

HUISH

SOMERSET TO LONDON VIA WALES

A VERY PARTIAL HISTORY. 1800 - 2000

10TH DECEMBER 2022



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# Revision History

Revision	Date	Author(s)	Description
1.0	26.12.21	PFW	Marginal change bars. More details about Harry Witcher including South African War, moving to Germany, and second marriage. Possible reason for no record of Henri and Elizabeth's marriage
1.1	typos	JNW	

## Introduction

This document is a collection of notes about the Huish and Dumont families during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: up to the 1911 census. It is highly incomplete.

## Spelling of names

The spelling of names in source documents is inconsistent. This inconsistency is carried over into this document.

## Family Traditions

Before starting this research I was aware of a number of traditions about the history of the family: that the Huishes, although they thought of themselves as Welsh, came from Somerset; Grandma Dumont was a diamond cutter; the Dumonts lived in Soho and were Huguenot, or perhaps Jewish (clearly, *both* of these can not be true). Some of these traditions are discussed as the crop up in the text below.

## **Huish: Chard to London**

Fred Huish's family originated around Chard in the south of Somerset. In the short space of the 30 years or so after about 1900 his father had moved to South Wales and Fred had moved on to Surrey, and then London. This document does not cover Fred's army career or his time at the Mews.

### **Imlah Huish - Chard**

Imlah Huish was born around 1852 in Combe St Nicholas, Chard, Somerset to Richard and Elizabeth Huish, basket-maker and glover respectively. He died in 1928 in also in Chard. Throughout his life his occupation is given on censuses as 'Brush Maker' or 'Brush Fashioner' Although we probably think of Somerset as a quintessential English rural county nineteenth century Chard has been described as 'an uneasy mix of industrial expansion and deprivation'.<sup>[3]</sup> Local businessmen made a number of attempts to connect Chard to the canal and rail networks but the results ranged from unsuccessful to disastrous. The GWR line from Paddington to Exeter, opened in 1860, missed Chard completely but a branch line opened in 1866.

### **Nimmer Brush Mill**

Nimmer Brush Mill is located at TA20 3AD about 1 mile outside Chard off Combe St Nicholas road. Originally a mid-17th century tucking or fulling (wool cleaning) mill, it was extended in 1870 with an iron overshot wheel, which powered James Coate's brush factory until 1970.<sup>[5]</sup> The Coate company was still around as recently as 2012, selling classy shaving brushes. The mill is now privately owned but opens to the public occasionally.

There is an unlikely coincidence between Nimmer Mill having previously been a *tucking*, or *fulling* mill and the Welsh word for *fulling* being *pandy*, as in Tonypandy ("fulling mill lea") where Frederick Thomas later lived.

## **Migration from Somerset to South Wales**

Between 1851 and 1911, it is estimated <sup>[8]</sup> that some 366,000 people moved into the South Wales coalfield. Many immigrants came from England, particularly from Somerset, Gloucestershire and Cornwall. The peak of this migration occurred between 1901 and 1911 when 129,000 people moved into the area. The migrants were carried as a "return load" by coal barges after unloading coal at north Somerset ports.

**JAMES COATE AND CO.,**  
 PATENTEES OF THE  
**WHITE ENAMELLED TOOTH BRUSHES,**  
 41 and 42, Lisle Street, Leicester Square, London, W.,  
 AND  
**NIMMER MILLS, CHARD, SOMERSETSHIRE,**  
 Manufacturing on their own Premises every kind and quality of  
**TOOTH, HAIR, AND NAIL BRUSHES.**  
 ESTABLISHED 1846.

We avail ourselves of the present opportunity to thank our friends and correspondents at home and abroad for the support and continued favours received from them since commencing the manufacture of Fancy Brushes *only*, now twenty-two years ago. Being fully persuaded that division of labour is essential to the attainment of the excellence required at the present day, particularly in Tooth and Hair Brushes, we beg to assure our friends that, as heretofore, so now, we are resolved to devote our whole attention to the manufacture of these articles, using only the best materials, and employing the most skilful workpeople that the trade produces, and to sell at the lowest prices possible.

As to Samples and Patterns, we unhesitatingly say, that we have the largest and most varied collection of any house in the trade; and that our Tooth and Hair Brush productions at the present time are second to none for reasonableness of price and excellence of quality. We may add, that having devoted nearly twenty-three years to the exclusive manufacture of these branches of the Brush trade, we can safely pledge ourselves to execute any orders with which we may be entrusted, to entire satisfaction.

We beg more particularly to call attention to our WHITE ENAMELLED TOOTH BRUSHES, patented September 9, 1853, notwithstanding the many inferior imitations of them which have appeared under the fictitious names of *Porcel-enamelled*, *Ivory-cemented*, *Diamond-cemented*, *Admontiac-cemented*, *Desideratus*, etc. All these are base imitations, which could not be sold but that they are represented as being made like Coate's Patent, although not so made. We affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the experience we have gained in the manufacture enables us to produce the best made Tooth Brushes in the world, unapproachable by any other manufacturer, even though he had our patterns before him to work to.

For the last seven years we have been engaged in establishing a Branch Factory, at Chard, in Somersetshire, where we have ample water power, and in which Factory we have placed the latest improvements in machinery, and the most skilful workmen of London and Paris, in order that we may be able to meet the constantly increasing demand for our Tooth and Hair Brushes. Our organization being complete, we can now manufacture any quantity of Tooth, Hair, and Nail Brushes, or execute with despatch any order for export (however large) suited to the different markets of the world.

We have now applied our Patent Cement to every quality of Tooth Brush, and are enabled to supply the Patent Cemented Tooth Brushes at prices as follows:—C, 26s.; Cemented, 30s.; Cemented London, 36s.; Cemented Improved, 42s.; Cemented Warranted, 48s.; Cemented Superfine, 60s.; Warranted Best Hair, 66s.; and our very Best Picked Goods, 78s. per gross, all subject to the usual discount, every Brush of which we warrant stamped "Coate and Co., London." Though it is in our power to append hundreds of Testimonials, we deem the insertion of the seven following, from first-rate houses (every one which can be verified by letter direct to the address), sufficient to show that we please our old customers as well as get new ones.

We also beg our friends to observe that we manufacture every kind and quality of the old Trepanned Tooth Brushes, from 18s. to 78s. per gross, according to the market they are required for.

COATE AND CO.

P.S.—Chemists and Perfumers who want a really good Tooth Brush which they can rely on wearing well, and who reside in small towns to which we do not travel, can order through any wholesale house that may be convenient, to which house the usual wholesale discount will be allowed.

8, Halkin Street West. December 14th, 1861.

MESSES. COATE AND CO.—During a great number of years that you have supplied us with Tooth Brushes, we have had every reason to be perfectly satisfied with them. The Brushes are well finished, and we have never had complaints from our customers that the hairs are not well secured.

We are, Sirs, your obedient servants,

WILLIAMS AND ELVEY, Chemists.

East Street, Chichester. April 17th, 1872.

MESSES. COATE AND CO.—GENTLEMEN.—I certainly must give you a testimonial for your Tooth and Hair Brushes, which I have tried for some time. I consider them perfect in finish and durability, and give the greatest satisfaction to my numerous customers.

I am, Gentlemen, yours respectfully,

C. J. PRATT, Chemist.

Apothecaries' Company, Branch Establishment, 95, Vincent Street, Glasgow.

December 15th, 1864.

MESSES. COATE AND CO. have supplied us with Tooth Brushes for several years, and we have always found them give our customers the utmost satisfaction; indeed, I might say, more so than any Tooth Brushes we ever had before.

ROBERT MACCALL, Manager.

1, Ormond Villa, Cheltenham. December, 15th, 1864.

MESSES. COATE AND CO.—GENTLEMEN.—In reply to yours respecting the Tooth Brushes, I am pleased to say I consider the Tooth Brushes you have supplied to me for the last fourteen years are first-class. I am so well satisfied with the make of them, that I sell them with a guarantee, that should the hairs come out I will exchange them. And I may further add that, during the fourteen years I have sold your Tooth Brushes, I have certainly not exchanged fourteen, and, I do not think, half that number.

I am, Gentlemen, yours respectfully,

JOSEPH WAITE, Chemist.

Apothecaries' Hall of Ireland, Dublin. December 8th, 1864.

MESSES. COATE AND CO. have supplied this establishment with Brushes for many years, and their goods, as well as mode of doing business, have been highly satisfactory.

ROBERT J. GRAHAM, Manager.

Weymouth, December 14th, 1869.

DEAR SIR.—I have sold many thousands of your Tooth Brushes during the last twenty-two years, and have almost invariably found them to give satisfaction to my numerous customers.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER T. COLE, Chemist.

MR. COATE.

24, Castle Street, Liverpool. July 9th, 1869.

MESSES. COATE AND CO. have supplied our establishment with Tooth and other Brushes for a number of years. We have almost invariably found them to give satisfaction to our customers.

JOHN McCUFFIE AND CO., Chemists.

## **Frederick Thomas Huish, Snr**

Frederick senior was born in about 1883 in Chard, Somerset and was son of Imlah and Fanny Huish. The 1891 census mentions him at 96 Nimmer, Chard. In 1901, age 18 he is still in Chard, by now second oldest of eight siblings, including two blacksmiths and at least two linen collar makers, and listed himself as an 'Iron Moulder'. With this background as an industrial, rather than an agricultural worker the move to the mines in South Wales would not have been quite as big a leap as it would have been for some. By the 1911 census he has moved to South Wales. The rest of Imlah's family seems to have stayed in Chard. Frederick Thomas married Florence Maude Phillips in 1908 at Pontypridd.

## **Frederick Thomas Huish: Fred**

Fred Huish was born about 1910 in Tonypany, Glamorgan in South Wales, to Florence Maude and Frederick Thomas Huish snr. Florence and Frederick had married about 3 years earlier in 1907 or 8. The 1911 census shows young Fred at 5 Mynachdy Terrace, Ynysybwl. Ynysybwl was essentially the pit village for the Lady Windsor Colliery. In 1841 it was a rural village with a population of about 200. The pit opened in 1886 and built 300 houses and at its peak the village had a population of 6000-7000.

There is no Mynachdy Terrace, named as such, in modern day Ynysybwl but the 1910 Ordinance Survey (see figure 2) shows a short terrace of that name. The terrace still exists, figure 3, but has been renumbered. Assuming the numbering starts on the right, at the town end, number 5 would be the one to the left of the mint green house.

## **the Phillips family**

Florence Maud Phillips, known in the family as *Nana Bwl* was born in 1890 in Ynysybwl, Glamorgan, to Mary Ann Phillips nee Jones, age 21, and Allan (Alen) Phillips, age 27.

Allen was born in 1863 in the tithing of Broadoak, Herefordshire, in the Forest of Dean. Broadoak is on the road from Chepstow to South Wales and at the time Chepstow had the first bridge on the river Severn and so carried all the road traffic to and from South Wales. The 1881 census shows im at a servant at Elephant and Castle farm 20 miles away.

Although he married Mary Ann Jones on 12 Mar 1888, and Florence Maud was born in 1890, the 1891 census shows Allan boarding, without





Figure 2: Mynachdy Terrace, Ynysybwl 1910 [6]



Figure 3: Mynachdy Terrace, Ynysybwl 2016

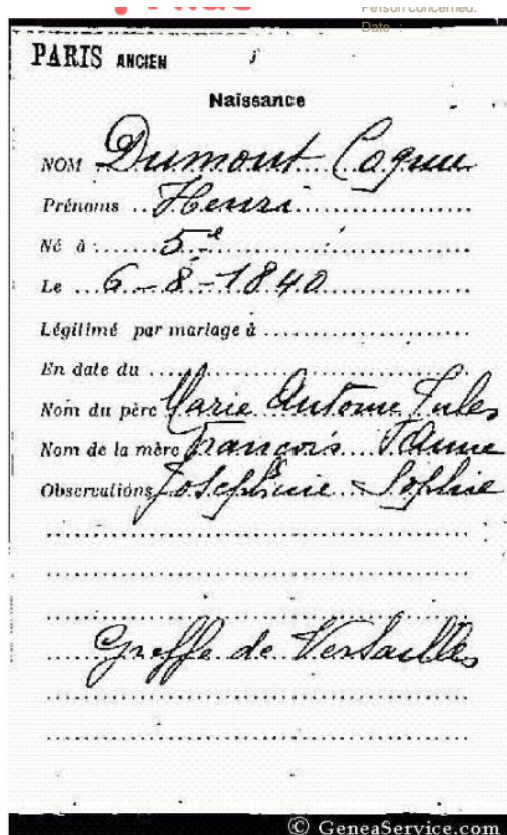


Figure 4: Henri Dumont's Recreated Birth Certificate

Mary, at 3 Paget Street, Ynysybwl. Meanwhile Mary Ann is staying with his parents along the 7 month old Florence Maud back at Broadoak

## Dumont - Paris to the City of London

### Henri Marie Dumont before 1881

Henry (Henri) consistently gives his place of birth on census returns as Paris or France. A fire in the mid nineteenth century destroyed most of the birth, death, and marriage records for Paris but they have been recreated. The certificate illustrated may be Henri's: the date is close to date implied census entries and the father's name of *Jules* is the same as Henri and Elizabeth gave to their son.

There was no formal immigration process for travel from France to Britain in the nineteenth century. Two Henri Dumonts, both minors, are shown as

entering from Belgium (Ostend is not an unreasonable route to England from France) at around the right time, but there is no way of following these up. If a marriage certificate could be found between Henri and Elizabeth this would give more detail of Henri's origins, but in spite of lengthy searches no such certificate can be found. It is possible that they did not marry because at the time a British woman marrying an alien may would have lost her British nationality and become an alien. He is not listed in any capacity in the records of the Goldsmiths' Company. The family tradition that the Dumont's were Huguenots is supported by Henry being French and a craftsman, but the term lost much of its meaning with the Edict of toleration in 1787, some years before Henry's birth.

## Henry Marie and Elizabeth Ellen Dumont nee Norman

The 1881 census shows Henry, age 38 and Elizabeth, 34, living at 21 Alfred Place in modern day Fitzrovia, with their children, Jules Firmin (12), Lucy (10) and Bertha (2 months). Both Henry and Elizabeth give their occupation as *jewellers*. Henry gives his place of birth as Paris, France and Elizabeth, Westminster. Lucy was educated in France, which may explain her absence from the family's 1891 census entry, and Elsie recalls in her memoirs[7] that Jules was "typically French in manner and appearance"

Although Henry is shown as *Head*, his name does not appear first in the list for the address. Gunter Weiner and his wife, both German and also jewellers seem to have been the landlords and were listed first. Also in the house were a domestic servant and three lodgers: a Russian journalist and two French tailors. The house next door had two Americans, an Austrian and someone from Algiers so it looks like quite a cosmopolitan neighborhood.

Alfred Place, just off Tottenham Court Road, more or less opposite Goodge Street tube station, was laid out between 1800 and 1810 by George Dance the Younger, surveyor for the City of London Corporation as an area of large town houses for the upper end of the housing market. [4] The buildings are now lost but the street pattern survives.

Although Alfred Place was built for the upper end of the market there is evidence that it may have become more mixed by the late nineteenth century. Booth's social map shows Alfred Place coloured pink [1] - "Fairly comfortable. Good ordinary earnings." The actual notebook of the Booth's canvasser says:

Some places of doubtful character [unreadable] boarding houses.  
a bad macadam road (v. rare about here where all is asphalt).  
less good than formally. rents 14/- to 20/- per floor paid weekly.



Figure 5: A Claremont Square house

less good than the mansions where the rents run from £130 to £250

By 1891 a few things had changed: the Dumonts had moved a few hundred metres north to Mortimer Market, again just east of Tottenham Court Road (A block north and east of Heals). Henry now gives his occupation as Beer Retailer and Elizabeth does not list an occupation. Lucy is no longer listed, Jules is described as a Grocer’s Assistant, and Burtha a scholar. Booth’s maps colour the houses purple - ‘Mixed, some comfortable, some poor’. However, they do have the house to themselves: it is not shared.

The Booth canvasser’s note says:

N side taken by Maples Cabinet works. The blocks of houses are poorish, regular workers, shops, small cabinet workshops, master men [...] 3 stories, only one room to a floor, cobbles, paper and mess in st.

Henry died at age 52 on 5 April 1895 at 29 Claremont Square. According to probate records he left Elizabeth £135 5s (about £15,000 at 2017 values). Claremont Square was, and still is, a well-to-do address and is coloured red/pink on Booth’s map. The canvasser’s notes mention that some houses let out a single room. )

TODO Check Elizabeth and children on 1901 census

Soho was something of a centre for the French community in London, but there is no evidence that the Dumont’s ever lived in Soho, which is about a mile south of Fitzrovia.

	<i>First Floor.</i>
	43 to 45 Branwell Arth. & Co. Ltd. mers
	43 to 45 Moritz Edward Ralph, analytical chemist
	43 to 45 Brown Hcrace Tabberer, analytical chemist
	<i>Second Floor.</i>
	43 to 45 <i>North Pole Ice Co. Ltd</i>
	43 to 45 Shearing F. & Co. comsn. mers
	43 to 45 Henrici Fdk. Hy. com. mer
	43 to 45 Kux & Co. metallic cap- sule manufacturers
	43 to 45 Ochsé Albert, shell importr
	43 to 45 Gordon Luis, brandy agnt
	43 to 45 Pohndorff Federico G. manufacturers' agent
	<i>Third Floor.</i>
	43 to 45 Herbst G. drysalter
	43 to 45 Hoffman Miles A. & Co. american merchants
	43 to 45 <i>Cement Coated Nail Co</i>
	43 to 45 Bryce, Roberts & Co. gen. mers
	43 to 45 Perman & Co. Ltd. ship bldrs
	43 to 45 <i>Kromhout Marine Oil En- gine Co</i>
	43 to 45 Saword Edward Geo. & Co. wine shippers
	43 to 45 Deveson Geo. distillers' agnt

Figure 6: Businesses at 43 Great Tower Street

## Tower street and Harry Whicher

Harry joined up on his second attempt in around 1897 when Britain was preparing for the South African War. He joined the Royal Army Medical Core.

Harry and Berthe were married on Christmas Day 1902 in the baroque Wren church of St Lawrence Jewry in the City, when Harry gave his address as 10 Trump Street, a block north of Cheapside, and his occupation, just like his father, as housekeeper (so must have left the army). Berthe gave her address as 19 Montpelier Road, Kentish Town and her occupation as jeweller. Elsie, in her memoir[7], says Berthe worked as a diamond polisher since leaving school.

The family moved to 43 Tower Street around 1907 (Elsie says "before I was 2 years old")

They were there by the 1911 census. Elizabeth, described as a nurse, is also living with the her daughter Bertha and son-in-law Harry Whicher at Great Tower Street. Harry gives his occupation as housekeeper. The house, in the financial district of the City, was a kind of Edwardian office complex housing a number of companies.

When WW1 started Harry joined up again and served in the Royal Army Medical Corps as an Acting Corporal. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal in 1919. It seems possible that the move to Manor Park may have been due to Harry losing the Tower Street accommodation when he signed up, although Elsie[7] speculates that her father may have

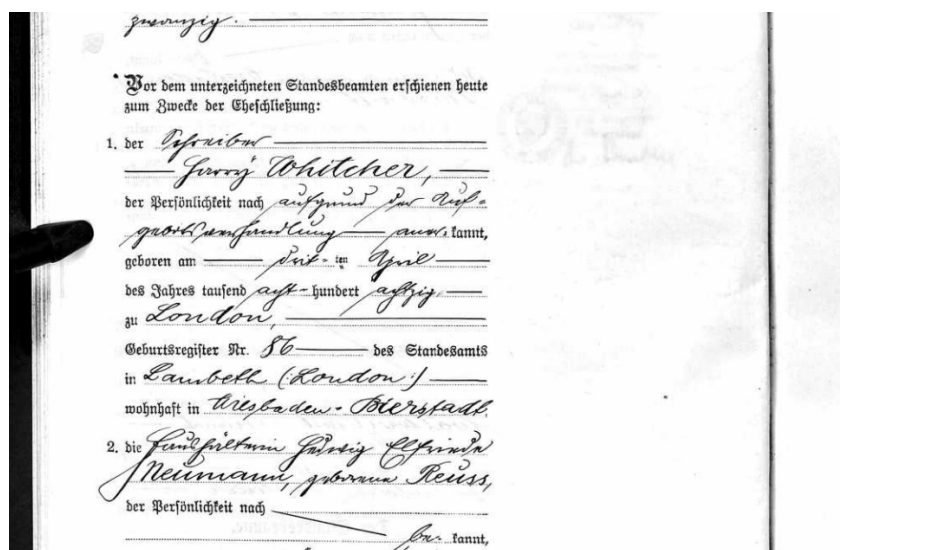


Figure 7: Harry's second marriage

fallen down on the job.

After the end of WW1 Harry moves to Germany as part of the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR). There would have been opportunity for the family to move with him but, Elsie[7] recalls, her mother Berthe would not go and remained at Manor Park.

## Harry's second marriage

Harry married again in December 1929 in Bierstadt, near Wiesbaden, Germany to Hedwig Elfriede Neumann (34) At that time Hedwig would have become a British subject on marriage to Harry. Hedwig had also been married before: the marriage certificate shows her maiden name (German, *geborene*) as Reuss.

1929 would have been a year of big changes in Wiesbaden: the British army of occupation (BAOR), which at its peak comprised 13,000 men, was withdrawing. The British presence in the area was sufficient to support a daily English language newspaper, the *Wiesbaden Times*, from 1924 to 1929. The second half of 1929 saw both the start of the Depression and the US calling the loans on which the Weimar Republic depended. These events were among the causes of the instability that paved the way for the Nazi takeover.

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