

# The Story of the

# HAMMENTS

*My great-grandfather, John Hamment, came from the fenlands north of Cambridge. He was the son of an agricultural labourer, James Hamment. This is the story of his extended family, largely covering the years of his life.*



John Hamment (1846 - 1930)

## The "Hamments" of Ramsey and Coates

John Hamment (1846 - 1930) was born and spent his childhood in Coates, Cambridgeshire, close to the town of Whittlesey. There were many 'Hemmant' and 'Hamment' families in Whittlesey, but these were not directly related to our John, whose father James Hammant, was recorded in the 1871 census as born at Ramsey, Huntingdonshire, 10 miles or so south of Whittlesey. We can trace the family back a little further despite confusing variations in the spelling of the surname in parish records, censuses, and registrations of birth/marriage/death, even when they clearly refer to the same person or to siblings. ("Hammant", "Hemmant", "Hammond", "Hemmont", "Hammont", "Hamment").

In this account I will generally use "Hamment".

In 1993 an article entitled *"Stand Up the Hamments - an example of the problem of name variants"* was published in "The Huntsman", the Journal of the Huntingdonshire Family History Society. (No. 15, April 1993, pp 14-15). The author, William Butler, refers to his mother, Elizabeth Hamment, who was a first cousin of 'our' John Hamment. He begins the story with "Enos Hamment" of Ramsey, and this seems likely to be correct.

Enos Hamment of the parish of Bury, near Ramsey, was born in 1763 (from his stated age at death), though his birth has not been traced.. In 1789 he married Anne Lee.. According to William Butler's article, they had six children, all baptised "Hammond". A son John was born in about 1793. He became an agricultural labourer and seems to have worked in several places. He married Ann Walsom at Thorney in 1812. Her name was also encountered as 'Wolsonne' in some records. John and Ann then spent some years back at Ramsey.

Their first four children, George (1814), James (1815), Rebecca (1817), Mary (1819) were all baptised as 'Hammond' at "Huntingdon Circuit, St Mary's Wesleyan". This is probably the chapel at Ramsey St Mary's, a hamlet between Ramsey and Whittlesey. This area was among the last bits of the fen to be drained and in 1833 Whittlesey Mere, Ugg Mere and Trundle Mere were large expanses of water. There was a community at Ramsey Heights ('Heights' which were three feet below sea level!). There were many Wesleyans in the area, and the chapel was 'down the heights' in the northern end which became 'St Mary's.

The family then moved to Peterborough where two more children were baptised (as 'Hammont. at the Wesleyan chapel). A boy Richard was baptised in 1825. He presumably died, since another Richard was baptised in 1827.

Soon after this, the family seem to have moved to Coates, near Whittlesey, and another son, John, was born there in about 1829. Back at Ramsey, Enos Hamment died in 1838, aged 75.

All the above children of John and Ann Hamment lived full lives. George was an agricultural labourer and in the 1861 census was living with his wife Elizabeth, and 4 children at Tick Fen near Ramsey; his sons, George, John and William ((only 9 years old) were listed as agricultural labourers. Richard emigrated to Australia - see below. Mary remained unmarried and worked as a



**Coates village**



**Forty Feet Bridge**

cook/domestic servant, ending her days in the Huntingdon Union Workhouse. Rebecca married, becoming Rebecca Roberts. In the 1881 census we find Rebecca, now a widow, and her father John, a widower aged 88, living together at 'Forty Feet Bridge', Ramsey. Also living at 'Forty Feet Bridge' was the youngest son, John 'Hammond', later referred to as 'Hamment'. This John Hamment was still alive in 1901, living at 'Forty Feet Bridge' with his second wife Mary Ann, and children John, James and Rebecca.

### **James Hamment and his family**

We now return to James Hamment. His wife, and John's mother, was Ann Lucy Hamment, nee Newton; 'Lucy' was the maiden name of her mother who was the second wife of William Newton of Whittlesey; he had been previously married to one Elizabeth Land. In addition to her full brothers and sisters (William, Mary, Thomas and Hannah), Ann Lucy Newton had a half-brother Philip and half-sister Ellen.

Ann Lucy Hamment (Newton) bore five children, two illegitimately prior to her marriage to James Hamment. Her first child, Eleanor Newton, was born in 1829, fathered by a labourer, James Matson. Rebecca was born in 1837, baptised 'Rebecca Newton', fathered by James Hamment. James Hamment and Ann Lucy Newton were married in April 1841, and the 1841 census lists them at Coates, together with their children Ellen (Eleanor) 'Hammant' and Rebecca 'Hammant'.

Three children were then born in wedlock, Ann (probably short-lived), John, and William. In 1851, Rebecca, John and William were still living with their parents at Coates, but 'Ellen Newton' was a house servant in Market Place, Whittlesey. Ellen (Eleanor) Newton married James Cox, a carpenter, probably early in the 1850s. James Cox was a widower with a baby son, Robert. They married in Islington, where their children Alice, James, Edward and Mary were all born between 1854 and 1859. Soon after this, they moved to 7 Winchester Terrace in Agar Town. At about the same time, John Hamment, now 14 years old, left Coates and was recorded in the 1861 census as a boarder at 7 Winchester Terrace. His cousin, William Roberts, a carpenter, was also lodging with the Cox family at Winchester Terrace.

### **Agar Town**

It must have been exciting for the fourteen-year-old John Hamment to leave rural Coates and travel to Agar Town to start a new life. Agar Town had been built in the 1830s on either side of the Regent's Canal, on the edge of St Pancras. Within few years the land to the east was developed by the Great Northern Railway and Kings Cross Station was built at the southern end, on the Euston Road.



**Ellen & Rebecca**



Fig. 2.—Paradise lost, Agar-town.



Winchester Terrace was immediately adjacent to the railway yards. John Hamment soon joined the Great Northern, eventually becoming an engine driver.

Agar Town is now history - and today's historians, as well as contemporary writers, present Agar Town as a very unpleasant and squalid slum - an appalling collection of hovels on streets with open drains, fringing a scummy and smelly canal.

An article appeared in "Household Words" in 1851. This was a journal founded and edited by Charles Dickens, but the article itself entitled "A Suburban Connemara" was written by W.M. Thomas. A young man looking for somewhere decent to live had decided to explore Agar Town; he found filth and wretchedness - a disgrace to the metropolis. He was sorry for poor people who lived there by necessity and were able to give a certain air of cleanliness to their own dwellings, contrasting with the filthy state of the street.

In 1980, Anthony Wohl's book 'The Eternal Slum - Housing and Social Policy in Victorian London' referred to the notorious Agar Town 'rookery', one of the 'hell-holes, utterly fantastic in their labyrinthine streets and decrepit structures, heaped up rubbish, unendurable stench, depravity and violence'.

Further major railway development brought the end of Agar Town in about 1863 when St Pancras Station was built. Thousands of people were displaced from Agar Town and from a large corner of the adjacent Somers Town. The Cox family, and John Hamment, were almost certainly among those evicted without compensation. Wohl commented 'Only when the full horror of conditions in areas like Agar Town is grasped can one appreciate the enthusiasm with which its destruction was greeted, and the reluctance to impose any costly and time-consuming conditions upon that destruction.'

The Coxes, and John Hamment, seem to have found a place to live in Kentish Town for a while - but things were going to change for the better. They moved to Pancras Square. This must have been around 1865, but we do not know the date.

## Pancras Square

Housing was an immense problem in St Pancras, (as in the rest of London) at this time. The population of St Pancras had increased from 30,000 to 120,000 in the first 40 years of the century, and rose to 240,000 by 1881. The problems were further aggravated in St Pancras by the building of the railways, many houses being demolished. Most houses were overcrowded (averaging some 9 people per house). In the mid-Victorian years there existed a widespread faith in the ability of philanthropic capitalism to combat the evils of overcrowding. The model dwelling movement was under way on the principle of 'five per-cent philanthropy'. The first 'model dwelling' company received a royal charter in 1846.



**Pancras Square in 1936**



This was the 'Metropolitan Association for Improving the dwellings of the Industrious Classes'. 'Metropolitan Buildings' on Pancras Square was their very first block of 'model' flats, completed in 1847. It was visited by the Prince Consort in 1848 and by many other notables including Gladstone, Dickens and the Duke of Wellington.

Metropolitan Buildings accommodated 110 families in 3-room apartments. Each apartment had a scullery containing a sink, high pressure water supply, a meat-safe, a chute for the removal of ashes and refuse, and a water-closet. Each living room was equipped with a range, boiler, and oven. The ground in front of the building was enclosed by iron railings to form a protected play area for children. At the rear were a washhouse and drying ground for the residents' use. The space, unobstructed light and air, and other facilities, provided a much more healthy and comfortable home than any of the tenants had previously occupied. The cost of the building was £17,737. The weekly rent varied from 3s.6d. to 6s.6d..

In 1861 a contemporary account appeared in 'Good Words', describing these flats and expressing concern about the dangers of the staircases and stair-wells. The flats were occupied by the 'higher class of labourers and artisans'; the author considered that these people were paying artificially low rents, and were benefiting from a benevolent society which was really intended to help the truly poor.

Another writer referred to the model blocks as 'small plots of civilisation, cultivated in the midst of a wide waste of barbarism', but yet another considered that 'long dark passages, with rooms on each side, like so many horse stalls in a nobleman's stable, tenanted by different families, is not a provision likely to render the poor better morally, socially or religiously'.

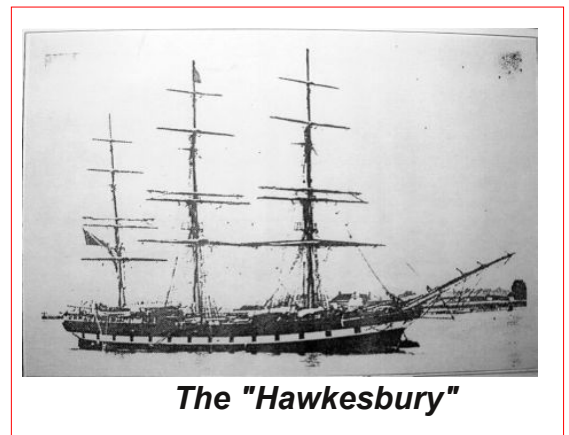
The 1871 census shows that Ellen Cox and seven children were living at 82 Pancras Square. (Later known as Platt Street). John Hamment was still lodging with them.. He would by now have met his future wife, Louisa Newton, who was at 63 Pancras Square.

Before continuing with the life of John Hamment and the Newtons, we will tell the story of John's half-sister, Rebecca.

### **The emigration of Rebecca Hamment**

In 1870, Rebecca emigrated to Australia, an arduous three-month voyage on the ship "Hawkesbury".

The "Hawkesbury" was a new 1120 ton ship, built in 1868. It was one of the final generation of fast Clippers, constructed with an iron frame, but wooden planking. It was operated by Devitt & Moore's Australian Line. Another Devitt & Moore ship which left for Australia at about the same time was their new sail-and-steam ship, the "Queen of the Thames". This was wrecked on its return journey from Australia in March 1871



Rebecca was one of 59 single females - out of the 82 passengers. Though the normal cost of passage was £13 - 15 - 0, she almost certainly had free-passage under the scheme run by the Government Emigration Office. Single female domestic servants were eligible for this. Various other categories of worker could apply for Assisted Passages at rates from 1/- to £8.

The "Hawkesbury", with Rebecca aboard, seems to have sailed from the East India Dock a fortnight or so later than previously advertised.

She wrote several letters relating to the voyage to Ellen and John, and John copied them out; these copies survive. The first was a letter she wrote on board ship, on the day of departure, as follows:

*Ship Hawkesbury  
off Gravesend  
Thursday December 8th 1870*

*My Dear Sister and Brother*

*I now thought you would be amazed to hear how I am getting on we sailed this morning at one o'clock and soon got to Gravesend where they say we shall remain until Saturday when we shall make a final start, we still get on all right with the food the ship biscuits and soup is really very passable and I can cook the biscuit so that we shall manage very well please give my love to Mrs Marsh and Mr Howarth. I am sorry you went off board soon for some of the people did not go off until 9 o'clock. You would have been able to see where we sleep it is a very cozy corner and we are very comfortable there is eight at our mess and I am captain of the mess for a week we take it in turns to be the captain of the mess week about there are about 70 single women who are in another part of the vessel do not forget to tell my brother if I could only write and tell him what I have seen and heard he would not think I know more than anybody give my love to Corporal Wm Hamment tell him I hear and see almost as much as he does in his regiment but above all do not forget my dear old Father and Mother bless their dear old hearts remember me to all enquiring friends and with much to you both I remain your affectionate sister.*

Rebecca commenced her next long (fascinating) letter on board ship on December 20th 1870 and completed it on arrival in Sidney in mid-March 1871. This mentions 'a clergyman, Mr Newton, ' who has taken a great interest in us '. ( Rev W.S. Newton has been found to be William Shackfield Newton, born at Ormskirk, Lancs, in 1837. He graduated from Cambridge, and was the incumbent of Macleay River, New South Wales from 1871-1873 ) Clearly there is no family connection between Rev Newton and Rebecca's mother's family.

She wrote another letter fairly soon after arriving at Macleay River, where she had been engaged to work for Mrs Newton, and she was then a little disenchanted by living conditions in Australia ('houses which are not as good as the pigstys back home'). She also wrote that 'people say they will only give me 4 months of single life here' - an accurate prediction as she married William Rowe, a widower, in July.

Back home the family were impatient for news from Rebecca, and the following letter was sent to her (only the first part of the copy survives).

*Dear Sister*

*I now take up my pen to write these few lines to you hoping that they may find you quite well as I am very happy to tell you that we are all quite well at this present time thank god for it and I hope and trust that he will keep it so for it is not very pleasant to have illness not at any time. Give our kind love to your husband and except the same for your self.*

*Dear sister we are all getting very anxious about not hearing from you for we begin to think that there is some thing wrong been as we do hear from you. Father and Mother gives there kind love to you both for they think that you ought to have written to them before any els but Dear Sister we should very much like to hear from you a little oftner than what we do for your letters are a very long time in between.*

*Dear Sister I must tell you that William is got back to London again and he is not sorry to get back to England he has been in Ireland this last twelve month he says that it is a very beautiful Country but the People are a very disagreeable class for they will not speak to you except they want to quarrel with you and that is not very pleasant he is now gon to Aldrshot for a fortnight and then he is coming back to London again to the Tower of London he is looking .....*

Rebecca also refers to 'Uncle Richard' who was already in Australia, living in the Blue Mountains area at what is now Wentworth Falls. We know that this was Richard 'Hammont', a younger brother of James Hamment, baptised at Peterborough in 1827.

## [William Hamment](#)

William Hamment referred to above, was John's brother. In the 1861 census he is recorded as an Agricultural Labourer, living at home. In 1867, then 18 years old, he enlisted for 9 years in the Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards. As a Private, he spent a period stationed in Dublin. At about the time he returned from Ireland he was promoted to Corporal (1872). In 1876 he re-enlisted for a further 12 years, and very soon after this he was promoted to Sergeant.

In 1877 he was (temporarily) in trouble.. He was confined and then tried by Court Martial for an unrecorded offence and sentenced to be reduced. However three days later the authorities had remitted the sentence and he became a Sergeant again ! These 3 days became 'forfeited service'.

In about 1881 his Battalion was on guard at Windsor Castle. And at that time, Louisa Ann Thomsett, who he was to marry, was living in Windsor Castle, a servant to William Stevens, one of the Military Knights of Windsor.

A year later, William Hammant's Battalion went to Egypt. As part of the Guard's Brigade led by the Duke of Connaught, he fought in the Battle of Tel el Kebir. He was awarded the Egypt Medal, with Tel el Kebir Clasp, and also the Khedive's Bronze Star.

In 1888, just before he left the Army, he married Louise Thomsett, at St Jude's, East Brixton. Then, on completion of his 21 year service, he was discharged at Windsor - character, Exemplary and Temperate. He received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

He then seems to have become a Caretaker, at 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green (1891). 10 years later he and Louise had returned to Eastrea, near Coates (1901).

By 1911 they had moved to Herne, where they became 'Boarding House Keepers' at Ridley House, an 11 room house, where they had a servant, Lily Bubb. They were there for many years.

But the Army had not forgotten William Hammant. In 1921 he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, a medal which also came with an Annuity, and which was awarded quite sparingly. In 1926 he was an honoured guest at the inauguration of the Guard's Memorial in London.

William Hammant died in 1927; Louise continued living in Herne ( at Rugby Villa) for a number of years.

## [Louisa Margaret Newton](#)

When John Hamment arrived at 82 Pancras Square during the 1860s, the Newton's - Louisa Margaret, her father William and brother Walter - were already living at 63 Pancras Square. One may wonder whether this family of Newtons were related to John Hamment's mother, Ann Lucy Newton, but it looks more likely that they were unconnected.

William Newton was born in Great Marlow - where his father, James, was a 'servant' at the time, but it does not appear that James Newton and his wife Margaret, originated in Great Marlow.

Some clues to their life are given by two small notes written by William Newton. The first indicates some connection between James Newton and "Hon Elphinstone, companion of Princess Charlotte"; the second gives the death of Margaret Newton, 25th May 1816, aged 11 months.



**William Hammant**

'Hon Elphinstone' was yet another Margaret - Margaret Mercer Elphinstone (1788-1867), Comtesse de Flahault, Viscountess Keith & Baroness Nairne. Prior to 1817, as the Honourable Margaret Elphinstone, she was an 'attached friend and confidante' of Princess Charlotte of Wales (1796-1817), the daughter of the Prince Regent. Margaret Elphinstone's father was Lord Elphinstone, whose London House was in Harley Street. Just around the corner is the church of St Mary, Marylebone Road, and we discover that a Margaret Newton was baptised there on 5th July 1815, daughter of James and Margaret Newton. This must be William's baby sister who died in 1816.

The obvious conclusion is that James Newton was in the service of Lord Elphinstone, or of his daughter, Hon Margaret Elphinstone. William Newton was baptised at Great Marlow in November 1813; his sister Margaret was baptised in London in 1815. Perhaps James was in service at Great Marlow before taking up a position with the Elphinstones. James and Margaret Newton were not married at Great Marlow, but a marriage between one James Newton and one Margaret Townson occurred on 27th July 1812 at St Martin in the Fields. It would seem that James Newton was still living when William married Ann Standen, and he is then described as a plumber.

It was also believed in the family that there was some far-back connection with a Dean of Ross. This was probably John Newton, rector of Ross on Wye from 1660-1679; he wrote books on mathematics and Astronomy.

William Newton married Ann Standen in 1843. She came from Sussex - born in the village of Frant, south of Tunbridge Wells. Her parents were David and Lucy Standen.

### [The Standen Families](#)

David Standen married Lucy Standen at Ticehurst in 1807. They came from two different Standen families who lived ten miles apart and if they were related it was only distantly. The fathers of both were evidently prosperous farmers. Three of the children of Thomas and Lucy Standen of Beckley (John, Susanna and David) married three children of William and Sarah Standen of Ticehurst (Sarah, Stephen and Lucy)! A fourth child (Ann) married a William Standen of Leigh - apparently from a third Standen family.

Lucy Standen (1786-1837) was the daughter of William and Sarah Standen of Ticehurst. Sarah had borne ten children, and eight survived to adulthood. (William, Stephen, Thomas and John; Ann, Sarah, Sophia and Lucy). William's father (also William) was one of four brothers who had been born in Goudhurst. Both William senior, and his brother Stephen, left wills; these refer to various members of the family. William Standen senior died in 1770. He had property in Ticehurst, and also in nearby Cranbrook. He left "Church Lands" in Ticehurst to his son Stephen; he left "Taylors" in Ticehurst to his son William, together with property in Cranbrook which included the "White Hart". He stipulated that his daughter Elizabeth should receive income totalling £6 per year payable from the properties.

Brother Stephen died eight years later in 1778. He apparently had no family of his own and all his possessions went to his nephews and niece (William's children) apart from two small bequests to his brothers Thomas and John. Property in Cranbrook was left to nephew Stephen, and property in Ticehurst to nephew William.

So Lucy's father William had received a substantial inheritance, and he seems to have made good use of it. When he died in 1816 he left "Miskins" to his four sons as tenants-in-common. But in addition he had several thousand pounds to allocate to various bequests. A total of £1750 was left to his daughters, Lucy receiving £550. £100 was left to his grand-daughter Hannah, Ann's illegitimate daughter. The will also referred to various loans to his son William, totalling £1200, this sum to be treated as part of the residue to be divided between the sons.

The other Standen family at Beckley were also prosperous. David Standen's grandfather, James, farmed at 'Creeches', and also had a malt-house. 'Creeches' passed to Thomas. Thomas's will divided his Estate equally between his children; a provision stipulated that George Standen, then occupying 'Creeches', could purchase it for £1200, this money then becoming part of Thomas's estate.

## [William and Ann Newton](#)

William Newton and his family lived at a number of addresses in north London between 1843 and 1859 :- Mabledon Place; 3 Thanet Street; 35 Gower Place; 31 Grove Street; 6 College Place (Homerton); 53 Burton Crescent; 26 Skinner Street. These were probably all crowded houses in multiple occupation. With the exception of College Place, Homerton, all these houses were in St Pancras, located in a small area close to Euston Road, near the present site of St Pancras Station. William's occupation changed; in 1851 he was a 'commercial traveller (grocery)'; then in 1861 he was described as an 'advertising agent' and in 1871 as a 'reporter's clerk'.

The Newtons moved to Pancras Square in 1858 or 1859 when Louisa was 10 years old. She had an older brother, William, and two younger sisters, Amelia and Caroline.

Another child, Walter Edwin Newton was born at Pancras Square in 1859, but his mother, Ann Newton died a year later. The Newton's marriage certificate survives. On the reverse side is written a list of the children, ending with the sad line:

AN She filled this page and then she died. God, rest her soul WN

Walter was then looked after as a 'nursechild' by Jane Green at 61 Pancras Square, while William and the older children remained at number 63. A few years later, John Hamment came to Pancras Square .

## [John and Louisa Margaret Hamment - early years](#)

John Hamment wrote notes and copies of letters in a 'Punch's Pocket Book' for 1870 which survives. He wrote the following, perhaps to Louisa Margaret Newton, his wife to be:

*Every time I think of you my heart flops up and down like a churn. Sensations of unutterable joy creeps over it like young goats over a stable roof and thrills through it like Spanish needles through a pair of linen trousers as a gosling swimming with delight in a small puddle so swim I in a sea of gorgeous visions of ecstatic rapture thicker than the hairs in a blacking brush and brighter than the hues of a humming birds pinions visit me in my slumber and borne on their invisible wings your image stands before me and I reach out to grasp it like a painter grasping a blue bottle fly when first I beheld you my eyes stood open like cellar doors in country town my tongue refused to wag and in silent adoration I drank the sweet infection of love as a thirsty man a tumbler of sweet cider. Since the light of your face fell upon my life I sometimes feel as if I could lift myself up by garters to the top of the Presbyterian steeple and ring the bell for service day and night you are in my thoughts when aurora appears blushing like the white robed angels when the awakened pig ariseth from his bed and grunteth and goeth forth to his morning refreshments when the drowsy beetle wheels his droning flighth at sultry moontide and when the lowing cows come home at milking time I think of thee and like a piece of gum elastic my heart seems to stritch clear across my bosom if you cannot reciprocate my passion I shall fall away from the flourishing vine of life an untimely branch and in the coming years when the shadows fall from the hills and frog sings his cheerful evening hymn you happy in anothers love can come and drop a tear and catch a cold upon my last resting place.*

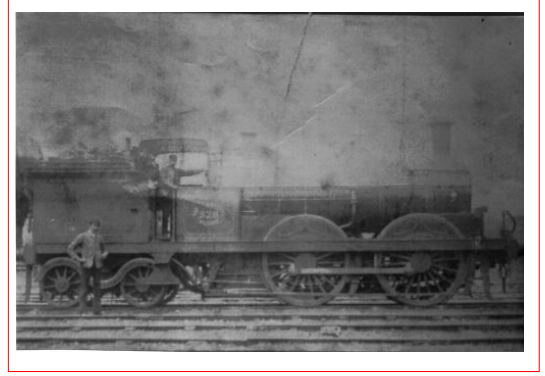
John's father, James, died on August 6th 1873, and a copy of a sympathetic letter written by Louisa Newton to John, dated 9th August, survives. At that time Louisa seems to have been housekeeping for a family in Hornsey Rise, caring for two children, a dog, a bird, and a pig.

1874 was an eventful year for the family. John's mother, Ann Lucy Hamment, only survived James by a few months, dying in January 1874. John Hamment married Louisa Margaret Newton on 21st March 1874; William Newton then died on 17th May 1874, his will leaving everything to Walter, and appointing a guardian for him. On 4th June 1874, John and Louisa's first child, Amelia Ellen was born.





John and Louisa's first home was at 58 Havelock Street, close to the Caledonian Road. After this, they lived for some years at 31 Buckingham Street, not far away. John Hamment worked on the railways as an engine driver on the Great Northern Railway, probably working from Kings Cross, and the next picture shows him on the foot-plate of 'his' engine.



The engine is a 120 Class GNR 5'6" 0-4-4 Back Tank. Four were built in 1875; in 1900 they became GNR Class G2.

Though James and Ann Lucy Hamment had died, there were still family connections with the Coates area which were maintained for many more years. We will touch on this later.

### [The Growing Family](#)

John and Louisa had six children between 1874 and 1886. The first was Amelia Ellen, born 1874; her life was short. She died in 1878.

Albert John Hamment was born on April 25th 1876. He was followed by Walter Newton Hamment (1880), Ernest William Hamment (1881), and William James Hamment (1886). There was also another short-lived child, Edith Ellen (1883-1884). For most of this period the family lived at 31 Buckingham Street. The 1881 census records them there, and Louisa's brother, Walter Edwin Newton was living with them.

At that time, Ellen and Alice Cox were still at Pancras Square (Platt St), and Robert Cox, now married with children was in another flat in this street.

And in 1871 Louisa's brother, William Newton junior, was living nearby with wife Agnes Maria and small son Herbert William Newton.



**Albert John Hamment**

During the 1880s the Hamment family together with Walter Newton moved to 3 Marquis Road in Kentish Town.

Albert John Hamment was the oldest of the four Hamment boys. He began work at the age of 14 at J Salaman & Co, 46 Monkwell St, EC, in May 1890; Salaman's were 'Ostrich Feather Manufacturers' (and though long forgotten now, this was the largest wholesale concern of its kind in the world, with offices and warehouses at one time in London, Paris, New York, and Buenos Aires and depots in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Durban.) . Albert John had eight different jobs during the 1890's, several lasting no more than a month or so!

By now Susan Margaret Eveleigh had come into his life. She was the daughter of George Frederick Eveleigh. George Eveleigh was born in Exeter in 1851. His father was then a respectable tradesman with an engraving business. But Frederick deserted his family in 1857 and was imprisoned the following year. George was 'rescued' by his aunt, Margaret Williams, and her friend Susan Barker, the wealthy daughter of a Devon vicar. Susan Margaret Eveleigh was named accordingly.

Albert John Hamment married Susan Margaret Eveleigh in about May 1900. This was within a few weeks of Mafeking night, when this photograph was taken.



**Mafeking Night**

## [The New Century](#)

Bert and Susie set up their first home at 10 Boscastle Road, St Pancras. Bertha was born in 1902, followed by Ida (1904), Marjorie (1906) and Irene (1911).

At the time of Bert's marriage, John & Louisa Hamment, Bert's three brothers, and Walter Newton were all living at 7 St Paul's Crescent, St Pancras. Just across the road from John and Louisa Hamment, 4 St Paul's Crescent was the home of John's sister Ellen Cox, and his niece Alice. Alice had married Francis Bartlett, an upholsterer; they had a daughter Amelia.

Walter Newton was still living with John and Louisa in 1901 - but was said to have 'disappeared in mysterious circumstances' soon after that, leaving the house, never to be seen again!. It was certainly very odd. From the 1911 census we find that Walter was then living at Bromley with Thomas and Agnes Roots. He was listed as 'Uncle - Retired Clerk'. That seems to make sense when we find that the maiden name of Agnes Roots was 'Newton', and that she was grand-daughter of William and Ann Newton of Pancras. But this was without question another William and Ann Newton apparently unrelated !

Albert John Hamment went into business as a sign writer soon after marriage, probably in 1903. The business known as 'Harcourt Hamment' lasted for more than 60 years. We will return to Harcourt Hamment.

Two of the other Hamment brothers married two sisters who had almost certainly been introduced to the family by the Eveleighs. Susan Eveleigh was born at 12 Herbert Street, and this house was also the home of the Beesley family at a similar date. James Beesley was a "cheesemonger" and the Beesley's first daughter, Elizabeth, was born in about 1879. She married Walter Hamment in 1910. Her younger sister Eleanor married William Hamment in 1918.

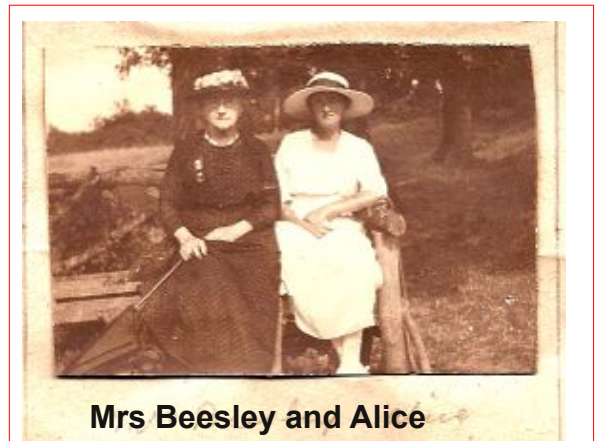
In 1911 John and Louisa Hamment were living at 64 Carysfort Road, together with the two younger sons, Ernest William, then 29, a 'Managing Clerk', and William James, age 25, 'Clerk'. Albert John and his family were now living at 27 Dresden Road. Irene was a small baby. With them was Ethel Annie Bishop, age 19, Servant and 'Mothers Help Domestic'. She continued working for them for at least another 25 years and is faintly remembered.

Albert John Hamment's brother Walter Newton Hamment was newly married. He and Elizabeth were living at 29 Glaslyn Road, Crouch End, together with his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Sarah Beesley, and two sisters-in-law, Eleanor and Alice Beesley. Walter and Elizabeth's two children, Basil and Kathleen were born in 1911 and 1914.

In 1914 Albert John Hamment became a mason, being admitted to the Hugh Owen Lodge. The lodge met at Frascati's Restaurant in Oxford St., meeting there regularly on Friday evenings.

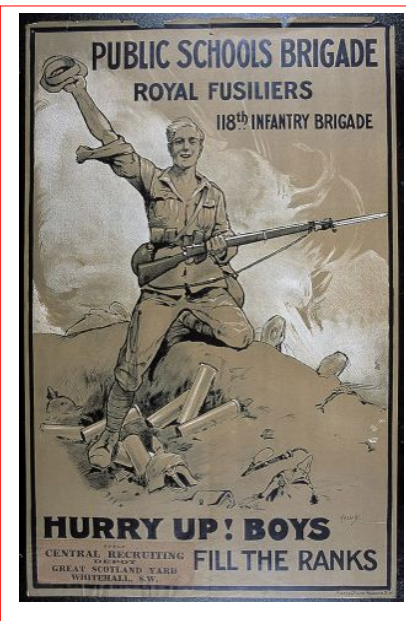


**Ida Hamment 1904**



**Mrs Beesley and Alice**

## [The Great War and the Family](#)



The war began in July 1914. Billy Hamment, the youngest of the brothers enlisted very soon, joining the "Public Schools Brigade, Royal Fusiliers". But a month later he was found unfit for service, vision not up to standard. He was probably bitterly disappointed at the time - but what a blessing it proved to be !

Walter Hamment had a longer period in the Army, enlisting in the Royal Garrison Artillery in 1916 and serving until 1919, finally serving in Calcutta. He came to no serious harm, but a bout of malaria resulted in a small disability pension.

One related Hamment lost his life in the trench-warfare of the First World War. This was John Hamment's cousin James from Forty Feet Bridge. James was a Private in the Bedfordshire Regiment. He died near Ypres and his name appears on the Tyne Cot War Memorial at Zonnebeke in Flanders. It also appears on the War Memorial in Ramsey.

During the years of the 1914-18 war, John and Louisa Hamment were living at Carysfort Road, and the next photograph probably dates from this period. Ernest married Nina Splatt in 1915.

Louisa Hamment died in 1918, just before the war ended. Billy married Eleanor Beesley at about that time.

### [After the end of WW1](#)

After Louisa Hamment died in 1918, John lived in good health for many more years. Ernest and family joined him in Carysfort Road. Norman was born in 1921 and Denis in 1926. The 10 grandchildren were completed by Kenneth (1920) and Clifford (1923), the children of Billy and Eleanor. The first great-grandchildren Audrey (Cross) and David (Cawsey) arrived, just too late for John, in 1932.



The family had kept in touch with John Hamment's brother, William. By 1901 he had retired from the Army, and he and his wife Lou went back to Whittlesey for a while, and lived at Eastrea, Coates. Later they moved to Herne Bay, Kent, and one outing for the family was to visit them. Lou was 11 years younger than William and continued living at Rugby Villa, Bridge Road, Herne Bay after William's death in 1927. Kathleen Hamment (Parkyn) remembers her own visits to Herne Bay. Lou was always dressed in white. There was a large picture of William, a 'military gentleman', in the hall and young Basil Hamment was asked to salute him

The family also kept in contact with Coates connections. Ann Lucy Hamment's sister, Mary Newton, had married James Oldfield; their daughter Lucy (John's cousin) married Joseph Duddington, a builder. The Duddington's had a large and long-lived family, and five daughters all lived until the 1960s when they were all aged in their 80s or 90s. They would meet every year on the birthday of the youngest, Florence, and this continued until at least 1967 (picture). On the right is Lucy (Aveling) who was still corresponding with the Hamments at that time.

Another Coates connection was William Ashling. He seems to have been a boyhood friend of John Hamment, and they kept in touch throughout their lives. William left Whittlesey for Yorkshire, and was first an ironstone miner and later a tramway repairer in York.





In 1928, John Hamment was still in touch with a “Mrs Hamment” at Gorleston on Sea, Yarmouth. This may well have been his Aunt, Mary Ann, originally from Forty Feet Bridge. (This aunt - by marriage - was several years younger than John himself)

Unfortunately in 1931 John was hit by a car on Park Road, Hornsey and the inquest was reported in the Hornsey Journal.

### [Albert John Hamment - Family and Business](#)

This photograph of the family probably dates from just after the end of WW1.



In 1914 Albert John Hamment had become a mason, being admitted to the Hugh Owen Lodge. The lodge met at Frascati's Restaurant in Oxford St., meeting there regularly on Friday evenings. The photograph on the left shows a Masonic dinner at Frascati's early in the 1920's. Albert and Susan Hamment, Ida and Marjorie, are with the King's. Albert King was admitted to the Lodge at the same meeting as Albert John Hamment.



We now return to Harcourt Hamment. 'Harcourt' if he ever existed, was soon forgotten, and Albert Hamment ran the business for over 40 years until his sudden death in 1944. The business started at '10, Archer St Works, Archer St., Gt. Windmill St'. in about 1903. In about 1911 it moved to '5 Macclesfield St., Soho', and from there it moved to 40 Gerard St. in about 1925. Finally in about 1930 it set up at '11, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Rd.' where it was to remain until 1967. Cecil Court, named after the Cecils, is still owned by that family. Harcourt Hamment rented 11 Cecil Court from that family for a mere £100 p.a.



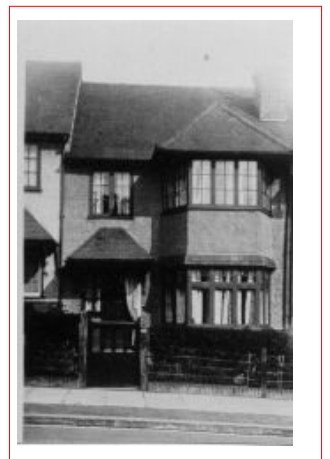
Surprising as it may now seem, Harcourt Hamment was located in the heart of the then vigorous British silent-film industry and this was a source of work. Cecil Court had so many film-related businesses, including the Gaumont offices, that it was known as 'Flicker Alley'. But at that time, Harcourt Hamment was in Macclesfield Street nearby, and the following is an advertisement from 1915.



In 1925 Sidney Bernstein (later Lord Bernstein) started the 'Film Society' for the screening of 'avant-garde' films. He later presented the records of the Society to the British Film Institute, and these include some 16 Harcourt Hamment invoices for work done in the Society's first season. One referred to a rendering of the Russian Imperial Arms which probably related to the film 'Raskolnikov'.

Film work must have disappeared at the end of the silent film era, and when Harcourt Hamment moved to Cecil Court the film companies had gone. But at Cecil Court, the sign-writing business had some notable customers. It had the 'Fortnum and Mason' business; it also did church sign-boards such as St Martin's in the Fields in Trafalgar Square .

In the 1930s Albert and Susan Hamment lived at 77 Summerlee Avenue, East Finchley, and these were happy years for them and their daughters - all living nearby. Ida had married Harold Cawsey, and David was born in 1932, Marjorie had married Reg Cross, and Audrey was also born in 1932. Bertha and Irene were unmarried. But they both travelled. - and Rene introduced her father to travel.



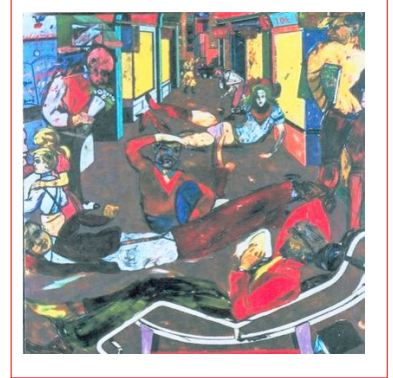


Rene was working as a clerk for the Orient Line from about 1930. In May 1931, she and her father took a Mediterranean cruise on the R.M.S. Orontes - travelling First Class! Rene herself made further trips on the "Orion". And then in 1939, Albert, on his own, took a further cruise on the "Orontes".



In 1933 Bertha travelled to India to continue her nursing career there. She travelled to Colombo on the S.S. Baradine, and continued on to Udthagamandalam (the hill station usually called "Ooty") to work at an orphanage. She returned in about 1937 bringing an adopted daughter Alison.

The clouds had been gathering. During the 1930s Jewish refugees were arriving in London from Germany and a number were drawn to Cecil Court where they set up businesses. This is recorded in a painting by R.B. Kitaj in the Tate Gallery entitled 'Cecil Court, London W.C.2 (The Refugees)'.



In 1939 the family was scattered by war-time evacuation. And then came sad times. Susan Hamment died in 1940. Then in 1942, Irene married John Lardner - but within a few weeks he was dead.

The Harcourt Hamment business kept going in the difficult times of wartime London. Albert John lived with Marjorie, Reg and Audrey at Whetstone for a while, though it seems that he still owned the Summerlee Avenue House.

He then remarried 'Alice', a Jewish refugee from Austria.

'Alice' was Alice Berneck. She was one of the seven children of Karl and Louise Berneck, of Vienna. Karl Berneck was a lawyer, who died in about 1925. In about 1938, at about the time of Hitler's annexation of Austria, Louise Berneck escaped to England from Vienna with several of her sons and daughters. Two sons went to the United States almost immediately, while Louise and the daughters settled in England

Alice lived at 33 Inverness Terrace, Bayswater, and Albert John moved there on his marriage to Alice on 18th November, 1944, when Alice was 48, 20 years younger than Albert John. Hedwig Hitschmann, Alice's sister, was a witness at the wedding. Albert John died there only 3 weeks later, on 10th December, from 'coronary atheroma'. He was in strange surroundings. We know just a little about Inverness Terrace in the 1940s from something written by Ates Orga, a well known biographer of the great composers. The father of Ates Orga was Irfan Orga, a writer and refugee from Turkey who lived successively at 29, 35 and 21 Inverness Terrace. These were rooming houses in multiple occupation, and one supposes that number 33 was similar. Ates Orga writes that 'this was a very cosmopolitan area, a haunt for emigres, refugees, prostitutes and fugitives' - certainly very different from Finchley and Whetstone.



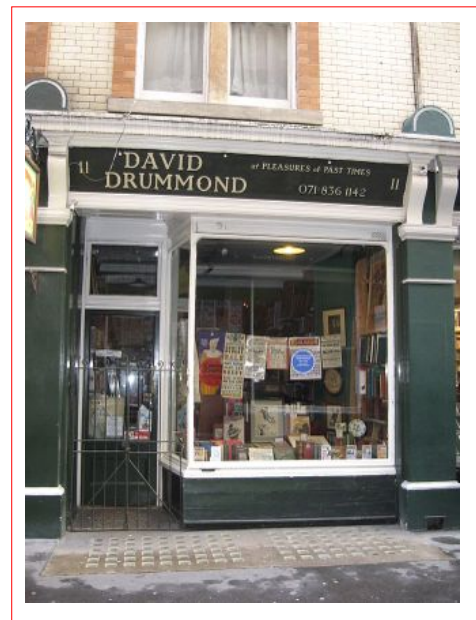
Alice of course inherited everything and gained British Nationality from the marriage. She did not remain in touch with the family. That now seems a pity, but clearly the circumstances would not have made for an easy relationship.

Alice Hamment moved into 77 Summerlee Avenue. Her niece, Betty Belina, remembers visiting her there in the 1960s. Alice continued running the Harcourt Hamment business with one employee.

The shop at 11 Cecil Court is now David Drummond's "Pleasures of Past Times - Theatre Ephemera and Books; Juvenilia". David Drummond bought the Harcourt Hamment business in 1967, in order to secure the shop-lease for his own business. He remembers meeting Alice Hamment at that time. She was then 71, and David Drummond refers to her as 'quite elegant'.

Alice lived for another 14 years, dying in 1981.

Another Hamment lost his life in the Second World War. This was Clifford, the son of William and Eleanor Hamment. He was a Pilot Officer in the RAFVR and died in a flying accident in Canada. His name appears on the Ottawa Memorial. This is a memorial to Commonwealth Air Force personnel who lost their lives while serving in Canada, the USA or BWI, and who have no known graves.



This story ends there - and this Hamment line is not continued since Albert and Susan had no male children. However several nephews and their children have carried the Hamment name forward to this day.