

# Genealogy by *Gaslight*

*The Family Tree of Novelist, Patrick Hamilton*



*Patrick Hamilton. (Photograph courtesy of the Bruce and Aileen Hamilton Estate.)*

Those who enjoy the novels of Patrick Hamilton (1904-1962) will perhaps recognize the way that themes of heritage and family history feed into his writings. The embarrassing disasters that result from obsessional relationships between couples of differing social backgrounds are the staple of many of his works. So too are his favourite topics of disappointment, squandered inheritance, sham respectability, and the horror of going down in the world. Although most of his characters are strangely alone in the world - adrift from their families and communities in cheap boarding houses or hotels - family background drives their behaviour, interactions and fate. It is therefore particularly tempting to examine the writer's own family tree.

Anthony Walter Patrick Hamilton was born on St Patrick's Day, 1904. Enjoying commercial success early in life with two plays, *Rope* and *Gaslight*, both made into films, he produced a total of twelve novels that became increasingly dark in tone until his alcohol-related death in 1962. He was also one of the chief exponents of the now extinct genre - the boarding house novel. Many of his works are set in the West End of London and deal with a collection of pathetic low-lives, chancers, street walkers, snobs and boozy bores. Some of his more sinister characters use pedigree and family background, always untrue or exaggerated, to further their wicked ends. Their victims are easily identified as those who are quick to be taken in by a posh accent or a claim of distinguished ancestry. They are also sensitive about the way that gentle people always seem to "do the right thing" - that is take big risks in life that always seem to come off. This fact alone can be their undoing.

Both Patrick's parents were novelists. His mother, Ellen Hockley, wrote under the pseudonym, Olivia Roy, and one of her works, *The Husband Hunter*, was turned into an early Hollywood film in 1920. In addition to his writing activities, Hamilton's father, (Walter )Bernard, was a keen researcher of his own family history, much of it thought to be fanciful. Insisting that his own Scottish ancestors were steeped in the Scottish royal throne, Bernard once remarked to his son that " ..If it ever comes to war between England and Scotland - you and I go over the border." <sup>1</sup>

A committed Marxist, Patrick Hamilton may not have been comfortable with the suspicion that he might be one of the toffs. In the 1952 novel *The West Pier*, one of Hamilton's meanest creations, Ralph Ernest Gorse, wins the good will of shop girl, Esther Downes, when he entrusts his fabulous gold ring to her, complete with family crest (horse's head in profile) and the highly appropriate family motto (*ride through*). In reality, the crest belonged to the Scottish Lords of Belhaven and Stenton who bore the surname of Hamilton and held lands near Glasgow. This was a particularly contested title owing to many of its holders dying without issue, and on several occasions it became extinct. Yet Bernard Hamilton was certain that he could claim common descent with its holders, going to the trouble of engraving its heraldic motifs into his own bookplates<sup>2</sup>. In *The West Pier*, Gorse's gesture with his fabulous gold ring is planned for the sole purpose of swindling Esther Downes out of her meagre life's savings. This piece of heraldry becomes the hallmark of the conman, perhaps mocking Bernard's claims to ancient nobility in the process.

There are other examples of Hamilton taking a swipe at his father's genealogical boasts. In his definitive boarding house novel, *Craven House* (1926), the book's main character, Master Wildman, exposes the bogus family tree of fellow lodger - fiercely proud Scot , Mrs Nixon. Young Wildman's devastating revelation at dinner one night that Mrs Nixon was, in fact, a Sussex-born sasanach is the catalyst for all-out war among the lodgers, destroying the superficial calm that existed between them for fifteen years.

## The Governor and the Gypsy

According to Hamilton's father the whole family stood in the shadow of Patrick's great grandfather, Colonel Edward Wildman <sup>3</sup>, (1791-1846) a swashbuckling hero on horseback at the Battle of Waterloo, who lived with a metal plate in his head from deep saber injuries. <sup>4</sup> Indeed "Wildman" appears to have been the only surname from his personal tree that Hamilton gave to one of his fictional characters - in this case the forlorn but trying to be cheerful army major , who falls down on his luck and comes to lodge at *Craven House* with his young son .

The Wildman pedigree is well documented and so is beyond the scope of this essay. It is widely known that members of this family were agents for the enormous Jamaican sugar plantations of William Beckford , and at least one of these estates fell into Wildman hands as a result of an

---

<sup>1</sup> Sean French, *Patrick Hamilton- a Life*, page 11. Faber & Faber. 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Sean French, *Patrick Hamilton- a Life*, page 10. Faber & Faber. 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Sean French, *Patrick Hamilton- a Life*, page 11. Faber & Faber. 1993.

<sup>4</sup> H.G. Hart, Lieut. 49th Regt., , *Hart's Annual Army List, Militia List, and Imperial Yeomanry List* , 1840, page 52

unpaid debt on the part of its owner . <sup>5</sup> This lucrative enterprise, living off the labour of up to 800 slaves at its peak, enabled Colonel Edward Wildman's older brother ,Thomas, to purchase and then renovate George Gordon Byron's ancestral home, Newstead Abbey, although he nearly bankrupted himself in the process.

Intriguingly , though, a far more prominent ancestor than Colonel Edward Wildman existed one generation back in the Hamilton family tree. This was Sir Hildebrand Oakes (1754-1822), Colonel of the 52nd Regiment of Foot, then one-time governor of Malta, (1810-1813) and the recipient of a military baronetcy in 1813 for services to the army. (His portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, London, is said to evoke a striking resemblance to Bill Clinton. ) Bernard Hamilton appeared to have been far less boastful about Oakes than Wildman. Perhaps this was due to the fact that Bernard's grandmother, Antonia , was the result of a liaison in approximately 1800-1 between the bachelor Oakes and a woman whom Hamilton's biographer simply called a "Spanish gypsy dancer". This was Antonia Mahona Olivar, very likely a Minorcan, about whom little else is known .

A close friend of intrepid world traveller, Lady Hester Stanhope, Hildebrand Oakes was made Lieutenant Governor of Portsmouth in 1804. Two years later the parish register of nearby Alverstoke, Hampshire, shows that he was father to another child out of wedlock - in this case a son, christened Hildebrand, by a woman named Abigail. <sup>6</sup> Things might have been very different for subsequent Hamilton generations had this child survived. But the child's death was recorded soon after the birth , leaving Oakes' daughter , Antonia, as only living issue at the time of his death at Ramsgate in 1822. His last will and testament makes it clear that she was to be one of the major beneficiaries of his substantial personal estate. <sup>7</sup>

(As an aside, Oakes' grandmother was a descendant of the Jacob family of Bromley. <sup>8</sup> Through this line there is a direct link to the First Earl of Cork, Richard Boyle, and the Earls of Barrymore.)



*Heraldic motif on Ralph Ernest Gorse's gold ring, which proved to be the undoing of Esther Downes. (West Pier. (1952)) This same crest and motto belonged to the Scottish Lords of Belhaven and Stenton. Hamilton's father, Bernard, claimed descent and had the piece of heraldry engraved on his bookplates.*

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/wildman-james-1747-1816>. Accessed December 2012.

<sup>6</sup> "England Deaths and Burials, 1538-1991," index, FamilySearch , <https://familysearch.org>. FHL microfilm 1596020. Accessed Oct 1st. 2012.

<sup>7</sup> National Archives Kew, Will of Sir Hildebrand Oakes, 01 October 1822, PROB 11/1662/349

<sup>8</sup> John Debrett, *The baronetage of England; containing their descent and present state* .Page 1303, Vol.II, London 1815. Google books.

## The Provosts of Kinghorn

One of Hamilton's common literary themes concerns how the course of a character's life is changed dramatically when they receive an unexpected wind-fall from a deceased relative. This is the case, for instance, with the much put-upon Enid Roach in the 1947 novel, *Slaves of Solitude*, set during the Second World War. The money in question isn't a large sum, but it is enough to allow her to escape her grey predicament.

This theme is amply echoed in Hamilton's own heritage when his twenty-one year old father, Bernard, was said to have inherited an enormous sum of money from his Wildman relatives, reputed to be in the region of £100,000. Available records of the potential benefactors' wills would suggest the sum was much smaller in reality, perhaps in the region of fifteen thousand, which would better explain how Bernard managed to run completely through the fortune by early middle age.

Patrick's grandfather, the much-married Reverend Walter Hamilton, had been a Church of England clergyman, living a life of peaceful obscurity in the service of the parishioners of Waldershare, Whitfield and West Langden near Dover for over forty years.<sup>9</sup> In 1852, Walter, then curate for Brenchley, Kent, married Ellen, third daughter of James Beckford Wildman of Chilham Castle, one time MP for Colchester.<sup>10</sup> Ellen died at Scalford vicarage at the early age of 25 in 1855. In 1861, St James's Church, Paddington, Walter Hamilton married Ellen's second cousin, Sarah Maria, the second daughter of Colonel Edward Wildman and Antonia Oakes. There were a number of stillborn births born to the couple but Bernard turned out to be the only surviving child of this marriage. Sarah Maria died on Oct 5 1869 aged 46. Hamilton married for the third time a Mary Jane Hernamen of Newton Abbot in 1872.<sup>11</sup>

Census records showed that Walter Hamilton's parents were Andrew and Agnes Hamilton. Scottish-born Andrew (b 1793) appears to have been the first Hamilton to seek a career south of the Scottish border and had a long-standing position as secretary of one of the major insurance companies of the day, the Alliance British and Foreign Life and Fire Assurance Company, whose offices were at Bartholomew Lane and 8 Pall Mall, London.<sup>12</sup> He had six sisters and brothers, most notably Walter Hamilton, who became a colonel in the Madras army.

Scottish church records revealed that Andrew Hamilton's parents were Catherine Biggar, member of a family of linen manufacturers from Sheens, and Andrew Hamilton, deputy comptroller of excise for Scotland. Andrew Senior was also the author of a book on the principles of taxation, published in 1793, the year of Andrew Junior's birth. He also had literary and philosophical interests which found an outlet in membership of the Edinburgh-based *Speculative Society*, whose members at one time included Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. Andrew Senior died

---

<sup>9</sup> *The Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*, Sept 17, 1898, page 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Essex Standard*, 5 Nov, 1852.

<sup>11</sup> *The Western Times*, April 9, 1872.

<sup>12</sup> *Pigot's Directory* 1828-9. Appendix.

young, leaving six children. His wife, Catherine Biggar, may have experienced financial difficulties as a result. She was eventually granted a civil service pension of £49 a year but only in 1838. The family burial site was located at the north side of Edinburgh's St Cuthbert's church yard - with a plaque to Andrew showing that he died at Buxton, July 12 1796, in the 42nd year of his age.<sup>13</sup> Catherine herself was buried there in 1848 (aged 82) along with one of her daughters, three sons and two daughter-in-laws. Patrick Hamilton must have been aware of this burial plot as his fictional character, Master Wildman, makes an oblique reference to the same location when discussing his ancestors' resting place with his fellow lodgers in the novel *Craven House*.<sup>14</sup>

Eighteenth Century Scottish parish records enabled Andrew Hamilton's origins to be traced further back to the history-steeped seaport of Kinghorn in Fife. His parents there were identified as Robert Hamilton and Agnes Bruce.<sup>15</sup> Kinghorn, which was associated with the Lyon family and their seat at Glamis Castle, was a small but geographically important sea port with a recorded population of a little under two thousand in 1755, not long after Andrew's birth.<sup>16</sup> It had been elevated into a royal burgh as early as the 1285, but its probable heyday was in the 17th Century when a spa popularised by Charles I's physician, Dr Patrick Anderson, was established there. The mineral waters were associated with a spring located near rocks where King Alexander III fell to his death in a riding accident (1286) - a catastrophic event in the history of Scotland.<sup>17</sup>

The Deeds of Kinghorn (1682-1839), published by the Fife Family History Society, provide an insight into the legal and business life of the community. And the Hamilton family were mentioned many times there. They describe Robert Hamilton's father, also Robert (~1678 -1751), as a mariner, a ships master and a merchant.<sup>18</sup> From the nearby harbour at Pettycur, there were high levels of boat traffic to Leith and Edinburgh City over the Firth of Forth. And it is likely that the Hamiltons were involved in this lucrative business. Both Robert Hamilton Senior and Junior served as Kinghorn's provost (mayor) and magistrate. Window duty tax records from the period indicate that the Hamilton residence had 19 windows, which suggests they had one of the largest properties in the burgh.<sup>19</sup> Court records build up a picture of Robert Hamilton Junior as a somewhat argumentative figure, given to disputes with fellow citizens, including the Wardlaws of Abden, and also with possible relatives through marriage such as the Bruces. As official compiler of court records for the faculty of advocates, Hamilton got to set down some of these disputes for publication himself!<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> "Epitaphs and Sepulchral Inscriptions", *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, Vol. 78. page 838.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Hamilton, *Craven House*, page 217.

<sup>15</sup> Scotland's People, <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> 22/03/1752 Hamilton, Andrew (o.p.r. births 439/0000300187 Kinghorn). Accessed September 2012.

<sup>16</sup> John Smith, *A System of Modern Geography*, Volume 1. London. 1810.

<sup>17</sup> John M Leighton, *History of the County of Fife: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, 1840, page 208. Google Books

<sup>18</sup> Deeds of Kinghorn, (1682-1839), <http://fifefhs.org/Records/Deeds/kinghorndeeds.html>. Accessed Jan 3, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Kinghorn Community Website, Kinghorn Window and House Tax 1753 to 1798 - National Records Of Scotland Ref: E326/1/189, <http://www.kinghorncommunity.org.uk/Kinghorn%20Window%20Tax%201760.pdf>. Accessed Jan 24 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Faculty of Advocates Scotland, *Decisions of the Court of sessions, from 1769 to 1772*. Page 308-16. Edinburgh. 1803.

Agnes Bruce's connections were even more interesting and may provide the key to Bernard Hamilton's fervent identification with the Scottish throne. Thanks to the prominence of one of her nephews, John Bruce, (1744-1822) professor of logic at Edinburgh University and founder of the *Speculative Society*, she could be linked in available literature to the Bruces of Earlshall. This family has been consistently identified as one of the oldest cadets of the royal house of Bruce.<sup>21</sup> There is also anecdotal evidence of the same Bruce family being linked to figures such as William Kirckaldy of the Grange, defender to the death of Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>22</sup> Parish records do not go back far enough to confirm these links beyond suspicion, but they are worth further investigation.

In 1865 Andrew Hamilton's older brother, Walter, (born 1787), an ex-colonel in the Madras army and then well into his seventies, came into some good fortune. He turned out to be the oldest nearest relative of Margaret Tyndall-Bruce (1788-1869), the only child born out of an illegitimate relationship between Lt. Col. Robert Bruce, a nephew of Agnes Bruce of Kinghorn, and an Indian woman from Madras. This meant that he was entitled to inherit the lucrative Scottish estates of Nuthill, Falkland and Myres in north east Fyfe. Included in the inheritance were the stately residence, Falkland House, laid out on 6 square kilometers, and also the then ruined Falkland Palace, a favourite hunting seat of the Stuart kings. Changing his surname to Tyndall-Bruce, Walter Hamilton applied for and received the grant of a coat of arms from Lord Lyon, the Scottish herald, in 1873. The third quarter on his shield described the Hamilton element of the coat: *Gules, a Cross potent fitchee Or between three Cinquefoils Argent*. It was hoped that this could help to further pinpoint family links with this branch of Hamiltons, but it turns out that this heraldic pattern is common to all arms-bearing Hamilton families.

It would not be difficult to imagine the effect on Andrew Hamilton (the nearest in age to Walter) and his descendants of missing out by a whisker on this good luck. But this scenario must surely have formed part of the inspiration for the ludicrous Joan Plumleigh-Bruce in Patrick Hamilton's novel, *Mr Stimpson and Mr Gorse* (1953). The widow of a colonel in the Indian army, now playing lady of the manor at her little suburban pebble-dashed house in Reading, Plumleigh-Bruce's snobbery made her an easy dupe for the ever-predatory Ralph Gorse.

Unfortunately older relevant parish marriage records don't record names of parents, but from dates and naming patterns in the Hamilton family, it is probable that Robert Hamilton Senior's parents were Alexander Hamilton and Jonet Vertie of Kirkaldy (married circa 1666). Very little information could be found about this couple, but it is possible that they too, like their near descendants, were involved in shipping at Kirkaldy since it was a prominent port for trade with the Low Countries in the Seventeenth Century. Directories for Kinghorn from the mid-Nineteenth Century would seem to show that the link between the Hamiltons and Kinghorn had died out.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> *The Annual Register or a view of the History, Politics, and Literature of the year 1826*. Page 240. 1827. Google Books. Obituary of Professor John Bruce.

<sup>22</sup> Louis A. Barbe, *Kirkaldy of Grange*, Ontario Legislative Library, page 153-4.

<sup>23</sup> Cupar-Fife, A. Westwood, *Westwood's Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife and Kinross*, 1862.

## The Riddle of the Two Miss Hockleys

It was almost a joke within the Hamilton family that Patrick's mother, Ellen (Nellie) Hockley, was an unreconstructed snob and a terror to tradesmen and staff who ever came in contact with her. Yet research into her family background turned up its own skeletons. And as Hamilton was, above all, one of Soho's best chroniclers, the maternal Hockley line provides a certain ancestral link to that part of London.

In April 5, 1822, the parish of St James, Piccadilly, recorded the baptism of a child named Anthony John Frederick Weldon Hockley. The child's parents on the baptism register were identified as Elizabeth and Anthony Hockley of Rupert Street. The father's occupation was described as "carrier". According to Patrick Hamilton's biographers, family lore held that the Irish peer, Anthony Weldon, future 4th Baron Kilmorony, County Laois, was the actual father of this child, Ellen's father. But is there any evidence to back up this theory? If true, Hamilton's first name at time of christening came down from an ancestor who was never officially part of his tree.

Anthony Weldon (1781- 1858), son of the rector of Athy, Co. Kildare, joined the East India Company at fourteen years of age, becoming a lieutenant fireworker the following year. He was eighteen when he took part in the Siege of Seringapatam (1799). By 1813 he had attained the rank of major.<sup>24</sup> He saw action during the Mahratha Wars and was wounded at the important Siege of Asseerghur (Asirgharh) in 1819, a battle which virtually left the East India Company in unopposed control of India. Like the Hamiltons, the Weldon family was essentially a military one, but with many of its members holding positions in the church. It is thought that the family settled in Ireland from Northamptonshire during the Tudor plantations. The first mention they received in official Irish records was in 1609, when a Walter Weldon wrote a letter of complaint to the Lord Chancellor after agents of the Earl of Kildare took away a portion of his harvest by force, injuring his wife in the process.<sup>25</sup>

Records for the East India Company at the British Library reveal that from 1820 onwards Anthony Weldon was taking a well-earned, three year-long furlough after over twenty years of continual service with the company.<sup>26</sup> The East India Company's furlough was a strange institution, satirised by writers including Charles Dickens. One of its main peculiarities was that it left soldiers who returned to Britain with barely enough money to feed themselves. In July 1820, Anthony Weldon was recorded as landing off Weymouth on the ship the *Albion*.<sup>27</sup> This would certainly have placed him in England the year before Anthony Hockley's birth. The London address of the child's parents, Rupert Street, now part of present-day Soho, was closely associated with employees of the East India Company at the time.

---

<sup>24</sup> British Library, St Pancras, L/MIL/11/67-69.

<sup>25</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland, James 1st, 1608-1610*. London 1874. Page 332.

<sup>26</sup> British Library, St Pancras, *East India Registry and Directory 1822*. Edition 1. India Office Library. Cox & Baylis, London.

<sup>27</sup> *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany*. Vol 10. East India Company. 1821. Page 189,208.

Bizarrely , not long after his furlough, Weldon returned to Madras and the following year, 1824, married a woman with the same surname as Elizabeth Hockley from Piccadilly. His new wife was Harriet Hockley, youngest daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Hockley, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Army of Reserve, and sister to one of Weldon's comrades in the Madras Artillery, Captain Thomas Hockley, who had accompanied him on furlough. These Hockleys had their origins in Bury, St Edmund's, Sussex. (Hockley is an Old English habitation name associated mainly with the counties of Essex and Warwick.)<sup>28</sup> This begs the question, who was Elizabeth Hockley of Rupert Street, and is it conceivable that she had no connection to the Hockley family that Weldon married into two years after she reputedly gave birth to Anthony's child ?

Clues to the identity of Elizabeth Hockley strongly suggest that she was born in Braintree, Essex, in 1801 to Robert Hockley, a local bricklayer, and his wife, Priscilla. (Braintree lies about twenty-five miles from Bury, St Edmund's. This geographical closeness raises the suspicion that both Hockley families share a common ancestor from an earlier time. ) Further background to Elizabeth Hockley is provided by a court case from 1841 that was reported in the newspapers.<sup>29</sup> In this case, Elizabeth, who was described as a lodging house keeper from Chapel Street , Soho, was prosecuted by the parish of Braintree for failing to support her elderly father who had become resident in the local workhouse. (The census for 1841 shows a Robert Hockley of about the right age staying in the Braintree Union.) The parish presumed she had means because she had recently sold a copyhold property to one of the overseers of the parish for 500 shillings. When the magistrate enquired how she had come to own this property, she declined to answer but said she would be happy to do so *in private*. Had Anthony Weldon given her the money to buy this property? The poor rate collector for Soho backed up Elizabeth Hockley's case, describing her circumstances in London as difficult and the case went in her favour. During her evidence she mentioned that she was obliged to care for an invalid sister who lived with her. Her census return for Chapel Street for 1841 confirms that this sister was called Susannah , a younger daughter of Robert and Priscilla Hockley.

Shortly after marriage in India, Anthony Weldon retired from the Madras Infantry in January 1824,<sup>30</sup> with several medals and quite a few war wounds to his name. The newly weds returned to Ireland and took up residence at Rahin House (or Rahinderry) outside the village of Ballylinan, County Laois, about four miles from Athy. A curious local tale grew up in Kildare that the Weldon "family seat", Kilmorony Castle, was occupied by their cousins , the Trenches, because Anthony's relatives hadn't heard from him in India for thirty years and had presumed he was dead <sup>31</sup>. His service record with the East India Company contradicts this version, however, showing that he was known to be very much alive and well during this period and had never been missing in action.

Anthony Weldon succeeded to the title, 4th Baronet Burdett of Dunmore, on the death of his cousin, Sir William Burdett, in 1840. He served as High Sheriff for County Laois in the 1830s and 40s. The district was hit hard during the Famine years as the memoranda book of his land agent, Thomas Crawley, confirms. <sup>32</sup> Over the pages of this simple pencil-written ledger, the number of

---

<sup>28</sup> Hanks & Hodges, *A Dictionary of Surnames*, page 258.

<sup>29</sup> *London Standard*, June 26th 1841, page 4.

<sup>30</sup> India Register 1855, findmypast.com. Accessed Jan 22 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Frank Taafe, *The Kildare Nationalist*. July 2011

<sup>32</sup> NLI, Memoranda books of Thomas Crawley, agent to Sir Anthony Weldon , c. 1830-55. Mss. 9962-9964



tenants listed at Ballylinan between 1845 and 1851 was halved, while all listed cottiers disappeared completely. As chair of the Ballyadams Relief Committee, Weldon corresponded with the government on several occasions, reporting the loss of half of the potato crop in the mountain district and a quarter in the remaining parts of the barony.<sup>33</sup> His suggestions included the distribution of suitable seed and the provision of public employment in the form of much-needed drainage projects.

Anthony Weldon's personal cash book, which is available at the National Library in Dublin, gives a flavour of life at Rahin. He evidently kept up his interest in Indian affairs with a regular subscription to the *Times of India*. There were also trips to London at least twice a year, sometimes lasting over a month.<sup>34</sup> Sir Anthony Weldon lived out the remainder of his life at Rahinderry and died in 1858, leaving an estate of £5000. No copy of his will, which was proved in the Principal Registry, Dublin, could be located. So it is not known if Elizabeth or Antony Hockley were remembered by him. He was laid to rest in the family vault at St John's churchyard, Athy, County Kildare. No trace of the original Rahinderry House exists today.

## The Tooth Fairy

There is often great attention paid to people's teeth in Patrick Hamilton's novels. In *Mr and Mrs Simpson and Mr Gorse* there is Joan Plumleigh Bruce's "rabbity" teeth (the unlikely secret of her attraction to men apparently). Her maid, Mary McGinnis's, "awful Irish teeth". The progressive gaps and shortcomings of the teeth of the lodgers at *Craven House* is also painfully described. Perhaps this is no surprise given the major part that dentistry played in Hamilton's maternal family story.

As early as 1841, Elizabeth Hockley's son with Anthony Weldon, known always as Anthony Hockley, was apprenticed to a Scottish dentist, William Sinclair. A newspaper reference from 1850 puts his address at Gerard Street, Soho. In his 1851 Census return, he was providing lodgings at his home to a twenty year-old cousin, Robert Hockley, from Braintree, Essex. (Robert's 1841 Census revealed that he was living at Coggeshall Lane, Braintree, with his mother, Mary, a charwoman, and three siblings.) Anthony undoubtedly helped to lift Robert out of poverty and he too went on to enjoy a successful career in dentistry until his untimely death at Gravesend in 1871. Anthony was admitted as a member of the College of Dentists in 1860, when he was living at Princes Street, Hanover Square.<sup>35</sup> He served as honorary secretary of the college shortly afterwards.

And what became of Elizabeth Hockley? It would appear that she lived the rest of her life in London. In 1851 her address was Albert Cottage, Kentish Town. By then she was describing herself as a ladies housekeeper. It would appear that she never married, although she referred to herself as a "widow" in her census returns. It is highly likely that Anthony was her only child. Life became easier for her with Anthony's improving economic situation as a successful and even fashionable

---

<sup>33</sup> NAI, Bishop Street, Famine Relief Commission Papers, RLFC2/Z298. Anthony Weldon to CSO, Jan 13, 1846.

<sup>34</sup> National Library of Ireland, Cash book of Sir Anthony Weldon, 4th Bart., 1848-52. Ms. 9942.

<sup>35</sup> *Morning Post*, Wed June 6, 1860, page 3.

London dentist. Records make it clear that he was loyal and supported her from the time he was able to do so. In 1861 she was staying at his home in Hammersmith. <sup>36</sup> Her death from tuberculosis was recorded on November 27, 1872. Anthony was the witness to her death. The deception was kept up on her death certificate with Elizabeth being described as the “widow of Anthony John Hockley, butler”. <sup>37</sup>

Anthony Hockley married Agnes Boardman in 1852, at All Soul’s Church, Marylebone. If the groom was economical with the truth about his father in his marriage certificate, then so too was the bride. Perhaps in the belief that she was “marrying up”, Agnes Boardman described her late father, George, who had died a few months before, as a “manufacturer”. But records show that he had been a constable with the Royal Constabulary, joining the force shortly after its formation in 1829. In a move that Hamilton might have enjoyed, his beat until his resignation in 1838 was London’s Marylebone Lane, where he would have enjoyed a pay packet of £1 a week and one day off a fortnight. His 1851 Census return reveals that he was living on his police pension by then and twenty-one year old Agnes was engaged in boosting the family income by making epaulets for the army. In his death notice in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, March 27, 1852, he was described as being late of the city of Norwich and “a most zealous officer in the police”.

Patrick’s mother, Nellie Hockley, died of an overdose in 1934. <sup>38</sup> It is not known what, if anything, she revealed about her origins to her novelist son. Whether it was by coincidence or not, Patrick had a close connection for many of his creative years to Norfolk, the county most associated with the Boardman surname. A small cottage at Burnham Overy Staithe provided a sanctuary away from distractions in the 1930s, and the *Siege of Pleasure* was written there. Hamilton’s ashes were sprinkled over nearby Blakeney Flats in 1962. <sup>39</sup>

Page 6.

1852. Marriage solemnized at <i>All Souls Church in the Parish of St. Marylebone in the County of Middlesex</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
9	September 1852	<i>Anthony John Hockley</i> <i>Widower</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Dentist</i>	<i>All Souls Church, District</i>	<i>Anthony Hockley</i> <i>George Boardman</i>	<i>Genl in Army (Deceased)</i> <i>Manufacturer (Deceased)</i>
		Married in the <i>District Church of St. Marylebone</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <i>John Boardman</i> Minister of the said Church, after <i>John Boardman</i> by me, <i>William Cashey</i> Minister of the said Church.						
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>John Boardman</i>		In the Presence of us,		<i>William Cashey</i> Minister of the said Church <i>John Boardman</i> Minister of the said Church <i>William Cashey</i> Minister of the said Church		

Marriage certificate of Anthony Hockley and Agnes Boardman in 1852, All Souls Church, Marylebone, London

<sup>36</sup> 1861 Census of England. *Ancestry.co.uk*. Accessed July 31 2012.

<sup>37</sup> GRO UK, Death Cert of Elizabeth Hockley, 1872, qtr 4, vol. 01b, page 60.

<sup>38</sup> Nigel Jones, *Through a Glass Darkly*, page 205.

<sup>39</sup> *Literary Norfolk*, [http://www.literarynorfolk.co.uk/burnham\\_overy\\_staithe.htm](http://www.literarynorfolk.co.uk/burnham_overy_staithe.htm). Accessed Feb 1, 2013.

## Conclusion

Bernard Hamilton's loud boasts about his direct descent from the Scottish Lords of Belhaven and Stenton could not be proved in the course of this project. Although the Hamiltons were undoubtedly people of note in their native Kinghorn, Fife, more work needs to be done to unearth their real origins. Less questionable is the family connection to Robert the Bruce, through Hamilton's great great grandmother, Agnes Bruce of Kinghorn and Grangemyre. In this sense at least Bernard's boasts were not all hot air. The heraldic crest motif on his bookplates belonged to the Lords of Stenton and Belhaven but it also belonged to the Bruces, his undoubted ancestors.

In this writer's opinion, there is solid circumstantial evidence to back up the story that the Irish peer, Anthony Weldon, was the grandfather of Patrick's mother, Ellen Hockley. It is interesting too to contrast the fates of his two ancestors, Antonia Oakes and Anthony Hockley. Both were born out of wedlock to socially marginalised mothers, yet one was the acknowledged recipient of her father's large fortune, while the other had to make his own way in the world with a father who didn't officially exist.

There were several men of the cloth in Hamilton's pedigree. Notably Hamilton's grandfather, Walter Hamilton, Vicar of Waldershare. On the maternal side there was his great great grandfather, Walter Weldon, Rector of Athy, and through his wife, Ann Burdett, a direct link to the Bishop of Kildare existed. Yet there is a total lack of any matters relating either to religion or characters associated with the church in Hamilton's fiction. There is also a noticeable absence of baronets, Scottish lairds or anyone with a genuine link to the aristocracy from either side of Hadrian's Wall.

Despite this absence what stands out from the research into this project is that Patrick Hamilton didn't have to look much further than his own family to mine much of the themes for his novels.

## Maternal family tree of Patrick Hamilton

Thomas Weldon  
(Northamptonshire? Northumberland?)<sup>40</sup>



Walter Weldon = Jane Ryder  
St John's Bower  
Athy



Arthur Weldon = Mary Dunbar



Walter Weldon of Raheen = Anne Burdett  
died 1728-9  
(MP for Carlow 1692-1715)



Arthur Weldon = Mary Dopping



Rev. Anthony Weldon = Anne Coghlan  
(Rector of Athy)  
died 1803



Daniel Hockley = Elizabeth



Robert Hockley = Priscilla  
b Braintree 1766



Sir Anthony Weldon = Elizabeth Hockley  
b Raheen? 1784    b Braintree Essex 1801  
d Raheen 1858    d London 1874



George Boardman = Elizabeth  
b Norwich ~1802    b Norfolk 1798  
d London 1852    d Westminster 1874



<sup>40</sup> Query from the Weldon family re: Thomas Weldon. *Journal of County Kildare Arch Soc.* Vol. V, 1906-8. Page 295.

1852

Anthony John Frederick Weldon Hockley = Agnes Boardman  
b Piccadilly 1822                      b Norwich 1828  
d Steyning Sussex 1894                d Paddington 1885

Bernard Hamilton = Ellen Adele Hockley  
b 1863                      b Hammersmith 1861  
d 1930                      d Hampstead 1934

Anthony Walter Patrick Hamilton  
b Sussex 1904  
d Norfolk 1961

Sources:

Genealogical Office. MS 261-276. Betham Sketch Pedigree. Series 1, VI, p 366 et seq.

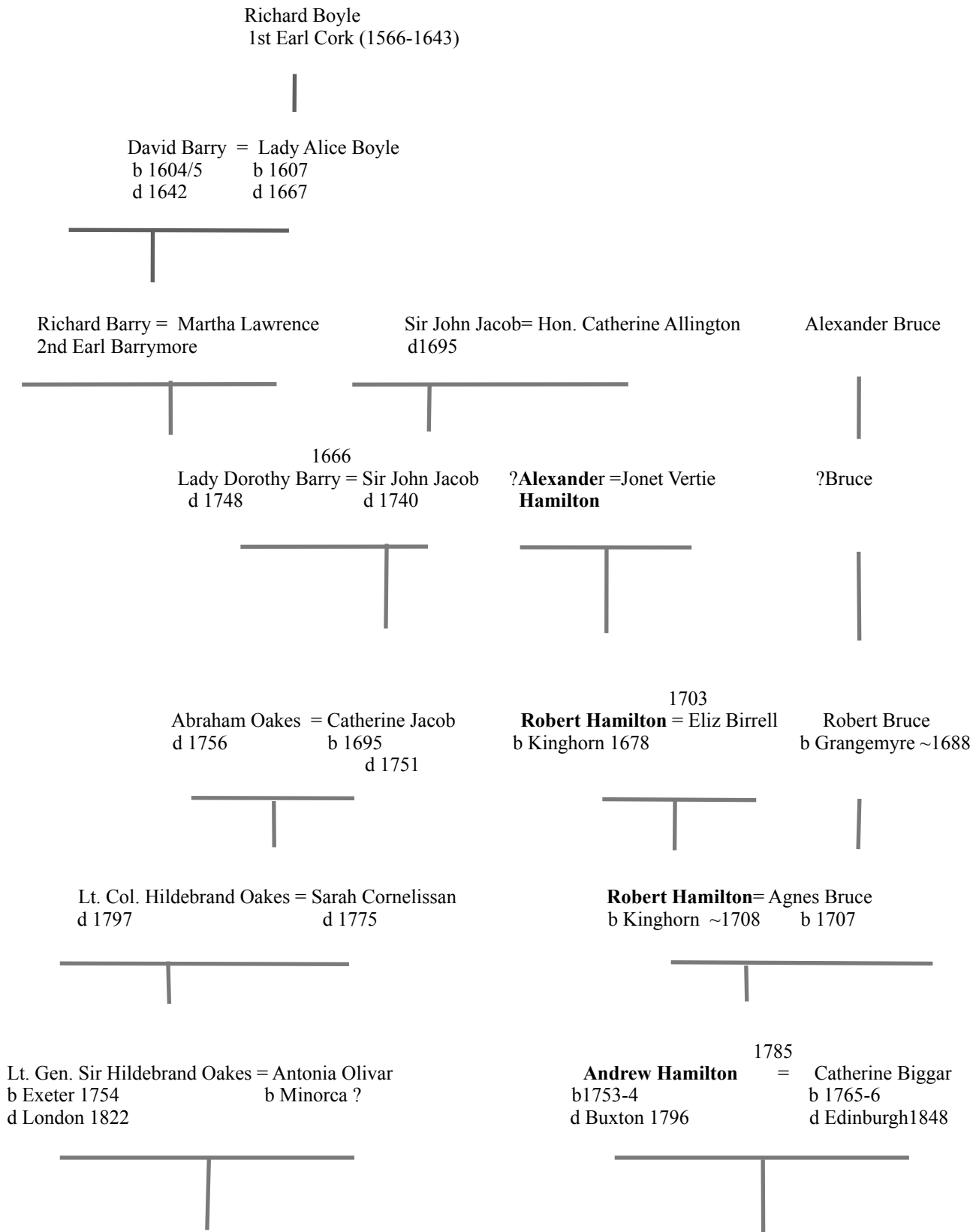
*Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally, Queens County.*

City of Westminster Archives Parish Registers of St James Picadilly

Parish Register transcripts for Braintree, Essex, Familysearch.org

Query from the Weldon family re: Thomas Weldon. *Journal of County Kildare Arch Soc.* Vol. V, 1906-8. Page 295.

# Paternal family line of Patrick Hamilton



1818  
Antonia Mahona Olivar Oakes = Col. Edward Wildman  
b Minorca 1801                      b 1791  
d London 1876                        d 1846

**Andrew Hamilton** = Agnes  
b Edinburgh 1793            d before 1841  
d before 1861



1861  
Sarah Maria Wildman = Rev. **Walter Hamilton**  
b Cork 1823                      b Camden 1827  
d Kent 1869                      d Canterbury 1902?



**Walter Bernard Hamilton** = Ellen Adele Hockley  
b Paddington 1863            b Hammersmith 1861  
d Ealing 1930                      d Sussex 1934



**Anthony Walter Patrick Hamilton**  
b Sussex 1904  
d Norfolk 1961

Sources:

Parish registers for Kinghorn, Fife, Scotland's People , <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk> .

"England Deaths and Burials, 1538-1991," index, FamilySearch , <https://familysearch.org>. FHL microfilm 1596020.

John Debrett, *The baronetage of England; containing their descent and present state* . Vol.II, London 1815.

"Epitaphs and Sepulchral Inscriptions" ,*The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, Vol. 78.

Kinghorn Deeds , 1682 - 1832 , <http://fifefhs.org/Records/Deeds/kinghorndeeds.htm> .