

The Brand History File

The furthest back ancestor I can trace direct descent to so far is a John Brand, who married Jonnet Miller in 1674, in Fossoway and Tullibole, Kinross. His son, William Brand, born 1680, married Janet Syme or Sim in Beath in 1713. William and Janet's son David was born in 1725, the 5th of six children I know of. David entered the Incorporation of Weavers in Dunfermline at the age of 13 in 1738, and he is mentioned several times in the manuscripts of that organisation. One son (illegitimate, from his relationship with Dinah Inglis), was also David, born 1746. James Brand was born to that David and his wife, Christian Brown, in 1769 at Dunfermline. He carried on the family tradition of illegitimacy, and I quote here from the Old Parish Records, Dunfermline, 1796 : *"Baptisms, May 1797 - Barbara Sands, Residenter at the back of the Rood, brought forth a son in fornication on the 2nd day of Oct 1796, and gave as the father James Brand at Bellyeamont. The said child was baptised May 7th 1797, and named William. Witnessed."*

Bellyeamont Farm exists today, although the name is spelt differently now.

William married Anne Margaret Swan, and they had 6 children. He was a farm labourer at Croftgary Farm, outside Aberdour, when most of the children were born, but had moved to Burntisland by 1841, where his fourth son, William Inglis, was born in that year. All 4 sons, James, John, Henry and William, worked on the railways, being employed by the North British Railway Company. John's son, William, also worked for North British Railways, and achieved the distinction of driving the first train across the [Forth Bridge](#). He was also said to have been on the last train to make it across the Tay Bridge on the night that it collapsed, although I have found no documentary evidence to back this up. His grandson, Archibald, still alive and living in the Borders area, remembers him telling the stories of these journeys. Archie retired at 65 from British Rail, having spent his working life on the railways, carrying on the family tradition, and I am exchanging family information with both his son and grandson. William's cousin, Ann, married a young man called George Ness, who boarded the train to travel from Ferry Port On Craig to Dundee to work in the railway yards there. His body was recovered from the River Tay some 16 days later, leaving Ann with a 10 week old baby daughter. The following entry is from the Dundee Register of deaths : *August 13, 1880 : Register of Corrected Entries for the District of St Mary in the Burgh of Dundee. The following report of the result of a precognition has been received touching the death of "George Ness", registered under No. 79 in the Register Books of Death in the year 1880 : Name, Age and Sex : George Ness, 21 years, male*

When and Where Died : 28th December 1879, River Tay, at Tay Bridge, Dundee.

Body found 13th January 1880 in river near bridge

Cause of Death : Drowning from fall of Tay Bridge, with Passenger Train into the river.

Procurator Fiscal's Office, 22nd July 1880"

He is buried in Tayport Kirk graveyard, and the stone also commemorates young Rachel, his daughter, who died aged only 5 months.

Meanwhile, my great-great-grandfather, William, was carrying on another old Brand tradition, and in 1862 his first son, William, was born out of wedlock to Isabella Buchanan. She was pregnant with their second child when she married William. This is the lady in the 4 generation photograph on the home page, and she lived to be 92 years old, having 9 children. William himself died in 1880 of pneumonia and pleurisy, aged only 38, and times must have been hard for his widow until the sons were all out working. In the 1881 census young John had been farmed out to relatives, and the 2 oldest daughters Euphemia and Ann Margaret were living with their aunt in Kinghorn, leaving a household of 6. Young William was the only one working, being an engine cleaner with North British Railways. Isabella's great-uncle, John McKenzie, emigrated to Australia in 1853, and I am in regular communication with one of his many descendants. Her second son, David Duff Brand, married in Markinch, and his son, also David Duff,

emigrated to Canada to start a Brand dynasty there, and I am also in touch with one of his daughters. Isabella's 5th son, Henry, is the gent with the moustache to her right, and my great-grandfather. He married Agnes Venters Lawson in 1898 in Burntisland. Agnes' father, Robert, was killed in a fall from a coal hoist in Burntisland Docks in 1894. According to the Fife Free Press of 1st December 1894

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" On Saturday night a man named John Lawson, a coal hoistman, employed at Burntisland Docks, met with a fearful accident, which shortly thereafter terminated fatally. The unfortunate man was engaged loading one of the steamers in the dock, and when in the act of emptying a waggon of coal into the ship's hold he overbalanced himself and fell from a great height into the hold. When he was picked up he was found to be terribly injured, and lingered for only a few moments. The deceased was a sub-contractor, and was engaged at the docks for over 30 years. He was married, and leaves a large family."

This appears to suffer from the usual journalistic licence, as his name was Robert, and his wife had died in August of that year.

Henry's son, again William, is behind Isabella Buchanan to her left, and he married Isabella Kerr Barclay (on first photo album page) in 1924. My father, James, was the 2nd of 7 children, 3 of whom are still alive. Dad married Mum in 1954, in Burghfield, Berkshire (see photo on the first album page), and I came along in 1956. My oldest daughter was born in 1982, and can now trace 10 generations of her family back almost 300 years.

My mother's family are proving harder to trace. I now know the names of my grandmother's parents, and will be trying to trace them further, but I don't even have a birth certificate for my maternal grandfather yet, so that may take me some time.

So there we are. I could have filled out a lot more detail on some of these ancestors, it is surprising what you can find out, but that should give you a rough idea of my family history. Working on the land until better paid jobs came along at the advent of the Victorian railway boom, but never moving far from their origins - less than 15 miles in 250 years! There are Brand families descended from my ancestors still living in Burntisland, and the youngest generation is just starting school in Ferguson Place, where I, my father, grandfather and great-grandfather all attended (see the picture on the Old Burntisland Photographs page).