

THE FIDDIAN FAMILY STORY

by Paul Fiddian

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CHAPTER 1 – Yeomen in the West Midlands

Having speculated about the early origins of our family elsewhere this story will focus on the better documented saga which began in the Midlands in the 16th century. The first Fiddian for whom we have complete data is John Fyddian born in 1572 at Coleshill, Warwickshire though we do know that his father was a William Fyddian who died in 1577. We cannot be certain if this was the same William Fyddian who was ordained as a Priest at the Bishop's Palace in London in 1554 and who came from the diocese of Chester but he could be. There are a couple of other contemporaneous Fyddians from Cheshire and a Fidyman from Staffordshire who could also be related. But the fact that he lived in a market town would be consistent with William being a priest whereas John was almost certainly a Yeoman.

Although records with information about occupations are sparse before the introduction of censuses we do know that both one of John's sons and a great-grandson were Yeomen. Also we know that John moved to Sheldon as a young man where he married Elizabeth Baker in 1591 and they had a large family, but Sheldon was largely rural apart from a Manor and small village. So the most likely occupation would have been in agriculture but where would he have found the money to buy the land and buildings sufficient to warrant his social standing as a Yeoman. Even if his father was a priest it is still most likely that he came from a family of some standing and would probably have inherited the land or monies from a relative. Whilst we cannot tell how far back the family had such good fortune we do know that they continued as Yeomen farmers for four generations.

John and Elizabeth had at least 7 children though four of them had died before the age of twenty and Elizabeth herself died aged 37 whilst the remaining children were still quite young. So it would have been pretty tough for John who was only 48 when he died, though by then two of his surviving sons were old enough to inherit and probably split their father's estate. One, John Fyddian born in 1594 moved to Northfield and the other, Thomas Fydean/Fiddian born in about 1596 moved to Yardley where he was a Yeoman. A third son Richard Fyddian born in 1605 also moved to Yardley but died there in 1625, suggesting that the brothers moved away from Selsdon quite soon after their father's death. Since none of the family remained in Coleshill or in Selsdon this supports the

notion that there was no family affinity for either, and that their roots were probably elsewhere.

You will have noted the various spellings of our surname used so far which reflect those recorded in the original documents but we will now use only the form that is used today despite the continued misspelling by clerks over the next 100 years or so. The main branch of the family is descended from the John Fiddian who moved to Northfield, where many of them remained for the next 100 years or so. Like Selsdon, Northfield was largely a rural farming community until the 19th century although there was a nail making industry in cottages near the church and several mills on the banks of the river Rea. As John was the elder brother of a Yeoman and had a grandson who was a Yeoman it is very likely that he and his other children were also Yeomen.

It would have taken John some time to establish himself in Northfield and this may explain why he didn't appear to marry until he was well into his 30s. He and his wife Jane had eight children but having started quite late the youngest of these were still infants when John died in 1649. However the eldest son, another John Fiddian was just 18 when his father died and so was probably able to take over the farm with help from his brothers William and Richard Fiddian aged 13 and 11 years. For some reason this latest John had his eldest son, yet another John Fiddian, born in 1657 at Rowley Regis some 7 or 8 miles away, but then had another son at Northfield where he died in 1682. The fourth John Fiddian though remained in or returned to Rowley Regis where he married, had children and later died aged only 38.

His only son was a 5th generation John Fiddian born in 1692 at Rowley Regis who lived into his 78th year and had a 6th generation John Fiddian born in 1732 at Rowley Regis who in turn had 8 children, none of them called John. This line of the family then appears to come to an abrupt end and we know very little about the family members already mentioned. Returning to the middle brother William Fiddian born in 1636 at Northfield he too moved away but to Dudley where he met and married Alice Nock in 1659 and they had two sons before William died in 1665. Again this line too then comes to an abrupt end and so we are left with the final surviving brother Richard Fiddian born in 1638 at Northfield to continue our story.

Richard was almost certainly another Yeoman Farmer and he married Ursula from Northfield when he was about 30 and they had five children, only one of

whom was a son, Thomas Fiddian born in 1677 at Northfield. This Thomas was recorded as a Yeoman when he was buried in 1721 and it is quite likely that he was the last of the freehold farmers in the family taking over from his father at the age of 22. Although nail making was an increasing industry in the area we do not know if anyone in the family had yet become involved in it. Thomas married Ann in his twenties and they had seven children before Thomas died at the age of 44 leaving Ann with several young children. As the oldest son Richard Fiddian was only 14 at the time and perhaps did not want to become a farmer Ann may have been forced to sell some, or all, of their farm.

CHAPTER 2 –Working with Metal and ‘Woods’

Instead, in 1722 Richard was apprenticed for 7 years to William Moore Snr & Son, Gunsmiths of Birmingham. He would go on to complete his training and become a successful Gunsmith in his own right and there are flintlock muskets bearing his name that have survived to this day. There is no evidence that Richard either married or had children, though he did live to a good old age of 82 years. His two younger brothers were Thomas Fiddian born in 1711 and William Fiddian born in 1716 who probably grew up in and may even have started working in Northfield, but both of them had moved to Halesowen by their twenties. Although they might already have become involved in nail making at Northfield, it was little more than a cottage industry there, whilst at Halesowen (a Market town) it had become the staple trade in the 18th century, with many iron mills and local coal mining.

William married Mary Betterton in 1742 at Halesowen and they had 9 children, including 5 sons who between them could have started a quite extensive branch of the family, but after a couple of generations it seemed to peter out. So it was left to the middle brother Thomas to keep the family line going and leave his mark. Indeed most Fiddian family trees start with this Thomas and yet we know very little about the man. By the time he reached his majority in 1732 there may not have been a great deal of his inheritance left, but perhaps it was enough to give him a start. In any case as he heralded the pinnacle of the families' standing in society he must have been quite successful in his chosen occupation, and given the place and time he was most likely involved in Iron or Nail Manufacturing. Perhaps the latter as producing iron would have required a greater outlay upfront.

Thomas married Sarah Cooper in 1740 at Halesowen and they had 7 children, 6 of whom were boys, though two of these died in infancy and a third aged only 18 years, whilst the only daughter died aged 9 years. Of the youngest surviving brother we know only that Barzillai Fiddian born in 1755 was a Churchwarden for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, married late and had no children. The next youngest brother was Richard Fiddian born in 1746, whilst the oldest was William Fiddian born in 1743, and they were most likely given a start in the Nail Making industry by their father. William married Sarah Millward in 1767 and the following year he acquired a Public House in Halesowen, likewise

Richard married Sarah Thompson in 1769 and obtained a Public House in the same year. This was common practice for Nail Masters as they would often pay their workers in kind and give them credit notes to spend in their own premises. But William died in 1780 and Richard became a Saddler so Metal Working seemed to come to an abrupt end.

Richard and Sarah had 8 children, 6 daughters and two sons, but one of the girls died in infancy. His eldest son Benjamin Fiddian born in 1769 was the first Sexton and Parish Clerk of St Peter's Church, Cradley (which had been a Wesleyan Chapel but was allowed to conform by a special Act of Parliament). He might have needed his faith to sustain him as he lost three wives in a ten year period, although he also tended to be a bit quick off the mark conceiving two children out of wedlock. He married Sarah Morgan in 1794 when she was at least 5 months pregnant and they had four daughters before she died in 1798. The following year he married Hannah Roach who died in 1802 after the birth of their only daughter. His next wife was Diana Aston who had already given him another daughter before they married in 1803, and they had two sons before she died in 1808. Finally he married Hannah Honour Detheridge in 1810 and they had just one daughter, though Hannah had 8 other children to look after, and she lived to a good age.

Following their father's example two of his daughters from his first marriage managed to have a child out of wedlock but he might have found it difficult to scold them very much. The two sons from his third marriage were Thomas Fiddian born in 1804 and Benjamin Fiddian born in 1806, both at Halesowen. Thomas was a Merchant in Halesowen and married Mary Ann Edwards in 1832 with whom he had four children before he died in 1840 aged only 36 years. The first two of their children died in infancy and the other two died at 10 and 12 years old, but despite her losses Mary Ann lived to the age of 84 years. Life was somewhat better for Benjamin who initially worked as a Spade Finisher but later as a Journeyman Spade Maker. He married Mary Ann Badger in 1832 and they settled in nearby Old Swinford where they had 10 children, two of whom died young. Benjamin himself died from epileptic fits at the age of 58 whilst travelling on business but Mary Ann lived to the age of 86.

The oldest of Benjamin's three surviving sons was another Benjamin Fiddian born in 1842 at Old Swinford who also started off as a Spade Finisher but was more successful than his father and ended up running his own Spade and Shovel Manufacturing business sometime after 1891. He too was probably a

Journeyman in his twenties as he met and married Keturah Barnes whilst in Cambridgeshire and their first child was born in Essex, but their other two children were born in Old Swinford. Their only son was Alexander Francis Fiddian born in 1874 and he joined his father in Manufacturing Spades and Shovels as 'B Fiddian & Son'. Benjamin lived to the age of 78 before he died from a stroke and Alexander then developed the business into a Tool Making Company.

Alexander met and married a local girl called Amy Winifred Slim in 1907 and they had two sons and two daughters over a ten year period. Both Douglas Alexander Albert Fiddian born in 1908 and Eric Westwood Fiddian born in 1910 were Amateur Golfers of some standing before becoming Directors of the family Tool Company. Eric was the more impressive golfer of the two, winning both the Boys' and English Amateur Golf Championships and playing twice in the Walker Cup against the USA. Douglas married Hazel Brookes in 1963 but they had no children and he died aged 87 years in 1995. Eric married earlier, in 1933, to Florence Molly Fieldhouse and they had two daughters but Florence died in 1962. Eric married again in 1965 to Edwina Pearl Russell and they had a son Mark Alexander Fiddian born in 1966 at Birmingham with Eric living to the age of 95. Mark is married to Claire and they have two boys, but he works for a Computer Hardware Company and so his father was probably the last Fiddian to work with Metal.

CHAPTER 3 – Saddlers and early Emigrants

Returning to Richard Fiddian (born in 1746), his second son Richard Fiddian born in 1779 was also a Saddler as well as a Churchwarden of St John's, Halesowen and occasional Groom. He married Mary Forrest in 1802 and they had seven children, including three sons, all of whom survived childhood.

Their eldest son was another Richard Fiddian born in 1807 at Halesowen who was a Schoolmaster and Superintendent of Lye Free School in 1841, but also worked as a Farmer, Haulier, Fanner and Coal Dealer at different times and was declared bankrupt in 1846. In 1854 he was accused of embezzlement and the case went to court but he was acquitted. He married Sarah Benbow in 1836 and they had five children, several of whom went to the Antipodes.

The eldest, Samuel Fiddian born in 1837 was a Tinsmith (Whitesmith) who went to New Zealand in his 20s or 30s where he was a Miner. Next was Richard Fiddian born in 1839 who was a Pork Butcher and married twice, firstly to Ada Adams in 1860 with whom he had four children and then to Louisa Griffiths with whom he had a daughter. The only son from his first marriage, Richard Fiddian was born in 1869 at Rowley Regis and he firstly joined his uncle Samuel in New Zealand where he was a Miner and then in 1922 he went to Australia taking several different jobs. A daughter of Richard and Sarah, Eliza Fiddian born in 1843 married William Angliss in 1862 and they had 11 children before they all migrated to Australia where their eldest son Sir William Charles Angliss had built up a massive Meat Packing & Exporting Company.

Finally Arthur Fiddian born in 1844 was a General Labourer and then a Barge Foreman who married twice, firstly to Sarah Ann Round and then to Sarah Ann Butt, with whom had a total of 14 children. Although Arthur never emigrated two of his sons, Samuel Theseus Fiddian born in 1865 and Harry Douglas Fiddian born in 1868 ended up in Australia. The only other son who survived infancy was Frank Fiddian born in 1894 at Sparkhill, Birmingham. He was engaged to Lydia May Harris in 1914 but she died suddenly in January 1915 and Frank devastated, enlisted as a Private in the Machine Gun Corps. In October 1918 whilst serving at Flanders Fields in France he died from mustard gas burns and was buried at a Military Cemetery in Le Treport.

The final child of Richard and Sarah Fiddian was in fact a daughter, Alice Fiddian born in 1783 at Halesowen. In 1807 she had a son George Granger

Fiddian born out of wedlock and this must have caused the family great embarrassment as they made attempts to blur the records by referring to Alice as Allec or Alle in an old ledger and on the family tree. Still George was not the first, nor the last child born out of wedlock in the Fiddian family. As for some other of the men in this branch of the family George chose to work with leather rather than metal and was a Saddler & Harness Maker and a Tanner, as well as a Registrar and Parish Clerk. He married Anne Mason in 1843 and they had five children at Halesowen, four sons and a daughter though the eldest son died in infancy. The two older surviving sons George Fiddian born in 1846 and Richard Fiddian born in 1848 both worked for the Railways and married, but only George had any sons. These were Sidney Granger Fiddian born in 1888, a Spring Maker and Arthur Ernest Fiddian born in 1890 a Lighthouse Engineering Machinist. The two youngest children of George Granger, John and Anne Fiddian migrated to Philadelphia in the USA in 1872 at the age of 22 and 20 respectively but never married.

Other children of Richard Fiddian (born in 1779) and Mary were Charles Fiddian born in 1809 and William Fiddian born in 1816, both at Halesowen. Charles Fiddian was another relative who chose to work with leather, being a Boot and Shoe Maker. He married Sarah Perkes in 1832 and they had six children including only one son, Henry Fiddian born in 1832 who was a Boilerplate Shearer. Although Henry married it does not appear that they had any children. Charles' brother William Fiddian also worked mainly with leather as a Saddle & Harness Maker and married Elizabeth Mobberley in 1844. They had 10 children, of whom three died young, including William Fiddian born in 1849 who was a Civil Engineer, Surveyor and Auctioneer. Others sons were Charles Fiddian born in 1856 another Saddler and Samuel Fiddian born in 1858 an Ironmonger who was also styled as a Gentleman but had no children.

CHAPTER 4 – Social Status, Wine and Metal

Returning finally to William Fiddian (born in 1743) who like his brother Richard was most likely an Iron or Nail Maker, and a successful one at that, and who was married to Sarah in 1767. They had three sons and three daughters but William died in 1780 shortly before the birth of the last of these, hence her name Posthumia. Despite William's early death the family must have been very comfortably off as all three of his sons were able to claim the status of Gentleman, although the middle one chose not to use it. His eldest son Thomas Fiddian born in 1768 was a Gentleman, Wine Merchant and Birmingham Street Commissioner who married Elizabeth Bowyer in 1793. They had two sons and two daughters who had grown up by the time that Elizabeth died in 1830, but Thomas who was 8 years younger than her married again in 1832 to an Elizabeth Evans.

Thomas was still living in Birmingham with his youngest son William Fiddian born in 1801, a Wine & Spirit Merchant, when he died in 1849 aged 81 years. William never married and so when he died in 1867 at Edgbaston he left almost £6000 to his elder brother Thomas, worth over £600,000 today. This would have further bolstered Thomas Bowyer Fiddian, Esq who had been born in 1797 at Birmingham and was a Wine Merchant and Metal & Paper Dealer, but he died the following year. The status of Esquire is a curtesy title above that of Gentleman but below that of Knight belonging to the social class of gentry (or landed gentry). Thomas Bowyer had married Sarah Raby in 1826 at Wolverhampton and they had had two sons, Thomas Fiddian born in 1827 and William Henry Fiddian born in 1831 both at Birmingham.

Thomas was either a Polymath or was sufficiently well off to indulge his whims, as he was recorded as an Artist, Sculptor, Designer, Lithographer, Printer and Merchant. He married Frances Chandler at Edgbaston in 1853 and they had three daughters, but when he died in 1878 he did not leave them all that much. His younger brother William Henry was a Wine Merchant who married Ellen Sefton in 1857 at Kings Norton and with whom he had two sons, William Fiddian born in 1858 and Henry Fiddian born in 1865. In 1867 William Henry divorced Ellen at London, a quite unusual occurrence in those times though we don't know who was cited or for what. William Henry then married again at Chelsea in 1871 to Frances Wood who was 21 years his junior and with

whom he had two daughters. William Henry died in 1888 at Newton Abbott in Devon two years after the birth of his last child and four years after the birth of his first grandchild.

His son William had married Constance Swinden in 1884 at Kings Norton and they had had a son at the end of that year. He was christened William Ralph Sefton Fiddian, which may have grated somewhat with his grandfather, and he was responsible for the branch of Sefton-Fiddians that is dealt with elsewhere. His father William was a Metal Merchant and Manufacturer of White Metal Goods, whilst William Ralph was a Metal Merchant, Engineer and Manufacturer. The younger brother of William, Henry Fiddian was a Sewing Machine Salesman and Motor Tyre Repairer who married Emily Fanny Harper in 1891 at Kings Norton and they had a son and two daughters, the last of these being born in London. Life must have been hard for Henry and Emily as their son William Henry Fiddian born in 1894 was admitted to the South Eastern Fever Hospital at Deptford (a Workhouse Hospital serving the poor of East London) in 1897. No doubt fearing the worst he was christened in the hospital in the August of that year and then died the next month.

After reviewing the sudden change in fortune of one branch of the family we will return to the youngest son of William Fiddian (born in 1743) and Sarah, who was Charles Fiddian born in 1776 at Halesowen. Charles was a Gentleman, Shoe & Boot Manufacturer, Cashier of the Birmingham Street Commissioners, Proprietor of Houses, Spermaceti Candle Maker (no, it isn't was it sounds like but is from a whale!) and Insurance Broker. Despite all these occupations he still found time to be married three times. Firstly he married Penelope Bennett in 1798 at Aston in Warwickshire and they had twin sons the following year, then a daughter and another son who died in infancy before Penelope died in 1806. He then married Sarah Reynolds in 1808 at Birmingham and they had three sons before Sarah died in 1813. Finally he married Sarah Brunner in 1815 at Leamington in Warwickshire but they had no children. Charles died at Kings Norton in 1863 at the age of 87 years.

The twins from Charles' first marriage were George and Charles Fiddian born in 1799. George Fiddian was a Shoemaker and married Elizabeth Ball in 1830 at Birmingham where they had a single daughter Sarah. Charles Fiddian was a Gentleman and a Malleable Nail & Coffin Furniture Maker, the latter was a business partnership known as Dawes & Fiddian which eventually went bankrupt in 1861. Charles married Hannah Ryland at Birmingham in 1832 and

they had a son and a daughter. The son, Charles John Fiddian was born in 1833 at Edgbaston and was variously a Merchant's Labourer, a Coal Merchant and a Hardware Agent. He married Emily Jane Holland in 1857 at Kings Norton and they had two daughters, one of whom died in infancy.

Of the three sons from Charles' second marriage, the eldest Edward Reynolds Fiddian born in 1809 died at the age of only 10 years. The second son was Frederick William Fiddian born in 1810 at Birmingham who was an Architect, Surveyor, Cement Dealer and Freemason (the first of two documented Fiddian Freemasons). He was responsible for designing the Church of St Silas in Lozells, Birmingham which was completed in 1854 but is now redundant. He also had the misfortune of marrying four times having lost his first three wives from early deaths and even his last wife died well before him. The first wife Mary Field whom he married in 1835 at Deddington in Oxfordshire, died on their honeymoon at Rhyde on the Isle of Wight after only 18 days. He then married Ann Kirby in 1838 at Birmingham and they had a daughter Leah Amelia Kirby Fiddian born there in 1840 but Ann died the same year (possibly in childbirth). Next he married Eliza Harriet Dean in 1842 at Edgbaston and the following year they had a son who died in infancy, then a daughter Alice Mary Fiddian who died at 25 years of age and finally a daughter Florence Fiddian who lived to the age of 92 years.

After Eliza died in 1851 Frederick William still had three young daughters and he married again in 1853 to Ann Chellingworth at West Bromwich and the following year they had a son Frederick Hubert Fiddian who became a Gentleman and a Silversmith (the type of metal was improving!). Frederick Hubert married Amelia Bushell in 1884 at Kings Norton but the family's misfortune was set to continue. Their first and only child was a son, Frederick William Fiddian who was born in 1889 but died the following year, as did Amelia. Frederick Hubert then died not long after in 1893, though whether this was from heartbreak or other causes is unknown.

So we are left with the final son of Charles Fiddian, Gentleman from his second marriage, namely Thomas Henry Fiddian born in 1812. He too was a Gentleman and an Accountant, and in 1850 he married Mary Ann Brunner at Oxford. They had nine children in all, though two died in childhood and a third at the age of only 23 years. Of the three surviving sons William Henry Fiddian born in 1852 at Birmingham was the eldest. He was a Journalist, moving around the country and at one time was Manager and Reporter for the Kentish Express & Ashford

News. In 1880 he married Ada Dowsing at Plomesgate in Suffolk and they had four children, two sons and two daughters. The two girls both became School Teachers a common occupation amongst female Fiddians, whilst Thomas Henry Arthur Fiddian born in 1890 at Canterbury was a Builder's Carpenter but never married. The youngest child was Charles Edward Fiddian born in 1898 who became a Pipe Fitter at Neath in Wales, married a local girl Annie Griffiths in 1919 and had one child, a daughter Joan.

The second son of Thomas Henry Fiddian, Gentleman was Thomas Brunner Fiddian born in 1855 at Birmingham who was variously a Jewelry Case Maker, Gas Meter Inspector and Publican. In 1879 he married Catherine Crow at Birmingham and they had a son and a daughter. The latter was Edith Carrie Fiddian born in late 1879 who was a School Teacher before her marriage in 1908. The son was Thomas Harold Fiddian born in 1881, a Municipal Clerk who married Florence Edith Kimberley in 1915 and had a son Thomas John Fiddian in 1916 at Aston in Warwickshire. There are no records of Thomas John's occupation but in 1941 he married Nora Lilian Burman at Bromsgrove and they had a single daughter Jill Fiddian in 1949. The final son of Thomas Henry was Charles Bridges Fiddian born in 1863 at Birmingham who was a Telegraphist. He married Emily Eliza Ann Thompson in 1892 and they too had a sole daughter.

CHAPTER 5 – Brass Founding and Religion

We now need to return to the middle son of William Fiddian (born in 1743) who was also a William Fiddian born in 1772 at Halesowen. Whilst it seems likely that William senior was involved with Iron Making at Halesowen it was only in Birmingham that Brass Founding was a fast growing industry at the end of the 18th century. It is most probable that William junior was first apprenticed to one such Brass Founder after his father's early death, but no doubt coming into his inheritance he was able to start his own business around the age of 21. He was almost certainly successful very quickly as he had married Catherine Showell by 1795 and they went on to have 11 children, including two pairs of twins though sadly three of the latter died in infancy.

William was an interesting character, not only building up a highly successful business known as the Fiddian Foundry which included Brass Founding, Cock Founding, Bell Founding and Brass Candlestick Making, but also contributing to society. He sat on the Board of Guardians of the Poor, was a Birmingham Street Commissioner (like his two brothers) and was a Circuit Steward for the Methodist Church. Perhaps most telling is that he eschewed the use of the title Gentleman (unlike his brothers) which would surely have been his if he had wanted it. No doubt having had 11 children in 14 years proved too much for poor Catherine and she died in 1810, but it wasn't until 1818 that William married again to Martha Millar who by then was too old to give him any more children. William died in 1842 at Great Hampton Street in Birmingham and shortly afterwards his son Rev Samuel Fiddian sold his business to James Barwell.

All of William's surviving children have a story to tell so we should consider them in turn. The eldest was Mary Fiddian born in 1796 who was initially given a Church of England christening but later a Methodist baptism after William had settled on that faith. She married Richard Peart in 1816, another family with strong religious connections that will be reviewed elsewhere. Next was another William Fiddian, born in 1797, who sadly died in 1821 at London before he really made his mark. The second son was Joseph Fiddian born in 1799 who was the only child who followed his father into the Brass Founding business, working as a Brass Cock Founder for William Fiddian & Son. He married Elizabeth Gill in 1825 and they had a daughter and two sons but the business

was sold by his brother Samuel. Next was Elizabeth Fiddian born in 1801 who went on to marry Richard Green, another Brass Founder so beginning the Fiddian-Green branch of the family and a story told elsewhere.

Another daughter Catherine Fiddian born in 1802 came next and she claimed she would never marry a Methodist Preacher like the many that frequented the Fiddian household. In the end she did fall for the Rev James Egan Moulton and married him in 1833, starting a dynasty of Moulton Methodist Ministers and a Baron which has been related already. Sibling number six was Rev Samuel Fiddian born in 1804, a Methodist Minister who married into the Paull family and will be discussed below. Sarah Fiddian born in 1806 was the only surviving twin who married Edward Jones in 1832 and had a son Edward Fiddian Jones, born in 1833 who became an Iron & Brass Founder and employed up to 70 staff. His son Charles Fiddian Jones born in 1864 was also Manager of an Iron Foundry. The last of the surviving siblings was Ann Fiddian born in 1809 who married her cousin Richard Coates in 1839 but had no children.

So despite this large family there were only two sons who kept the Fiddian name going and we will review them now. As discussed above Joseph had two sons, these being William Fiddian born in 1828 and John Gill Fiddian born in 1830 at Birmingham. William was variously a Plumber, Glazier, House Painter and Silversmith Warehouseman, marrying Fanny Lucas in 1852. They had a single son, John Lucas Fiddian in 1854 and William died in 1873 at the age of only 45 years. John Lucas was a House Painter and Paper Hanger at Southam in Warwickshire where he met and married Clara Charlotte Deugard in 1893 at the age of 39. Although Clara was nine years younger than John they never had any children and John died just after World War 1.

Joseph's other son John Gill was for a time a Harness and Leather Goods Maker at Aston in Warwickshire but both before and after this he had a variety of Clerking jobs in Birmingham. In 1857 he married Annie Hewitt at Birmingham and they went on to have three sons and three daughters. The eldest son was Joseph William Fiddian born in 1863 but after the 1871 census there are no further records of him so it must be assumed that he died as a boy, although the 1911 census indicates that all of Annie's six children were still alive. The next son was Frank Fiddian born in 1867 who became an Incorporated Accountant not long after the Society began in 1885. Frank married Helen Marianne McKewan in 1892 at West Bromwich in Staffordshire and they had a daughter the following year but no other children.

Frank's younger brother Henry Fiddian was born in 1872 and worked as a Cashier. In 1902 he married the younger sister of Frank's wife, Edith Annie McKewan at Aston and they had five children including two sons. The eldest son was John Arthur Fiddian born in 1907 at West Bromwich of whom we know very little. He married Ella Irene Moffett at Birmingham in 1939 but they had no children and John died at the age of 93 in the year 2000. Henry's other son was Frank Martin Fiddian born in 1916 who was only 62 when he died. He had married Janet Winifred Short in 1942 and they had had two sons and a daughter. The two sons Anthony M Fiddian born in 1947 and Jeremy R W Fiddian born in 1950 do not appear on any records after their birth.

CHAPTER 6 – Leaving the Midlands behind

Returning to the other son of William Fiddian (born in 1772) we find the Rev Samuel Fiddian born in 1804 at Rowley Regis in Staffordshire. He was ordained as a Methodist Minister in 1826 and began by working as a Travelling Preacher in the Leyton area of East London. By 1835 he was in Cornwall where he met and married Grace Burall Paull at Camborne. The Paull family of Cornwall will be discussed in detail elsewhere but it is worth noting that it was they who introduced the vocation of training as doctors into our family. Samuel and Grace were to have 13 children in all, nine daughters and four sons, and because of his work they were born in seven different counties around England. It is quite incredible to imagine this ever increasing family being lugged around the country though four of the girls did die young. In fact by the time all the siblings had died they would be scattered even further afield, including Wales, India and Australia.

Of those who survived childhood, the eldest was Mary Paull Fiddian born in 1836 who was a Teacher and never married. She migrated to Australia in the 1860s probably just after her brother Samuel and died at Creswick in Melbourne in 1908. Next was Grace Burall Fiddian born in 1838 at Tunstall in Staffordshire (like Mary), a Governess who never married and died aged 96 at Hastings in East Sussex. Samuel Fiddian born in 1842 at Castle Donnington in Leicestershire was the eldest son and in 1859 he went to Tasmania for three years before returning to study Maths at St John's College, Cambridge where he got a 1st Class Honours degree (Wrangler). He then migrated to Australia at the end of 1868 becoming the Headmaster of Prince Alfred College, Adelaide and two years later was the Senior Classics & Maths Master at Geelong College in Victoria. In 1872 Samuel became the Proprietor & Headmaster of Creswick Grammar School which he retained until 1903 the year before he died at the end of a visit to England. He and his family in Australia are discussed at greater length in a separate document.

The next daughter was Catherine Fiddian born in 1843 at Loughborough who fell for the Rev John Colwill Reddaway and married him in 1868 at Aston in Warwickshire. Their only child was Prof William Fiddian Reddaway born in 1872 at Middleton in Lancashire who became Professor of History at King's College Cambridge and was also Master (Censor) of FitzWilliam College,

Cambridge. The next son was Dr Alexander Paull Fiddian born in 1845 at Loughborough who trained at King's College, London and was both a Physician and a Surgeon. He married Mary Leonora Gregory in 1872 at Hackney in London and then practised at Cardiff, Wales where they had four sons and a daughter. Remarkably none of their five children married though some of them had quite colourful lives.

Alexander R Fiddian was born in 1875 and joined the Civil Service in 1897. He spent many years in the Colonial Office particularly in West Africa and in 1926 was appointed as an Establishment Officer for the Colonial & Dominion Office. Dr Benjamin Gregory Fiddian was born in 1876 and trained to be a Surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital receiving his MRCS in 1901. Sadly he spent from 1911 to his death in 1948 in Dorset County Asylum, Dorchester where he was classed as a lunatic. William Alfred Fiddian was born in 1879 and got a scholarship to study at Brasenose College, Oxford. Whether or not he ever completed his studies he was working in Gateshead as a Yardmaster for a Railway Company in 1911 and died in Newcastle in 1966. Dr Arthur Edwin Fiddian was born in 1881 and was a GP with a MRCS qualification. During WW1 he was a Captain in the RAMC and spent time in Egypt. Finally Constance Leonora Fiddian was born in 1889 and in 1911 was working as a Dishwasher, possibly because her father had just died.

The penultimate son of Samuel and Grace Fiddian was William Moulton Fiddian born in 1846 at Loughborough who graduated from St Catharine's College, Cambridge with a BA and a MA. He joined the Indian Civil Service rising from Collector, then Head Assistant to Magistrate and finally, District & Session Judge. In 1880 he married Alice Ann Bond, 14 years his junior at Cuttack, Bengal, India and they had three daughters and two sons all born in India. The first of these was Kenneth William Fiddian born in 1881 who was a Switchgear Designer but never married and died in Ealing at the age of 81. Next was Alice Muriel Fiddian born in 1883, she became the third wife of Robert Harborough Sherard in 1928 but was too late to have any children. Robert, a Writer and Journalist, was also a friend and Biographer of Oscar Wilde as well as the son of a Clergyman.

The second daughter was Gladys Kathleen Fiddian born in 1884 who married William Ronald Corrie in 1913 at Ealing. During WW1 Ronald was a 2nd Lieutenant in the East Yorkshire Regiment serving in France and was mortally wounded at the Battle of Arras, dying from his wounds two weeks later on 23

April 1917 at Le Touquet he was buried at Etaples. The second son was Cedric Moulton Fiddian born in 1890, a graduate of Cambridge University he became a School Teacher then Headmaster of King's College School, Cambridge. During the war he was invalided out of the army after becoming shell-shocked and remained quite eccentric being known to hold outdoor latin classes in a homemade 'bomb crater'. He married Winifred Annie Morton in 1922 at London and they had a son William Evelyn Harold Fiddian born in 1923 at Worcester.

William went to King's College School then King's College, Cambridge where he studied Agriculture, completing his degree after the war. He became an Agricultural Scientist and married Valerie Ann Addis in 1950 at Hartismere in Suffolk where they had three children. These were Susan Jean Fiddian born in 1952, Richard Morton Fiddian born in 1953 who has a son and a daughter, and Mark Laurence Fiddian born in 1956 a Photographer who also has a son and a daughter. The final daughter of William and Alice was Dorothy Aileen Fiddian born in 1891 of whom we know only that she died in 1979 at St Albans at a respectable age of 88 years.

Before discussing the last of Samuel and Grace's sons there are two more daughters to consider. The first of these was Sarah Jane Burall Fiddian born in 1851 at Pontefract in Yorkshire who was a Governess and lived to the age of 84 years having married Edward Lowder Downing, JP a Shipbroker and County Magistrate in 1896 at Newmarket. The other daughter was Pauline Burall Fiddian born in 1855 at Howden in Yorkshire who was also a Governess and married the Rev Frederick Charles Wright a Wesleyan Methodist Minister in 1890 at Cambridge.

CHAPTER 7 – Judge James Paull Fiddian & Granny Pink

Finally my great-grandfather James Paull Fiddian was the last son of Samuel and Grace Fiddian and was born in 1853 at North Shields in Northumberland. He was educated at Kingswood School, Birmingham and Christ's College, Cambridge before entering the Indian Civil Service in 1875. Like his older brother William Moulton he progressed from Collector, then Head Assistant to District & Session Judge and JP. In 1884 he married Ella Louise Vasey at Hawthorn in Melbourne, Australia and not long afterwards they enjoyed an extended honeymoon in America, which was recorded in a diary kept by Ella. The following year, their first child Hilda Grace Fiddian was born at Cambridge, though the other six children were all born in India. Hilda never married and died at the age of 99 at Carnforth in Lancashire, the longest lived Fiddian to date.

The next child Ella Margery Fiddian was born in 1886 at Chingleput in Madras but sadly died the following year. Then there were twins James Victor Fiddian and Guy Vasey Fiddian born in 1887 who both survived despite their place of birth. The next son was William Moulton Fiddian born in 1889 at Tellicherry in Kerala and after him Eric Alfred Fiddian born in 1893 at Trichinopoly in Madras. The final son was John Paull Fiddian who was born in 1894 but died at the age of four months and was buried at Berhampore in Madras. Two years later Judge James Paull died from dysentery at the age of 42 whilst Ella and the surviving children were in England and he was buried alongside John Paull at Bejipur Cemetery.

Although devastated by news of her husband's death brought to her by a sister-in-law, Alice whose husband William Moulton Fiddian was also serving in India, Ella managed to hold herself together for the sake of her five children. The final estate left by James Paull only came to a little over £700 (worth about £78000 in today's money) and yet she managed with a pension from the ICS to complete the education of their children, with three of her sons becoming doctors. Not long after his death she returned to Australia taking the children with her but as the oldest boys reached senior school age she came back to England in about 1901. After Public School Guy Vasey and James Victor both went to Cambridge University but the latter initially read Architecture before poor eyesight brought about a later switch to Medicine.

During WW1 both of them were Captains in the Royal Army Medical Corps, whilst William Moulton was a Captain in the Suffolk Regiment and Eric Alfred, who had obtained his MRCS at St Bartholomew's Hospital, was a Surgeon Lt in the Royal Navy. William Moulton or 'Bill' as he was known was the first to marry, in 1914 to Alice Emma Colyer and their two daughters were born during the war before two sons, Peter Moulton Fiddian and Michael Paull Fiddian came along in 1921 and 1923 respectively. Bill was the last of the Fiddian Gentlemen and largely worked in Suffolk as a Wheatbroker, and I can remember meeting Uncle Bill (actually my great-uncle) on a couple of occasions before his death in 1966 at Ipswich.

My grandfather Dr James Victor Fiddian was next to marry in 1915 to Elizabeth Mary Doris White at Peterborough Cathedral and the first of their daughters Barbara Hilda Fiddian was born in 1916 at Cambridge. After the war they had two more daughters, Judith Grace Fiddian born in 1919 and Doris Angela Fiddian born in 1921, then two sons James Anthony Fiddian born in 1922 and Richard Vasey Fiddian born in 1923 all at Ashton-under-Lyne where he was a Surgeon and GP. Despite having a twin brother James Victor was closer to his younger brother Bill and the two families had many summer holidays together, especially at the farm in Fulbourn near Cambridge where my granny came from. Her mother was of course a White as well and she was known by the children as Granny White which led to Ella their paternal grandmother becoming known as Granny Pink to distinguish her. Ella died in 1931 at Newton Abbot in Devon hopefully content that she had successfully brought up her children on her own.

The next of the brothers to marry was Eric Alfred who wed Marjorie Lisle Holdsworth in 1918, the daughter of Rev William West Holdsworth whom he had lodged with as a student before the war. Having failed to serve in the RAMC during WW1 like his doctor brothers he did so in WW2, first as a Captain but later as a Major. After running the No 1 Casualty Clearing Station in Italy he was recommended for a MBE. It does not appear as though they had any children and Dr Eric Alfred Fiddian died in 1968 at Midhurst in Surrey, the year after Marjorie had died there. Finally Dr Guy Vasey Fiddian married Eleanora Shaw in 1920 at Belper in Derbyshire and they had two daughters and a son at Stockport in Cheshire. Guy Vasey was the first of the brothers to die, in 1959 at Barnstaple in Devon.

CHAPTER 8 – My Fiddian Cousins

My grandfather Dr James Victor Fiddian had five children who have all now died, the last of these being my father Dr James Anthony Fiddian in 2010. Like his father, my father had been a GP at the same practice in Ashton-under-Lyne in Lancashire but between the two of them my aunt Dr Barbara Hilda Fiddian was the local GP. Barbara Hilda was the eldest of the five children and married quite late in life in 1952 to Joseph Bernard Bryson, having a single son Mark Fiddian Bryson who was born in Manchester in 1954. Mark is my only first cousin whom I regularly saw as a child despite the fact that we were a big family. He is married to Anne, with two grown-up sons and they all live ‘up north’.

Neither of my other two aunts, Judith Grace Fiddian and Doris Angela Fiddian, married so there were no more cousins there. My only uncle Dr Richard Vasey Fiddian was a General Surgeon and married twice, firstly to Aileen Lorna Adams in 1955 with whom he had a son Jonathan born in 1958 at Norwich. Aileen was born in Australia and they mostly lived there until 1967 when they returned to England, and where Aileen died shortly afterwards. So for most of my childhood Jonathan was on the other side of the world. Uncle Dick did marry again in 1971 to Jean Moore at St Albans and they had two daughters, Emily and Sarah, and an adopted son James Henry Vasey Fiddian born in 1977 who were of course a good deal younger than me. Both my father and uncle served in Burma during WW2, both saw action and my uncle oversaw the rebuilding of the Burma Road by Japanese POWs but neither of them ever spoke to me about it.

As far as my grandfather’s siblings and their families are concerned I had very little contact over the years. His elder sister Hilda Grace Fiddian did live near my grandparents and didn’t die until 1984 so I saw her regularly and she was quite a character, but never married. I don’t believe I ever met my grandad’s twin brother Dr Guy Vasey Fiddian, nor his son David Garth Fiddian or daughters Nancy Patricia and Mary Brinsden Fiddian. But through my interest in family history I have been able to make contact with my second cousin Simon Vasey Shaw Fiddian, born in 1950 at Bideford in Devon and son of David Garth. Like me Simon is now enjoying retirement and also has a fascination with Fiddian genealogy.

As I have already mentioned Eric Alfred Fiddian didn't have any children and so that leaves only William 'Bill' Moulton Fiddian as a potential source of more second cousins. I also discussed having met Uncle Bill a couple of times but I don't recall ever meeting his sons or daughters. Peter Moulton Fiddian was a similar age to my father and managed to equal the Fiddian record of four marriages, but as the first and third marriage was to the same lady I'm not sure if that really counts. His first wife was Elizabeth Mary Bennett and they first married in 1945 at Uxbridge. They had two daughters and a son and again through my family research I have made contact with one of them. Jane Alison Mary Moulton Fiddian born in 1946 at Hillingdon is another of my second cousins and we regularly exchange Fiddian facts. Jane lives at Bury St Edmonds where she runs an Interior Design Company with her daughter Raychel Claire Catherine Fiddian. Her father married his fourth wife Linda Osborn in 1980 at Bromley in Kent and they had a son Paul William Fiddian, who I am also in contact with.

CHAPTER 9 – The Fiddian Family today

As most of the subsequent generations of the family are still alive we should be more circumspect in discussing personal details to respect their privacy. In fact as many as 100 of those born as Fiddians may still be alive at the time of writing, which represents a little over 20% of all our family since 1550. This should not be too great a surprise because our family tree if represented as a pyramid would have a very broad base. It does though mean that it is quite difficult to represent all the family together in a single display and presumably this will get even harder with subsequent generations. There are also some anomalies caused by use of double-barrelled names, so that Sefton-Fiddians are strictly Fiddians whilst Fiddian-Greens are not though we are pleased to include both in our extended family.

Though the Midlands were home to our family for several centuries (and maybe many centuries) there are not very many still living there today. Despite some having been born there, the Sefton-Fiddians have now largely moved away as have the Fiddian-Greens. My 6th cousin Mark Alexander Fiddian and his family, descended from Benjamin Fiddian & Son, Spade Makers are still living in Worcestershire. Also still in the Birmingham area are several descendants of George Granger Fiddian via his great-grandsons Cyril and Geoffrey Fiddian, whose children would also be my 6th cousins. Apart from these two branches I think the rest of the family have been scattered far and wide, not only around England and Wales but also especially in Australia.

About one third of all living Fiddians call Australia home and for those Fiddians born in the last 50 years the figure is almost 40%, suggesting that it may not be long before the proportion reaches a half. As for the family who remain in the UK, the majority were born and live south of Birmingham especially Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, Oxfordshire, Norfolk and Glamorgan. So perhaps, most of us are gradually migrating southwards until we reach the sea. Regarding occupations, this has been dealt with elsewhere although the information is less readily available for family members born in the past 100 years except where I know them well.

My research has gradually brought me into contact with more of my Fiddian relatives and I can think of at least two 3rd cousins and another 6th cousin who are also in touch. A recently started Extended Fiddian Family Group on

Facebook already has 48 members and offers a means of keeping in touch with family relatives scattered around the globe. So there is really no excuse why the larger Fiddian Family should not remain just that since we all share more than just an unusual name.

Paul Fiddian – October 2015