# Preface

To whom it may Concern –

Some one, (I never was very good at recollecting my authors) but I believe some author has said that keeping a diary, writing a biography, or making a genealogical table or tree: is a sign of vanity on the part of him who does it: but that can only be true of those who have ancestors of note and celibrity, not that I have any need to be ashamed of mine that I am aware of, and some of them may even yet be noted, for many men have only had Monuments erected to their memory years after they have ceased to exist: be that as it may, I cannot think that there can be anything very wrong in recording for the amusement of ones own family circle, anything that one may know of ones own history, humble though it may be, indeed I can easily imagine that the history of ones own Great Grandmother and anecdotes of her time might be as interesting as the history of anyone elses. besides, who can say when that distant relation or his decendant who may have Emigrated, either

of his own free will or otherwise is going to turn up, with a fortune ready made. See the trouble you might spare the poor man by having your lineage at your fingers Ends, why the law costs that might be saved is enough to make ones mouth water, that is if you cared for the lucre, but none of our kin ever did, or if so they always took (make money) care to enjoy it while they lived, and so never left any behind. but we never know what may happen, I have known some of the family who have been much poorer than there was any real occasion for, or than I should have expected they ever would have been. therefore one may be justified in hoping that some in the future may become as unexpectedly rich. Well having said as much as I hope will prove that modesty and hope (is) was not entirely extinct in the Meadows disposition any more than it was in the breast of Mr Micawber, I will proceed to tell what little I know or have heard of our family I may say that it is my intention to attach a genealogical list so that some future member may if he is able extend it either into the

distant past or the unseen future. I believe the latter will be found the easier, but as he does that he may remember that this date will become more and more distant and obscure.

Yours affectionately

Edwin Lewis Meadows

Islington

Rochester Nov 11th 1894.



This is a fancy sketch for thinking

– Meadows of Chelsea about 1742

Born about 1720. Great Grandfather –

The first of my ancestors of whom I have any knowledge is – Meadows. Thomas or William, probably Thomas. as I have heard that my grandfather. whos name was William had an Elder brother Tom. This worthy who was my great grandfather (and of whom, as it is proposed to make this also a family portrait gallery I have made

a fancy portrait was a Market Gardener of Chelsea about the year 1740. and lived probably near the river, for I have heard that his son William when a small boy went to school on the Battersea side and was supplied with the necessary pence for paying the Bridge toll, but was in the habit with other boys of swimming over on all convenient occasions, while one of the number carried the clothes. he must have been a good swimmer - as indeed I have heard he was in after years - for on one occasion I have heard that someone, probably the toll keeper, sent word to his mother what was taking place and that she ran round and awaiting his landing slapped him and carried him home in her apron naked, the boy with the clothes not having waited for an interview with the Lady. But this is a digression, such as I fear will not unfrequently occur, so I will here apologize for this and future. This same Thomas Meadows had two sons, and I believe at least one daughter but of her I know

nothing, and very little of his Son Tom except that I have heard from my father that his father had told him that his brother Tom having in some way offended his father was told by him to never let him see his face again, and he never did ~~so~~ or did anyone know what became of him: he was never heard of again: Where the aforesaid Market Gardener may have died, or been buried, I do not recollect to have heard. but I do not think he lived always at Chelsea. indeed I believe I have been told that he was proprietor of the St James's Coffee House. which was next door or very near to the Old St James's Palace, and this may in some way account for the circumstance of his Son William, having a kind of sporting (or probably I ought to say gambling acquaintance) with H.R.H Prince George - and other (for him) undesirable persons: And here I will just mention that a slight coincidence has sometimes led me to wonder if this close proximity to the Palace had any effect on any other members of the family: what

I refer to is this: I remember to have read somewhere but I cannot now say where, some lines, evidently written by some critic of the Royal household, wherein after describing certain events (probably the marriage of the Prince in 1795) occurs the statement ×× ——
" And the pretty Miss Meadows ran down
" the back stairs !". I mention this circumstance, because I have myself sometimes wondered if the Lady refered to was in any way a connexion of our family, and as the same question ~~May~~ in after years may possibly arrise, the mentionning it gives me the opportunity of saying that I never heard that she was. indeed I may say that I never heard any thing unbecoming of any Lady member. I will not pause to say more, or trouble you with speculations my object being to relate what I know or have heard. that may be interesting, and as we are principally concerned with William Meadows the Son of this Market gardener & Coffee house keeper (which by the way was I believe a very respectable

occupation in those days, as well as now):
I take it that William Meadows (my grandfather)
was born about the year 1767. and I fix the
date in this way; about 1845 when I was
seven years old he came from Bakers Farm
= Sible Hedingham Essex to visit my father at
No 5 Hope Place Mile End Road: and
was then 94 years old. or there about -
and I remember him very well. or it
may well be that I was not quite so old
when he came there which would make
the year of his birth earlier. but as
he is an important person in this
history I think he ought to have a
chapter to himself headed with a
portraite if possible. —



Old William Meadows.
Born about 1760. Grand father -

Of Course the above portrait is mearly a fancy one, for it is over fifty years since I saw him, but there was a portrait of him in my fathers house, on a small panne if I remember rightly and either my brother James, or Arthur (Joe) had it, but be that as it may, he was some 95 years old when he died

and that was before I was Seven years old, when we lived at No 5 Hope Place Mile End London. Now although I have in the previous Chapter endeavoured to fix the age of this Gentleman I am not quite sure of it. and when I saw him at Mile End, and I only recollect his coming once I may have been much younger than I suppose, I believe he was 95 when he died, But if he did Join Captain Cook's Ships as I have always understood he did, he must have been born sooner than I have stated, for I think that Circumnavigator started on his last voyage in 1769. at any rate I was always given to understand that he had joined his Ships and that he ran away in consequence of some hard treatment he received from the boatswain when going ashore at some port; I think in Ireland, however he didn't go, or probably I should not have had a Grandfather.

Well, the next Earliest thing that I remember to have been told about him is, that while living with his father at Rollendean, is it? to the

left of Brighton as you face the Sea? where his father kept an Inn (I dont know much of Brighton never was there above twice, once with my father and mother and "intended" as they say Emily Whillet - present wife, when we walked out to the place referred to and Pa pointed out an old Inn which he said was the one his Grand father kept:) Well I have heard that while this Willm Meadows was living there he had a Share in a lugger used for Contraband trading. and that while the Chief Excise man would be smoking his pipe with his father he and partners were busily engaged with the "Run goods" but- after a time a new Excise man came to the neighbourhood and the whole thing got wind and Grandfather had to make himself scarce; it is not perhaps a very creditable piece of history, but in those days every one who lived on the Coast appears to have been that way inclined, and

if they went no further, winked at the doings of those who did; it is worth noting that the Elder Meadows (Thomas as we will call him) should be living at Brighton which at that time I think was the favourite resort of the Prince: This William Meadows was eventually an Actor I suppose, and we hear of him about the King's Opera House, he was a good Singer I have always heard, and have been told that his name could be found in old Play bills of that time, and that he played "Young Meadows" in "Love in a Village" when first produced, I do not remember the Author of that Small Opera, but I have heard that he was well acquainted with "Paddy O'Kief" Inkeldon and men of that Sort who wrote Operetta I have also heard that he was a famous whistler, and had given performances of that kind, at the Opera house. his talents indeed appear to have been very diverse, the family appear to have been musical, My father always seemed

to know all about it; and was a good whistler I know, and one of my aunts who died young. was a famous Ariel in the "Tempest"; all this is digression. to return to Grand father - amongst his other accomplishments. should be named Running, I have been told that he was the best amature of his day. and my brother William has told me the name he used (not his own) which he had traced in some old Sporting Calender; My father has told me of his running from London to Brighton against a famous trotting horse, and of his running a race with another well known Amature. who was a barber, and held his opponent so lightly. that he started to run in a bag wig; the story goes, that this race was run in the neighbourhood of Epping Forest and that the barber was so badly beaten, that being unwilling to meet his backers he turned aside into the forest and was not seen for some days; He was also as has been foreviously intimated a good Swimmer

and seemed to think it the easiest thing in the world. — used to chaff my Mothers father who was a big man, and tell him he could not possibly sink on account of his Corpulence. — — "Float like a barrel" — but that gentleman being a through Countryman did not seem to think so. or be nearly so certain. and I dont think he ever had ventured out of his depth in water. —

I may here mention that as near as I can remember it is nearly two years since I wrote the foregoing. so that the chances are that this history will never be completed, if it is to be I must get on with it much faster in future or I myself shall have become "historical".

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well to return to Grandfather. I am quite unable to follow him in all his doings. but I have heard that he was in Ireland at the time of the 1798. rebellion — In Dublin, and I believe was a member of a trained band which was

to have gone to meet the French at Bantry Bay or somewhere. that being then a Married Man with a family, and as Matters appear to have been very unsettled just then (houses being marked in the night with paint &c which indicated that the occupants were to be Murdered &c &c) he seems to have thought it best to Clear out and come to London. besides I think I have heard that his daughter had been offered an engagement; and certainly it would appear that Dublin must have been a very undesireable place for an Actor just then, — Here it will be best to tell what little I know of his wife and children. as I find it necessary to mention them as I go on. "William Meadows" (the Subject of this Chapter) Married Margaret Syddle* of a Cheshire family. about the year 1790. or earlier.

* I have written this name. from a note made on the information of My mother. and think it is probably Correct. The date of marriage is from a note of information from my brother William

* who was by no means certain as to it, or as to the name. which he said might have been Siddle. Sibble. or Syble. and he also told me that her father was Armourer at the Tower of London. and that her Mother was there accidentely shot dead. through some mistake of an apprentis employed in the proving Gallery - If this be correct. should anyone wish to know more of the name no doubt some information could still be obtained at the tower, where I believe they keep. or used to do, a registery.

Be this as it may married he was, and I should think earlier than the date given above. probably 1786. for in 1798. when he left Dublin he had Five Children, some of them old enough to be Actresses. their names were. William (who died young probably before going to Dublin) 2nd Mary (who married Mr Richard Johnson and had 8 children. one of whom married ~~Mr Downs~~ Mr Downs Edwards. hence Mrs Moon his daughter &c -) 3rd Ann (who married Mr John H. Wright the Artist in water Colours who at the time of his death was the oldest

member of the "Old Water Colour Society" and had Eight Children. Some of them still alive Viz Mary Bracebridge, Ann, James, and Charlotte, Wright) & Viz Margaret who did a Spinster. This is the Lady who Sang, and played "Ariel" in the "Tempest". (by the way I believe all my aunts were Musical as to her death I never heard much, Except that she was said to have broken a blood vessel whilst out riding and fell from her pony. I fancy my father had some idea of Consumption and did not care to talk about it) Viz James. (My father of whom more later.) Well as I was saying with these children he thought Dublin in the year 1848* was no place for him, but there appears to have been some trouble in getting away as well as Expense. and I have heard that the funds would not admit of the whole family taking "Coach" on it may well have been "Waggon" from Liverpool to London so that having arranged for the transit of the other members ~~of the family~~ My father, then a child in arms was intrusted to his nurse, named

"Hannah ——— " (I cannot remember the other name now, but she was in my grandfathers service for many years after and I think married a man of the name of "Bill Gadd") She I expect was an Irish woman - at any rate she seemes to have been not only trustworthy, but persevering for she performed the journey to town on foot with very little money in her pocket and my father on her back, after the manner of carrying children in those days, among the poor Country folk. This I think speaks volums for the fidelity and attachment of the servant girl of that period, and it is no wonder that she was alway regarded as a most faithful person.

I never heard much of my paternal grand mother, except that she was a woman of some character and nerve, and my father used to tell the following anecdote in confirmation. About this time or soon after they were living at Winchmoor Hill, and on one occassion she was being driven home by a neighbour, when they were stopped by

armed highwaymen. with the usual pistol &c. her companion had a considerable amount of money with him which he had taken the precaution to hide under the seat; only retaining sufficient in his purse for the tolls and other slight costs of the road. but on being stopped appeared to have been quite unnerved dropping his reins &c. and becoming prostrate with fright. but the lady was equal to the occasion, and begging the theif not to frighten her husband who was not well. said of course they must deliver what little they had, and proceeded to induce the gentleman to give what he had in his pockets. together with the contents of her own, begging the highwayman to allow her to retain a few coins which belonged to her children. which he readily consented to do. Saying he had children of his own. and so after getting him to hand her the discarded reins drove off with the greater valuables.

Going back to a name that I have just mentioned namely "John H Wright". I should like to say that he was an excellent Musician as

well as a good painter. his drawings are delicate in colour. very correct ~~and~~ his drawing and his female figures are graceful, but have rather an old fasioned look about them, he painted many subjects from Don Quixote & Shakespear. as to his musical ability, of course I could not Judge he being an old man when I knew him and I quite a lad × but he had traveled with Chas Dibden as accompanist: when that great writer had sung his own songs. I have heard him play the piano. generally Extempore and he would on great occasions Sing "The Anchor Smiths" all his daughters played, some of them. Mary for instance very well, Charlotte sang very well as well, and no doubt would have come out as a public Singer had she not have had the misfortune. to be - well, the very plainest of the family.

× Only almost

This was as far as he got with the family history, & died from a paralitic stroke Dec 23. 1907 W H