 2 years and twelve years. Only their son Jean Pierre survived to continue the lineage.

Jacques and Marie were recorded living in rue Forâche (right), which was where the town's *vignerons* had lived since the sixteenth century, and where the Audcent family had lived since 1743.

Jacques, and his elder sister Marie, inherited the family home in rue Forâche, following the death of their mother. Marie claimed the small thatched cottage and Jacques built another house for himself in the garden. The division of their parents' property was not legally formalised until many years later, when in 1803 they eventually



paid a local notaire to draw up the necessary legal deed. Jacques and his sister each received an inheritance from their parents, which in 1803 was valued at 350 francs each. In 1805 Jacques purchased the thatched cottage which had been inherited by his sister and combined it with the adjacent house he had built, to create a single and more commodious house. Thus in 1821 (following his wife's death) the family home in rue Forâche was described as consisting of a corridor with a room, hearth and vestibule to the left, and another room with a hearth to the right, as well as an attic, part covered in thatch and part in tiles, with garden.

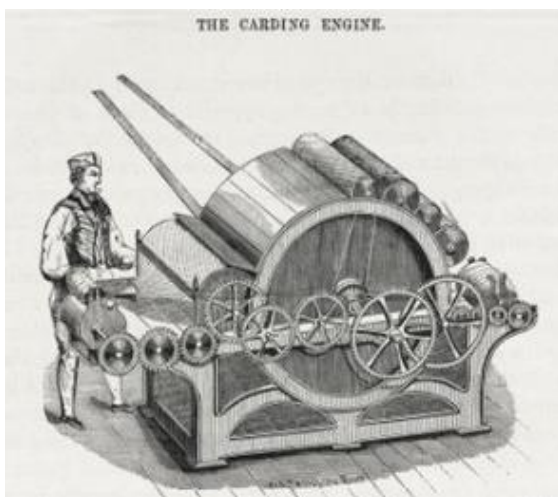
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street name, which was first recorded in 1585, refers to this practice: 'Fors' from the Latin for 'outside of' and 'ache' being the name of the feudal wine tax. In 1790 all feudal taxes, including local taxes on wine, were abolished as the French Revolution swept away the last vestiges of feudalism. However, the AUDCENT family stayed in rue Forâche until the 1821 - making the family some of the last survivors of the ancient community of vineyard workers who had lived in rue Forâche since the 1580s.

As well as a house and outbuildings in rue Forâche, the couple also owned three parcels of vineyard at Châteaudun. Between 1804 and 1809 Jacques and his wife purchased three separate plots of vineyard - located in vineyards called the clos de Tuchien and the clos de la Croix. The three plots covered a combined area of 31 ares and 61 centiares (3,160 square metres). This amount of vine could yield at least 1.5 tonnes of grape, which would produce around three to six barrels, or around 1-2,000 bottles, of wine per year.

Many traditional craft industries went into decline during the Industrial Revolution (between the 1760s to the 1840s) as they were exposed to new commercial competition. Wine-production at Châteaudun was one such casualty. It suffered a long slow decline because neither the quality nor quantity of the locally-produced wine could compete with wines from other areas. The local vineyards were gradually abandoned and built over, so that today no vineyards remain at Châteaudun. Although Jacques was born into the close knit community of vineyard workers, and acquired three parcels of vineyard, his principal source of income came from local textiles industry.

Jacques was employed in the textiles industry by 1782. This encapsulated what the Industrial Revolution meant for millions of ordinary people, who like him, left the land to work in the new mills and factories. The woollen textile industry, in particular, was a major contributor to industrial development across Europe, and it became an important source of employment in Châteaudun. The town specialised in the manufacture of heavy woollen cloth, serge and woollen blankets.



In 1782 Jacques was described as a blanket-maker (*couverturier*). He was described more specifically as a carder (*cardeur*) in 1786 and 1788, and wool-comber (*cardeur en laine*) in 1790 and 1803. His job was to prepare raw wool through a process of combing or 'carding' to produce fine threads that could then be spun into yarn for weaving. Carding was traditionally carried out by hand using large wooden combs, often by children. However, hand-carding was a laborious process and a major bottleneck in the production of yarn. Efforts to mechanise the process began in England, and during the 1780s the new machine carding technology spread to France.

These new carding machines (above) could process as much wool in minutes as a hand-carder could process in hours. The earliest carding machines were operated in small carding mills, to which individuals brought their own wool for carding, but carding technology was soon incorporated into the larger and more commercialised woollen mills and textiles factories that superseded traditional domestic spinning.

As a blanket-maker and wool-comber Jacques would have been a skilled craftsman employed to operate and maintain the new carding machinery. This was the cutting-edge technology of its day and his earnings must have been higher than working in a vineyard.

Jacques was illiterate and his surname was spelt in various ways when written in the parish registers, including: AUDECENT, AUXAN, AUXENT, HAUDSANT and HAUDESSANT. He died at Châteaudun in 1814, aged 63 years-old, which was a good age at the time. He left moveable chattels (*mobiles*) to the value of 89 francs, and real estate (*immeubles*) valued at 600 francs, shared between his widow and son.

His widow Marie survived for another seven years and continued to live in rue Forâche, dying at Châteaudun in 1821, aged 65 years. She left moveable chattels valued at 185 francs, together with real estate estimated at 890 francs, to her son. Her property included the house with outbuildings in rue Forâche as well the nearby parcels of vineyard. This was all inherited by her son Jean Pierre. He lived in Paris so the family home and vines were quickly sold off.

The lineage continued through their only son to survive into adulthood, Jean Pierre, who follows:

JEAN PIERRE AUDCENT

(1788 - ?)

Jean Pierre AUDCENT was born at Châteaudun in 1788 during the reign of King Louis XVI just as the *Ancien Regime* was about to be brought crashing down by the French Revolution. He was the only son of a blanket-maker and wool-comber named Jacques AUDECENT, and his wife 'Marie' Francoise PITOU. He was baptised the same day in the eglise de St Valérien.

The infant Jean Pierre was just ten days old when a massive hailstorm moved across France, destroying much of the wheat crop and leading to widespread famine in Paris and across the kingdom. This was the spark that ignited the French Revolution, and meant that the young Jean Pierre grew up in one of the most tumultuous and transformative periods in European history. The associated disruption might perhaps explain why Jean Pierre was the only child out of seven siblings to reach adulthood. However, the French Revolution and the parallel Industrial Revolution also set in motion massive social and economic change, from which Jean Pierre and the AUDCENT family would later reap the benefits.

Jean Pierre probably began working life, as a lad, by helping his parents maintain and cultivate their plots of vineyard, but when he was old enough he joined his father in the textiles industry, becoming a wool-worker (*ouvrier en laine*), blanket-maker (*couverturier*) and blanket weaver (*tisseur au couverturier*), first in his native town of Châteaudun and later in Paris. By this date the manufacture of woollen blankets was a major industry in Châteaudun, with more efficient power looms replacing traditional handlooms.

In 1810 Jean Pierre married Louise 'Victoire' BEAUGENDRE at the town hall in Châteaudun. She was the daughter of a local pottery and timber merchant, and granddaughter of an illiterate farm labourer. Over the previous century the BEAUGENDRE family had experienced a drastic decline in their educational, social and financial standing, as her three-times-great-grandfather had been in service to the royal family and her great-great grandmother was a member of the minor nobility. Only recently has it been established that Victoire was also distantly descended from medieval royalty (see Chapter Six).

It is notable that the wedding took place in the presence of Jean Pierre's father, as this was the first time in at least four successive generations (of the direct lineage) that a father had lived long enough to witness his son's wedding, such was the early age at which many men in the eighteenth century, and members of the AUDCENT family in particular, died.

Jean Pierre and his wife had just a single child, a son they named Prosper, who was born in 1811.

After moving to the capital with his wife and son, sometime between 1811 and 1821, he initially continued to work in the textiles industry, being described in 1821 as a Parisian blanket weaver (*tisseur au couverturier à Paris*). That same year he was named as his widowed mother's sole heir, and consequently received a further inheritance to the value of 1,075 francs following her death. This included the family home with outbuildings in rue Forâche, Châteaudun, as well as a nearby vineyard covering 3,161 square metres. However, Jean Pierre decided his future lay in

Paris and the house and vineyard were therefore sold off, severing the family's last links to its agricultural roots in provincial France.



In Paris the AUDCENT family lived at various addresses - they were resident in rue de Bussi in 1831, and rue Dauphine in 1835 (left). Both addresses were in the Latin Quarter, which also happened to be the centre of the French printing industry at the time. At some stage between 1821 and 1831 Jean Pierre decided to leave the textiles industry - which had provided a living for him and his father for over forty years - in order to pursue a second career in the printing trade.

In 1831 Jean Pierre was described as a printer (*imprimeur*), and in 1834 he was more specifically described as a lithographic draftsman (*ecrivain-lithographe*). The former term described anyone working in the printing industry, but the latter indicates he was employed in a lithographic printing workshop as a lithographic draftsman. Lithography was an innovative new printing technology. It was invented in Germany and first

introduced to France in 1815 when two presses were installed in Paris, one of which was just around the corner from rue de Bussi (where the family were living in 1831).

Jean Pierre's job as a lithographic draftsman was to transcribe a mirror image of the artist's design onto a specially prepared stone surface with a pen, so that an engraver could etch the image into the stone before it was then fixed to the printing press and images pulled. The work was highly skilled, requiring attention to detail, accuracy, concentration and a steady hand. The most difficult part of the job involved reversing the original design to take account of the fact that the prints would be a mirror image of the engraved stone. By the 1830s some of the lithographic workshops in Paris had developed into large, well-organised and profitable concerns. One of the most famous workshops belonged to Lermecier & Cie (above). It occupied a large premises in rue de Seine, which was less than 100 metres from where the AUDCENT family were living in 1835.



Jean Pierre's work required drawing ability and, although his craft was not quite as skilled as that of a traditional copper plate engraver, it was doubtless much more lucrative than blanket-making. However, his leap from the textiles industry to the printing trade was not as radical as it might seem: time spent working in the mechanised and regulated environment of the woollen mills of Châteaudun and Paris would have equipped him with a range of skills that were

transferrable to the new lithographic workshops. For example, he would have been familiar with a regulated routine as well as a production process that depended on the different skills of a large workforce to produce a finished product.

Expertise in lithographic printing was ultimately to provide Jean Pierre (and his only-son Prosper) with a route to social advancement. Jean Pierre could afford to live in a comfortable apartment and to raise his only-son into a cultured young gentleman, who was considered a suitable match for the daughter of a respectable bourgeois family. Through his own efforts, and with a modest inheritance from his parents, Jean Pierre rose in social and economic status from a humble blanket-maker to a skilled technician, and it was his son who then consolidated the family's social standing through an advantageous marriage alliance with the PINOT DE MOIRA family in 1835. Jean Pierre may have played a role in arranging his son's marriage, because the PINOT DE MOIRA family, like the AUDCENT family, were engaged in the lithographic printing business at the time.

Jean Pierre and Louise Victoire were present at their son's wedding in Rouen in 1835, but they then vanish from the written record. No further information has been found on them in Paris or elsewhere. The most likely scenario is that they remained in Paris, and died there sometime during the mid-nineteenth century. However, establishing their fate is hampered by the fact that records of deaths in Paris up to December 1859 were destroyed during the uprising of May 1871, when both the Hotel de Ville (which housed the registers) and the nearby Palais de Justice (which housed the duplicates) were burnt to the ground. Although a third of the records were subsequently reconstituted from alternative sources, there is nothing for Jean Pierre or his wife. It is likely that further research in the notarial or burial records of Paris could shed light on their fate, but such research would be time-consuming.

Jean Pierre was the earliest ancestor in the lineage able to read and write, and he was also the earliest to spell his name as "Audcent". He was baptised "Haudessant" and sometimes signed himself as "Audecent", but first used the modern spelling of "Audcent" when witnessing the marriage of his only-son in 1835.

The lineage continued through his only-son, Prosper, who follows:



PROSPER AUDCENT (1811 - 1862)

Prosper AUDCENT¹ was born in the provincial town of Châteaudun in 1811 during the reign of Emperor Napoleon I. He was the only child of Jean Pierre AUDCENT and his wife Louise Victoire BEAUGENDRE. His father was a woollen blanket-maker who went on to become a lithographic draftsman. Generations of his ancestors had lived in Châteaudun, but he left the town as a child when his parents moved to Paris. In the capital he trained as a lithographic draftsman like his father, and thus began a career in one of the cutting-edge technologies of its day.

In 1835 Prosper left Paris and moved to Rouen, where later the same year he married Mademoiselle Anne Marie Louise Henriette Sylvie PINOT DE MOIRA (known as “Fany”). She was a young lady from a bourgeois family that was so respectable it even had pretensions to nobility! Her father and brother had established a lithographic print workshop in Rouen four years earlier, and it was following the untimely death of her brother that Prosper joined the business. As a skilled lithographic printer he was evidently brought into the business to provide the technical expertise needed to keep the PINOT DE MOIRA print shop going, and the plan was probably for him to take over the business upon marrying the proprietor’s daughter. In all likelihood Prosper and his wife had an arranged marriage, based primarily on considerations of financial and business prudence, which may explain why they separated twelve years later.

Despite the promising business opportunities created by his marriage, Prosper soon abandoned his secure and conventional career in the printing industry to become a stage actor. Acting was a poorly paid and unpredictable profession, and in many social circles it was still regarded as

¹ The portrait (part a full-body length cartoon) comes from a collection of 72 drawing in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, depicting actors and musicians at the théâtre du Palais-Royal. They were drawn by Romain Thomas (alias “L’héritier”) who was one of the actors working alongside Prosper at this particular theatre. The person depicted in the cartoon is not named, but is considered to be Prosper, since the theatre company would have been relatively small and it exactly matches the description of Prosper in his passport application of 1846, which referred to his brown hair and beard (few of his fellow actors had beards), large nose, high forehead and oval face. There is also a striking similarity to family photographs of Prosper’s son (Arthur) and grandson (Henri); and the rather haggard demeanour perfectly corresponds to Prosper’s age and perilous state of health at the time.

somewhat disreputable. Thus, around 1838 the family printing business in Rouen was sold off and the couple moved to Bordeaux, where Prosper found work as an actor. The couple did not stay in south-west France very long and by 1841 they had moved back to the Latin Quarter of Paris, occupying an apartment just around the corner from where Prosper had lived as a boy.

After arriving back in Paris Prosper returned to work in the printing industry, doubtless forced back by the need to support his wife and children (and perhaps his elderly parents as well). However, he had not entirely lost his passion for the stage, because in 1842 the newspaper *Le Constitutionnel* carried a review of a performance at the Theatre des Batignolles in Paris, commenting that a “young artist, M. Prosper Audecent, showed intelligence, displaying in short, a real talent”.

The couple’s return to Paris lasted just a few years, and by 1846 they had moved back to Bordeaux. Their second stay in Bordeaux was only fleeting, because later that same year they emigrated to Spain, heading first for Saragossa before moving on to Madrid. During this time Prosper associated with other Frenchmen working in the Spanish printing industry, and his occupation at the time was described as engineer (*ingenieur*). Perhaps he was involved with the installation and maintenance of printing machinery.

Prosper and Fany’s move to Spain was not a success and within a year of emigrating their marriage had broken down. In 1847 they decided to legally separate and therefore signed a legal deed of separation at the French Embassy in Madrid. Under the terms of the deed Prosper granted his wife a large degree of independence, allowing her to return to France where she eked out a living in Paris as a Spanish teacher. Prosper meanwhile remained in Spain.

From the 1830s Prosper began to adopt a lifestyle increasingly at odds with the respectable bourgeois conventions of the day, placing him firmly on the margins of middle class society and amongst the section of society that was increasingly being described as ‘Bohemian’. The term was first coined around this date to describe the impoverished and unconventional lifestyle adopted by writers, artists and students living on the fringes of middle-class society in the Latin Quarter and later in Montmartre. These were both districts of Paris where Prosper lived at one time or another.

After Prosper separated from his wife he remained in Spain, but within just eighteen months his lifestyle, finances and health had spiralled completely out of control. By October 1848 he had fallen into such a desperate state that the authorities had to organise his repatriation from Spain to France, and he was conveyed back to the town of birth, Châteaudun, at public expense.

Both the marriage breakdown in 1847 and repatriation in 1848 were linked to Prosper’s poor health. He suffered from an illness that was regarded as chronic, incurable and self-inflicted. Categorised under the general term “paralysis”, the self-inflicted nature of his illness rules out a stroke or traumatic injury, and points to Prosper having been most likely the victim of a neurological disorder which today is called *alcoholic polyneuropathy*.

Alcoholic polyneuropathy is a condition that can develop in chronic alcoholics who are also suffering from a nutritional deficiency. Nerve damage causes pain and motor weakness as nerves throughout the body malfunction. Victims can be left with a severe disability. The degenerative disease leads to muscle spasms and atrophy, unsteadiness on the feet, frequent falls, confusion, speech impairment and difficulty swallowing. Retrospective diagnosis is always risky but this seems to be the most likely affliction. Certainly, his long-suffering wife

firmly believed the “paralysis” was self-inflicted and this clearly sapped any sympathy she had for him, explaining why she left him during the early stages of his long illness, and why she was prepared to let him languish for years in the squalor of the Paris poorhouse.

If Prosper was an alcoholic, as the evidence firmly suggests, then it was most likely caused by an addiction to absinthe. This potent alcoholic spirit was highly addictive and hallucinogenic - due to a narcotic ingredient, wormwood. It first became popular in Paris during the 1840s, which is exactly where and when Prosper’s problems began; it was a favourite drink within the type of theatrical and ‘Bohemian’ circles that Prosper frequented; and it caused serious health problems that were identical to the chronic “paralysis” suffered by Prosper.

Absinthe was relatively expensive at this date, and primarily a drink of the fashionable bourgeoisie. It soon became popular amongst ‘Bohemian’ writers, poets and artists, because it had the advantage of evoking euphoria and hallucinations without drunkenness. However, anyone addicted to absinthe risked serious and long-term health problems. In 1868 one pharmacologist noted that “absinthe affects the brain unlike any other stimulant: it produces neither the heavy drunkenness of beer; the furious inebriation of brandy, nor the exhilarant intoxication of wine. It is an ignoble poison, destroying life but not until it has more or less brutalised its votaries, and made drivelling idiots of them.”

After being repatriated and transported to Châteaudun at public expense Prosper’s circumstances briefly improved. By 1852 he had returned to live in Paris, where he took steps to put his affairs in order by finding work. He also enrolled in a friendly society that would provide assistance should his circumstances once again deteriorate. It seems he may even have been reunited with his wife for brief spell, but any reconciliation was short lived and certainly did little to alleviate the family’s dire financial predicament. In fact Prosper was so poverty stricken that he even lacked funds to complete the education of his only-son (Arthur), who at the age of just fourteen was sent to sea as a cabin-boy in the French navy.

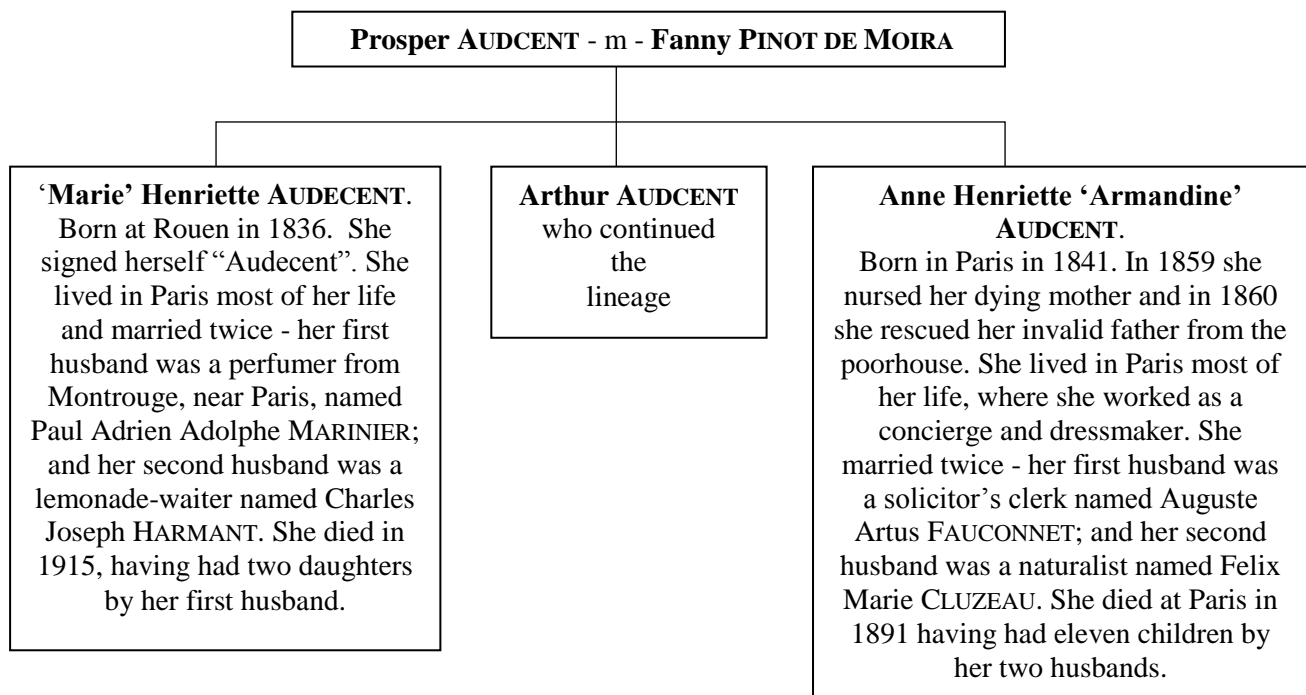
Whilst living in Paris between 1852 and 1855 Prosper renewed his passion for the theatre, obtaining work as an actor in the Théâtre du Palais-Royal - although in truth he was probably unfit to return to the printing industry. The theatre (opposite) in whose acting company he worked was one of the leading entertainment venues in the centre of Paris. It was well known for staging a genre of popular light comedy known as *comédie-vaudeville*. This was a type of farce which poked fun at petite-bourgeois values, pretensions and snobbery. Ironically, these were precisely the values and pretensions that Prosper had defied in real life, through the decisions he took concerning his unhealthy lifestyle, erratic career, precarious finances, broken marriage and dysfunctional family life. Regrettably, the outcome in real life for Prosper, his wife and their children, was a tragedy rather than comedy.



In 1855 Prosper and his wife both left Paris, but in opposite directions and for very different reasons - Prosper departed Paris as an invalid to receive care as a poorhouse inmate, whilst his estranged wife departed on official government business to embark on an exciting new professional career.

Prosper was taken to the château de Villers Cotterêts, 80 kilometres north-east of Paris. This large renaissance chateau, and former palace of King Francis I, had been converted by the *Préfecture de police de Paris* into a poorhouse (*Dépôt de mendicité de la Seine*) to accommodate the waives and strays of Paris. Prosper was admitted to the poorhouse and endured four years as an inmate inside this grim institution - one of the invalids and elderly paupers who shuffled aimlessly through the corridors and grounds of the ancient chateau carrying their meagre rations in their trembling hands.

His wife meanwhile - still using her married name of “Madame Audcent” - moved to the town of Clermont-Ferrand, 420 kilometres south of Paris, where she had been given a salaried position as a nursery school inspector. She was one of just eighteen female state officials in the whole of France at this date, and was therefore amongst the very first women - the twelfth to be precise - ever employed by the French state in a professional capacity. Her arrival in Clermont-Ferrand was a ground-breaking event, and the appointment made her influential at the local level. She was appointed by the Minister of Education, and her application for employment was personally supported by a number of eminent figures, including no less than Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Eugenie (wife of Napoléon III), the Archbishop of Paris, the Deputy-chief-of-staff to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Napoléon III, and the Minister of Public Works. It is doubtful she knew any of them personally, but they were all ‘friends of friends’, via a cousin (whose husband was a courtier in the Imperial Household), her parish priest and one of her language students.



The Préfet de la Seine, Monsieur (later Baron) HAUSSMAN also commented on Madame Audcent’s suitability and advised that she was intelligent and well brought up with commendable manners and a veritable aptitude for the care of children. He noted that she had “suffered the misfortune” of marrying a lithographic printer who was paralysed, through his own fault, in the poorhouse at Villers-Cotterêts. The Préfet’s only reservation therefore concerned the extent of Madame Audcent’s financial “embarrassment”, which he feared might - even with an official salary - make it difficult for her maintain a lifestyle conforming to her

official status and duties. However, on balance, he felt her character and conduct merited the Minister's benevolence, and she was duly appointed.

Madame Audcent's work as a nursery school inspector was challenging: in addition to regular travel she had to exert authority over truculent local dignitaries and vested interests who bitterly resented all outside interference, especially when the authority figure was a woman - which was virtually unheard of at the time. The Rector of the Académie was greatly impressed by Madame Audcent's professionalism, and he repeatedly praised her courage, intelligence and zeal. However, from the moment she took up her position, in 1855, she had to contend with a vicious and well-orchestrated conspiracy designed to undermine her personal and professional integrity. She was the unwitting victim of an elaborate entrapment and slander orchestrated by one of the local lady dignitaries (who resented outside interference in the nursery school she had established), with the aim of making it appear that Madame Audcent had secured her appointment through corrupt means. These hurtful, malicious and false allegations caused considerable stress which may have triggered the stroke she suffered in 1859. She died three months later, in August 1859, at Saint-Dier d'Auverge, where she had gone to be nursed by her daughter and cousins. She was 44 years old.

Prosper did not attend his wife's funeral, but was soon afterwards rescued from the poorhouse by his sympathetic daughter (Armandine). After having nursed her ailing mother she dutifully returned to Paris to take care of her invalid father. Prosper therefore left the poorhouse and headed back to Paris to live with his daughter. During the late 1850s and early 1860s they lived in the Montmartre district of Paris (at No. 7 Boulevard des Poissonnières - *La Presse*, 5 May 1861, page 1 and *Les Temps*, 5 June 1861, page 4) supported by a pension from the *Association des inventeurs et artistes industriels*, a friendly society that he had had the foresight to join a decade earlier.

Prosper's annual pension was only 60 francs, and not sufficient to live on. This may explain why he was drawn into the dubious business activities of his brother-in-law, Henri PINOT DE MOIRA. Unfortunately, his brother-in-law was something of a rogue, and Prosper soon found himself caught up in a criminal investigation over allegations that his brother-in-law had embezzled 70,000 francs belonging to an elderly widow. Some of that money might well have been used to subsidise Prosper's living costs, and he was certainly implicated in the crime when the police discovered his signature on some incriminating paperwork. However, as far as we can tell Prosper escaped prosecution, probably owing to his poor health, which must have convinced the authorities that he had been no more than a naive stooge. His brother-in-law was not so lucky, and following conviction was sentenced to two years in prison (see Chapter Five).

Although Prosper had narrowly managed to avoid prison his future looked equally grim. With his wife deceased, his son away in the navy and with his brother-in-law now behind bars, he was left to fend for himself when his daughter and carer (Armandine) moved to Rouen in 1861, following her marriage. Unable to care for himself, Prosper had no option but to leave his apartment in



Montmartre and return to Villers-Cotterêts, where he was re-admitted for a second time to the poorhouse (right). Prosper was by now gravely ill and died several months later, in 1862, in the poorhouse infirmary. He was 50 years-old and in his final weeks he was surrounded only by strangers and squalor. Sadly his death was registered by two employees of the poorhouse, with no family members present.

Prosper and his wife were both examples of new - but very different - social phenomenon, and their lives exemplify important strands in the development of modern France. As such they both helped to pioneer modern attitudes and ways of living, but the life of a pioneer is never easy and they both paid a heavy price. Prosper can be regarded as an early 'Bohemian', helping to create a new counter-culture that would come to dominate French intellectual and artistic life over the next century. Unfortunately, the 'Bohemian' lifestyle was almost by definition associated with behaviours and addictions guaranteed to lead to poverty and early death. Those who knew Prosper certainly attributed the illness that killed him to this lifestyle. His wife on the other hand was one of the very first professional women in France, and an early pioneer of a woman's right to pursue both a private life as well as a professional career independently of their husband. Very few women in nineteenth century France challenged the moral and social conventions of the day, in both the domestic and professional spheres of life, in the way she did. The decisions she took, to leave her husband and pursue a career as a government official, were truly radical and ground-breaking at the time. Unfortunately, the stress involved probably caused her fatal stroke and early death.

Prosper had seventeen grandchildren, but they were all born after his death and only three of them inherited his surname. However, it is notable that one particular grandson, Robert FAUCONNET, was a real chip off the old block and grew up to be exactly like Prosper in many ways. It is remarkable how Robert's own description of himself (in 1915) could so easily be a description of the grandfather he never knew:

"I am mad about literature and the theatre... [I am] no paragon, but ... a little wild, somewhat bohemian, having earned good money but always in debt, a hard drinker, still avid at the age of 49 for pleasures of every kind, people nevertheless give me credit - and I feel with some justification - for unswerving loyalty and an unusually altruistic disposition".

The story of Prosper's sad and lonely life seems to have been an embarrassment to the family, which probably explains why virtually everything about him was forgotten, until gradually rediscovered by David and Geoff AUDCENT when researching their family history.

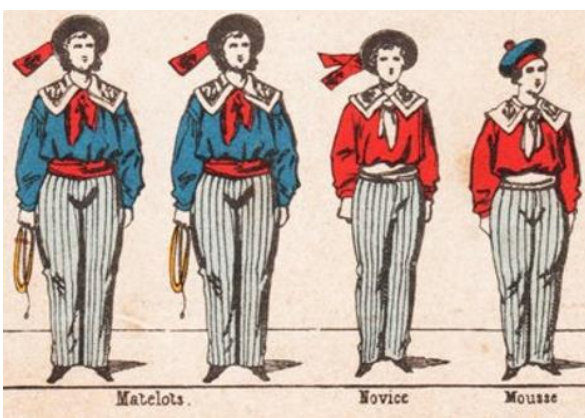
Prosper and his wife were survived by their two daughters and just one son - Arthur Audcent - who continued the family story and kept alive the family name:



ARTHUR AUDCENT
(1838 - 1881)

Arthur AUDCENT - full name Louis Arthur Henri Felix AUDCENT - was born at Bordeaux in 1838, during the reign of the last king to sit upon the French throne, King Louis-Philippe. Arthur was the son of a lithographic draftsman and actor named Prosper AUDCENT and his wife Anne Marie Louise Henriette Sylvie PINOT DE MOIRA.

Arthur had a very chaotic childhood. His father was almost certainly an alcoholic, probably addicted to absinthe, and the family lived an itinerant existence as they moved frequently from one city to the next. By the time he was eight-years-old he had lived in two countries and four different cities - Bordeaux, Paris, Saragossa and Madrid. His parents were legally separated in 1847, after which he may have stayed in Spain for a short time to continue his education. However, his family were 'financially embarrassed' and in 1853 he found himself being sent to sea as a cabin-boy in the French navy, presumably to avoid the expense of college fees. It would be unfair to regard this as the deed of cold or uncaring parents. On the contrary, it allowed Arthur to complete his education in an adequate yet affordable way.



Fourteen-year-old Arthur was thus enrolled in the French navy in 1853. He served in the navy - man and boy - for over eleven years. Starting off as a cabin-boy (*mousse*), he would have become an apprentice sailor (*novice*) at the age of sixteen in 1854; and on reaching his eighteenth birthday, in 1856, he became old enough to enlist as an ordinary seaman (*matelot*). He then rose quickly up the non-commissioned ranks. By December 1857, still aged just nineteen, he had been promoted to the rank of *quartier-mâitre*, which

was equivalent to an army *corporal*. Four years later, in January 1862 he was promoted to the rank of *Sergent Fourrier de Première Classe*, which was the highest rank he attained. This was

equivalent to a ship's second-master, but involved on administrative duties such as managing finances, record-keeping and stores.

Arthur's time in the navy coincided with rapid technological change - as sailing ships were converted to steam power and new 'ironclad' warships entered service. France was engaged in several military adventures during this period as Emperor Napoleon III used the navy to project French military power and prestige abroad. It is not known whether young Arthur saw action in the Crimean War (1853-56) but he definitely sailed to the Orient.

The navy played a key role in Napoleon III's imperialist adventures and its ships saw action in the Second Opium War (1856-60), which culminated with the Sack of Peking. French warships were also deployed in the Cochinchina campaign (1858-62), off the coast of what is now southern Vietnam (opposite), ushering in a century of French colonial dominance across Indo-China.



Sailors in the Imperial navy endured real hardships in the Far East. Whilst they had technological superiority over their opponents they were far from home, were fed poor rations and succumbed to the tropical climate in large numbers. Arthur's medical records reveal that he suffered badly from "sun stroke" whilst serving in "the China Seas". These simple facts are elaborated on by a story passed down through the family, which records that he became so ill at one point that he was pronounced dead by the ship's doctor. His life was miraculously saved by a nun who, whilst praying beside his body, noticed signs of life shortly before he was to be given a burial at sea. At face value this family tale is difficult to reconcile with the fact that warships do not normally carry nuns. However, the French navy gave protection to many persecuted missionary nuns during the Cochinchina campaign, and the story must therefore date to that military campaign, in the late 1850s. Arthur would have been thrown into the sea and drowned had the nun not noticed signs of life, and the AUDCENT family would thus have become extinct. Fortunately he survived and returned to Europe where, by the early 1860s, he was assigned to the crew of 'Le Faon'.

His new ship, 'Le Faon', was a screw propelled steamship operating out of Cherbourg and Granville in Normandy, which was assigned to coastal defence and patrol duties in the English Channel. The vessel was classified as a second rate *aviso de flottille* - which meant it was a small but fast ship. For this reason it was sometimes sent to assist merchant ships in distress, such as in December 1863 when she rescued six crew members, from the schooner Providence, shipwrecked during a gale (one of the sailors being a Guernsey man named James OZANNE - no relation but a similar surname). Arthur probably participated in the rescue.

Although his abilities won him steady promotion through the non-commissioned ranks, Arthur suffered several setbacks during his naval service, and his career appears to have been abruptly cut short. The first set back occurred in December 1857 when he was put in irons for eight days, with the punishment subsequently increased to thirty days confinement, after going absent

without leave when his ship was in port at Toulon. He probably absconded in order to go to Paris to support his maternal uncle, Henri PINOT DE MOIRA, who was embroiled in a financial scandal at the time (see Chapter Five). Arthur went on to serve a further six years in the navy until January 1864, when another instance of misconduct resulted in a more severe sentence. He was demoted in rank and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in the naval prison at Granville. The reasons are unclear, although his children were later led to believe it was for political reasons. However, it is interesting to note that this coincided with yet another family crisis - and once again it was his maternal uncle, Henri PINOT DE MOIRA, who was at the centre of the crisis (having again become embroiled in another financial scandal, for which he was sentenced to three years in a Belgian prison). Thus, both the setbacks in Arthur's naval career coincided with times of family crisis involving his uncle, and both Arthur and his uncle each received prison sentences in 1864, shortly before they both emigrated to England.

Arthur left the navy between 1864 and 1867 and obtained work in the French merchant navy for a short time.

Before leaving the Imperial French Navy Arthur had collaborated with his maternal uncle (Henri PINOT DE MOIRA) in developing a telegraphic lamp (*phare telegraphique*) to facilitate more effective naval communication during the hours of darkness, when communication using flags was impossible. His uncle often used the false noble title of "Comte de Rochepaule" and their invention was therefore called the *systeme Audcent-de Rochepaule*. Based on a copper lamp with six candles, it enabled communication between ships, and the family claimed it was superior to all other naval communication systems. During 1863 Arthur promoted the merits of the invention by writing to the Navy Ministry in Paris and to Emperor Napoleon III, but the innovation seems not to have been pursued.

After leaving the navy Arthur must have appeared a rather solitary figure - his parents were dead, he had yet to find a wife and he had no affinity to any particular region of France. He had two sisters, but they were both married with children. However, he remained close to his maternal uncle, Henri PINOT DE MOIRA, with the result that when his uncle and cousins (one of whom was destined to become his wife) emigrated to England, Arthur joined them. He arrived in England between 1864 and 1867, and settled in Bristol. This maritime city had longstanding links with Bordeaux - the city of his birth - owing to a wine trade dating back to the Middle Ages. It was this wine trade - principally in claret and cognac - that would provide Arthur with a living.

Around thirty years-old and newly arrived in England, Arthur set up in business as a wine and brandy merchant. His new career made use of his language skills as well as the knowledge of accounting and victuals which he would undoubtedly have gained in the navy. He was granted a Wine Licence by the

Bristol magistrates around 1867 and started to build up a successful business. The timing was fortuitous. Not only did it coincide with a surge in wine consumption following the landmark Anglo-French 'Treaty of Commerce' of 1860, which slashed import duties on French wines and brandies, but travel between Bristol, Bordeaux and Cognac was facilitated by a regular steamship service and the recent opening of a new railway lines in France. Wine consumption in England increased enormously in the two decades after 1860, a period sometimes referred to as



“the era of cheap Gladstone claret” (after the British Prime Minister William Gladstone, who was responsible for the Treaty of Commerce). Arthur was ideally placed to take advantage of this change in Victorian drinking habits.

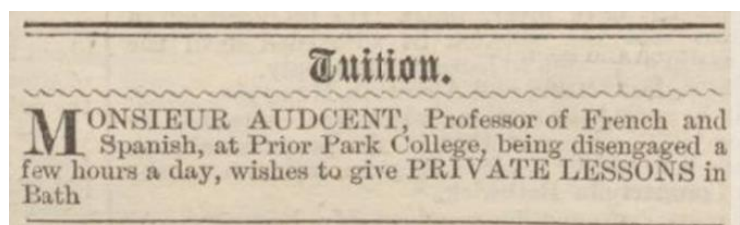
The Treaty of Commerce was intended to improve Anglo-French relations and defuse military tension by increasing trade between the two countries. Commenting on popular fears that France was about to launch a military invasion, the *Morning Star* - a free-trade supporting newspaper - reassured its readers that... “the French, it is true, are about to make a descent upon our shores, but they will be armed only with silks and clarets, and though we shall meet them with broadsides of iron and coal, our missiles will be hurled in the inoffensive form of freight.” Arthur was one of the Frenchmen to which the newspaper referred and he was indeed armed - literally - with wines and cognacs from Bordeaux.

The long-established wine merchants of Bristol purchased their wines in France before shipping them to England, but Arthur lacked the capital for such a business model and adopted a different approach. Instead, he went into partnership with a group of French wine producers and brandy distillers, and made his living by arranging shipment (using the regular service provided by the Bristol Steam Navigation Co Ltd) and taking a commission from the retail sales he generated in Bristol.

Wine and brandy remained a luxury product, despite the tariff reductions, and Arthur conducted business from a number of suitably smart addresses around Bristol - in Baldwin Street, Park Street and Regent Street. He advertised in local newspapers, with his cheapest wines selling for three shillings per bottle, and the oldest brandies upwards of ten shillings, which was almost a week's pay for a working man.

Arthur's work as a commission agent in the wine trade provided him with a comfortable living for over a decade. However, the business model had one serious vulnerability - his supply chain was dependent on the small network of French growers and distillers with whom he had negotiated contracts, but over whom he had limited control. This became a problem in 1869 when the aphid infestation known as *phylloxera* reached western France, ravaging the vineyards around Bordeaux and Cognac. Arthur's supply chain collapsed and he was forced to cease trading.

Arthur reacted to the collapse of his business by using his fluency in French and Spanish to embark on a third career. He obtained a position as a school master at Prior Park College, a private Roman Catholic boys boarding school near Bath. His teacher's salary would only have been modest, but this being a boarding school he received board and lodging. The headmaster also allowed him to augment his salary by offering private tuition to the residents of Bath in his spare time (advert opposite). However, he remained a school master for only a few terms.



Around late 1872 Arthur returned to Bristol and the wine trade, in order to rebuild his moribund business. His business soon recovered from the impact of the *phylloxera* infestation and as trade expanded during the 1870s he needed to hire staff, which created its own problems. There is evidence to suggest that he could be a difficult employer to work for, and he parted on bad

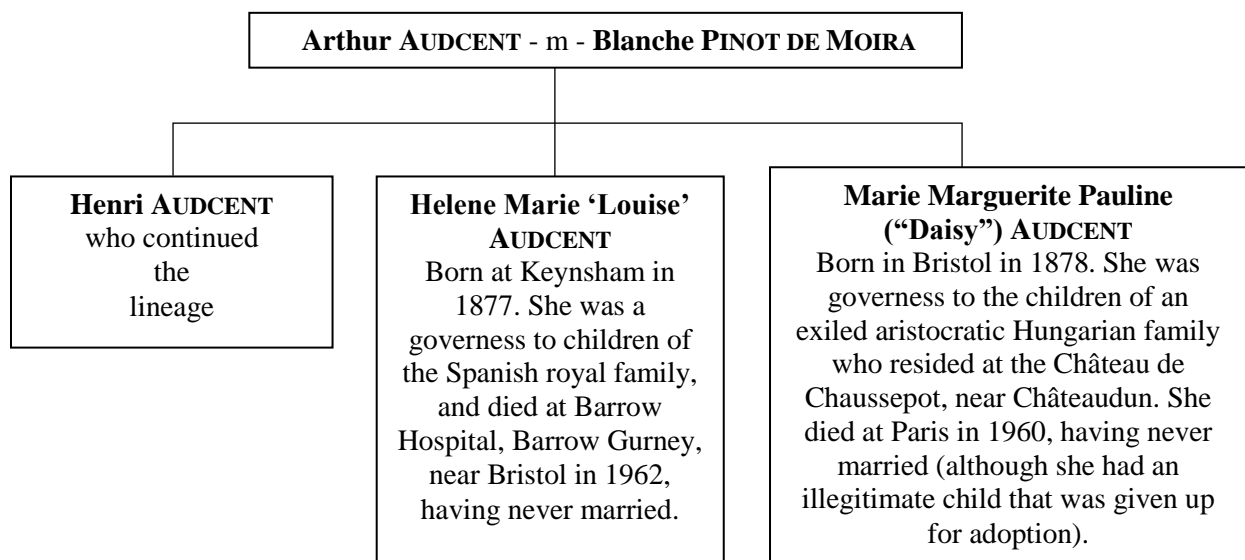
terms with at least two of his employees - dismissing one man in 1873, and another in 1876. On the second occasion it was reported in the Western Daily Press that he was sued by the disgruntled ex-employee for breach of contract and non-payment of salary owed. Arthur lost the court case but - determined not to be outdone - he lodged a counter-claim against this ex-employee for failure to handover £35 of receipts received from customers.



In 1874 Arthur married his first-cousin, H  l  ne Marie "Blanche" PINOT DE MOIRA, in St George's Roman Catholic church at Taunton. There was a significant age difference between 38 year-old Arthur and his 22 year-old bride, but in other ways they shared much in common. Blanche's childhood had been just as chaotic as Arthur's. Not only had her parents moved frequently - from Lillebonne in Normandy to Algeria, Paris, Belgium and England -

but her father (Arthur's uncle) had gained an international reputation as a fraudster and high society confidence trickster, with a string of criminal convictions and court judgements to his name.

The PINOT DE MOIRA family successfully concealed their secrets after arriving in England and became popular members of respectable society in Taunton and Bristol. So much so that Arthur and Blanche's wedding was one of the society events of the year in Taunton, with the local press reporting that the church was full to capacity and that admission had to be controlled by ticket.



Following their wedding, the couple established a family home in the town of Keynsham, within convenient commuting distance of Bristol by train. They named their home 'Chambord Cottage' in honour of the Comte de Chambord - who was the Bourbon (*legitimist*) claimant to the French throne. The AUDCENT and PINOT DE MOIRA families were ardent monarchists and

retained strong royalist sympathies after emigrating to England. In 1878 the family left Keynsham and moved into a slightly grander villa residence in Bristol.

Arthur did not let his foreign name or nationality prevent him from playing an active role in the local community. For example, in 1876 he was one of the local rate-payers to take a leading role in lobbying to secure funding for the gas street lighting of Keynsham. He also became a member of one of Bristol's most august charitable organisations, the Dolphin Society, demonstrating both the financial success of his business and the ease with which he assimilated into the local community. At the Society's annual dinner he rubbed shoulders with many of the city's social and political elite.

Arthur and Blanche's happy family life was tragically cut short in 1879, when Blanche died after an illness lasting two months. She was just 27 years-old. Arthur was then left to care for their three children, the eldest of whom was still just four years-old. As shocking as Blanche's premature death was, the tragedy would soon be compounded in the most terrible way.

Soon after his wife's death Arthur started to display symptoms of mental instability. His cousin-sister-in-law (Marguerite PINOT DE MOIRA) moved in to care for him, but he grew worse and the family were left with no option but to have him committed to the Bristol Lunatic Asylum (right). By then he had become constantly incoherent and often violent, and two local



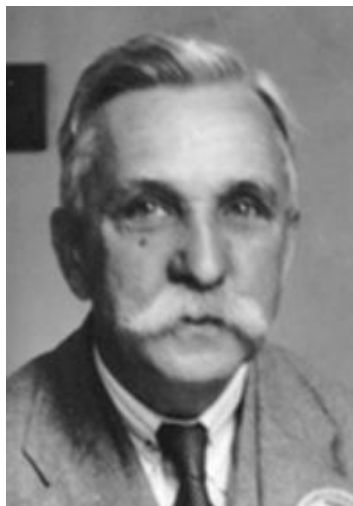
doctors had no hesitation in certifying him as a "person of unsound mind". As Arthur grew weaker his delusions became more bizarre - he believed himself to be higher than all kings and claimed to speak nineteen languages. He said his cousin-sister-in-law would marry the King of Ireland, and he believed that he possessed immense wealth, could cure all blind people and that he could even command time itself.

Upon admission to Lunatic Asylum in February 1881, the medical staff noticed that he was very voluble, shaking hands all round with the attendants, and telling them that he had "millions and millions". Unfortunately his condition was incurable and he rapidly declined over the next four weeks, sometimes struggling violently with the attendants and tearing down his curtains. Arthur eventually succumbed to his terrible illness in March 1881. He was just 47 years-old.

Most of his fellow inmates were paupers cared for at public expense, but Arthur was a private patient. His cause of death was recorded as "general paralysis of the insane", which was the medical term generally used for tertiary stage syphilis. This was one of the most dreaded afflictions a person could suffer, and it often developed many years after the initial infection. Syphilis was widespread in nineteenth-century France and doctors noted that military and naval life were commonly associated with the disease. By 1900 it was estimated that 15% of the population in Paris was infected. Arthur probably contracted the infection fifteen or more years earlier whilst in the navy, and fortunately the infectious stage of his illness appears to have passed by the time he married Blanche, saving her and children from the risk of contracting the disease.

Arthur's death was announced in the local press - the notice containing only brief details and falsely stating that he had died at home, because the family were too upset or embarrassed to announce that he had died in the local lunatic asylum. His orphaned children were told that their father had died at home from injuries sustained in a railway accident.

Arthur was survived by his two daughters and one son - Henri AUDCENT - who kept the family name alive and continues the family story:



HENRI AUDCENT, Hon MSc
(1875 - 1951)

Henri AUDCENT - full name Louis Arthur Henri AUDCENT - was born in 1875 at Keynsham, a small town in northern Somerset. He was the only son of a former sailor and brandy merchant, named Arthur AUDCENT and his wife Blanche PINOT DE MOIRA.

His parents were first-cousins but they both died prematurely, leaving five-year-old Henri an orphan. He was then brought up by his maternal grandparents in a loving environment, and oblivious to some shocking family secrets. His grandparents were Henri and H  l  ne PINOT DE MOIRA, the so-called "Comte and Comtesse de Rochepaule" (see Chapter Five). However, their noble title was entirely false, without any historical basis or legal validity - and this was just one of the family secrets.

The most iconic institutions of the Victorian age were the orphanage, the lunatic asylum, the prison and the poorhouse. Henri narrowly avoided the orphanage. However, his father and grandfathers had close associations with the other three institutions: his father died in the Bristol Lunatic Asylum (from syphilis, although Henri was told that his father had died at home from injuries sustained in a railway accident); his paternal-grandfather (Prosper AUDCENT) died in the Paris poorhouse (from paralysis apparently caused by alcoholism); whilst his dearly-loved maternal-grandfather (Henri PINOT DE MOIRA) served time in the prisons of France and Belgium (owing to his criminal activities as an international and high society confidence-trickster and fraudster).

For such a genteel family there were an astonishing number of skeletons in the cupboard, but these secrets were so well concealed that Henri seems to have known nothing about them.

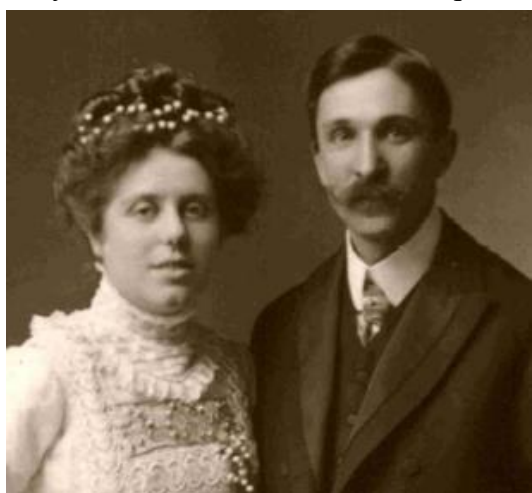
Henri was just four-years-old when his mother died, and his father died less than two years later, leaving Henri orphaned. He was taken into the care of his PINOT DE MOIRA grandparents, living with them first in Taunton and then Bristol. He was in effect adopted by his grandparents under a private guardianship arrangement (there being no formal adoption process in English law until 1927). It could be said that in many respects Henri was more of a PINOT DE MOIRA than an AUDCENT, both genetically and through up-bringing: he was descended from the PINOT DE MOIRA family twice over (through both a grandmother and a grandfather); and the premature

deaths of his parents meant he was raised from an early age by his PINOT DE MOIRA grandparents and aunts, with only the faintest memory of his father.

In 1891 Henri became the first AUDCENT to attend university, being awarded a free studentship by Bristol City Corporation to attend University College Bristol. In 1894 he was named one of the two John Stewart Scholars for the year (this scholarship was established to support to “poor lads, natives of Bristol”). He passed the intermediate exams for a Bachelor of Science degree but suffered a breakdown and was unable to complete the course. The breakdown was caused by overwork and the pressure he felt under to win scholarships to alleviate the financial burden on his elderly grandparents.

Without a university degree, but with an excellent grasp of the French language and a love of the natural sciences, Henri embarked on a teaching career in 1895. He taught at a succession of schools - Hanley Castle Grammar School in Worcestershire, Prior Park College near Bath (opposite, where his father had once been a member of staff), the Roman Catholic Institute in Liverpool and finally Fairfield Secondary School - a grammar school in Bristol (also depicted opposite). He taught at Fairfield from 1907 until 1938, initially as a French master but subsequently taking Botany and Biology classes. In 1909 he also joined the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools and remained a member for almost thirty years.

Amongst his pupils at Fairfield School was a lad named Archie LEACH, who later emigrated to the United States and became a famous Hollywood movie star with the stage name ‘Cary Grant’. Henri renewed his acquaintance with his former pupil when the movie star visited



the school in 1933. Henri is mentioned in a number of Cary Grant biographies, but Henri did not have especially fond memories of the boy, who could be somewhat badly behaved.

During a teaching career spanning over forty years Henri’s character and enthusiasm earned him the admiration of those he taught. One former pupil fondly remembered “his gentleness, humility and quiet, persuasive manner, and his smile that would transform a somewhat sad expression into one of radiant joy and appreciation.” Another recalled him having the “attributes of a scholar, near-saint, and

gentleman, including human sympathy, modesty, integrity, a just sense of values, and humour inherited from the two most subtly humoured nations in the world.”

In 1898 Henri took a temporary break from teaching, after being awarded a botanical research bursary by University College Bristol. The bursary was probably linked to research being carried out by the family into the application of electricity to improve plant growth - known as "electro-culture". His grandfather was one of the leading exponents of this new technology at the time, and conducted trials in the garden of the family home in Bristol between 1898 and 1901. Henri probably collaborated with his grandfather in this scientific research for several years, before returning to the teaching profession in 1900. During the school holidays he also sought employment in France as a tutor of English and science.

In 1910 Henri married Henriette FERNEY. She was the daughter of Joseph FERNEY (a civil engineer and officer in the French territorial army) and his wife Henriette LORENTZ. The engagement was celebrated with a party thrown in the palais de cristal, within the grounds of the Château de Saint Cloud on the outskirts of Paris (close to the FERNEY family home). The wedding took place at the Pro-Cathedral in Bristol. At the age of thirty-five Henri was in need of a wife, whilst his bride, at the age of twenty-eight was equally in need of a husband after her dreams of becoming an opera singer were dashed by an injury to her vocal cords.

The couple lived at various modest properties around Bristol, and his wife gave him three sons (Gerard, Jacques and Bernard) between 1911 and 1918. Although he married relatively late in life he was nevertheless the first AUDCENT in five successive generations to have had three sons, making the survival of the family name more likely than at any time since 1751.

During the First World War Henri attempted to enlist in the British Army, but repeatedly failed the medical examinations. This must have caused him some frustration because among his papers he kept a card with white feathers attached - it being a common practice for young women to hand these cards to men seen out of uniform to shame them into joining the armed forces. Undeterred, Henri contributed to the war effort in other ways. In October 1916 he set up a War Savings Association at Fairfield school and collected hundreds of pounds from staff and pupils. With his wife he also established a home for Belgian refugees and wounded soldiers in Bristol, funded through donations of money, furniture and time from fellow staff and pupils.

Although Henri was a dedicated and hardworking schoolmaster, it was entomology - the study of winged insects - that was his abiding passion in life. His particular area of interest was in two-winged flies - known as '*Diptera*' - which includes mosquitoes, crane-flies, midges, gnats, fruit-flies, horse-flies and hover-flies. *Diptera* are an important component in many ecosystems and the thousands of different species can only properly be identified through expert study under a microscope. This, together with the fact that there was little existing scientific literature made *Diptera* a fascinating and challenging topic for amateur study.



From 1917 Henri set about remedying the deficiency in scientific knowledge with relish, through painstaking research, collection of specimens, record-keeping, and many hours of study at the microscope to compare and identify specimens. As a taxonomist his contributions to the scientific literature have taken their place amongst the classics of the *Diptera* order. Between 1917 and 1950 he published over 30 scientific papers and lists, firmly establishing his international reputation as a first-class ‘dipterist’.

Henri’s personal collection of *Diptera* contained some 3,000 species and 12,000 individual specimens of fly, collected during field trips around the West Country and whilst on family holidays to France. The flies were mounted and stored in 160 carefully labelled wooden boxes (opposite).

Over the years Henri collaborated with many amateur and professional entomologists in Britain and overseas. He encouraged the work of local entomologists thorough his involvement in the Bristol Naturalist’s Society (of which he was made an Honorary Member), and also collaborated with entomologists in France and corresponded with one of the leading entomologist in the United States. In 1932 he played an active role at the International Congress of Entomology held in Paris.

Henri was generous in donating specimens to a number of institutions, including the British Museum, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter and the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff. He was also a member of the Entomological Society of the South of England, which soon afterwards became the Society for British Entomology.

The year 1939 was a notable one for Henri, and not just because of the outbreak of war with Nazi Germany. On a personal level he was newly-retired from teaching, it was the year he moved to Clevedon and he celebrated the arrival of his first grandchildren (Tony and David AUDCENT). This was also the year in which he was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Bristol. The degree of Master of Science was conferred on him in recognition of his entomological work. It meant that, despite failing to complete his degree course over forty years earlier, he at last received the academic recognition from his alma mater that he deserved.

Following his retirement Henri and his wife left Bristol and moved into a second-floor flat in Clevedon, a pleasant coastal town on the Severn Estuary. Their flat was in the genteel neighbourhood of Hill Road, located conveniently close to local shops as well as the town’s Catholic church. However, the couple struggled to make ends meet on the meagre pension paid by the Board of Education. In 1943 Henri therefore obtained a part time job with the Ministry of Labour and National Service, working as a clerk in the local Labour Exchange. However, his employment was terminated twelve months later following continued absence on sick leave.

Henri died in 1951 at Clevedon Cottage Hospital, aged 75 years and was buried in the churchyard of St Andrew’s, overlooking the Bristol Channel. He left his entire estate, valued at £880, to his widow.

Despite declining health Henri had actively pursued his entomological studies until the end. On learning of Henri’s death, a leading French entomologist referred to Henri’s passing as a “great and probably irreparable loss in one of the most difficult areas of the natural sciences.”

His widow, Henriette, survived another fifteen years and died at the Bristol Royal Infirmary in 1966. They were survived by their three sons; Gerard, Jacques and Bernard.

In 1966 a newly-discovered species of crane fly was named in Henri's honour by the renowned American entomologist Charles P ALEXANDER (with whom Henri had corresponded). The *Indotipula Audcentiana* occurs in the Philippines and was "named for Henri Louis Felix Audcent (1875-1951), capable student of the Diptera of Bristol, England, including the Ptychopteridae and Tipulidae". The *Indotipula Audcentiana* has an orange thorax with brownish-black legs and yellowish-brown wings.

In 1984 John BOWDEN first described the bee-fly *Bombylius audcenti* (*Bombyliidae*) from Morocco, commenting: "The species is named in memory of H.L.F. Audcent, my tutor in the study of Diptera." This species is said to be very like the British species *B. canescens* Mikan, but easily distinguished by its yellow femora.

More recently in 2004 David GIBBS described *Agromyza audcenti* (*Agromyzidae*) from the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, presumed to be a leaf or stem miner like other members of its family although the biology of this species is as yet unknown. It was named in commemoration of Henri's contribution to knowledge of the local Diptera fauna, with the comment: "He was a very popular dipterist, known for his wide knowledge and willingness to help others in their pursuit of entomology. In the final years of his life he published the first comprehensive list of the Diptera of Somerset and Gloucestershire, which has yet to be superseded."

4. Descendants of Henri Audcent

Henri AUDCENT (1875-1951) and his wife Henriette had three sons:

I - GERARD AUDCENT (1911 - 1981)



The eldest son, **Gerard Arthur Joseph AUDCENT**, was born in 1911 at Bristol. Educated in England and France he began his working life in France, where he worked in a chandlery (rope) business owned by relatives of his mother. However, he contracted typhoid fever and returned to England. He then got a job as a booking clerk with the Bristol School of Motoring in the centre of Bristol, and later worked for an engineering firm in Dursley. The firm was looking to increase exports to Europe and his fluent French was considered useful. Early in the Second World War he was called up, and was sent to the Officer Cadet Training Unit. In 1941 he received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps.

In 1941 he was married at Bristol to Eileen KENWAY. She was a Canadian sent to England to care for an elderly aunt.

During the War Gerard served overseas, in North Africa and Italy. During the Battle of Monte Casino he was almost killed when a shell destroyed a hut in which he had been interrogating an Italian prisoner only moments earlier. He was demobbed with the rank of Captain.

After the war Gerard and Eileen moved to Lytham St Annes, in Lancashire, where Gerard set up in business with friends manufacturing firelighters. Unfortunately the business went bankrupt and Gerard lost everything. The family soon afterwards emigrated to Canada. On arrival in 1952 they initially settled in Montreal before moving to Gloucester (Ontario) and finally Ottawa.

Gerard obtained a position as a translator for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and was regarded during as the finest English-French translator in the country. During the 1970s he became interested in family history, assisting his nephew (David AUDCENT) with translations of ancient family papers. He returned to England on two occasions, the first time in 1974 on his own and the last time in 1977 with his wife Eileen.

Gerard continued working for CBC long after the normal retirement age. He was still working at the age of 69 when he became ill. He was diagnosed with cancer, and died in January 1981, a month before the date set for his retirement. Gerard is survived by the following children and descendants:

1. **John Peter AUDCENT**, BSc, M Ed. Born 1942, Bristol. School teacher. He was the first member of the AUDCENT family to complete a university degree, graduating from Ottawa University. During the 1970s he established a wine consultancy business with friends, thereby re-establishing a family connection to the wine industry stretching back to the 1740s (although unaware at the time): his great-grandfather having been a wine

merchant, his four-times-great-parents having owned a vineyard, and his five-times great-grandfather having been a vineyard worker. In 1966 he married Mary Patricia PLUNKETT, and had two daughters:-

- a. **Karen Elizabeth AUDCENT**, BA, LLB. Born 1971. Senior Counsel in the Criminal Law Policy Section of the Canadian Department of Justice.
 - b. **Tobey Ann AUDCENT** MD, FRCP(C), DTMH. Born 1974. Consultant paediatrician and Assistant Professor at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, University of Ottawa, Ottawa. In 2005 she married Peter NOR and has two children:-
 - i. **George NOR**. Born 2008 in Ottawa
 - ii. **Hannah Marie NOR**. Born 2009 in Ottawa
2. **Mary AUDCENT**. She was born in 1948 and died young.
 3. **Mark Anthony AUDCENT**, MA, LLB. Born 1950 at Lytham St Annes. Retired Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel to the Canadian Senate. Following his retirement he appeared as a witness in the prosecution of a Senator accused of fraud, earning him some praise in the press for having "put a little of the H back in honourable".

II - JACQUES AUDCENT (1912 - 1984)



The middle son, **Jacques Louis Alexis AUDCENT**, was born in 1912 at Bristol. Educated in England and France. His first job was working for a small chain of leather goods shops in Bristol, before he obtained a temporary position touring the south of England dressing shop windows for Lever Brothers to advertise their new cooking fat. This was followed by a stint as a Hoover vacuum cleaner salesman, but he failed to sell enough vacuum cleaners and left owing his employer money for the hire of the demonstration kit. He eventually obtained a position as a travelling salesman and representative for Ever Ready Ltd.

In 1938 he was married at Bristol to Sylvia Constance PEAT. They had three sons and one daughter.

During the early years of the Second World War Jacques's job with Ever Ready was categorised as a reserved occupation. During the Blitz of Bristol he volunteered as a fire warden, although his wife and children were almost killed when a German bomb exploded in the street in front of the family home. The blast blew out all the windows and killed Sylvia's pet budgie, but the family were unharmed. In 1943 Jacques was eventually called up and posted to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He was classified as fit only for home service because he was found to be flat-footed, and spent the rest of the war working on the installation and repair of radios inside tanks. He ended the war with the rank of Acting Sergeant.

In 1946 Jacques was demobilised and returned to his former job with Ever Ready Ltd. The following year he purchased the family home at No. 3 Clifton Wood Road - 'Corazon' - from his aunt (Louise AUDCENT). This was the family home created fifty years earlier by his great-

grandfather Henri PINOT DE MOIRA. The house had almost been destroyed in the War by an incendiary bomb but fortunately the fire had burnt itself out unnoticed (and only later did Jacques discover the remains of the bomb and fire damage on the roof).

In 1952 Jacques left Every Ready Ltd, having decided to utilize the technical skills he had acquired in the army to set up his own radio and television servicing, sales and rental business. In the early 1950s television was an exciting new technology which offered excellent prospects for anyone with the necessary technical skills. The BBC began television broadcasting in the Bristol area in 1951 and television sets were at first considered an expensive luxury. Only 12% of British homes had a television when he started out in the business, but that figure had risen to over 95% by the time he retired.

The radio and television business was set up in a spare basement room (the old kitchen) at 'Corazon', and was named 'The Clifton Radio Repair Service' - a name which stuck even after the business moved to new premises in the village of Long Ashton, about 5 kilometres away. He diversified into the sale and repair of all types of electrical goods, and later into cycle and moped repair and sales, including Raleigh and BSA, Phillips bicycles and mopeds.

Although the business provided a reliable income it never generated large profits. Jacques's eldest son (Tony AUDCENT) joined the business for a time to finish his apprenticeship in radio and television engineering, and remained for a few years.

In 1976 Jacques suffered a major heart attack, forcing him to sell both the business in Long Ashton and the family home - 'Corazon' - in Bristol. Jacques and Sylvia then retired to a small bungalow in Watchet, near Minehead in Somerset, where they became active in the local community - joining constituency Conservative Association, helping to run the town's twinning association (with St Renan in Brittany) and helping at the local museum.

In 1980 Jacques accompanied his son (David AUDCENT) to France, to assist in researching the family history. Jacques died in 1984 at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton, aged of 72 years. Jacques is survived by the following children and descendants:

1. **Anthony (Tony) Edward AUDCENT.** Born in 1939 at Bristol (twin). Now retired, formerly a radio and television engineer. After leaving his father's business, he worked for Radio Rentals Ltd and then joined the Home Office, where he repaired and maintained police and fire service communications networks. At the time of writing (2014) he is the longest lived male recorded in the AUDCENT lineage for over three hundred years. In 1961 he married Valerie Anne KING and after her death he married Dymphna NORLEY. He had three children by his first wife:
 - a. **Geoffrey David AUDCENT,** BA (Hons). Born 1962 at Weston-super-Mare. Civil Servant in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Author of this family history. In 1987 he married Sandra RUSSELL and they have two sons:
 - i. **Joseph Richard AUDCENT,** BSc. Born 1989. Airside Safety and Compliance Officer at London Heathrow Airport.
 - ii. **Andrew Thomas AUDCENT.** Born 1992.
 - b. **Katherine Anne AUDCENT,** BSc. Born 1965 at Wells. In 1990 she married David Mark HANLON and has four children:
 - i. **Emma Louise HANLON.** Born 1992.
 - ii. **Samuel Mark HANLON.** Born 1994.
 - iii. **Jack William HANLON.** Born 1998.

- iv. **Chloe Anne HANLON**. Born 2000.
 - c. **Elizabeth Louise AUDCENT**, BA. Born 1968 at Cheddar. Teacher. In 1995 she married Mark VOICE, BSc, ACA, accountant for Imperial Tobacco Group PLC. They have three children:
 - i. **Eloise Anne VOICE**. Born 1996.
 - ii. **Ben Michael William VOICE**. Born 1998.
 - iii. **Matthew William VOICE**. Born 2001.
2. **David Bernard AUDCENT**. Born 1939 (twin). Now retired, formerly a Principal Officer in local government, and architect. Dedicated family historian for nearly 50 years. In 1965 he married Christine Jean KEELING. They have four children:
- a. **Justin David AUDCENT**, BA (Oxon), ACA. Born 1967. Accountant, Director and Partner of Ernst & Young, Head of Meyrick Webster Corporate Finance, Melbourne. In 1994 he married Fiona MacDonald ROSS, ACA. They emigrated to Australia in October 2002 and settled in Melbourne, and later moved to Perth.
 - i. **Robert John AUDCENT**. Born 2001.
 - ii. **James Ross AUDCENT**. Born 1999.
 - b. **Jonathan Mark AUDCENT**, HND(Blg). Born 1968. Employment Consultant and Manager for Pro Choice, Nottingham. In 1996 (Eire) he married Ita Edelle O'CONNELL. They have :
 - i. **Daniel Peter AUDCENT**. Born 1998.
 - ii. **Jamie Mark AUDCENT**. Born 2003.
 - c. **Alexa Christine AUDCENT**. Born 1971. Former Credit Controller (up to 1998), Young Electronics of High Wycombe, member AAT . In 1994 she married Bryan David ANDERSON and had issue:
 - i. **Joseph (Joe) William ANDERSON**. Born 1997
 - ii. **William Stanley ANDERSON**. Born 1999.
 - iii. **Thomas (Tom) Harry ANDERSON**. Born 2003.
 - d. **Martin Richard AUDCENT**, BA, ACA. Born 1973. Former Manager, Price Waterhouse, Manchester. In 1998 he married Catherine Anne MOORE, LLB. They have issue of:
 - i. **Matthew Alexander AUDCENT**. Born 2000.
 - ii. **Elise Christine AUDCENT**. Born 2003.
3. **Paul Jacques AUDCENT**. Born 1941 in Bristol. Now retired, formerly a purchasing officer, Computer Manager, Business Analyst, Project Manager and Teacher. He married firstly, in 1969, Christine REID (divorced), secondly, in 1988, Cherie MARTIN (divorced). Of his first marriage he had two children:
- a. **Simon Marc AUDCENT**. Born 1972.
 - b. **Julie Anne Louise AUDCENT**. Born 1974 She married firstly, in 1995, Adrian WILLIAMS (divorced 2002) and secondly, in 2005, Peter JAMES (divorced). Of her first marriage she had two children:
 - i. **Andrew Kevin WILLIAMS**. Born 1994.
 - ii. **Jacob Daniel WILLIAMS**. Born 1997.
4. **Jeannine Louise AUDCENT**. Born 1947 at Bristol. Now retired, formerly an Assistant Librarian with Bristol City Council. Civil Servant in the Ministry of Defence.

III - BERNARD AUDCENT (1918 - 1968)



The third and youngest son, **Bernard Henry Robert AUDCENT**, was born in 1918 at Bristol. He was educated at Prior Park College, near Bath, where his father and grandfather had both previously been schoolmasters. Initially drawn towards a vocation as a Franciscan monk he transferred to St Bernadine's College in Buckingham to prepare for a life in holy orders. However, he left when he lost his vocation and in 1934 decided instead to enlist in the Royal Air Force (RAF) where he remained for 14 years, rising to the rank of Warrant Officer and serving in Iraq, France, Holland, Belgium and Germany. In 1942 he was married at Bristol to Martha Thompson ("Mattie") CONNELL. She had converted to Catholicism.

Mattie's father refused to attend the wedding because of his strong Protestant views but Mattie's sister Chryss was allowed to attend as bridesmaid.

During the Second World War Bernard's RAF career focused on administrative and personnel roles in setting up and maintaining airfields in France, Belgium and Germany from 1943 to 1945. Between 1946 to 1948 he was stationed with the Occupation Forces in Germany where Mattie and their two young children joined him. Bernard had always wanted to become a pilot but by the time the opportunity came to enter pilot training in 1947 Bernard felt that it was too late and at the age of 30 he left the RAF.

On leaving the RAF in 1948 Bernard and Mattie settled in Edinburgh, Mattie's home town. In a short time religious differences were forgotten and Bernard and his father-in-law Jimmy CONNELL became very close friends. Bernard pursued a succession of jobs, working for the Herring Board, as a photographer, running a mobile shop and even working as a mushroom grower. However none of them proved to be very lucrative and Mattie also worked full time in a department store. In his early forties Bernard enrolled at college to study rubber technology which led to a position as a Production Manager with the Dunlop Rubber Company, at Edinburgh and then in Manchester.

Bernard was still working for Dunlop when he became ill in 1967. He was diagnosed with cancer, and died on 16 March 1968 at Chadderton, aged just 50.

Mattie eventually migrated to Australia and lived near her son Michael in Sydney. She died from cancer on 9 March 1989.

Bernard survived by the following children and descendants:

1. **Michael Geoffrey AUDCENT**. Born 14 June 1943. Now retired. Began as a television engineer and later TV video tape editor. In 1978 he moved to the production side of broadcast television and became an Executive Producer in Sport and later Australian Manager of Network 10 Sport. On 23 August 1969 he married Marion Rita LINCOLN in Manchester and had issue of just one daughter:
 - a. **Caroline Janet AUDCENT**. Born 24 January 1971 in Edinburgh, Scotland. She also works in the television industry, maintaining a family link to the industry

dating back to the early 1950s. Caroline is TV Production Supervisor for Beyond Productions, an Australian-based producer and distributor of television content. In 2011 she was married (at Sydney, Australia) to Michael STEINBERG.

2. **Jean Moira AUDCENT**. Born January 22, 1945. In 1965 she married Brian Andrew WEDDELL, designer and project engineer for Blenkhorn-Sayers, St Catherines, Ontario, (divorced), of which marriage just one daughter
 - a. **Michelle Deborah WEDDELL**. Born 1968, of whom one son:
 - i. **Tristan WEDDELL**. Born 1989.



Audcent family gathering Downton, England

Rear Row:

Andrew Audcent, Elizabeth Voice née Audcent, Mark Voice, Alexa Anderson née Audcent,
 Bryan Anderson, Catherine Audcent née Moore,
 Martin Audcent, David Hanlon, Katherine Hanlon née Audcent, Sandra Audcent née Russell,
 Geoffrey Audcent, Joseph Audcent, Emma Hanlon

Middle Row:

Serina (friend of Jeannine Audcent), Margaret Vincent née Windsor, Langford Vincent,
 Helen Vincent, David Audcent

Front Row:

Christine Audcent née Keeling and her mother Florence Keeling née Line, Dympna Audcent
 formerly Norley, Anthony Audcent, Mary Pinot de Moira née Pegler, Peter Pinot de Moira,
 Jeannine Audcent

Sitting on Grass:

Tom Anderson, with elder brother Joe behind, William Anderson, Matthew Audcent,
 Ellie Audcent, Samuel Hanlon, Ben Voice, Matthew Voice, Ellie Voice, Chloe Hanlon,
 Jack Hanlon

5. Henri Pinot de Moira - Doyen of the family in England (1820-1909)



Henri PINOT DE MOIRA - full name Hippolyte Henry PINOT DE MOIRA - was born in the town of Saint-Junien, département de la Haute-Vienne, in 1820. As the son of Paul Henri PINOT DE MOIRA and his wife Marie Jeanne Felicité DE VILESTIVAUD DE LAPEYROUSE, he came from a respectable bourgeois family whose ancestors had been lawyers, administrators and tax collectors in the Limousin for generations. At the time of his birth his father was running the family's cloth manufacturing business but, when that encountered difficulties, around 1823 his father moved the family to Montauban and then Rouen, in pursuit of a career as a Commissaire de Police. Henri was therefore educated in Rouen before winning a place at the École de Droit de Paris, the most prestigious law school in France.

Henri first became acquainted with the AUDCENT family as a fourteen-year-old scholar in 1835, when his elder sister married Prosper AUDCENT. It was the printing industry that brought the PINOT DE MOIRA and AUDCENT families together, because the PINOT DE MOIRA family were proprietors of a lithographic printing workshop in Rouen whilst the AUDCENT family were skilled lithographic printers (it is also interesting to note that both families' involvement with lithography was preceded by involvement in the textiles industry). Henri was closely associated with the AUDCENT family throughout his life, eventually taking responsibility for bringing up his three orphaned AUDCENT grandchildren.

After university Henri was called to the bar in 1839 and began training as a barrister, first in Paris and later in Limoges. However, after four years he gave this up to train as a solicitor (*notaire*) - which was only the first of many abrupt changes in his life. In 1846 Henri purchased his own legal practice in the town of Lillebonne (Normandy). Much of the day-to-day work of a solicitor could be repetitive or trivial, and not without reason did the writer Balzac observe that notaires "become boring through being bored." Henri became the Mayor of Lillebonne, in 1851, which perhaps alleviated some of the monotony.

In 1846 he married H  l  ne DE ST OUEN D'ERNEMONT at Rosay, near Bellencombre in Normandy. She was descended from an ancient and illustrious noble family, and this encouraged Henri to investigate his own origins. An impressive genealogy was produced which traced his alleged descent from a noble family in the Auvergne, bestowing on him the noble title of "Comte de Rochepaule". However, this genealogy was almost entirely fabricated and there was no legal or historical justification for his use of a noble title.

In 1855 Henri stepped down as Mayor and sold his legal practice in order to emigrate to North Africa as a French colonist in Algeria. He settled in the small town of Blida in the shadow of the Atlas Mountains, probably attracted to Algeria by the money to be made in conducting the legal work involved in transferring ownership of land from the local Muslim tribes to the French settlers. It seems he was one of the many lawyers, property speculators, middlemen, money-lenders and rogues who flood into Algeria during the 1850s hoping to make their fortunes. Initially all went well, with Henri's sister (Fany PINOT DE MOIRA, the estranged wife of Prosper AUDCENT) even encouraged to join Henri in Algeria. However, he soon returned home to France (before his sister could join him).

The time spent in Algeria certainly seems to have had a transformative effect on Henri, and not in a positive way. It upset his moral compass - before emigrating to Algeria he had been a pillar of the local community but over the subsequent seven years he engaged in a succession of unscrupulous property deals and unethical business practices, some of them clearly criminal.

On returning to France in 1857 Henri settled in Paris and set up in business as a financier, shipper and investment banker. However, he had little commercial acumen and ran into difficulties, resorting to a series of ever-more desperate and reckless money-making ventures and scams. His career as a Parisian banker lasted only three years and ended in disaster when he received a two-year prison sentence for embezzlement in 1860 (to be followed by a further three-year sentence for fraud in 1864).

Evidence has been found of Henri's involvement with four serious financial scandals, and in total his victims lost several millions of francs. The scandals were:

- the Domaine de Cerneck scandal of 1857 (when Henri was accused of pretending to be an impartial negotiator in the sale of a valuable estate in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, although in reality he was colluding with the purchasers to acquire the estate at a greatly reduced price. Having acquired the estate he then colluded in over-valuing it in order to attract investors);
- the 'Kaulla contre Pinot de Moira' court case of 1858 (when it appears that Henri altered a bill of exchange to try and avoid repaying a debt - but he lost the court case);
- the 'Pious Speculator' scam in 1859 (when Henri was found guilty of embezzling 70,000 francs that had been entrusted to him by a wealthy widow he had befriended); and
- the Ch  teau de Margery fraud of 1863 (when he was found guilty defrauding an elderly Belgian aristocrat).

In 1859 Henri renewed his acquaintance with his brother-in-law, Prosper AUDCENT, after Prosper was rescued from the poorhouse and returned to live in Paris. The fact that Prosper was an invalid did not prevent Henri getting him to counter-sign a promissory note for 70,000 francs in an effort to conceal his embezzlement of a wealthy widow's fortune. Henri was prosecuted and

sentenced to two years in prison for embezzlement (the court case was even reported in England, with Henri dubbed the 'Pious Speculator' by the British press).

Henri was probably released from prison in Spring 1862, and soon embarked on another money-making scheme. He collaborated with his nephew (Arthur AUDCENT) on a project to develop a new naval communication system. They designed a telegraphic lamp (*phare telegraphique*), made of copper and containing six candles, to facilitate communication between ships at night. The design was submitted to the French Admiralty around 1863, but does not appear to have been pursued.

Around March 1863 Henri left France for Belgium. Now in his forties, he was newly released from prison and professionally disgraced, but with a wife and nine children to support. On arrival in Belgium he settled in the town of Louvain, where he ingratiated himself with the local Dominican friars and was entrusted to lead a project to establish a Catholic lay community on a nearby farm. Henri persuaded a wealthy Belgian aristocrat (Baron Emmanuel-François COPPENS D'ECKENBRUGGE) to donate a farm for the project, which Henri rather grandly named the "Château de Magery".

All appeared to go well until September 1863 when Henri was suddenly arrested by the Belgian police, thrown into prison (again), and prosecuted on charges of fraud and deception. It was alleged that he had befriended and defrauded the gullible, but wealthy and pious, aristocrat using various forms of trickery. The trial concluded in December 1863 with Henri clearing his name, but any celebrations on being released from custody were short-lived, because an appeal was immediately lodged by the director of public prosecutions. The outcome of the appeal was announced in March 1864 and this time Henri was not so lucky - the original verdict was overturned and he was found guilty of fraud and deception. The Belgian court also declared Henri's use of the noble title of "Comte de Rochepaule" to be false and contrary to French law.

Henri was sentenced to three years imprisonment, with a fine of 100 Belgian francs, and ordered to pay half of the prosecution costs. The court also ordered him to be placed under police surveillance for three years following release from prison. However, in that same year - 1864 - Henri suddenly reappeared in England, so it can only be assumed he escaped from Belgium before the authorities had a chance to re-arrest him, and then fled to England as a fugitive from justice.

It is by no means an exaggeration to say that by 1864 Henri had gained a reputation as a high-society and international fraudster, swindler and confidence-trickster. Despite all the evidence he still maintained his innocence, blaming his predicament on the most calumnious and wicked machinations of a set of Liberals and Freemasons. There is no doubt that he was implacably opposed to liberalism, republicanism and anti-clericalism, but there is only limited evidence to support his claim that he was the victim of a conspiracy.

The PINOT DE MOIRA family had a long history of loyalty to the BOURBON royal family, and Henri followed family tradition with his staunch royalist views. He was a 'Legitimist' who supported the restoration of the senior branch of the BOURBON royal family (in preference to the Orléanist and BONAPARTE claimants). In 1865 he even visited the Comte de Chambord (the Bourbon claimant to the throne) at Castle Frohsdorf in Austria.

Henri's previous attempts to settle abroad - in Algeria and Belgium - had both ended badly but his decision to emigrate to England opened up a whole new chapter in his life. The year 1864 was a turning point for Henri, and ushered in the start of the second - and much happier - half of

his life. Henri first settled in Taunton, where he lived from 1865 until he moved to Bristol in 1887.

Henri lived an active life in Taunton and Bristol from the mid-1860s, attracting a wide circle of friends from amongst the local gentry and professional classes. In Victorian England a knowledge of French language, literature, fashion, wine and cuisine was considered a true mark of a lady or gentleman, and Henri was well placed to capitalise on the English fascination with all things French.

By March 1865 - within just twelve months of his conviction for fraud in the Belgian courts - Henri was already offering language lessons in England, and a short time afterwards he announced in *The Taunton Courier* that he was opening a French class for young gentlemen. The newspaper adverts at the time described him as a professor of the French, Italian and Spanish languages.

In 1868 Henri secured a position on the teaching staff of Weir Field House School near Taunton, a small private secondary school that prepared boys for entrance to the universities and army. During the early 1870s he wrote and published a 24 page textbook of *French verb tables*, which went through at least seven reprints between 1873 and 1893.

Whilst living in Taunton he was a keen angler. Several of his most impressive catches were reported in the local press including a jack fish weighing 12 lbs in 1868, and a pike of 24 lbs in 1881.

In 1879, after fifteen years in exile, Henri applied for naturalisation as a British subject. He had been so successful in concealing his criminal past that the Mayor of Taunton supported the application, commenting that "I personally know this applicant and his referees, and can vouch for their respectability and integrity."

In 1887 Henri and his wife moved to Bristol, so that they could live together with their daughters and three orphaned AUDCENT grandchildren. The family initially rented, and then purchased, a large property at No. 3 Clifton Wood Road, which they called "Corazon Villa".

Henri was 66 years old when he moved to Bristol, where he continued to offer language tuition and energetically pursue all manner of interests. During the 1890s he gave public lectures on French literature and theatre, proving himself to be a witty and accomplished public speaker. One of his lectures was so popular that more than 200 people had to be refused admission.

Henri became a highly respected member of Clifton society. He was an active member of the Bristol and Clifton Philosophic & Literary Club and sat on the committee of the Bristol & Clifton Chess Club (which was the "only chess club in Bristol with the electric light"). In 1887 he was one of the dignitaries at the consecration of the new Catholic church in Clevedon, Somerset. In 1899 he led a group of amateur astronomers in mounting a watch, over three nights, for the Leonid meteorite shower, and that same year he attended the annual meeting of the Bristol Humane Society (which was campaigning for swimming lessons in local schools).

In 1889 Henri returned to France, perhaps for the last time, as a delegate to the International Congress of Primary Education (*Congrès international de l'enseignement primaire*) in Paris. Held as part of the Paris Exposition of 1889, and with over 1,500 delegates, this was the largest educational conference ever held up to that date. Although Henri knew Paris well, the city skyline had changed. It was now dominated by a new landmark in the shape of an iron lattice

tower. The Eiffel Tower was built for the Paris Exposition, and opened only three months earlier. Given Henri's fascination with science and technology, he was very probably amongst the first visitors to make use of the tower's steam-powered elevators.

During the 1890s Henri wrote a monthly column for his local newspaper, *The Clifton Chronicle* in the form of letters supposedly from a correspondent in Paris named "de Rochepaule". The column was written in French and the topics ranged from the development of submarines, the potential benefits of electricity in agriculture, the introduction of electric tramways and the merits of building a channel tunnel between France and England, as well as political issues of the day such as the threat posed by anarchists and the notorious Dreyfus Affair (with Henri expressing strongly 'anti-Dreyfusard' opinions).

The newspaper column revealed that Henri was socially conservative and politically right wing, but also something of a scientific visionary in his old age. In fact he did not just write about the technological marvels of the modern age, but took active steps of his own to experiment with, and promote, new technologies. He remained a true polymath into advanced old age.

Henri spent a lot of time in his large garden. However, he was not one to potter around growing the odd vegetable for the kitchen table. Instead he used the garden to conduct scientific trials on the use of new methods of cultivation, mostly developed by horticultural scientists in France. He obtained "most excellent and satisfactory results" by applying a technique called "annual incision" to his grape vines, using a specially designed sap knife (purchased by mail order from a supplier in France). However, his most innovative experiments were in the application of electricity to aid plant growth - a field of science named "electro-culture".

Henri's primary interest was in a branch of electro-culture that involved conducting electricity from the atmosphere by means of a conductor (called a *géomagnétifère*) and applying it to plant roots via a network of wires buried in the soil. There was no scientific consensus on whether, or how, this assisted plant growth but Henri followed the early experiments in France with great interest, and became the first person to apply the technique in Britain.

Between 1898 and 1901 he carried out his own trials in the back garden of Corazon Villa. He was now an old man of eighty-years-old and was probably assisted by his grandson (Henri AUDCENT), who was living with him at the time, and who received a botanical research bursary from University College Bristol in 1898.

Henri applied atmospheric electricity to a range of crops including potatoes, tomatoes, beans, peas, cauliflowers, asparagus and celery, as well as his grape vines and fig trees. The results were impressive, sometimes producing an increased yield of up to fifty percent. He also championed the benefits of electro-culture in the press, and reports of his work appeared in scientific journals published in Britain, France, Italy, Germany, South Africa and the United States. Indeed, not since his convictions for fraud and embezzlement forty years earlier had his name appeared so widely in print !

In 1898 Henri's work was presented to the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (which that year was held in Bristol). The annual meetings brought together the country's scientific elite, and during the 1890s a number of major scientific advances were announced at the meetings - including the first demonstration of a wireless transmission in 1894, and the discovery of the electron in 1899. Unfortunately, Henri's work on electro-culture was not received with the same rapture as the wireless or electron. The renowned Lord Kelvin (one of the great scientists of the Victorian age) was especially sceptical, making

several disparaging but witty comments on Henri's work that generated laughter amongst the audience. However, Lord Kelvin and several other eminent scientists did visit Henri's garden to view the results for themselves, and when the proceedings of the annual meeting were published, Henri was praised for being "an excellent amateur gardener as well as a careful experimenter".

Henri was clearly annoyed at the way his work had been ridiculed by such an eminent scientist, and he quickly put pen to paper to refute the criticisms. In a letter to the local press he pointed out that even the most learned scientists were sometimes proved wrong, as demonstrated by the fact that railways and steamships had once been rejected as impossible dreams. Henri's rebuke was directly aimed at Lord Kelvin, who Henri clearly thought lacked vision despite his eminence. In fact Henri's assessment of this great Victorian scientist was vindicated just four years later, when the elderly Lord Kelvin rashly predicted that "no balloon and no aeroplane will ever be practically successful."

Henri's network of copper wires remained buried in the back garden of Corazon Villa for the next fifty years, until eventually pulled up by his great-grandson (Jacques AUDCENT). However, scientific interest in electro-culture continued to grow, and the British Board of Agriculture established a committee to look into it between 1918 and 1936. The mass of results achieved then, and during the 1960s and 1970s, suggest that the growth increases seen by the early electro-culturists were real.

By 1901 Henri had finally retired from teaching and was described in the census returns as a "retired professor". He lived on to the grand old age of 88 years, and died at his home in Bristol in 1909, following a short illness. The death certificate gave the cause of death as senile decay and septic laryngitis, whilst his obituary referred to his "innate kindliness, geniality, and urbanity".

Henri is buried in the family grave alongside his daughter (Blanche PINOT DE MOIRA) and his nephew-son-in-law (Arthur AUDCENT) at Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery, Arnos Vale, Bristol.

During the 1840s and 1850s Henri had nine children, all of whom were born at Lillebonne or Paris. Two of his children died young but three sons survived into adulthood and married. The eldest two sons left England and emigrated to Brazil where their descendants continue to live to this day (although the male line there has died out). The youngest son remained in England and is the ancestor of all present-day holders of the PINOT DE MOIRA surname.

6. Descent from the kings of England and France

All members of the AUDCENT family can claim direct descent from the Saxon, Norman and Plantagenet kings of England, the Capétien kings of France, and numerous other ruling families of the early Middle Ages.

Distant-great-grandfathers include eight kings of England: Edgar the Peaceful, Æthelred II the Unready, Edmund II Ironside, William the Conqueror, Henry I, Henry II, John and Henry III. Other direct ancestors include the French kings Hugues Capet, Robert II, Henri I, Philippe I, Louis VI and Louis VII; Æthelwulf and his son, Alfred the Great, who were kings of Wessex; the Scottish kings Donald II and Malcolm I; the Holy Roman Emperor Charles the Great ('Charlemagne'); and Baldwin II and Faulk, who were crusader kings of Jerusalem.

Distant-great-grandmothers include Saint Margaret of Scotland (canonised by Pope Innocent IV in 1250) and Eleanor of Aquitaine (one of the most powerful women in Europe during the Middle Ages, who was Duchess of Aquitaine in her own right and then queen of France and queen of England).

There appear to be royal descents through multiple lines, two of them via through the PINOT DE MOIRA family and one via the BEAUGENDRE family. However, the PINOT DE MOIRA lines are considered less reliable - one is best described as an 'alleged' descent (as some of the documentation has been lost) and the other as 'probable' (as it depends on several assumptions), and neither of them is supported by documentation that explicitly links each generation in the lineage to the next.

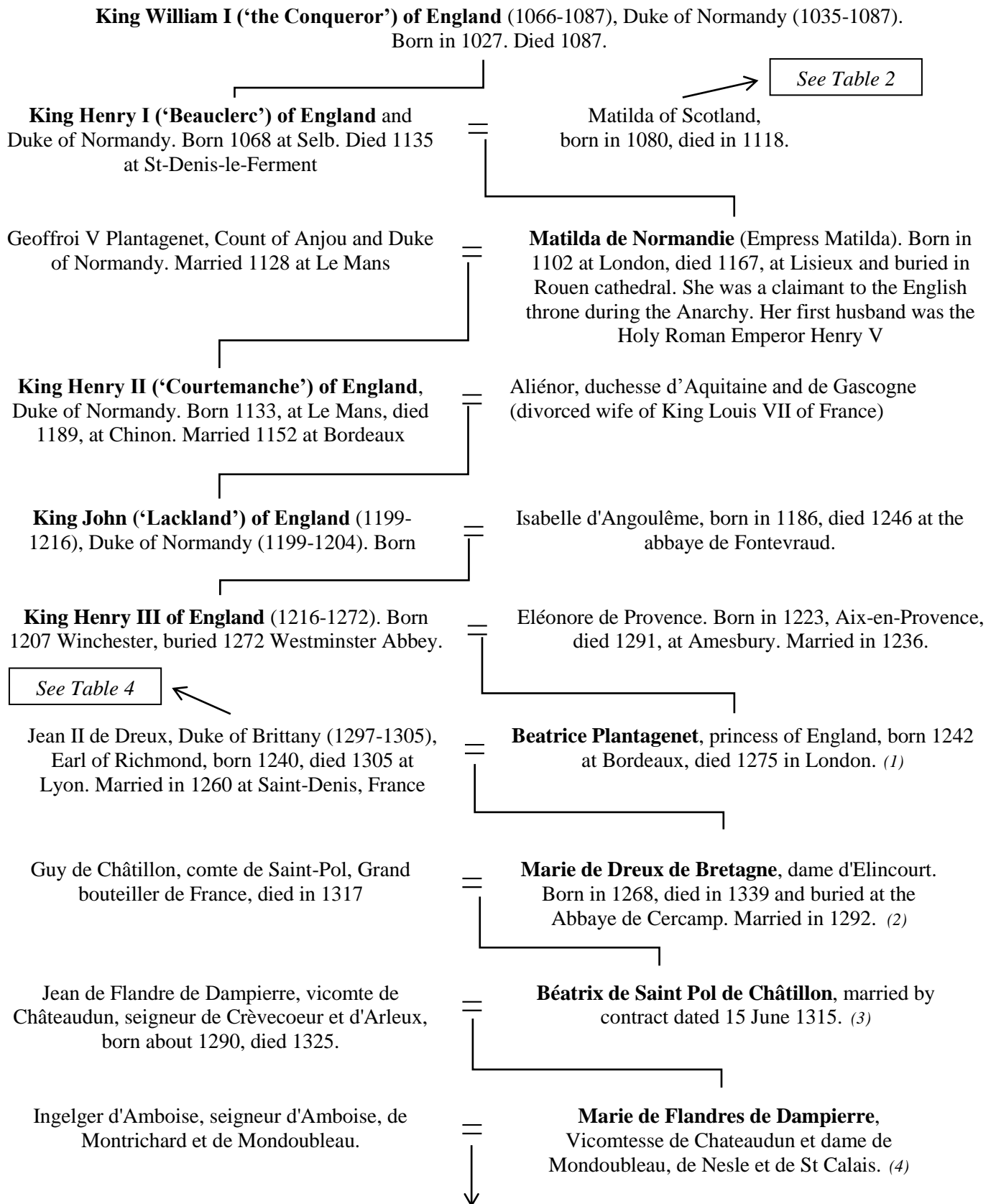
For a more robust royal descent it is necessary to look elsewhere, via descent from the BEAUGENDRE family, as shown in *Table 1*. Recent research, in 2015, has established an unbroken documented lineage, generation by generation, from Henri AUDCENT back to his great-grandmother, Louise Victoire BEAUGENDRE, and from her back through an illiterate farm labourer to a minor noble family, then to the higher aristocracy and finally to royalty. The paper trail explicitly identifies each person in the lineage as the offspring of their father or mother, thereby creating a documented and unbroken royal descent.

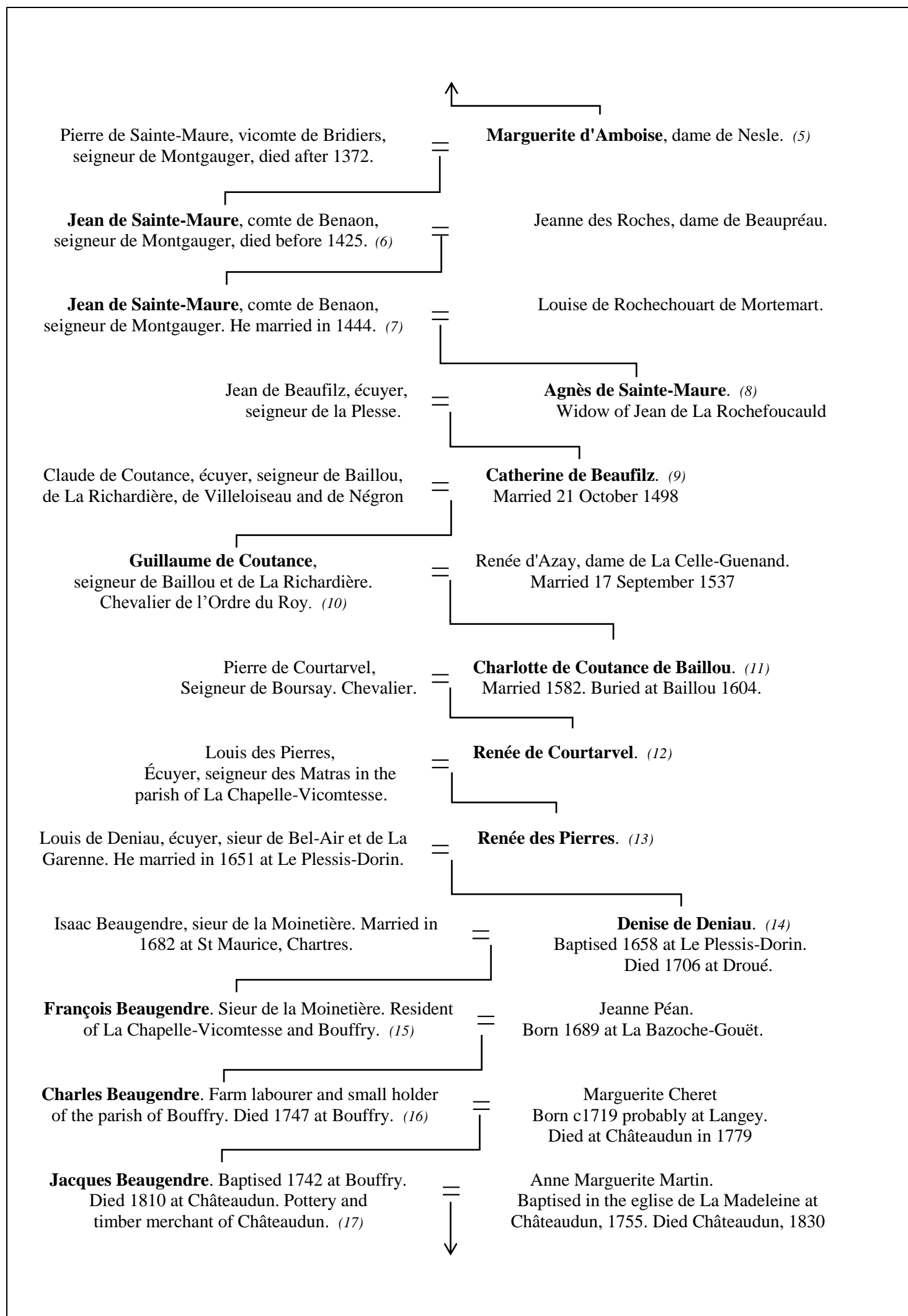
It is possible to trace the family's documented ancestry even further back into the Dark Ages - see *Tables 2 and 4* - and then into the realms of the Old Testament, folk law and myth. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* traces the ancestry of Alfred the Great to the Saxon god Woden, the biblical Noah and ultimately to Adam and Eve, as shown in *Table 3*. Various genealogies of Alfred the Great were written during his lifetime, which differ in their detail, and which are clearly fictional in part. However, if the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* were to be believed, then Henri AUDCENT would be the seventy-four-times-great-grandson of Adam and Eve.

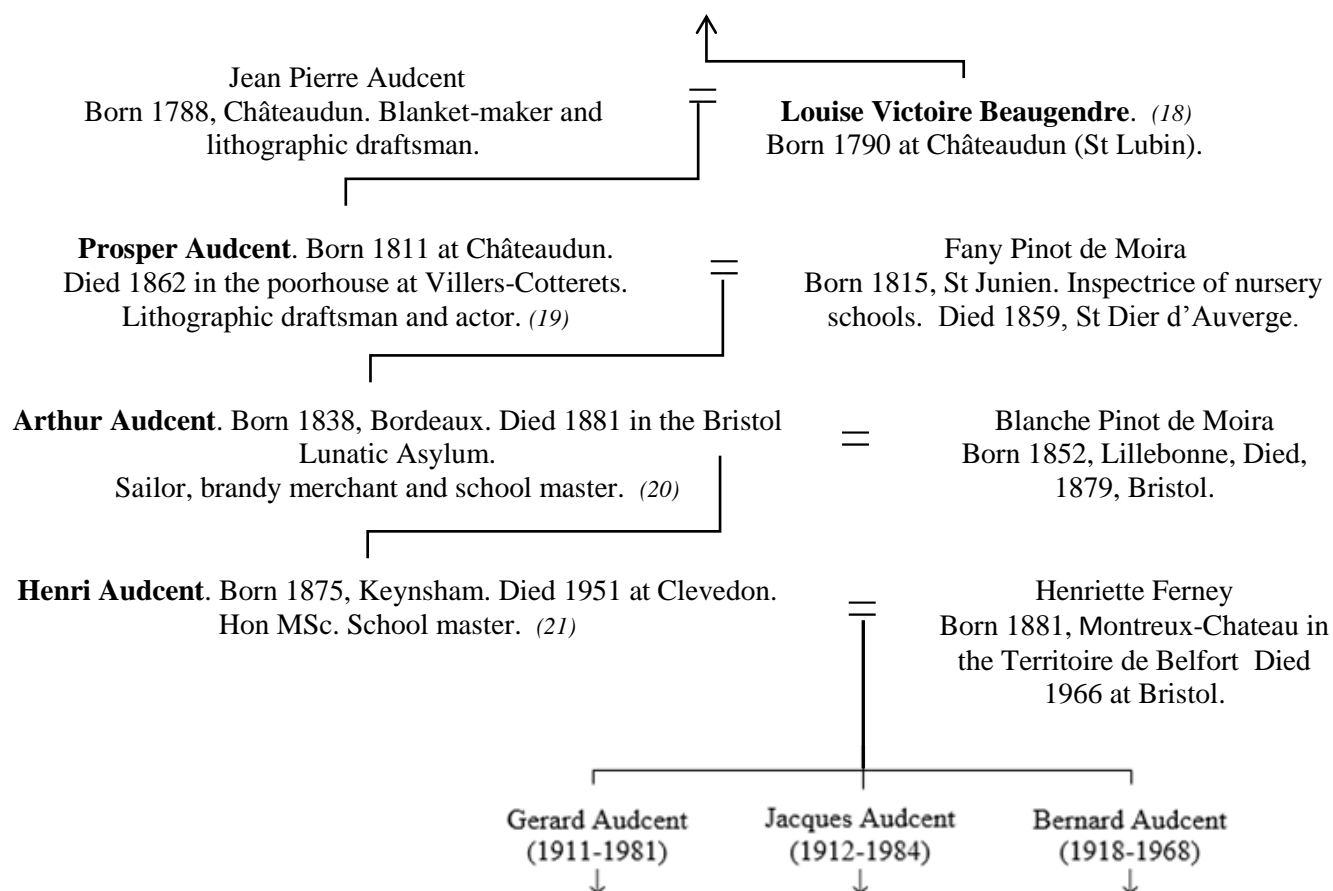
The BEAUGENDRE royal descent has been verified against authentic sources back to the sixteenth century, but for earlier generations it has been necessary to rely on various genealogies published between 1628 and 1848. A word of caution is therefore required, since the obsession with genealogy and lineage during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries led to the publication of a plethora of genealogical works, some of which were compiled in a less than scrupulous way, often reflecting the ambitions of newly ennobled or prosperous families to graft

themselves onto some older noble pedigree or to embellish their history or status. These works have reproduced half-truths or laid false trails which can be difficult to untangle, especially as they sometimes utilised information supplied by the families themselves, which - whilst not necessarily wrong - cannot be verified today against authentic sources, as those sources no longer survive.

Table 1 - Documented lineage to William the Conqueror







Sources

- (1) The father of **Beatrice Plantagenet**, and the preceding generations in the lineage, are according to E. B. Fryde et al, in *Handbook of British Chronology*, Cambridge University Press (1996).
- (2) The mother of **Marie de Dreux de Bretagne** is named by Henri-Philippe de Limiers in *Annales de la Monarchie Française* (1724), pages 216-21; and by Louis Moréri et al in *Le grand dictionnaire historique, ou le mélange curieux de l'histoire sacrée et profane. Nouv. ed. dans laquelle on a refondu les suppléments de (Claude-Pierre) Goujet* (1759), page 569.
- (3) The mother of **Béatrix de Saint Pol de Châtillon** is named by Sceuale and Louis de Sainte-Marthe in *Histoire genealogique de la maison de France*, Tome 1, Volume 2 (1628), page 900; and by Louis Moréri et al, *op. cit.* (1759), page 569.
- (4) The mother of **Marie de Flandres-Dampierre** is named by Sceuale and Louis de Sainte-Marthe, *op. cit.* (1628), page 900; followed by André Duchesne in *Histoire généalogique de la maison royale de Dreux etc*, (1631), page 140; and by François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye des Bois in *Dictionnaire généalogique, héraldique, chronologique et historique etc, tome deux* (1757), page 610.
- (5) The mother of **Marguerite d'Amboise** is named by Sceuale and Louis de Sainte-Marthe, *op. cit.* (1628), page 900; followed by André Duchesne *op. cit.* (1631), pages 139-140; followed by Père Anselme in *Le palais de l'honneur contenant les généalogies historiques des illustres maisons de Lorraine, de Savoye et de plusieurs familles nobles de France* (1664), page 670; Père Anselme in *Histoire de la Maison Royale de France, et des grands officiers de la Couronne* (1730) page 10; and by François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye des Bois, *op. cit.* (1757), page 610.
- (6) The mother of **Jean de Sainte-Maure** is named by Sceuale and Louis de Sainte-Marthe, *op. cit.* (1628), page 900; followed by Père Anselme, *op.cit.* (1664), page 670; and by Père Anselme, *op. cit.* (1730) page 10. Note: some genealogists (e.g. François Du Chesne in *Histoire Des Chanceliers Et Gardes Des Sceaux De France* (1680), page 305) suggest Jean was the son

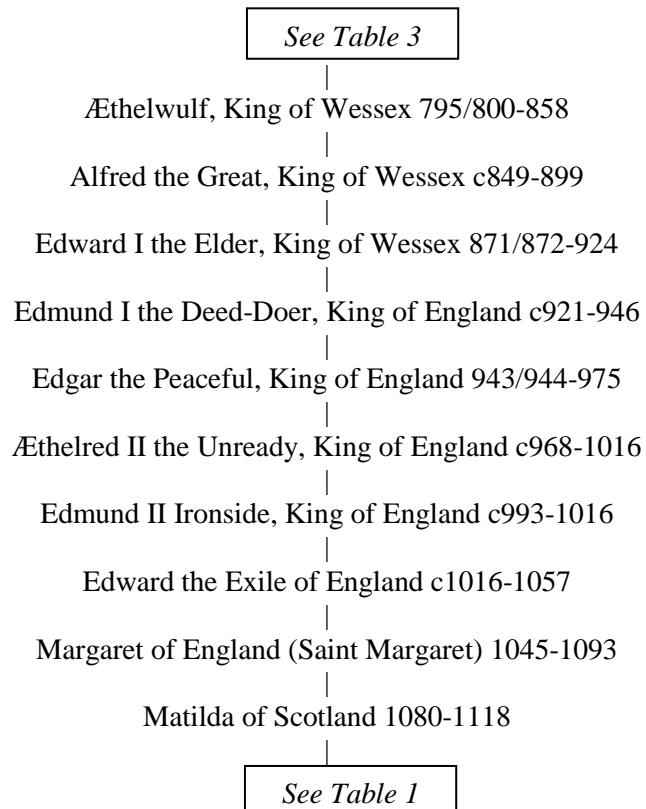
of Raoul de Sainte-Maure and grandson (rather than son) of Marguerite d'Amboise - this is rejected by most sources but even if correct the lineage to Henry III is preserved.

- (7) The father of **Jean de Sainte-Maure** is named by Sceuale and Louis de Sainte-Marthe, *op.cit.* (1628), page 900; followed by Père Anselme in *op. cit.* (1664), page 671; and by Père Anselme, *op.cit.* (1730), page 11.
- (8) The father of **Agnès de Sainte-Maure** is named by Père Anselme, *op. cit.* (1664), page 671; and by Père Anselme, *op.cit.* (1730), page 11. Her parents are also named by chanoine Hubert in his seventeenth century *Manuscripts de généalogie de l'Orléanais* (famille Beaufile, bibliothèque municipale d'Orléans reference E4264 ; vol. IV, f° 31).
- (9) The mother of **Catherine de Beaufile** is named by Jean-Baptiste L'Hermite de Soliers in *Histoire généalogique de la noblesse de Touraine* (1665), page 503 (de Coutance), who states that "Catherine Baufis, fille de Jean, Ecuyer, Seigneur de la Place, & de Dame Agnes de Sainte Maure, sa veufue" was married by contract dated 21 October 1498, to Claude de Coutance, Ecuyer, Seigneur de Baillou; followed by the abbé Desvignes in *Un Gouverneur de Vendôme*, in the Bulletin de la Société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire du Vendômois (1886), page 138; and by Marquis de Rochambeau in *Le Vendemois: Épigraphe and iconographie*, Volume 1 (1889), page 348. In several other works Catherine de Beaufile is merely referred to as "d'une famille noble du Vendômois". Note: If the date of marriage (in 1498) is correct then it would mean that she married nine years after the wedding of her neice, also called Catherine de Beaufile (who was daughter of Jean de Beaufile, chevalier de l'ordre du roi, seigneur de Villepion et Valony au bailliage d'Orléans, and Marguerite-Jeanne de Pathay). Her neice was married by contract passed in la châtellenie de Chateaudun on 1 July 1489 to Robert de Monthiers, chevalier, seigneur du Bosroger, de la Folie-Herbaut et de Bérengerville. Such an age discrepancy is possible if the elder Catherine was a younger child and/or if she was widow marrying for a second time.
- (10) The mother of **Guillaume de Coutance(s)** is named by Jean-Baptiste L'Hermite de Soliers, *op. cit.* (1665), page 503. Followed by François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye des Bois in *Dictionnaire généalogique, héraldique, chronologique et historique etc, tome V, second edition* (1772), page 267, and Marquis de Rochambeau *op.cit* (1889), page 348. Note: Jean-Baptiste L'Hermite de Soliers is considered to be one of the less scrupulous of seventeenth century genealogists, and his source is uncertain - possibly it was information provided by the family. In other works the mother of Guillaume de Coutances is identified merely as "Catherine de Beaufile, d'une famille noble du Vendômois".
- (11) The father of **Charlotte de Coutance(s) de Baillou** is named by Nicolas Viton de Saint Allais in *Nobiliare universel de France, etc*, tome 13 (1818), page 181 (de Courtarvel); followed by P Louis Lainé in *Archives généalogiques et historiques de la noblesse de France, etc*, Volume 8, (1843), page 31 (de Courtarvel); by François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye-Desbois, in *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, tome 6, troisième édition (1865), column 404; and by the Marquis de Rochambeau *op. cit.* (1889), page 353. Note: some earlier genealogists (namely, Louis Moreri in *Le grand dictionnaire historique ou Le mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane* (1759), page 208, and René Le Paige in *Dictionnaire topographique du Maine* (1777), page 411) fail to name her father, although they do refer to her as "Catherine de Coutances de Baillou" thus linking her to Guillaume de Coutances, who was the seigneur de Baillou. However, it can be deduced that her father was indeed Guillaume de Coutance from the marriage of Charlotte's great-grandson (Cesar de Courtarvel) to her great-great-neice (Marie de Coutances de Baillou) on 29 June 1688 at Valennes (Sarthe). Such a marriage was prohibited under church law without dispensation from Rome. Having a common descent from Guillaume de Coutances made them third cousins, and indeed this was stated as being their blood relationship in their acte de mariage (AD Sarthe, 1 MI 1023 R2, frames 17-18) and the 'bref de dispense du 4e degré de parente' (AD Sarthe, G369, folio 288). Both documents refer to them being related in the fourth degree of consanguinity, which equates exactly to them being third cousins. Dispensation for the marriage was duly granted by Rome, and it is interesting to note that a consequence of this marriage between third cousins was that the chateau and seigneurie of Baillou (which had belonged to the de Coutances family and their ancestors since at least the fourteenth century) passed to the de Courtarvel family in 1759 upon the death of Charlotte's 98

year-old great-great nephew (Hardouin de Coutance, who was last of the de Coutance line). The chateau is still owned by the descendants of the de Coutance and de Courtarvel families in 2015.

- (12) The mother of **Renée de Courtarvel** is named by Nicolas Viton de Saint Allais, *op. cit.* (1818), page 182; followed by P Louis Lainé, *op.cit.* (1843), page 31 (de Courtarvel).
- (13) The mother of **Renée des Pierres** is named as “Damoisellede Courtalvel” in her acte de mariage at Le Plessis-Dorin in 1651, but her mother’s first name is confirmed as “Renée” by *Inventaire sommaire des Archives départementales antérieures à 1790, Loir-et-Cher: archives civiles; Série E*, tome. 2, pages 532-3, which refers to her marriage contract, signed before Mathurin Guelot, tabellion de la baronnie de Montmirail. See also Nicolas Viton de Saint Allais, *op. cit.* (1818), page 182; P Louis Lainé, *op.cit.* (1843), page 31 (de Courtarvel); and Abbé Charles Métais in *Les Templiers en Eure-et-Loir* (Histoire et Cartulaire - Archives du diocèse de Chartres, VII) (1902), page 32, which each name Renée de Courtarvel as wife of Louis des Pierres.
- (14) The mother of **Denise de Deniau** is named in the record of her baptism in 1658 at Le Plessis-Dorin (Loir-et-Cher), and the record of her marriage in 1682 at Chartres (St Maurice).
- (15) The mother of **François Beaugendre** is named in the record of his marriage in 1707 at Saint-Agil (Loir-et-Cher).
- (16) The father of **Charles Beaugendre** is named in the record of his marriage at Boisgasson (Eure-et-Loir) in 1740. Note: the acte de mariage is missing from the register (collection de greffe) published on-line by the Archives départementales but is preserved in the registers that are still held at the Mairie de Boisgasson (and has been photographed by the Cercle de Recherches Généalogiques du Perche-Gouet).
- (17) The father of **Jacques Beaugendre** is named in the records of his baptism at Bouffry (Loir et Cher) in 1742, his marriage at Châteaudun (St Lubin) in 1774 and his death at Châteaudun in 1810.
- (18) The father of **Louise Victoire Beaugendre** is named in the records of her baptism at Châteaudun (St Lubin) in 1790, and marriage at Châteaudun in 1810.
- (19) The mother of **Prosper Audcent** is named in the record of his birth in 1811 at Châteaudun and marriage at Rouen in 1835.
- (20) The father of **Arthur Audcent** is named in the record of his birth in 1838 at Bordeaux and registration of his marriage (Taunton, 1874).
- (21) The father of **Henri Audcent** is named in the record of his birth in 1875 at Keynsham and registration of his marriage (Bristol 1910).

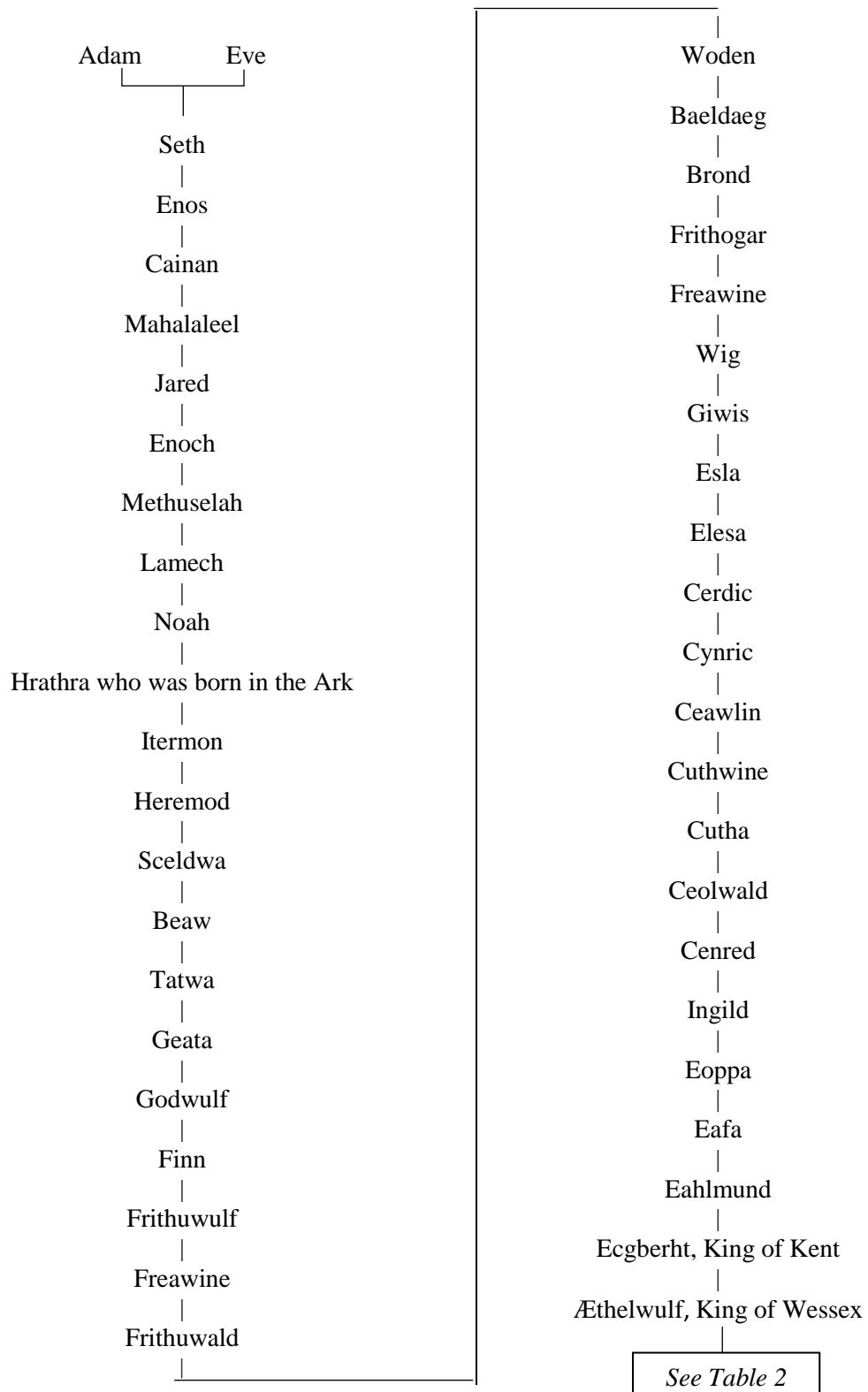
Table 2 - Lineage to King Æthelwulf of Wessex



Sources

From *The Saxon and Norman Kings* by Christopher Brooke (1963), tables 3 and 4. The above lineage follows the accepted genealogy of the royal house of Wessex. See also E. B. Fryde et al in *Handbook of British Chronology*, Cambridge University Press (1996).

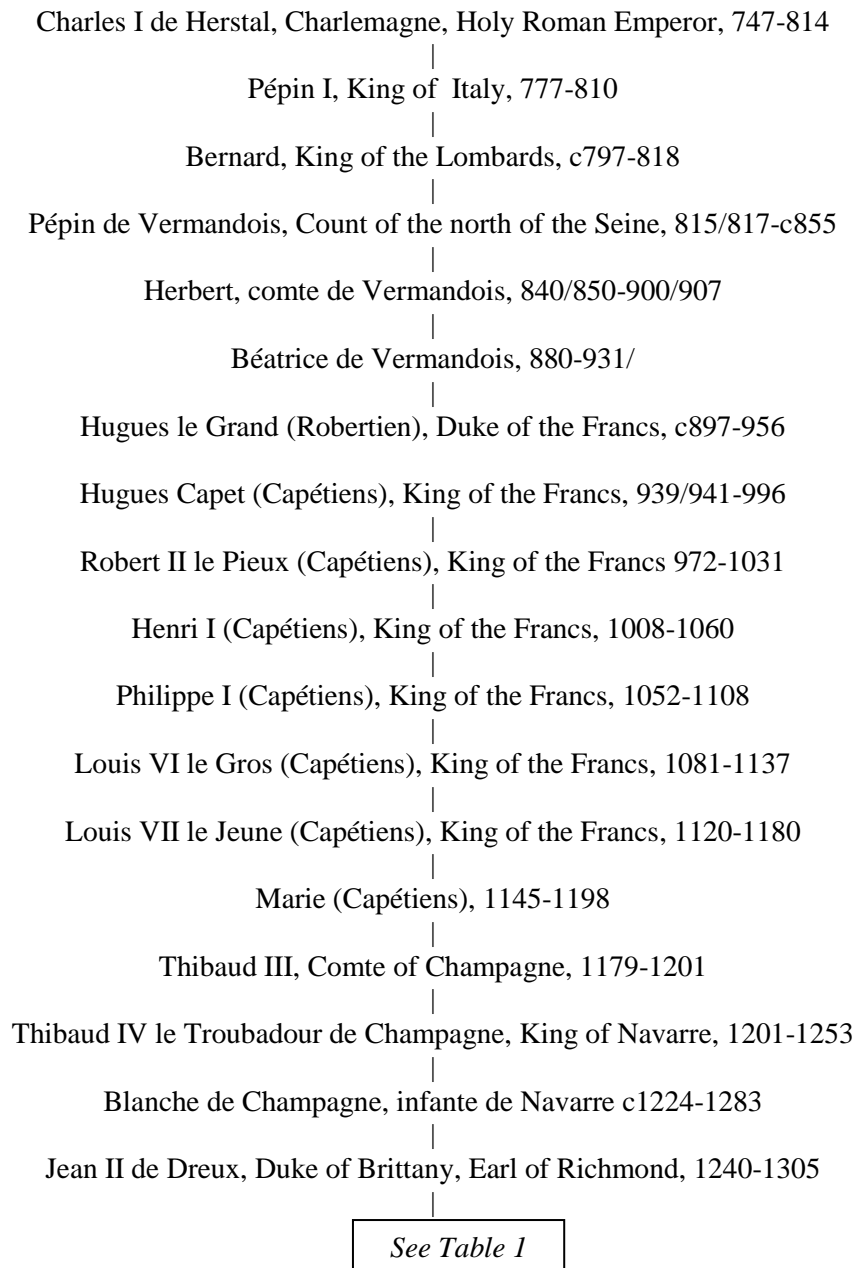
Table 3 – Mythical lineage back to Adam, the first man



Sources

Based on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, compiled in the reign of Alfred the Great - the Laud (Peterborough) Chronicle preserved in the Bodleian Library (MS. Laud 636, page 64). The names from Adam to Noah follow the genealogy in *St Luke's Gospel* 3:36-8, but there is no Biblical mention of Hrathra "who was born in the Ark". The genealogy is clearly mythical in large part, and includes a number of Saxon gods, such as Woden and Baeldaeg.

Table 4 - Lineage to Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor



7. Chronology

Jacques Hodsan (Deceased in 1699)

c1663	Married Perrine BADRAU (?-?)
1660s-70s	Two sons born
1699	Noted as a deceased merchant (<i>marchand</i>)

Jacques Haudsan (c1673-1718)

c1673	Born, place unknown
1699	Recorded as carpenter (<i>charpentier</i>)
c1706	Married Perrine NEAJEAN
1706-18	Five children born
1716	First described as a sawyer (<i>scieur de Long</i>).
1718	Died and buried at Châteaudun, aged 45 years

André Auxen (c1707-1755)

c1707	Born, possibly at Thiville
1733	Married Marie Oudin (1702-?) at Châteaudun
1733-51	Six children born at Châteaudun, but half died young
1838	First recorded as a day labourer (<i>journalier</i>)
1740	First recorded as an agricultural labourer (<i>garçon de labour</i>)
1742	First recorded as a vineyard worker (<i>vigneron</i>)
1742	Purchased small thatched cottage in rue Forâche, Châteaudun
1755	Died and buried at Châteaudun, aged 48 years

Jacques Audecent (1751-1814)

1751	Born at Châteaudun
1782	Married 'Marie' Francoise PITOU (1755-1821) at Châteaudun
1783-94	Seven children born at Châteaudun, but all died young except one son
1782	First recorded as a blanket-maker (<i>couverturier</i>)
1786	First recorded as a wool-comber (<i>cardeur en laine</i>)
1803-10	Inherited property in rue Forâche and purchased adjacent cottage from his sister, as well as three parcels of vineyard at Châteaudun
1814	Died at Châteaudun aged 63 years

Jean Pierre Audcent (1788- ?)

- 1788 Born at Châteaudun
- 1810 Married to Louise Victoire BEAUGENDRE (1790- ?) at Châteaudun
- 1810 Recorded as a wool worker (*ouvrier en laine*)
- 1811 Recorded as a blanket-maker (*couverturier*)
- 1811 One son born at Châteaudun
- 1821 Recorded as a blanket weaver (*tisseur au couverturier*) and resident in Paris
- 1821 Inherited and sold family home in rue Forâche and nearby parcels of vineyard
- 1831 Resident of rue de Bussi in Paris
- 1831 Recorded as printer (*imprimeur*)
- 1835 Resident of rue Dauphin in Paris
- 1835 Recorded as lithographic draftsman (*ecrivain-lithographe*)
- 1835 Present at son's wedding in Rouen - last known to be living

Prosper Audcent (1811-1862)

- 1811 Born at Châteaudun
- 1831 Lithographic draftsman (*ecrivain-lithographe*) in Paris
- 1835 Married to Fany PINOT DE MOIRA (1815-1859) in Rouen
- 1836-8 Resident at Rouen
- 1836-41 One son and two daughters born at Rouen, Bordeaux and Paris
- 1838 First recorded as a stage actor (*artiste dramatique*) and resident in Bordeaux.
- 1841 Resident again in Paris
- 1842 Appears at the théâtre des Batignolles in Paris
- 1846 Resident again in Bordeaux
- 1846-8 Emigrated to Spain, resident of Saragossa and Madrid
- 1847 Legally separated from his wife
- 1848 Financial and health problems, repatriation from Spain to Châteaudun at public expense
- 1852 Resident again in Paris
- 1852 Joins the Association des inventeurs et artistes industriels (a friendly society)
- 1853-5 Returns to the stage as an actor in the Théâtre du Palais-Royal, Paris
- 1855 Admitted to the poorhouse for Paris at Villers-Cotterets suffering from paralysis
- 1860 Leaves the poorhouse and returns again to live in Paris (faubourg Montmartre)
- 1860 Implicated in embezzlement of 70,000 francs by his brother-in-law
- 1861 Awarded small pension by the Association des inventeurs et artistes industriels
- 1861 Re-admitted to the poorhouse at Villers-Cotterets, still suffering from paralysis
- 1862 Died in the poorhouse at Villers-Cotterets, aged 50 years

Arthur Audcent (1838-1881)

- 1838 Born at Bordeaux
- 1853 Enrolled as a cabin-boy and apprentice sailor in the French navy
- 1856 Enlisted as a seaman in the French navy
- 1857 Recorded as *Quartier-mâitre* (equivalent to corporal)
- 1857 Put in irons and imprisoned for going absent without leave
- 1862 Promoted to *Sergent Fourrier de Première Classe*
- 1864 Demoted to *Corporal Fourrier* and imprisoned for reasons unknown
- c1866 Left French navy and emigrated to England to join Pinot de Moira relatives
- 1867-70 Resident of Bristol
- 1867-79 Ran business as a wine and brandy importer, and commission agent
- 1870-72 School master of French and Spanish at Prior Park College near Bath
- 1874 Married first cousin Blanche PINOT DE MOIRA (1852-1879) at Taunton
- 1875-78 Resident of Keynsham, Somerset
- 1875-78 One son and two daughters born at Keynsham and Bristol
- 1878-81 Resident again in Bristol, and member of the Dolphin Society (a local charitable body)
- 1879 Death of wife aged 27 years
- 1881 Admitted to the Bristol Lunatic Asylum
- 1881 Died in the asylum from “general paralysis of the insane” (syphilis) aged 42 years

Henri Audcent, Hon MSc (1875-1951)

- 1876 Born Keynsham, Somerset
- 1881 Orphaned at five-years-old and placed in the care of grandparents
- 1894 Entered University College Bristol on a free studentship funded by Bristol City council
- 1894 Awarded a John Stewart scholarship to continue studies at University College Bristol
- 1895 Embarks on a teaching career with first appointment at Hanley Castle Grammar School
- 1898 Break from teaching to undertake botanical research funded by a university bursary
- 1907-39 Teacher of French, Botany and Biology at Fairfield Secondary School in Bristol
- 1910 Married Henriette FERNEY (1881-1966) at Bristol
- 1911-18 Three sons born in Bristol
- 1917-50 Over 30 scientific papers and lists published
- 1932 Attended International Congress of Entomology in Paris
- 1938-9 Retired from teaching and moved to Clevedon
- 1939 Awarded Honorary Master of Science degree by the University of Bristol
- 1943-44 Clerk in the Ministry of Labour and National Service
- 1946 Elected Honorary Member of Bristol Naturalist’s Society
- 1951 Death at Clevedon, Somerset

8. The Meaning and history and of the Surname

At the time of writing, in 2014, the AUDCENT name is used by 35 individuals living in England, Canada and Australia. Present day members of the family also have the honour of sharing their name with three different species of insect! Each of these species was named in honour of Henri AUDCENT (1875-1951): They are a species of crane fly found in the Philippines named *Indotipula Audcentiana* in 1966, a bee-fly from Morocco named *Bombylius audcenti* (*Bombyliidae*) in 1984, and - closer to Henri's home in England - a species of leafminer fly from the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, which was named *Agromyza audcenti* (*Agromyzidae*) in 2004.

The derivation and meaning of the AUDCENT surname remains open to speculation. Three possible theories are advanced below, any one - or none - of which could be correct.

The first possible derivation was described in 1977 by Gerard AUDCENT, when he commented that:

“Typing the name AUDCENT, reminds methat “cent” in French names often came from the old “ceint” the root of many words like ceinture, enciente etc, suggesting the city walls, precinct etc. Not very helpful I’m afraid, particularly as we do not know how the name would be spelled, since the original ancestor couldn’t spell, and the name may just as easily have been Haudessant, or anything else”.

The second possible derivation comes from Albert DAUZAT, who in his ‘Dictionnaire Etymologique des Noms et Prenoms de France’, states that the names AUZANNEAU, AUZANNE and OZANNEAU, together with their equivalents and diminutive forms, such as AUZANNE and OZANNE, derive from the French translation of “Hosanna !” - the acclamation which accompanied the entry of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. This became a common Christian name in the Middle Ages, and was often given to a child born on Palm Sunday. Many European surnames developed from Christian names (e.g. ROBERTSON, JEFFERSON) and this could perhaps be the origin of the name AUDCENT, albeit with the pronunciation and spelling having been corrupted and modified over the centuries.

A third possible derivation, especially for a family originating in the vicinity of Châteaudun, is that the name could be derived from the Ozanne river. This river is a tributary of the Loir river and flows through a valley around 20 kilometres north of Châteaudun. The river may have given its name to a family living along its banks. Again, landscape features are known to have been a common origin for European surnames (e.g. LONGBOTTOM, TOWNSEND).

The earliest reference to the family name at Châteaudun occurred when Adam AUDESSON brought his son, also named Adam, to be baptised in the eglise de St Aignan on 15 June 1585. They could be distant ancestors of the modern AUDCENT family.

The AUDCENT surname in its modern form was first used with consistency by the family from the 1820s. In earlier generations the surname was spelt phonetically by the clergy when recording family baptisms, marriages or burials in the parish registers. On each occasion the priest would spell the name according to how it sounded to him, and consequently an individual's surname could be spelt entirely differently at their baptism, marriage and burial, and on other occasions throughout their life. This was not a problem for the individuals concerned, especially as they were illiterate, but it adds to the challenge faced by modern

genealogists. The spelling only became relevant and more consistent when members of the family learnt to read and write.

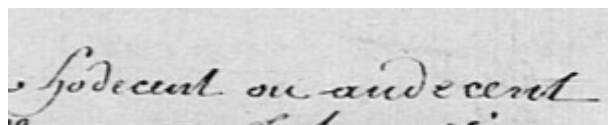
In this family history it has been decided to spell surnames according to the spelling adopted by the individuals themselves when signing their signature. Where that is not possible, for example because of illiteracy, the spelling from their burial record has been used.

Although the family spelt their name as 'Audcent' from the 1820s, public officials whose job it was to record births, marriages and deaths, continued to insist on spelling the name as 'Audecent' up until the 1860s. It is also interesting to note that whereas Prosper AUDCENT and two of his children consistently spelled their name as 'Audcent', his third child (Marie) opted to use the spelling 'Audecent' right up to her death in 1915.

The parish registers at Châteaudun show there were multiple ways to spell the family name, including:

Audcent
Audecent
Audessant
Audesson
Audsent
Auxan
Auxen
Auxent
Haudecan
Haudesan
Haudessant
Hautesan
Haudsant
Hodcent
Hodecent
Hodsan
Occean
Odcent
Odsan
Oxan
Oxand

The spellings Hodecent and Audecent were officially considered interchangeable well into the early nineteenth century, as evidenced in 1804 when the death of Bathelemey "Hodecent ou Audecent" was registered at Châteaudun by the deputy mayor:



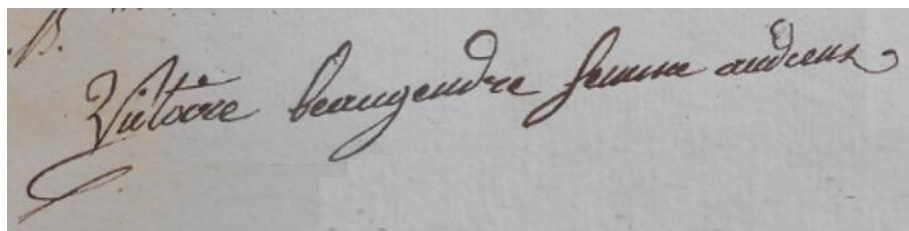
There were a number of families using these names at Châteaudun and elsewhere in France. The parish registers of Châteaudun also contain numerous references to the surnames OZAN, OZANNE, OUZANNE and OZEN. It is likely that these were a more common and earlier form of the same name, although by the eighteenth-century it does appear that those using the names OZAN, OZANNE and OZEN formed a district and separate branch of the family to the AUDCENT

lineage, with the names pronounced in a slightly different way. The names OZAN and OZANNE still exist in France today.

Surnames were adopted in France during the Middle Ages, and the origins of the AUDCENT name probably go back to that time. The earliest known reference to the name in France occurred in 1430, when a Guillaume AUDECENT is mentioned in a deed signed on 14 December 1430 at Bourg-d'Iré. Another Guillaume AUDECENT - probably a descendant of the first - is named as the husband of Guillemine DELYMELLE in another deed signed at Bourg-d'Iré on 13 June 1564. Bourg-d'Iré is located nearly 200 kilometres from Châteaudun and it is not known whether there was any link between the families at Bourg-d'Iré and Châteaudun.

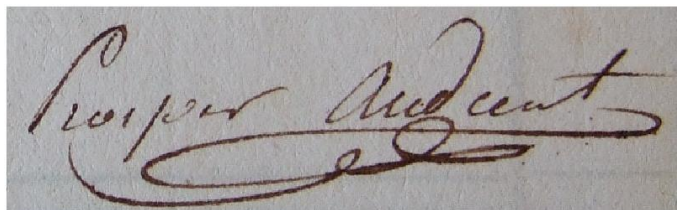
It is interesting to note that the name 'Ozanne' is reputed to be one of the oldest names on the island of Guernsey, where it occurs in Assize Rolls dating from 1309. In that year a Richard OZANNE was prosecuted for encroaching on the King's highway. At the time of the 1901 census there were still 281 people named 'Ozanne' living in Great Britain - mostly on Guernsey.

Jean Pierre AUDCENT (actually baptised with the name 'Haudessant') was the first member in the family lineage to be able to read and write, and his wife provides the first example of a family member using the modern spelling of the name.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Victoire Beaugendre femme audcent". The ink is dark brown on a light-colored paper background.

In 1821, when selling the family house and vines in Châteaudun, she signed herself "Victoire Beaugendre femme audcent". Her husband was still using the spelling "Audecent", but he later adopted the modern spelling "Audcent" when signing the *acte de mariage* for his son Prosper in 1835.

The first example of a man in the family using the modern spelling occurred on 19 May 1834 inside the hôtel de ville of the old 10e arrondissement of Paris, where Prosper AUDCENT signed the register to confirm receipt of a certificate exempting him from military service (opposite).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Prosper Audcent". The ink is dark brown on a light-colored paper background.

Jean Pierre's descendants are the only branch of the family to consistently use the 'Audcent' spelling, as it never caught on with his distant cousins. Jean-Pierre AUDCENT's only-grandson in the male-line (Arthur) emigrated to England in the 1860s meaning that the name is no longer found in France.

At the time of writing, in 2014, the AUDCENT name belongs to 35 individuals living in England, Canada and Australia:-

- 16 males
- 5 unmarried females
- 8 women for whom it is their marriage-name

These figures do not include the six women for whom 'Audcent' was their maiden name prior to marriage, nor the two ex-wives of Paul AUDCENT.

Although the name 'Audcent' is today unique to one family, many families have used similar names over the centuries, albeit with different spellings. In addition to the families mentioned above there was a noble family in Poitiers named DE HAUDESSENS during seventeenth-century, including a father and son, both named Louis DE HAUDESSENS. They held the seigneurie des Cluseaux and were Trésoriers général de France within the Généralité de Poitiers.

Several intriguing references have been found to the name in France and England. For example, the names 'Ozan' and 'Ozen' have been found in the Anglican parish registers of at least three Somerset villages (at Wick St Lawrence, Burrington and Wedmore), which by coincidence is close to where the modern AUDCENT family settled in the 1860s. The parish registers of Wedmore were published in 1888 and the vicar at the time commented:

"I only notice two foreign surnames; viz., Keisar and Ozan. The reading of the name Ozan puzzled me at first. By a curious accident just after I had made it out and printed it, I went into Normandy. I saw it there twice: once over a shop door in the old town of Caen, where William the Conqueror lies buried in a very magnificent church: and once on a tombstone in a cemetery which commanded a fine view of the city of Rouen. I have also noticed the name in a Paris directory."

The OZAN and OZEN families in Somerset could perhaps be descended from French Huguenots who arrived from France through the port of Bristol, or perhaps they came from Guernsey.

Another intriguing reference to the name was discovered by Mark AUDCENT inside the Palais des Papes at Avignon (the former palace of the Popes and one of the largest Gothic buildings in Europe). This fact is mentioned in a letter from his father (Gerard AUDCENT) in 1980:

"...By the way, Mark tells me that when he visited the Popes' palace at Avignon, he saw the name Audcent scratched on one of the walls. He adds that there are miles of walls and thousands of names scratched, so it would be difficult to locate".

An even more intriguing reference occurs in a book by Ben NORMAN, entitled 'Tales of Watchet Harbour' which was published in 1985. This states that:

"In 1913 Messrs Quadley and Audsent presented plans for construction of a new jetty on the eastern side of Watchet harbour (nothing ever came of this)."

The identity of this "Mr Audsent" is a complete mystery - no references to him has been found in the census or other records. What is even more odd, is that by a peculiar coincidence the author of this book was a personal friend of Jacques AUDCENT when he lived at Watchet during the 1970s and 1980s.

9. Historiography - about the writing of this family history

The ‘historiography’ of the AUDCENT family history - that is to say, the history of the family history - is a fascinating saga in itself.

Until the 1970s the family knew virtually nothing about their paternal-side origins. Surviving documents made only the briefest mention of Prosper AUDCENT, and nothing was known about his origins. This was in stark contrast to the PINOT DE MOIRA side of family, about whom a wealth of material survived.

In 1951 Marguerite AUDCENT (by then an elderly spinster, known within the family as ‘Ta Daisy’) commented that her father (Arthur AUDCENT) was born in Bordeaux (which was correct), and that she believed (incorrectly, as it turned out) that her grandfather (Prosper AUDCENT) originated from the Poitou region of France.² It was later discovered that her grandfather was actually born in the town of Châteaudun. It is somewhat ironic that she was so mis-informed on this matter because she had (by a pure co-incidence) spent much of her adult life living in the Château de Chaussepot, barely 15 kilometres from her grandfather’s place of birth in Châteaudun.³ Moreover, one of her ancestral great-aunts had two centuries earlier been mistress of the château in which she was worked as a governess, and many of her ancestors had lived within the just a couple of kilometres from Chaussepot. Indeed, unbeknown to her, her distant cousins still lived nearby.

The lack of any information on Prosper AUDCENT was so conspicuous that Gerard AUDCENT commented on this several times in letters to his nephew, David AUDCENT. In 1975 Gerard wrote “I wish you luck in pinning down Prosper AUDCENT who seems to be a very mysterious, and intriguing, individual.”⁴ Five years later, in 1980, he observed that “his name certainly seems to have been taboo throughout the family”.⁵ This astute observation turned out to be exactly the case.

Recent research shows this dearth of information was no coincidence, nor the result of the passage of time. It was the result of a deliberate concealment. There were various family secrets needing to be kept, including the fact that several generations of the AUDCENT family had died in (what were considered at the time to be) shameful circumstances - Prosper AUDCENT died in a poorhouse and his son Arthur AUDCENT died in a lunatic asylum. In addition, the AUDCENT and PINOT DE MOIRA families had together been implicated in criminal activity during the 1860s.

Arthur’s premature death in 1881 meant his children were orphaned at a very young age, which made it easy for the family secrets to be concealed from them. With the passage of time these shameful secrets were entirely buried, until recently exposed with the advent of the internet. Being brought up by their PINOT DE MOIRA grandparents during the 1880s, also meant the AUDCENT orphans lost all contact with their paternal-side relatives (except for a chance contact in 1915). Their grandfather (Henri PINOT DE MOIRA) expunged virtually all record of their

² Letter from Daisy Audcent to her sister-in-law (Henriette Audcent) dated 13 November 1951, Paris XI.

³ She lived in the Château de Chaussepot at Courtalain for many years, as a governess to the children of the de Kish de Nemesker family.

⁴ Letter from Gerard Audcent to David Audcent, dated 16 December 1975, Ottawa, Canada.

⁵ Letter from Gerard Audcent to David Audcent, dated 29 August 1980, Ottawa, Canada.

paternal grandfather, and was very selective about what the orphans were told. This was surely meant as a kindly gesture, to shield the children from any stigma they might feel were they to know the truth. However, it also meant that the true history of the family was forgotten. The “skeletons in the cupboard” have only recently been rediscovered, after nearly thirty years of careful historical research by David and Geoff AUDCENT.

It was David AUDCENT who first developed a serious interest in family history. He has spent over forty years researching the family history, drafting and redrawing his family trees, checking and rechecking the data, writing biographies of family members, corresponding with relatives, creating a computer database and - from 1996 - running his family history website. During the 1970s he collaborated with his uncle Gerard AUDCENT, and from the 1980s he collaborated with his nephew Geoff AUDCENT.

David's interest was triggered by having heard mention of his many cousins, and meeting some of them when they visited his parents and grandparents. He was intrigued when no one could say exactly how some of the cousins were related, and his interest was spurred on when his father agreed to give him an old family portrait (of their forebear Jean Paul Baptiste Henri PINOT DE MOIRA), which he had restored in 1964. Some years later, when his young daughter (Alexa) asked him the same question about how the distant cousins were related, he set himself the challenge of finding out. David began to document all the available information, to preserve it for his children and anyone else in the family who was interested, before it was lost for ever.

Soon David became the family archivist, as his parents gave him the surviving family papers. The collection dated back to the 1770s but mainly concerned his PINOT DE MOIRA and DE ST OUEN D'ERNEMONT ancestors. Much of David's research therefore focused on these families, but he did not neglect the AUDCENT lineage, despite the frustrating scarcity of material. David corresponded with his uncle Gerard AUDCENT on family history between 1975 and 1980. Gerard lived in Ottawa and worked as an English-French translator for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He quickly became interested in the family history and generously assisted his nephew by providing translations, advice and encouragement, writing 47 letters over five years.

At first David could find nothing about Prosper AUDCENT beyond a brief mention of him in an old genealogy of the PINOT DE MOIRA family dating from 1846.⁶ This simply said that “Marie Silvianne Fany PINOT DE MOIRA” had married “M. Prosper AUDCENT”. Nothing more was known about Prosper (other than he was the father of three children, and the erroneous belief he originated from the Poitou region of France).

As there is no centralised index of births, marriages and deaths in France, it took David many years to make any progress. He eventually tracked down the date and place of Prosper's marriage (which came from the birth certificate of Prosper's daughter Armandine) and he immediately ordered a copy of the marriage certificate. This arrived by post in January 1976 and revealed Prosper's place of birth as the town of Châteaudun. This was a major breakthrough and was the key to unlocking the family history. By June 1976 David had obtained a copy of Prosper's birth and baptism records, enabling the lineage to be traced back a further two generations to Jacques AUDCENT (1751-1814). Congratulating David on the fruits of his research, Gerard wrote that “the news from the archivist of Eure et Loir is most interesting. It is

⁶ A certified copy of the genealogy, made in Bristol, was amongst the papers passed to David by his parents. The original copy made in 1846 was later discovered in the possession of cousin Peter Pinot de Moira.

quite a breakthrough to know where the AUDCENTs came from and to know that the name was spelt the same way that far back”.⁷

It was clear that further progress would be difficult or impossible without visiting the archives in France, and so in the summer of 1980 David set off for France. He was accompanied by his father (Jacques) who spoke French and was able to assist with translation. They first visited cousins in Normandy,⁸ before driving on to Paris, where they stayed for a week in an apartment kindly lent to them by another cousin.⁹ However, in Paris they were disappointed to discover little new information on the AUDCENT family.

They then travelled on to Châteaudun, where the two of them spent three whole days in the town hall requesting ‘photostat’ copies of anything that might be interest. The visit was a great success, and provided David with the documentary evidence he needed to draw up a relatively comprehensive genealogy and to trace the lineage back a further generation to Jacques HAUDSAN who married Perrine before 1707.

Observing progress from his home in Canada, Gerard was greatly impressed and wrote to David saying “your trip certainly has paid off and opened all sorts of avenues for exploration. Your discoveries about the Audcents in Chateaudun are very promising and I look forward to hearing more when you have the time”.¹⁰ Unfortunately, Gerard was to die the following year.

It was around this time that David’s nephew, Geoff AUDCENT, also became interested in the family history. Geoff - the author of this family history - was able to carry out further research in the English and French archives, as well as on the internet. Archives and libraries he visited included the Bristol Record Office (at various dates), the British Library in London (various dates), the Archives départementales de la Seine-Maritime in Rouen (in 2003 and 2005), the Archives de Paris (in 2010), the Archives Nationales de France at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (in 2013) and the Archives départementales d’Eure-et-Loir at Chartres (2015).

The development of personal computers and the internet from the 1990s proved to be a major boon in researching the family history - not only because they allowed remote access to various primary and secondary sources, but because they made it much easier to arrange travel and book hotels abroad, to collaborate with fellow researchers, to record, store and edit information, to translate text between English and French, to search for information in digitised reference books and newspapers, and to easily photograph documents discovered in the French archives so that they could be translated and analysed at leisure upon returning home. It is easy to forget how even the most basic of tasks, like ascertaining the locations and opening times of different archive offices in France, could be difficult and time consuming before the age of the internet.

The internet proved especially useful in revealing more detail about the lives of individual family members, extending the lineage back another generation to Jacques HODSAN who married Perrine BADRAU, and enabling collateral branches of the family to be more comprehensively documented.

⁷ Letter from Gerard Audcent to David Audcent, dated 11 June 1976, Ottawa, Canada.

⁸ Therese Monton (nee Grasset) and family at Hacqueville. She then arranged for them to visit their cousin Agnes Frechon and her son Louis at the Chateau de la Heuze, Bellencombre.

⁹ Jean-Jacques Lefebvre who kindly allowed them to use the apartment originally owned by his parents Jean Lefebvre and Anne-Marie Carbonnier, at 23 Rue de Rhumkorf, Paris.

¹⁰ Letter from Gerard Audcent to David Audcent, dated 29 July 1980, Ottawa, Canada.

The mystery of what happened to Prosper AUDCENT was finally solved in October 2010 when the records of the Département de l'Aisne were placed on line. These revealed, as David and Geoff AUDCENT had already started to suspect, that their ancestor had died in the poorhouse at Villers-Cotterêts in 1862.

10. A Note on Sources

This family history is based on a wide range of primary and secondary sources. A general overview of the main sources is presented below, and all the sources are fully documented as footnotes to the separate biographies written for individual family members by David and Geoffrey AUDCENT.

Family papers

A large collection of family papers are in the possession of David and Geoffrey AUDCENT. The material includes diaries, memoirs, poems, passports, correspondence, photographs, memorial prayer cards, and other documents.

Records of births, marriages, deaths, baptisms and burials

Records of baptisms, marriages and burials in parish registers, and subsequently state records of births, marriages and deaths, are a major source of information and can be found in the relevant public archives - the General Register Office and relevant county records offices in England, and the relevant archives départementales in France (although most French records are now available on-line).

Other manuscript sources

Archives Nationales de France (at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine):

- Dossiers personnels d'anciens fonctionnaires de l'administration central (reference F/17/22723) - information on Fany Pinot de Moira's application and career as a nursery school inspector.

Bristol Records Office:

- Bristol Lunatic Asylum - medical records for Arthur Audcent.
- Census returns, 1881 to 1911.

Archives départementales de la Seine-Maritime (at Rouen):

- Legal papers relating to the separation of Prosper Audcent and his wife.

Archives départementales d'Eure et Loir (at Chartres):

- Tables alphabétiques décennales des successions et absences, Bureau de Châteaudun.
- Legal papers relating to property transactions and inheritance at Châteaudun.

Archives départementales de la Gironde (at Bordeaux):

- Nineteenth-century passport applications.

Archives de Paris:

- Tableau de Recensement pour le Classe de 1831, Commune du 10e Arrondissement de Paris.

Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC:

- Record Unit 7298, Collection - Charles P Alexander Papers c1870-1979. Division 1 General Correspondence 1906-79 (Box 3, Folder 12: Audcent Henri, 1933-1940, 1947-1951, 1955, 1958). Division 2 (Box 59, Folder 7 Audcent Henri, Biographical information and photographs).

Oxford University Museum of Natural History:

- Correspondence of J E Collins (contains letter from Henri Audcent)

Contemporary printed sources

- Le Constitutionnel (1841)
- Association des inventeurs et artistes industriels - *Annuaire de l'Année* (1852, 1855, 1858)
- Le Temps (1861)
- The Hull Packet & East Riding Times and The Manchester Times (1860)
- The Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette (1871)
- The Western Daily Press (1870-1877)
- The Western Times (1874)
- The Bristol Mirror (1869-1877).
- The Bristol Commercial List, comprising Bristol, Cardiff, Newport and Swansea (various dates)
- Matthew's Street Directories of Bristol (1875-1880)
- Almanach Imperial (1853-1858)
- Annual Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalist's Society, Transactions of the Entomological Society of the South of England and Society for British Entomology (various dates)
- Fairfield Grammar School Magazine (1948)

Non-contemporary and recently published sources

- Lyonnet (Henry), *Dictionnaire des comédiens français (ceux d'hier): Biographie, bibliographie, iconographie*, Volume I, Bibliothèque de la Revue Universelle Internationale Illustrée (1902-12), page 56
- Linda L Clark, *The Rise of professional Women in France - Gender and Public Administration since 1830* (Cambridge University Press) (2000).
- *Les Inspecteurs généraux de l'instruction publique: dictionnaire biographique 1802-1914*, (1986), page 140.
- Ross Gilkes, *Fairfield 1898-1998 - The life of a School* (1998)
- Lionel Godfrey, *Cary Grant: the light touch* (1981)
- W.H. (Ben) Norman, *Tales of Watchet Harbour: The Somerset Port of a Thousand Years* (1988).