

Essay on my Origins - by Avis Saltsman (Saltzmann)

I was born in 1935 in Lancashire and have been a teacher and visual artist for forty years. I recently realised that I had not understood the origins of my father's family, a fact which has, after sixty years cast a whole new light on my life.. It may not be of such importance to my brother and sister because they were born later, although it certainly must have affected them because of its profound and even tragic influence on our parents experience and behaviour, both totally innocent parties. Now that I have worked this out, with the aid of research done by my brother, I feel extremely sad, as it meant that I filled the vacuum with wrong interpretations, particularly of my mother's attitude towards me.

Up to the age of almost five I had a very happy childhood in an eastern suburb of Manchester looking towards Ashton-under-Lyne and the Pennines. Mine was a close and happy family consisting of, as well as myself and my parents, my mother's parents and her brother's family living near to each other half a mile away. I remember Christmases at my grandmother's house with pleasure. My maternal Grandmother was Frances Elizabeth Roberts whose mother Maria spoke only Welsh, and would be, with her husband, among the wave of Welsh seeking work in Northern industrial cities. She remembered an 'Aunty Charlotte', youngest daughter of a great-uncle who was a doctor vaccinating the population of Honolulu, capital of the Hawaiian islands and whose eldest son went to school on a camel with the Prince of Honolulu. So some of their family were among the Welsh who populated distant and exotic places like the still existing Welsh colony in Patagonia. Frances Elizabeth was a good craftswoman, being able to tackle very complex knitting patterns. When I was about eight she knitted me a Fair Isle short-sleeved jumper with fourteen colours and many lines, each with a different pattern. Many years later my most complex screenprints have up to fourteen colours.

My maternal Grandfather was Ernest Stansfield, which is a Yorkshire name, and all I know about his family is that he had a brother Harold who was an art teacher. Ernest became managing director of a scrap cotton company, Butterworths, having started as office boy. He had served in the First World War in France when his children, my uncle and mother were three and two years old. He volunteered to be a driver although he had never driven. He calculated, I imagine, that he might survive to see his young family again with the protection of a vehicle. He soon learned to drive and his strategy obviously worked as he lived until the 1950's, dying a few months after my grandmother, who had kept the family during that first war by running a wool shop in Clayton.

Both of my father's parents were dead before I was born, my father's mother, Caroline Daniels having died the year before my parents married in 1934. Hers was probably another Welsh family immigrated to Liverpool, as Daniels is also a Welsh name. Her father, a giant of a man who was 6ft 5 ins. tall and wore size 22 collars, built sailing ships. Her brother or uncle William Daniels was a well-known Liverpool artist of the time, painting Victorian subjects like 'The Flower Seller', still, I believe in the vaults of the Walker Art Gallery. My mother kept an illuminated address presented to William Daniels after a dinner in his honour for painting the Lord Major of Liverpool. Definitely a conventional artist, friend of the Liverpool Establishment, but it was the style of the day.

My mother also had some designs which I only vaguely knew were connected with my father's family. It was never made completely clear whose they were. Some were 'bread and butter' designs for the Victorian period, such as tweed and lace patterns, but others were quite different. They seemed to be well in advance of their time, geometric patterns, such as in Italian Futurist art or the English Vorticists before the First World War or, as a friend recently pointed out, the Vienna Secession.

My mother Frances (nee Stansfield), born 1912 was married to Cyril Saltsman, born 1908, in the summer of 1934. In 1926 they met in Clayton, Manchester where both their families lived, when she

was fourteen and he eighteen. My mother, was a naturally gifted pianist who could not read music. When she was three she wandered from the public house her parents kept and was found listening in rapt fascination to a Salvation Army band. In her late teens she was a member of a group playing 1930's style popular music and my father used to follow the group round. She seems to have only played on her baby grand piano (her most precious possession) at home after she married, rather than in public. Anyone with a gift like that, male or female, would these days be guaranteed a living. She went on picking up every popular trend, her style being somewhere between Billy Mayerl and Fats Waller, until she died thirty years after my father in 1993. She was also a good amateur painter.

They married in August 1934 because my Father's mother, Caroline (nee Daniels) had died of pernicious anaemia, having produced three sons, all weighing over twelve pounds at birth and three sets of twins, all boys, who died before the age of one. So Cyril and his brother Leonard, who was nineteen, were left motherless, which does not say a great deal for Frances' intended role. The fact that Leonard lived with them when they were first married was an understandable source of resentment on my mother's part. She had artistic and craft talent and went to a trade school to learn millinery, but her parents would not let her go to a high school at eleven because they said she was 'too young to cross the road'. I suspect it might have been connected with the payment necessary. Her brother John, who was ten months older, went to Manchester Grammar School. My mother was gifted in the arts and not given an equivalent chance. She must have envied me my limited amount of higher education which was a great deal more than she or my father had had.

My father was an excellent sportsman. He had been given a five-pound note by his headmaster for his prowess as a bowler in school cricket matches, (a lot of money then). This must have been before he was thirteen as his father lost his job then (1921) and my father had to leave school and start work in a chemical factory. He had played water polo and was an excellent goal keeper for Stalybridge Celtic, at one time being offered a position for a first division team (Preston North End), which he did not take as he felt his business was a better prospect for making a living. He told me twice that a sadistic foreman at the factory had 'tried to push him into a vat of boiling chemicals' but without explaining why the foreman might want to do this. This attempt to murder him must have been accompanied by verbal abuse making clear what it was all about. After leaving the chemical factory, my father had gone to 'night school' to educate himself, saving the bus fare by walking and eventually becoming a Chartered Surveyor and Estate Agent, .

My mother had had a miscarriage between myself and my brother. Many years later on telling me about it she said 'I said to the doctor 'I bet that was THE BOY.' She had been lifting me out of my cot and I was shocked to learn that she had blamed me for the miscarriage over all these years. There always seemed to be an element of regret at having produced me. I might have been more acceptable if I had been male as they were considered the useful people. There was no general knowledge or attention to child psychology in those days, indeed very little today amongst the general population. But having any child was an economic burden in the thirties, and my father started his business because he had earned very little when first married.

When I was just four, in September 1939, war with Germany was declared, in May 1940 my brother Peter was born, and in August 1940 I was five and started primary school the next month. My father became an air-raid warden and one of my most vivid memories is sitting on his shoulder in our outer suburb, watching Manchester burning. It must have been one of the early raids on the docks. I cannot remember at what point my father went into the war. He was thirty-two when he entered the war and thirty-seven when he came out. At the initial medical the doctor accused him of 'running round the block' beforehand as his heart was racing. He had done no running in fact he already had a 'heart murmur'. Indeed he had the same reason to volunteer as his brother Fred had done for the First World War at sixteen, pretending to be eighteen. Fred had died slowly of the gassing and foot rot ('Trench Feet') finally at twenty-nine leaving a wife and two young daughters. In spite of that

Cyril still felt obliged to volunteer and I will reveal why.

I know that at first my father was posted to Buxton, Derbyshire, to guard Italian prisoners, one of them being Charles Forte. Some of the prisoners made toys and jewellery from scrap materials which they gave their guards, including my father, who came home with a wooden horse on wheels and ingenious broaches made out of very tightly folded sweet papers.

At this stage my father could get leave to come home and he brought me story books from a Buxton bookshop. I remember another child calling across the road 'Your Dad's back' on one of his visits home. I loved my father. He was warm loving and concerned and paid attention to my welfare in spite of the difficulties. Also he had a spirit of adventurousness, which gave me a connection with the outside world, and in my teens, the holiday journeys we took broadened my horizons and fed my immense curiosity and 'need to find out'.

I suppose, like many, I was Daddy's Girl, because like my grandmother, he paid me attention, whereas my mother was always preoccupied with the baby, whom I felt she preferred. He did have the advantage of being a rare event rather than the day-to-day responsibilities of bringing up babies under the threat of air-raids. He was what now would be called 'quality time', But they were both under an extra dimension of pressure I only now understand.

I was an avid reader and the infant school headmistress, aunt of Jean Metcalf, the broadcaster said, years later, I used to 'write and write'. I can remember walking along the road home with her having a conversation about weights and measures. She was tiny, so more on my scale. At this time, though, and throughout my short lifetime, unspeakable atrocities were happening in countries surrounding Germany. I have always found it difficult to face information about the Holocaust. It is the worst series of events I feel has ever existed in the world. For a long time I thought my name might be Jewish, though there were no Jewish rituals in the family. My parents had Jewish friends whom they had met on holiday and kept in contact with for years. I always felt my mother was not prejudiced. She accepted an Indian friend of my sisters with the same equanimity.

Occasionally during the war, my mother and grandmother would take us to the Lancashire coast, to the 'posh' end of Blackpool called St. Annes. In a shop window there in the first year of the war was a beautiful doll to be raffled for Polish children I'd seen gazing out of a hostel window. The doll was made of felt with plaited blond hair and a wonderful traditional costume with layers of skirts, the upper ones trimmed with multi-coloured ribbons and long ribbons and beads hanging down at the back from a wreath of flowers round her head. The best part was the black velvet bolero intricately decorated with beads and sequins. My mother bought a ticket and then we went home. Some weeks later I opened the door for the postman on my fifth birthday and he had a large box as well as my cards. I had won the doll.

When he entered the army he left the business he'd built up in the hands of a man he'd taken pity on who had eight children. When my father was posted to Africa (one of the places was Benghazi) this man stole the money from the company and my father was given compassionate leave to come back and re-mortgage the house and make arrangements for his young family. After the Infant school, though, apart from the sirens I was not happy in a school with forty-five to fifty children in a class, screwed down desks and a harridan at the front yelling at us and sending us into the hall to chant times tables. My father said the headmaster was a complete incompetent. This is one of the reasons I became a humane educationalist. I'm sure I vowed it then I could do better than that.

On one of his visits home my father arranged for me to go to another school. It meant a bus journey to Ashton-under-Lyne, but was well worth it. My father had heard that the headmistress was good and I can remember her coming close and listening to me singing. I must have sung in tune though very quietly because she chose me for the choir. They discovered that I had not been taught handwriting rather than print and that I was 'absent-minded', spending time gazing out of the

window. I result I feel now of shutting myself off because of my war experiences. Not only was the first school hopeless I now believe that the emotional paralysis I suffered due to experiences in the war lasted into my late twenties, although people experienced much more in the area where I live now, near the City of London.

As the war gathered momentum, we began to have the possibility of air-raids. Even now I dread the sound of an air-raid siren and all the memorial programmes last year (1995) were torture. (I could not turn on the radio without hearing a siren and it contributed to a gradual thawing of the suppressed memories. I had a gas mask to put over my head, a terrifying experience in itself as it was so enclosed, airless and heavy. My tiny brother was in what looked like a little coffin and you could see his face through a window. My mother told two stories, one about her finding me behind the sofa 'breast-feeding' my doll as she did my brother and saying, 'now's the time for the other side' and the fact that soon, when there was an air-raid at night, I would be at her bedside before the siren had woken her up. She was very tired, having a young baby, although I now realise she had even deeper worries than most young mothers at that time and I think I unconsciously picked that up. My writing this has only been sparked off by some new information throwing an amazing light on my experiences, although the full realisation has come gradually, helped by the reading of the history of Lancashire and Cheshire.

Our local shelter was in the basement of the vicarage, a huge house on some open land at the end of the road, near the allotments where my Uncle Leonard had taken me to feed the ducks, my earliest memory at two or three. As I write this now, it seems like the screenplay for a horror film. I never liked such films and now I realise it was probably because I had my own inbuilt one, not helped by my receptiveness and vivid imagination.

Later we had a Morrison shelter in the living room, a little steel house with rivets and stable-type divided doors containing deck chairs which we used to retreat to on the sound of the siren. A recurring memory must have been in 1944 after, to a nine-year-old, an interminable four years, when the Germans were throwing everything at us, the time of the doodlebugs. My mother told me that after the doodlebugs, I had a nervous facial twitch. By that time the war had taken up more than half my life. I was old enough to suffer but not old enough to remotely understand. There was one funny incident where an 'auntie', really a name for a parent's friend, who lived next door was sharing the shelter. Let us say she was somewhat overweight and a deck chair collapsed under her.

One night we heard a sound not like a plane propeller but a more mechanical whine or buzz. The adults knew it was a doodlebug and it stopped above us. That memory often comes back to me because in those few seconds I really believed I was going to die. What we did not know at the time was that the missiles fell diagonally and this one fell about two miles away in Oldham. The persistence and total immersion I have shown in many activities in my life, I believe stem from that experience, because when it didn't fall I had been given my life back and valued more what I could do with it. When I became a Teachers Union president in 1984, a voluntary position, whilst bringing up two sons alone and teaching full-time, my mother asked 'why do you do these things?'

When nothing is explained, children attempt to fill in the gap. How does a five to ten-year-old attempt to explain these events to herself? Who could be doing this to us and why? A friend of mine who suffers from having been abused as a child by a 'friend of the family' hates her mother because she blamed her for letting it happen. At that age, one's parents are the only possible protectors. You do not know then that they are probably greater victims than you. The family was in fear and under threat and desperately trying to protect the children, without knowing the outcome of the war and there was reason to worry about how we would be regarded. This was the story of my father's life and I'm sure led to his illness and early death. Nowadays there is counselling for people who have experienced disasters, but there were so many victims then and no such help. All children received a message from King George VI in 1945 and I recently came across mine. It said 'To-day, as we

celebrate victory, I send this personal message to you and all other boys and girls at school. For you have shared in the hardships and dangers of a total war and you have shared no less in the triumph of the Allied Nations'. I wept at this.

'I know you will always feel proud to belong to a country which is capable of such supreme effort; proud, too, of parents and elder brothers and sisters who by their courage, endurance and enterprise brought victory. May these qualities be yours as you grow up and join in the common effort to establish among the nations of the world unity and peace.' Although today this looks a little jingoistic, I took much of it to heart, the supreme effort became, not the country's but mine. Before the war, a family joke about me was me saying 'Aa'll do it mesalf', meaning 'Don't try and do everything for me'. I think, as a girl I was expected to be useless and I was trying to express the opposite. When my father went away and my mother and brother seemed so helpless, I had only my own strength to rely on. In June there were the Wakes Week processions in Lancashire which children took part in. I was given a supporting ribbon for one of the poles supporting the banner. When the wind was blowing it down I was mocked by two boys for trying to pull it back. This is a vivid memory and I feel it is very symbolic.

My father came home on what had been a luxury cruise liner from the 1930's with several times more men on board than it was intended for, sleeping in close ranks on the decks. Every possible ship was enlisted for this. My father volunteered to be Librarian and slept in the library which gave him a little more room. This piece is written from a child's point of view as there are many histories of the facts of the wars, but many reaching retirement now, in the early nineties, were children then.

Cyril and a friend, George Hibbert, who was a local solicitor and had fought in Italy, spent their war gratuity on what was then a luxury holiday for themselves and their families. At one time before going abroad my father was posted to Corfe Castle and wanted to show it to us, and a number of other places much more beautiful than Manchester, so we set off for the West Country in a large local taxi. There were the four of us, my brother Peter then being five and not having seen his father for at least two years, 'Uncle' George, his wife Mary and daughter Moira, 'Auntie' Clare, the one who had fallen from the deck-chair in the doodlebug raid and her husband. The journey took at least twelve hours and we slept in the car and at the end we returned by train, another adventure. For a number of summers after that we went to South Coast resorts, Lyme Regis, Torquay, Swanage, staying somewhere on the way, like Wells or Stroud (The 'Bear' Inn which seemed the epitome of luxury and had a Siamese cat). They all tend to merge now. I think we once stayed at Falmouth, but did not stay overnight on the way. I know we arrived about midnight. This was all very adventurous for people from Manchester then, but later became commonplace.

A vivid memory from that holiday was Sennen Cove, the nearest beach to Lands End. Although I had been to Wales and St. Annes, this beach was special. It was huge and sweeping and we were the only people on it. I have an almost visionary memory of gazing into a rockpool and the green weed and red veins in the rocks were astonishingly bright. They fed my intense need for colour, which I have used as the stuff of life in hundreds of artworks. There is a collograph called 'Ocean Sounds' which I made forty-five years later which captures that mood. Perhaps I felt safe then after so long, but was soon to be taken over by another tragedy.

My father had his first heart attack during that holiday when someone had taken us on a visit to Dorchester and he was travelling in the back of a car with me. I must digress: In 1985 I took early retirement from teaching as I was disgusted with the Education policies of the present government and my life circumstances allowed me to pursue a life-long aim to be a visual artist full-time as opposed to fitting it in to the rest of my life, as I had always done. After leaving teaching I had more time to spend on my health and found I had astronomically high blood pressure. It had affected my eyesight to the extent that, after treatment and a calmer life I no longer needed to wear dual-lens spectacles. I needed none for distance sight and only half the previous prescription near sight half-

glasses for reading, drawing and print-making.

I got some medical advice about high blood pressure;- 'People who suppress emotional problems could be harming their hearts. Researchers have found that people who hide psychological distress show an unusual jump in heartbeat and blood pressure when they're stressed.' This is from advice circulated at the Y.M.C.A. gym at the Barbican where I attend for over-fifties exercise. I speculate that my father had these problems from adolescence, that he, like his elder brother had felt more obliged than most to go and fight for this country to show where his loyalties lay. This was because they were of German extraction. The worry about his young family and business on top of his war experiences created that first heart attack and he struggled on, at one point being in hospital for seven months taking nineteen pills a day.

Precis of information from 'A history of Lancashire and Cheshire from A.D. 1540' by C.B. Philips and J.H.Smith. Period 1860 - 1920. follows...

"A leading role in industrial development was taken by educated men from a continental background. Sir Alfred Mond, founder of I.C.I. came from Germany in 1862, Ivan Levenstein set up in Manchester in 1864, Charles Dreyfus founded Clayton Aniline in 1881. These men and others had a scientific education in Germany or Switzerland and the chemical and dye-stuffs companies relied on them. (My addition-In order for the printed cotton fabrics to sell, good designers were also needed).

The continentals were VIEWED WITH HOSTILITY, as they are in certain circles in England now, especially in the government. The old gentry resented the pollution and being politically and legally challenged. There were Tory / Liberal antagonisms intensified by legal disputes-town versus country. The continentals played a leading role in local government, in fact had a strong sense of civic responsibility."

FAMILY TREE OF MY FATHERS PARENTS. From research initiated by Peter Salzman.

What I knew at the time of writing this essay was misleading & I only elucidated the facts in May 2002. This is what I thought originally:-

"Mainrad (translation 'My wheel?') SALTZMANN

(Genealogist says could have been Mainhart translation 'My heart') Landed Proprietor, probably the last one to live in Germany up to the 1830's, one hundred years before my parent's marriage."

The story of my search for the facts is not germane to this essay & is on this link.

The fact that my great grandparents Joseph Saltzmann and Ann Roylance were married in Manchester Cathedral and my grandparents Oscar Frederick and Caroline at All Souls, Manchester suggests that they were not Jewish.

At the age of sixty I have at last been given some clues as to why I never felt quite acceptable, particularly in Lancashire. I felt as an orphan might feel who did not know who their parents were and that my characteristics and enthusiasms (even obsessions, such as twentieth century art, education, particularly the importance of nursery education, 'kindergarten', which the damned English will stubbornly still not introduce in spite of the fact that it would be of immense benefit to the country, and community action/local government and what would then have been termed liberal political involvement) were somehow alien and strange. It makes me well able to understand the irrational prejudice my parents must have felt was in the air mainly due to my father's early experiences as an adolescent. Even though he was the third generation to live in England the irrational prejudices of the First World War caused even dachshunds to be lynched, as easily available scapegoats were few in most parts of England. What is surprising is that the name was not changed until just before they married in 1934, but then they probably felt they had no reason to be ashamed, which indeed they did not. He did say that perhaps they should have gone to America, without saying why.

This has sparked off months of speculation about the situation my parents were in and their feelings about it, especially during World War II with two young children and no idea of the outcome year after year. It has been a profound shock to me to realise that those people bombing me were from the same country as my ancestors. What confusion there has been in my mind after my sufferings in the war and now knowing this in retrospect, Am I an ally or an enemy? Whose 'side' am I on? This is what my father must have thought. He had a Lancashire accent of course, and probably, so did his father. What was he thinking as he watched the flames with me? According to the research carried out for my brother, Cyril's grandfather Joseph may have been the last Saltzman(n), with the second 'n' removed, to spend any time in Germany. He probably moved between the two countries and may actually have died abroad as his death certificate cannot be found. What is certain is that at thirty-seven he married a Lancashire woman, as did his son and three grandsons. Inter-marriage and the introduction of genes from a distance strengthens the physical and mental abilities. The Queen Mother as an outsider must have done that for the Royal Family which of course has well-known German connections and in one notorious case, even Nazi sympathies.

When I was seventeen and in the lower sixth form at my girls grammar school, one of the English teachers (all of the staff were women) investigated the origins of our names and I was told that my name was Anglo-Saxon, meaning a woodman or charcoal burner. That would suggest my Saxon ancestors came over five or six centuries ago and I must have accepted that and dismissed it from my mind as I thought I had all memories of the war until recently. The most startling revelation from the newly-revealed family history was on the two marriage certificates' description of my great grandfather Joseph Saltzman (spelt with one 'n') as 'pattern designer' (1871) and my grandfather Oscar Frederick Saltzmann (spelt with two 'n's', 1897) as 'designer'. This fact had always been totally obscured in the family, in fact there had never been any mention of the German connection to me up to my mother's death in 1993, although my brother did the research in 1992, the year before her death. At first I thought that knowledge of the build-up of Nazism in the early thirties reached Lancashire slowly, but the fact that my father took out the 'z' from his name before they were married proves that they knew it was a factor.

My sister was born in 1950, with a dislocated hip which I, at the age of fifteen detected. Alyson was a year and a half old before she walked and I remember placing her on a table and measuring her legs against each other. One was longer than the other and I went in to tell my parents who were washing up. I will not describe all the treatment but she was able to attend school at five and do P.E. My mother always maintained that the doctor had asked her whether we had Welsh or 'Austrian' ancestry. He had most likely said 'German' and to the end of her life she never mentioned this possibility to me.

My Grandfather Ernest Stansfield sent a driver from his works who taught my mother to drive on the journeys to and from the hospital. Cyril had permanent angina and was at periods in pain every morning for up to two hours before he could go to work. He employed some staff and carried on his business by phone until he could get to his office nearby. He was by then a surveyor, valuer and estate agent and work involved week-ends when people were enquiring about houses. He belonged to his professional association and went with my mother to their annual dinners. My mother went to London for the first time when she was forty on one of these occasions and they stayed at the Rembrandt Hotel opposite the Victoria and Albert Museum.

There are two very revealing photographs of me three years apart. One is a happy, smiling jolly little girl of eight and the other is two years after the doodlebugs, a shrivelled little mouse with huge owl-like glasses burying my face with rows of other eleven-year olds in the secondary school hall. I was probably already twelve but look smaller than the others. I am unlucky enough to be an August birthday, so the first time I took the eleven plus I was very young and missed the high school by three places. It meant I also had a second chance and passed the second time. As an educationalist I am a fervent supporter of comprehensive schooling as had I not had the second chance my life

opportunities would have been even more limited although I was exactly the same person. After my father came out of the army my parents arranged for me to be tutored by a friend who was a primary school headmaster. I especially remember him helping me with fractions with the aid of drawings of cut cakes. It obviously worked and I clearly remember being sent home one morning to tell my mother the result. She was standing in the driveway of our corner semi-detached with my grandmother and 'Auntie' Mary Hibbert. I said 'Av passed the scholarship' in my Lancashire accent.

From the moment I entered secondary school, I was always first in the art exams. Every parents evening the art teacher would buttonhole my parents trying to impress them about my gift and my father always complained about this and set himself fervently against my going to art school. The fact was that art had been the family business and but for the Wars could have been public and successful. Of course it is only in the nineteen nineties that I know this. Genetic inheritance is extremely powerful and it was reinforced from other strands of the family, my mother's and father's uncles, Harold Stansfield and William Daniels. It would have been strange if someone in our generation had not inherited these abilities. I went to a women's teacher training college, taking art as a main subject. The testimonial from school to the college described me as having an exceptional artistic gift. This was in 1953 and the expansion of art colleges in England happened in the sixties during which Britain and particularly London led the world in fashion and design. Some of my father's companions from the army had taken a late teacher training and he knew of Bingley College, Yorkshire, though now it was a women's college. Looking back on it now, it was more confining than home and managed to shield me almost entirely from life experience, in spite of which I came top in a general knowledge quiz. The curriculum was varied and interesting but not at a very high intellectual level and I was trained to teach the 'little ones', nursery and infant age. One lecturer described me as being 'more hungry for knowledge than I was for food', and another that I was there 'because my father was ill'.

When I left I was still only nineteen as being an August birthday, the mechanism that had given me another stab at the eleven plus prevented me from taking A-Levels as I was just old enough to go to college after only one sixth-form year. Decisions about careers were a blunt instrument and most girls went on to teaching or nursing and it was only a two-year course. By ten years later, girls were going for real careers such as architecture, the law, medicine etc. I feel that from the age of sixteen I was mightily underestimated and have spent my life proving my ability, unfortunately most of it unpaid in the adult world outside schools, such as running a county-wide organisation with newsletters, branches, conferences and training courses, being a teacher's union president for a London borough and on two national committees of artists organisations. Wherever I have lived throughout England I have taken part extensively in community life. I now know that these were all characteristics of the Germans and Swiss who set up the industry in Lancashire and Cheshire providing both jobs and community support and experiencing enormous prejudice, reinforced by the two wars and which my father experienced from early adolescence.

I believe my father Cyril, like me, had to suppress painful memories in order to survive and his memories were connected with art and design and his father losing his design job in 1921. He said it was because of the cotton slump, but that came in 1929 with the total recession that blighted the 30's. I think that prejudice was at least an element in the families' plight. It was my father's suppressed memory about art which was partly responsible for his not allowing me to pursue it. In trying to explain it I had previously felt he thought teaching was a safer bet since he was ill and I needed to earn my living and also Victorian attitudes still prevailed and art school was felt to be somewhat adventurous for 'young ladies'. I have always been successful in what I have attempted to do and I am sure, in the fertile climate of the sixties I could have made a go of a design company, especially had I gone to a London College as my second son did to R.A.D.A. a generation later. My sister, fifteen years younger went to Manchester Art College to do graphics and gained first class honours.

When I left training college I started teaching in an infants school a short distance from my parents' home, whilst living there and giving them half my salary in rent. No-one ever considered in those days that a young woman might rent a flat alone and it is impossible to explain to my children's generation about the unspoken assumptions and restrictions then existing. Virtually the only reason a young woman might leave home was to marry, so in order to be free of that extremely restricted life you had to find a man, any man who would be willing to marry. As it was not even then considered that a woman was a person in her own right with a life she could explore, it did not matter whether you, as a person, had anything in common with that person and you both took on certain pre-determined roles. Passion may or may not be part of it. I think it was in my mother's case but in mine, I had left college still with a hunger to explore my own abilities and find out who I was and had a very limited experience of the opposite sex. This is no insult to my first husband because this was the case with millions of people and as Philip Larkin said 'Sex was discovered in 1963, a little late for me'. An exciting partnership of equals was something I found many, many years after much wear and tear.

I went to evening classes at Manchester Art School when I started teaching. In the mid-fifties they were conventional life and still-life classes and I remember going to my mother's local greengrocer to get apples and oranges to paint. A still-life I painted involving them and a blue glass vase I had bought my mother, one of a number I considered better design than her brass ornaments, was acquired by a friend of my parents. She was a matron from Salford Royal Hospital, a Scotswoman called Miss MacIntosh (I never knew her first name). My father knew her because he was chairman of Governors of the hospital, the one where he had spent all those months. While I was painting it, the principal of the college came round and said 'I could speak of that and Manet in the same breath'. Towards the end of my first year of classes, I saw some work in the drying racks which was very different, so I asked about the class they were painted in and someone told me Terry McGlynn was the teacher.

The following September I attended his evening classes and discovered a totally different world. Terry was a man in his fifties married to Ida, who lectured at Manchester Training College. They were the first really cultured people I had met and I regard them as my 'spiritual parents'. Extreme necessity had led me to them. The work produced in Terry's classes was abstract and very individual to the person and the method he used to teach was based on a deep knowledge of twentieth century art and a modern and original philosophy of teaching. I was ready for this as I was already bored with representational work because it came easily to me. Based on his advice we produced work at home and brought it to the next class. I can remember him many times taking off his glasses and creeping up close to scrutinise my work. He seemed drawn to it.

Terry used to take promising students from his various classes to their home in Heaton Moor, Stockport, a large Victorian house which he and Ida ran as an art centre. I dropped the art college and went to Terry's classes in Heaton Moor, quite a long bus ride, on Wednesday evenings, until after the birth of my first child when we moved to the Midlands at the end of 1961, five years in all. Terry conducted the classes in one long ground floor room and had his studio in another. Occasionally there were long weekend courses which took over the whole house. He was my first example of someone living as an artist and teacher. The house was full of books about twentieth century art which sparked off my life-long study of it. It was very brave of him, after being well-known as a representational artist in a provincial town to evolve into doing exciting abstract work acknowledging modern developments which I still believe were a high point preferable to later movements like pop, minimalism and conceptualism which were more about sociology than art. (Music is abstract so why not visual art?) Terry was ostracised by his former circles for the move at first, but was bringing Manchester, which in many respects has been progressive in the other arts, into the twentieth century.

At twenty-one I was a member of the Hallé Society when John Barbirolli was conductor and went to

every concert, two a week, in their centenary year celebrations with the best soloists and sometimes other orchestras from all over the world. The group of painters including myself, led by Terry took over the Modern Art Society, which formerly had been a bit of a farce, and I was in my first show at the Manchester Art Gallery at twenty-one, the youngest of the group. Ida said my potential should have been picked up at seventeen and I believe there was a school in Manchester for children gifted in the arts. The McGlynns house was full of people it was good for me to meet and gave me some social sophistication. They came from a wide range of society and included a scientist's wife and a fish and chip shop proprietor. There was an atmosphere of contact with Europe and people brought food like pasta, my first experience of Italian food. The McGlynns spent the long university summer vacation on the Island of Ischia, in the Bay of Naples, where they knew Paolo, who had a cafe on the beach. In the summer after my first year of teaching I went with a college friend to Rome and Rimini. We visited the late-night opera ('Aida') at the Caracalla Baths and Italy became of great importance to me and has featured tremendously in my work. Ischia was a kind of ideal dream-island for me which I was only able to visit when I was forty, just as I was about to separate from my first husband. The next year I used drawings I had done there as the basis of some of my most important work.

I continued to paint when we moved to the Shropshire/Staffordshire border and I had had my second child. (This child, Jason Watkins, got his first big acting opportunity after leaving R.A.D.A. at the Manchester Royal Exchange theatre and this gained him his Equity card.) A friend had asked me to give her lessons, which I did with the aid of Terry's methods. A local Adult Education tutor asked whether I would like to give classes and be paid for it, so when Jason was ten months old I gave my first A. E. classes at Shrewsbury Art College later moving to the Mulberry Art Centre Shrewsbury, at one time in co-operation with a mime artist, with my students making masks to be used in the dance, and then to other centres in Shropshire. I discovered I was getting the same pay as an Oxford graduate who was head of English at a Birmingham comprehensive.

I have been avoiding writing about my relationship with my mother and was surprised to find that my brother also experienced a kind of 'arm's length' restraint in her attitude, a lack of warmth, a complete inability to hug. She never hugged me and how I must have needed it during those air-raids. I was always trying to impress her and never found it possible. In fact the more I achieved the less she seemed to like it and when I talked about my activities over the phone, she would change the subject to talking about her neighbours whom I hadn't met for years. We moved away from Manchester after my first marriage and the birth of my first child, which I think was the only legitimate activity she felt I should have engaged in. She completely lacked my interest in the outside world and since the ruin of her early married life and her husband's health came through world affairs, it is perhaps understandable. Frances never wore make-up, not even lipstick and I cannot remember a time when she appeared to be an even remotely sexual being.

Another characteristic she had was what she described as shyness, saying that she could never speak in public. Her life was completely domestic as she never worked outside the home so she never had the experience of juggling home and children with work and outside interests which many of my and the succeeding generation of women have had to do. In talking about my union position she once asked me 'why do you do these things?' At the time I was battling to save the jobs and conditions of a thousand teachers, which was the size of our association, against a right-wing council, including Terry Dicks, who later became an ultra-Thatcherite MP who many times declared that art (and presumably education which he obviously didn't have) was totally unnecessary. Perhaps some indication of why England is now the 'thick man of Europe' Recent research (1996) has discovered that art and music are vitally necessary to learning in all other subjects and comprehensive school results have been consistently good through all the years of destruction and denigration indulged in by the Conservative government.

In thinking about my mother's life I have tried very hard to put myself in the shoes of a young woman of twenty-two, very much in love with my father whom she'd known since she was fourteen, feeling

prejudice, which she may not have experienced directly. When the lamps needed to go on on a dark day, she would immediately draw the curtains, it was almost an obsession 'so people could not look in'. She was, I felt, stern and very concerned to be respectable. She had a sense of humour which she only seemed to exercise with her friends. When she was over eighty and briefly considering old peoples homes which she never in the end needed, she said she 'wouldn't want other people to know her business' which I feel may have meant she didn't want them talking about her as they may have done in the past. The strain of shielding me during those early years and keeping a secret from me which after all that time she felt she could never reveal left a distance between us.

This meant that, after the deaths of my Grandmother, when I was sixteen and taking O-levels, and my father when I was two hundred miles away with two young children, I felt there was no-one left in the family to really care about me. Leaving the children to be looked after, my first husband and I had a slight car accident on the way to my fathers funeral so that we only arrived as the procession came out of the church, so I had not taken part in the official mourning. There is one memory about when my father was very ill and it must have been before he had that long spell in hospital. He had bought me a good fountain pen to do my exams. His real dream had been to be a doctor. Unfortunately my talents were not those which would fulfil his dreams, they were inherited from his father, grandfather and those other relatives.

Certain characteristics, indeed gifts which I have inherited at least partly because of my German ancestry have lent immense colour and interest to my life, so I cannot in any way disown it. Barbarity has never come from my direction as a long-time member of CND, indeed area membership secretary. I gave my sons no toy guns, although, astonishingly given her experiences my mother bought them Action Men with guns. Everything I have ever done has been based on thought and analysis, I do not do things blindly, but I am sorry my mother could never raise the subject, so I was not able to get closer to her by discussing it. She once said to me 'We get on don't we' and I replied sharply that 'We never discuss anything important'. I have got on' with many hundreds of people, but more intimate relationships require knowledge in depth. Apart from my teachers' research into the name, there is probably a deeper reason for not asking about it, since I am so penetrating in other ways. My mother had experienced the destruction of my father because he was a third-generation immigrant and all hr life she was determined this would not be visited on the fourth. I have never heard of a better argument for European integration, indeed universal tolerance. Even though my mother probably did not work this out so thoroughly, it was based on feeling and a sense of justice. Even our alienation from each other was caused by it, which is the ultimate injustice.

In the year before I remet and married my second husband, I went on a wet August holiday to the Lake District with my mother. In a bookshop in Ambleside I found a booklet about one of a number of twentieth century artists I am interested in, Kurt Schwitters. I first heard about him from the McGlynns, who had actually known him in the Lake District, a real link with history. He, like another favourite, Ludwig Kirchner, attempted to escape from the Nazis and the booklet said that he went to Ambleside, ill and at the end of his life and lived there for some time drawing portraits of local people, such as the postman who were friends. They can have had no idea of his stature as a world-class creative artist whose output was astonishingly wide-ranging, from sound-pictures to collaged structures called Merzbau, one of which he built in Ambleside, to revolutionising lettering for commercial art. The booklet gave directions to where he had lived and I dragged my mother round Ambleside to find it. I had no idea why I was doing this, but there are other instances where I was subconsciously trying to get her to reveal something which must have confirmed her worst fears, that I had inherited these talents and interests from my father's family, about whom she had pledged herself never to say anything.

In 1992, Manchester was the City of Visual Arts and I went with my friend Virginia to visit my mother. We visited some of the exhibitions including one showing black and white woodcuts, some by the German expressionists and my mother came with us very reluctantly, sat in a chair throughout and would not look at the prints. Virginia and I also went to Liverpool to visit the Tate there, but we

understood it would be too much for my mother so she didn't come with us. My mother only once met Terry McGlynn and acted in a very embarrassed way at his enthusiasm for my work

In a very full life I have spent forty years studying twentieth century art and visited hundreds of exhibitions. In my studio I have a good collection of books on it and six files of hand-written notes I took when taking a late education degree with art as a main subject and lectures on twentieth century art in 1975. With my first teaching salary I bought a book on Picasso. Gradually I worked myself away from teaching infants to teaching adults and Art in a secondary school. Throughout the age-groups I used my artistic ability to make my teaching of all age groups interesting and that ability gave me a steady living which has rendered two pensions, including the state one in my own right for thirteen years longer than waiting for my husbands. When I came to live in London and took an Education and Art degree course seconded on salary by the London Borough of Hillingdon, I made contact with the Artists Union after going to their meetings at the I.C.A. They later had offices off Cambridge Circus and then in Poland Street and I became the Librarian of the Union. I still hold the archives and am attempting to write a history. After I had secured early retirement from teaching, I gave myself the training I had always wanted by taking short courses in mostly London colleges and got into an exhibition at the Royal Festival Hall with only the third etching I'd ever done called 'Civilisations' and an abstract silkscreen called 'Summer' in the second half. I never looked back and have been a member of the Printmakers Council Committee for five years (1991-96). A list of exhibitions is at the end of this paper.

In August 1993 I visited an exhibition in southern Germany as a member of the British Printmakers Council committee. One of our members had made the contacts, in Landau in the Rheinlandpfalz near Karlsruhe. A good many towns in Germany have organisations called Künstlerverein which consist of local people who wish to support artists, which is something totally unknown in England. The one in Landau had a turn-of-the-century villa as a permanent exhibition venue and our joint German/English printmakers show was a big event for the whole region, with a regional politician (arts minister) attending, among others and an art historian giving an address. I obtained a copy of the address and a friend translated. It was a eulogy of printmaking from the earliest times with quotes from Goethe and descriptions of all the methods. The show was called Reflections/Reflexionen. The people I stayed were slightly younger than me, with children in their early twenties and they were born after the war. We were wined, dined and feted, taken on trips to the castles on cliffs overlooking the vineyards of this wine-growing district. The Germans bought most of the English work at high prices and the peoples homes we stayed in, were full of adventurous art which they had bought. These people were not artists themselves but think of artists as special people and we were treated with a breathless reverence which was almost embarrassing, being used as we are to rock-bottom status in England with a London gallery Mafia of dealers making a fortune out of selling dead artists' work to tourists and ordinary people not buying art, particularly adventurous art.

Since I remarried in 1983, for all professional purposes I called myself Avis Saltsman, since there were difficulties with people identifying who I was if using either married name. My mother was the only one who insisted in addressing letters to Mrs K.J. Baldry. I do not mind A.A. Baldry for things other than public positions, but the former I regard as an elimination of me altogether and my husband agrees. If he didn't I wouldn't be married to him. Several of the Germans told me I was German and the photoetching I showed in the show was called 'Waiting to Cross' ! All this was sheer chance, but seems uncanny to me now. This piece of work was reproduced, with others in the town art magazine (population only seven thousand) and I sent a copy of the catalogue to my mother. I now realise it was one of a string of unconscious attempts to get her to reveal something to me. The results of our return show in the foyers of the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, though handsome, still did not sell because, as I said the English don't buy art, but we did give the organising committee some good parties, including a dinner at the Chelsea Arts Club. A night to remember.

I remember clearly when the war was over as we were in St Annes again during the August school holiday and it was boiling hot . We were in one large bedroom, my mother and grandmother in

the double bed, my brother in a cot in the corner and I had a single bed by the window. I couldn't sleep because I was sunburnt and suddenly the air was filled with bells ringing and I could hear crowds singing. I said 'Mu-u-u-m, I think the war's over'. All she said was 'Oh, go to sleep. The war will be over for us when your Father comes home' I can now see that the end of war was not necessarily the end of things for my family, as it hadn't been for my fathers. My mothers reactions were always puzzling to me and I must have struggled to interpret them. Who could possibly not be joyful on that occasion? And her answers to me were always bad-tempered. I believed I always felt that something was my fault since she hardly had a good word for me. Children do interpret things that way. Children, especially girls have to learn to break away from their mothers. I know few women who feel they really get on with their mothers and mine certainly made it easy for me. The downside was that I could not stop futilely trying to impress her. I had piano lessons but, when I played Beethoven's 'Für Elise' for her, she stopped them.

In describing my sister's eldest daughter Amy to me over the phone, my mother described her as 'like you-Bright'. She spat out the word as though it were some kind of disease. I now realise it was the German Disease and I was an infection that had contaminated our family. I feel (and I mean deep and hurtful emotion) that it was a very great pity that my unconscious attempts to discover the origins of my personality could not have had a kinder response from my mother. My parents had had to guard my brother and I as babies in paralysing fear that the connection may be held against us, but if we had been able to discuss it before she died it was the only means of having an adult relationship. I am writing this, after Britain had been an (albeit reluctant) member of the European community for years in an attempt to repair the damage that all the contradictions of this history has done to me and an attempt to find greater understanding from members of my family. Having spent a life-time studying twentieth century art alienates me further and further from most English people's 'philistinism and proud of it' even to the point where they cannot appreciate they have the best in the world such a British acting skills, and the farce of the current 'Beef of Old England' pantomime.

At the same time I was sheltered, being a child of the third generation after Mainhart and immigrant artists and craftspeople have contributed much to this country over the centuries.

In 1992, it was Britain's turn to chair the European Community, and aware that they funded the arts abysmally compared to the other European countries, the government suddenly found six million pounds to try to impress them with arts events during the six months (they withdrew ten million the following year.) To get funds you needed a European project, so an artist acquaintance recruited seven other artists, including me, to put on a Euro8Group show. She was English and a painter, there was a humorous Scotsman, a painter, a German woman printmaker, a Greek potter/sculptress, a French sculptor, Irish abstract painter, French sculptor, an Italian muralist and myself regarded to be Welsh as I was three-quarters so and we all lived in London anyway. We got the grant which just paid for a professionally presented catalogue with messages from the Arts Minister and an art critic. We tidied up an empty shop in Lower Marsh, Waterloo, called it the Euro Gallery, had several good parties in our house to plan it with everyone contributing food and were the first visual art event in the official catalogue. My husband Ken composed music to be played during the show and we were visited by John Drummond, the Festival Director. This is my idea of a future I would like to take part in.

I hope writing this may help to make me a more relaxed individual, able to enjoy my life and especially my new grandson without agitation. When you are older you are less able to suppress early memories These realisations have been very gradual and painful, but by writing them down I hope to lay them to rest. They certainly raise questions about international relations and the effect on the individual. There are going to be some pretty disturbed people in Bosnia for years to come.

Added 21-2-1999

I joined the Anglo-German Family History Society (AGFHS on this link) as soon as I discovered there was one. Apart from assisting members in their research into their ancestors, they organise trips to Germany, both as holidays & to allow local research.

On a Mosel Valley holiday in May 1998, we met two women from Manchester (the AGFHS covers Britain) who were cousins, Their mothers were the eldest and youngest daughters of a family of eight. Their grandfather, Adolf Wieland, was a butcher of German origin and their grandmother was English. He had been deported to Germany during or just after World War 1. Their grandmother died and her eldest daughter had to look after the seven others. All the family had to remember Adolf by was a battered and torn agonised letter in German expressing his horror at having to leave them. On the last night of our holiday, we had a river trip, on which we shared our feelings about what had happened to families with such a background. I feel that Cyril's family cannot have escaped the consequences of the hatred that was whipped up by the newspapers (similar to the tabloids today) making it worse than it would have been anyway. It did not matter if they were born here like my grandfather (Oscar Frederick) or gave their life for Britain like his son Fred, my uncle. Many Germans came to Britain in the 19th Century and our grandfather, Joseph Saltsman(n), the spellings vary with not much logic in the certificates, was one of them. My grandfather, Oscar, was born in Pendleton, which is still a pleasant little village. Oscar was always called Fred in Lancashire. I guess that their move to Salford took place when Joseph was promoted and his daughter Laura was born there.

Joyce Pittman, the Microfiche Librarian of the society has found the address in the 1881 census. Joseph is described as a forman designer living at 44, Embridge St and born in France. In reading some of the society's literature it seems fairly common that people went back to their country of origin when they were old as there was no old-age pension. In Joseph's case it is difficult to guess whether that would have been France or Germany. We do not seem to know when his wife Ann died, but if she had died and his children married there would be nothing to keep him. It would be interesting to know whether Joseph had brothers and sisters whose descendants still live in Germany and whether there are descendants of Laura's living here. On the census, there is a Frederick Bohler, a butcher (there were many German butchers) living next door at 40 Embridge St probably lodging with the Buckley family.

It may be possible to go further back and find out where the land owned by Joseph's father Mainrad (or Mainhart) was. That might be an exciting thing to do that would counteract the horror of what is illustrated by some of the AGFHS literature. One book is by Roy Bernard, the founder of the society whose four grandparents were German and whose grandfathers were interned in the concentration camp at the Isle of Man (although they didn't know each other at the time). He has led a society visit there to commemorate the thousands of innocent men wrenched from their families, leaving them destitute. A plaque was erected on one of the remaining buildings and there was a church service. The place is called Knockaloe and I shudder to think that my mother Frances often complained about how her parents had so many holidays on the Isle of Man until she was 17 in 1927. She had known Cyril then for three years.

I quote from 'Germans in Britain since 1500', (Hambleton Press) Chapter Seven, by Panikos Panayi:-

'no immigrant minority in nineteenth and 20th century Britain has had to endure the level of hostility faced by the Germans during the first World War when both the government and public opinion became so saturated with Germanophobia that each devoted large amounts of energy to eliminating the German communities from Britain,'

also about 'xenophobic pressure groups':-

'racial violence can be considered the strongest form of popular racism, ranging from attacks on individuals... to riots against minorities at a particular time, involving thousands of people and systematic targeting'.

At the height of all this in May 1915, following the sinking of a passenger liner (stuffed with munitions), the Lusitania by a German submarine with loss of a thousand lives, Oscar (Fred) and Caroline were 41, eldest son Fred 17, Cyril was 7 and Leonard 2. I think Cyril grew up in an atmosphere of extreme hostility every time he left his parents house.

Six years later, in 1921 his father lost his job and Cyril had to leave school and whilst working in a chemical factory was almost murdered by a sadistic foreman who tried to push him into a vat of boiling chemicals. On the two occasions he told me this, he never explained why this had happened.. He used to say he saved bus fare by walking to his evening classes but I think he must also have suffered abuse on the buses. He said he studied in his mother's bathroom against the warm cistern and it breaks your heart to think how Caroline must have tried to protect her children. In the articles I've read so far the wives of mixed marriages suffered abuse and in many cases were left destitute and often died like the grandmother of the Manchester cousins. At the Armistice on November 11th (and Cyril always attended the memorial services) only 16% of 24,450 men were permitted to take up residence again in Britain.

Frances said her brother-in-law Leonard Saltsman had been in prison although he was only 19 when he went to live in Dunkirk St with them. He lost his girlfriend, probably because she couldn't face the prejudice that Frances may have received though things were not as bad in WW11. Perhaps there are some things you can remember that fit into the pattern and make more sense in the light of what we now know. There were thousands of families affected by this

It has taken a long time for all this to dawn on me, starting with my brother's original research. I don't intend it to take over my life as it does with some family researchers, but one only has to see how assiduously adopted children search for their real parents to see how strong is the need to know where one comes from. It is part of identity and always felt I only partly knew who I was. Frances seemed obsessed with getting me married. After I married Ken, she was the only person to address letters to Mrs K.J Baldry, so anxious was she to eliminate the danger of the dreaded name that she didn't even leave me my own first name!

2002 - The Search for my Roots

My brother Peter had been curious about our family name because there were no other Saltsmans in the Manchester telephone Directory but it was not something ever discussed by my Mother & Peter was reluctant to pursue the matter until after her death. When he hired a genealogist to look into the matter, the result was a considerable shock, for the reasons I have explained in my Origins essay. He wrote to me with the information at the beginning of 1996. When I said to my husband, Ken that I was a German & what did he think of that, he replied that he was a musician & what did I think he thought - "Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner" he said & explained that he had thought it was a name of German origin but, as an admirer of German culture, this was scarcely an issue. (He speaks some German). However, I was more concerned about more recent German history & it is difficult to banish such thoughts. I started to take German classes at the City Lit.

In April 1997, we became aware of the Anglo-German Family History Society & joined it. It does not sort out people's families for them but has a large number of resources, which I tried tapping in to. Because of various other concerns, we did not attend any of the society's meetings until after going on a coach trip with them to the Mosel region in May 1998. We enjoyed the holiday & started to attend the bi-monthly meetings in June 1998. We made contact with various members in the Manchester area & the man who eventually set up the Manchester Group, Anthony Steven, was

particularly assiduous in seeking out information about the German connexion with local industry. He found Joseph in Slater's Manchester Directory for 1851 when he was 14. However, while other snippets of information about Joseph Saltzmann did appear, none added much to our knowledge of his ancestry. We also tried contacting the German Lutheran Church in Stretford but did so when they had just changed pastors, so he was unable to help. This was at the end of a Scottish trip in August 1999 & we looked at the few locations we had for Joseph in Manchester. They had all been rebuilt.

Ken searched on the Internet, which we had only really started using in April 1998, when I had an art show to publicise, so we needed a web site of our own. This soon included the AGHFS site, which Ken maintains. However, the search facilities on the Web were still rather primitive in 1998 &, while we were able to contact a number of Saltzmanns & Salzmanns, none appeared to be related to me. A complication arose with Joseph's marriage certificate: his father was named as 'Meinrad', which Ken did not believe was a name at all & supposed it to be a mishearing of Meinhart or Meinhardt, which are names. Also, Joseph was stated to have been born 'in France' with no further detail. The spelling 'Joseph' is French (Germans spell it 'Josef') but Saltzmann seems German, so we thought that Alsace-Lorraine might be a possible area of origin. We planned to visit there some day, when we had something more definite to go on. This was not to be for a long time.

Meanwhile, we took part in the social activities of the AGFHS, going to the Christmas Markets, based in pretty Boppard in December 1999. Roy, the tour organiser, lost his wife in 2000, so Ken found himself organising a Christmas Markets tour based in Aachen for December 2001. However, by the time that tour happened, we had made a little progress.

Anthony Steven had come up with something of Joseph's working pattern & I was thrilled to discover that he had had a workroom behind the Manchester Art Gallery, where I had exhibited in the 1950s. In April 2001, Anthony Steven sent this:-
"Hello Avis, I was working in Salford and found 30 minutes to visit the local studies library. Had a look at the street and trade directories for you. Joseph appears in Slaters 1893 and 1894 directories with a business address of 22 Cooper Street and a residential address of 35 West Ashton Street. He is in Kellys 1895 directory showing only his residence as 35 West Ashton Street, Eccles New Road and after that there are no more entries for him. I checked to 1905. It would seem likely he died 1894/95 as the 1895 directory would have been compiled in 1894 or even 1893."
In August, Ken found a Pierre Saltzmann, born in Lafrimbolle, Lorraine, in 1840 who had emigrated to the USA. Lafrimbolle is too small to show up on our Europe Motoring Atlas, so Ken bought a local map & there it was, in what seemed to be a pretty area. We resolved that, tenuous as it was, Lafrimbolle was a place to visit & see what we could find.

Ken searched the on-line telephone directories for Saltzmanns & came up with some interesting numbers. There were 75 Saltzmanns in France & only 15 in Germany with the 't'. There were plenty spelt 'Salzmann' but Roland Saltzmann had told us by e-mail in 2000, that the 't' ones were not German. One of the Saltzmanns was Claudine, who lived in Abreschviller, nearby Lafrimbolle. I had started French classes (the German ones ground to a halt when most of the class could not keep up) & wrote to Claudine in my bad French. This was corrected to poor French by a member of the AGFHS & sent but I had no reply. Then, we found Steve Johnson on the web in April 2002. He was descended from Pierre & also put us in contact with Jaris Roth, who was descended twice from Pierre. Because of the bleakness of a drive across Northern France, we flew to Zürich on 8th May 2002 & hired a car.

The detailed story of this tour is on this link but this is what happened in the search. We had several pieces of incredible luck:-

We intended to stay in Schirmeck, as being central in the region we wanted to check. But there are

no hotels (luck:1), so we drove to Abreschviller. The only hotel with a room was the Cigogne in the centre of the village (luck:2). I mentioned my mission & (luck:3), the barman knew Claudine, gave us her telephone number &, it appeared, rang her to warn of our presence. I rang her in the evening & (luck:4) although she speaks no English, has an English speaking friend, allowing us to make a date for a beer the following evening. Meanwhile, I searched the Abreschviller Mairie (Town Hall) records. No luck, so we drove over to Lafrimbolle to the Mairie there. Several Saltzmanns but nothing obviously relevant. Then, we tried the Sarrebourg archive, as that was the nearest proper town. All the bureaucrats were very helpful at all the places but no luck again.

That evening, Claudine & friend Françoise brought her grandfather's wedding photo with her family tree for last century on the back. She told us (luck:5) that she came from Rixheim & that that was the only place with many Saltzmanns. (If I had plotted the telephone directory Saltzmanns on a map, I may have discovered that). We invited them to dinner the next day & learned more about the family. Claudine had thought my letter was a joke, as Lafrimbolle is so small!

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So, we drove down to Rixheim, staying at a hotel in Mulhouse. At the Rixheim Hotel de Ville (Town Hall), we met Benoit Meyer, Chef de Service & a real genealogy enthusiast (luck:6). He found a Joseph (there were not many) who's dates seemed correct but his father was Jean. At this point, Ken (luck:7), who had never been happy about the Mainrad name, had an inspiration. It wasn't his name. It was a mishearing of Gemind(es)rat (Councillor) by the Manchester registrar. Joseph must have been puffing his origins at his wedding. As in Britain, the wife receives the Marriage Certificate, he may well have been unaware of the error & we think Ann Roylance was probably illiterate. Joseph's mother was. There was no stopping Benoit, who dug out all the records, some in ancient books in beautiful copper-plate handwriting & traced my family back for four more generations. Jean was a mason & we may have seen some of his handiwork in the cemetery of Rixheim Church, which was full of Saltzmanns & the other families I am descended from. One last indicator - Alsace is largely Catholic but not this corner, which was once Switzerland & Calvinist. Joseph was a Protestant who married in Manchester Cathedral. The family tree is on this link.

We were left with some grounds for speculation, as we visited the excellent Textile Museum in Mulhouse & learned that there had been a free School for Textiles & Practical Geometry in Mulhouse. We wondered if Joseph had studied there. He was also the son of a second marriage, so he may have left Alsace on the death of his father, who was 50 when he was born.

