

CROKER PRIZE FOR BIOGRAPHY 2022

2218 Not Royal But Gentrified

by Louise Barker

NOT ROYAL BUT GENTRIFIED

“Where did I come from? I asked my father. I was seven years old and had a family tree school project. There was no extended family in our lives and a family tree was a mysterious thing. *“We’re descended from royalty.”* My father answered, ruffling my hair and turning away so no further questions would follow. Many years later, embarking on family research, I searched for this royal ancestor but the closest I found was landed gentry. This would prove to be a connection not to be proud of.

My third grandfather Henry Hawke Peard (1804-1858) was an Esquire from Fermoy in County Cork.¹ Henry had inherited Coole Abbey, a manor built by his grandfather in 1765², on 157 acres. He also owned another 129 acres and four houses in the same parish.³ Coole Abbey was described as a *‘large and handsome mansion ... situated in an extensive and well-planted demesne.’*⁴

The landed gentry were esteemed as *‘... northerners, protestants, well educated, industrious, they are a credit to the country.’*^{7 5} while the catholic tenant farmers who rented bits of their land were viewed with derision. In the 1836 Poor Law Inquiry Henry stated that, *‘the devoutness of many Catholic labourers prevents them from earning more money as they observe too many church holidays and attending stations to confess, [which] take a good deal from what a labourer could earn, there are 11 holidays kept.’*⁶



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Henry Hawke Peard married Elizabeth Cathrow (1803 – 1848) on January 26th, 1826 in Great Amwell, Hertfordshire, England,⁸ Elizabeth’s father, George, was also an Esquire, owning substantial land, including a brewery and ale houses in Hoddington, Hertfordshire.⁹ Henry and Elizabeth resided mostly at Coole Abbey and between 1826 and 1848, Elizabeth gave birth to thirteen children; Elizabeth Catherine, Richard McCullough, William Henry, Anne Mary, Marion Cotton, Alberta Disney, George Spottswood, Henry Turner, Emma Fanny, Charles Harte, Augusta Maria, St Helier Phillip and Alice Cathrow.¹⁰

In early 1843 the Peards moved to the Channel Islands, settling in St Helier on Jersey,¹¹ part of an influx of wealthy immigrants in the 1840s.¹² Five thousand English had already settled in St Helier and Irish immigration was also prolific.¹³ The family lived in a house on Royal Crescent¹⁴ *‘inhabited chiefly by the English considerably improved in its appearance by the Theatre, which forms the centre of the arch, and whose pretty Greek porticos an agreeable relief to the plainness of the of the buildings that flank it.’*¹⁵

Little Augusta Mary died of the 'bloody flux' in May of that year at 9 months old.¹⁶ The following year my second great grandfather was born on March 25th.¹⁷ He was named after his birthplace, St Helier, but known fondly as Sainty.¹⁸ When Sainty was one, while the family were living abroad, healthy and well fed, the potato blight took hold in Ireland, causing mass starvation, disease and death.¹⁹ While their tenant farmers starved, the Peards, along with other wealthy expats, continued to enjoy quality Irish foods such as peas, beans, rabbits, fish, butter and honey which were exported to England right through the famine years.²⁰

Previously at the Poor Law enquiry of 1836 Henry had touted that his tenants' wellbeing had greatly improved since 1815.²¹ *'You now never see a person without shoes and stockings, which used to be the case, clothing is much cheaper, they are also improved in cleanliness of the house.'* He described their diet as *'potatoes with milk in summer, which is very cheap and in winter those that can afford it, the addition of bacon, salt fish etc.'* He gave details about the rent and quality of their dwellings, *'The usual rent was 'with a small patch of garden ... from £1 10s to £2 ... Their dwellings were composed of mud walls, thatched [and] in almost all you will find good bed and bedding'.*

In 1846 Henry went back to Ireland to attend several hearings regarding the starving masses.¹ Listed as a non-resident he subscribed the paltry amount of £2 to the Poor Fund in his Parish.²² In December of that year his brother in law Richard Campion, attended another Parish hearing on Henry's behalf. Richard described Henry's rents as fair with no small tenants, (a direct contradiction to Henry's 1836 description of holdings with *'a small patch of garden'*.) A man named Eugene Byrne disputed this strongly stating that *'rent was too dear'* and *'tenants were leaving fast.'* He continued on stating that when Henry *'was home up to 40 people were employed and now these were all unemployed.'*²³

By 1848 the Peard family had left the Channel Islands and at least Elizabeth, pregnant again, went to Cornwall, perhaps having a sibling there to stay with. Baby Alice Cathrow was born in Marazion on May 2nd 1848.²⁴ Elizabeth may have known that she was ailing, for despite the horrors of the famine still unfolding, she returned to Ireland and died at Coole Abbey on July 11th, 1848.²⁵ An unknown relative posted a notice in the Maitland Mercury and Hunter Valley Advertiser on December 30th, 1848 attesting to Elizabeth's death and the twelve children left *'to deplore her loss.'*²⁶

Henry lived for another ten years,²⁷ leaving his Estate worth £5000 to his eldest son Richard McCullough Peard who also claimed Elizabeth's estate.²⁸ The other eleven children were left to get by without any inheritance. All six girls married, staying in Ireland²⁹ and George joined the Royal British Navy.³⁰ Between 1852 and 1860 the other four boys made their way to Australia.³¹, their listed occupation of 'Gent' the only vestige of their former privileged life.³² St Helier married, settled in Lismore NSW and had many children including my great grandmother Florence.³³ However, as a seven year old I knew nothing of this. I proudly made my tree recording my parents, my five siblings and my grandmother the Queen.

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- ² *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archeological Society*, Vol 52, (1947) p 180 (<https://www.corkhist.ie/search.php>) viewed 4/3/22
- ³ *Ireland, Griffith's Valuation, 1847-1864*, Parish of Coole, 1853, p 108 (<https://www.ancestry.com.au/search/collections/1269peard>) viewed 4/3/22
- ⁴ Lewis, Samuel 1837, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (<https://www.libraryireland.com/topog/C/Coole-Kinnataloon-Cork.php>) viewed 10/01/22
- ⁵ Dillon, William 1888, *Life of John Mitchel in two volumes*, Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., London, Vol 1, p25 (<https://www.forgottenbooks.com/en/readbook/LifeofJohnMitchel>) viewed 22/10/21
- ⁶ Finn (author), Tom (ed) 1998, *Conna in History and Tradition*, Mallow, Conna Community Council, pp 66,68 ,71
- ⁷ Daniels, H Michael Photo 'Coole Abbey, Fermoy, County Cork, Ireland' (http://www.michaelhdaniels.com › property_images) accessed 23/5/21
- ⁸ England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973, Item 68 p23, FHM 1537766, entry for Elizabeth Cathrow and Henry Hawke, 26 January 1826 (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com.au>) viewed 29/7/21'
- ⁹ The National Archives, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, *Hertfordshire Record Office/ECb Deeds of the Kodesdon Brewery and a number of licensed houses owned or leased by the brewers.* (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>) accessed 2/2/22
- ¹⁰ (<https://familysearch.org>) viewed 10/12/21
- ¹¹ Jersey, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1915 for Augusta Maria Peard, St Helier 1841-1848, p 246 (<https://www.ancestry.com>) _ viewed 10/12/21
- ¹² Jersey Heritage, (<https://www.jerseyheritage.org/research/family-history/jersey-immigration/>) viewed 20/4/22
- ¹³ Jersey Heritage, (<https://www.jerseyheritage.org/research/family-history/jersey-immigration/>) viewed 20/4/22
- ¹⁴ Jersey, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1940, *Burials in St Helier, in the Island of Jersey*, p61 (<https://www.ancestry.com>) _ viewed 10/12/21
- ¹⁵ . (https://www.theislandwiki.org/index.php/Royal_Crescent) viewed 20/4/22
- ¹⁶ Jersey, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1915 for Augusta Maria Peard, St Helier 1841-1848, p 246 (<https://www.ancestry.com>) _ viewed 10/12/21
- ¹⁷ . St Helier Town Church Baptiism Register, September 9^t 1841 to August 13th, 1848, Volume 1, p246 (<https://catalogue.jerseyheritage.org/collection>) viewed 13/9/21
- ¹⁸ . St Helier Town Church Baptiism Register, September 9^t 1841 to August 13th, 1848, Volume 1, p246 (<https://catalogue.jerseyheritage.org/collection>) viewed 13/9/21
- ¹⁹ . Dunlop Family Tree (<https://ancestrylibrary.com.au>) viewed 15/9/21
- ²⁰ . Delaney, Enda, 2012, *The Great Irish Famine: A history in four lives*, Gill and McMillan, Dublin
- ²¹ *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archeological Society*, Vol 52, (1947) p 180 (<https://www.corkhist.ie/search.php>) viewed 4/2/22
- ²² The Castlelyons Poor Relief Fund Subscription List 1846, (<https://www.familysearch.org>) viewed 4/2/22
- ²³ Finn (author), Tom (ed) 1998, *Conna in History and Tradition*, Mallow, Conna Community Council, pp,71,72
- ²⁴ England Births and Christenings, 1538-1935, p2 for Alice Cathrow Peard, Marazion, Cornwall England 1848. (<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com.au>) viewed 23/6/21
- ²⁵ The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser (NSW; 1843-1893) Sat 30 Dec 1848,p3, Family Notices (<https://www.trove.com.au>) viewed 4/2/21

- ²⁶ The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser (NSW; 1843-1893) Sat 30 Dec 1848,p3, Family Notices (<https://www.trove.com.au>) viewed 4/2/21
- ²⁷ Calendar of wills and administrations 1858-1922, National Archives of Ireland, (<https://www.nationalarchives.ie>) viewed 8/2/22
- ²⁸ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 for Elizabeth Peard 1878 (<https://www.ancestry.com.au>) viewed 4/2/21
- ²⁹ Elizabeth, Ann, Marion Alberta, Emma, Alice (nee Peard) (<https://www.familysearch.org>) viewed 4/2/22
- ³⁰ Great Britain Admiralty, *The Navy List*, 1866, John Marledon, Albermarle St, Bookseller to the Admiralty, 1855 p70 (<books.google.com.au>) viewed 22/5/22
- ^{31/32} William Peard, 1852, Victoria, Australia, Assisted and Unassisted Passenger Lists, 1839-1923, (<https://www.ancestry.com.au>) viewed 4/4/22
- ^{31/32} Charles Peard, Henry Peard 1859, Victoria, Australia, Assisted and Unassisted Passenger Lists, 1839-1923, (<https://www.ancestry.com.au>) viewed 4/4/22
- ^{31/32} St Helier Peard 1860, Victoria, Australia, Assisted and Unassisted Passenger Lists, 1839-1923, (<https://www.ancestry.com.au>) viewed 4/4/22
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