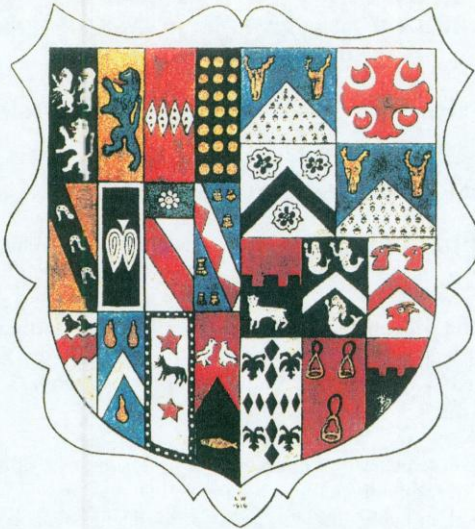
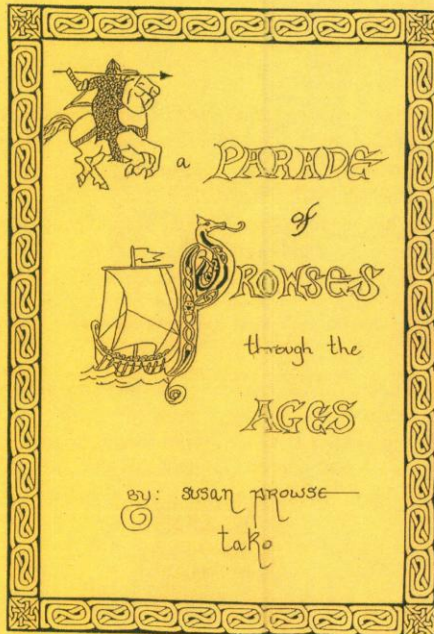


The 2011 Southampton, UK, Prouse/Prowse Reunion



PROUZ, PROUSE, ... PROUSE
SHIELD OF ARMS OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF CHAGFORD, CO. DEVON



A Romp
Through
Eleven Centuries
of
Prouse/Prowse
Ancestry

A ROMP THROUGH 1000 YEARS of PROWSE/PROUSE ANCESTRY
by Susan Prowse Tako

Presented at the Southampton, UK, Prowse Reunion – September 2-4, 2011

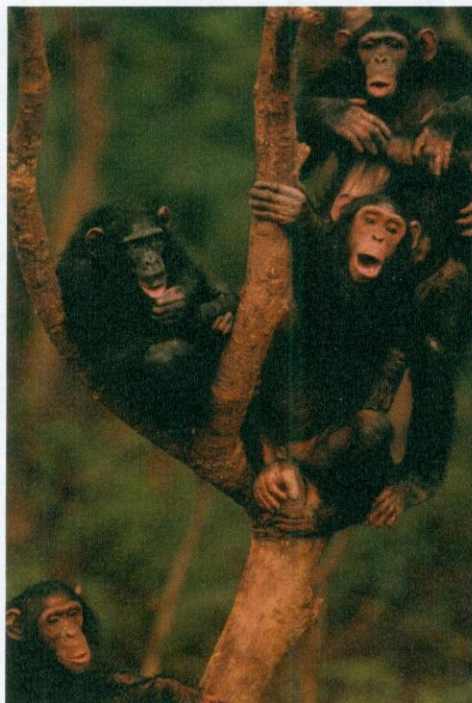
PART 1 – EARLY NORMAN/ENGLISH ROOTS:

- Slide #1: **PROWSE SHIELD:** As a family, we are very fortunate in having such a rich legacy handed down to us throughout the last 1000 years or so, & I hope – in this presentation today - to not only condense the wealth of information that we share with family members world wide, but to also romp through **eleven centuries** of Prowse legends, concentrating first on our early Norman **roots** & then on our family's naval & military **heroes**, & also giving you a brief tour of some of our family's ancestral homes.
- Slide #2:

- Slide #3: As for our Prowse ancestry, I am reminded of a story of a little girl who asks her father, the age-old question, dreaded by all parents, "Dad, where do we all come from?" & he answers, "Well, in the beginning, there was God and he made Adam & Eve and they had children, and from them came all of mankind". A few days later, the little girl asked her mother the same question, and her Mom answered, "Well, we are all descended from monkeys"! By now, this little girl is very confused and she stomps back to her Dad & says, "How come **you** said we are descended from Adam and Eve, and **Mom** says we are descended from monkeys?". Oh, that's easy to explain," says her Dad, "I was talking about my side of the family.....!"

- Slide #4: Back in 2006, I was truly honored to be able to present our family history story at the Church of the Latter Day Saints Library – the LDS Library - in Salt Lake City, Utah, which as you know, is the Mecca of Genealogy. My sister, Anne Cash, flew over from the UK, together with our very own Mary Prowse, & we joined **Elmer Larson**, the guiding light of that Reunion, and several of our American and Canadian family members in an unforgettable 3 days of events and celebration, including a magnificent concert by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Many of you met Elmer at or 2004 Plymouth Reunion & were charmed, as I was, by his engaging personality. The presentation I am giving today has grown considerably from the one I presented at that time in Salt Lake City, so much so that I have divided this talk into 2 parts, entitled "Early Norman/English **Roots**" & "**Heroes**".

Before we start our program today, I do need to **WARN** you that much of our early family history is very murky indeed and fraught with errors. Take everything you read on line or in early manuscripts with a pinch of salt! What I will tell you today is what I, & other Prowse family historians, believe to be the most logical interpretation of all the sources researched so far. Much is still unknown and the research continues.....



Family Tree?



2006 Salt Lake City Reunion

Slide #5: Things began to get very **interesting for our family in 1066**, although our known story goes back even further, at least back to the days of Rollo the Northman, the 1st Duke of Normandy, who reigned in the early 10th century (911-927).

Slide #6: There are many **questions about our ancestors**.....some of which are listed here & which I intend to answer today.....

1. Who was buried in the wrong location & what was done about it?
2. Which of our ancestors impersonated a King? And why?
3. Which one of our ancestors played with fire?
4. Who was press-ganged & promised a commission in the British Navy if he kept quiet about it?
5. Who guarded the exiled Napoleon Bonaparte at St. Helena?
6. Who are Prowse Place in London & Prowse Farm & Prowse Point Cemetery in Normandy named for?
7. Which one of our ancestors fell through the floor in his bathtub & lived to become President of the United States?

HASTINGS : 1066



NORMANS : I

SAXONS : O

When things began to get interesting.....!!!

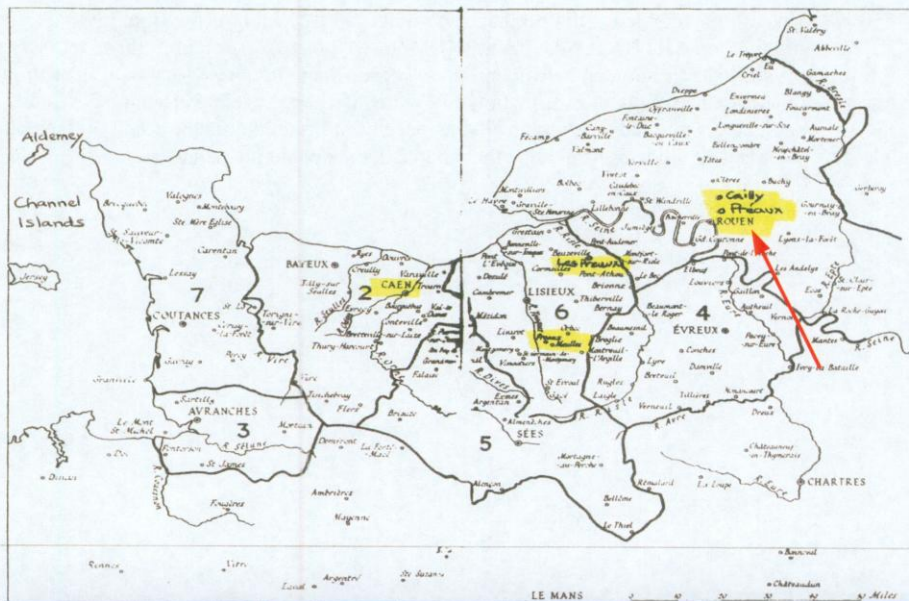
- Who was buried in the wrong location & what was done about it?
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- Which one of our ancestors fell through the floor in his bathtub & lived to become President of the United States?

Slide #7: As most of you are aware, the **PROWSE or De PREAUX** family originated in **NORMANDY** & came over to England with William the Conqueror in 1066. **Here they are setting out from Normandy**, on their conquest of England, as depicted in the Bayeaux Tapestry.

Slide #8
(Map) Originally, our family name was **De PREAUX**, which literally means 'from' or 'of' **Preaux**, which is a small canton or district, a couple of kilometers northeast of Rouen in Normandy. However, there are at least 3 other Preaux's that we are aware of, some of which are shown on this map of Normandy in the time of William the Conqueror, so this opens up some interesting speculation! I firmly believe, as did my grandfather, Arthur Banks Prowse, that the Preaux, NE of Rouen, is "our" original family seat.

Note the position of this **Preaux** on the map & also the location of **CAILLY**, just to the NW of it, because Cailly seems to be one of the important missing links in our family story!

The Norman Invasion of England in 1066



Normandy in the time of William the Conqueror, showing hilited locations of several Preaux's & Cailly

Slide #9

Our family name changed through the centuries from **De Preaux** to the LATIN forms of **PROBUS** and **PRATELLIS** in the 12th century, and then to **PROUZ**, with a 'z', and **PROUS**, ending in 's', in the 13th century, and finally to the modern forms of **PROUSE** with a 'w', and **PROUSE** with an 'u' in the early 1500's.

Slide #10

Most of the knowledge that we have about our family history came from my grandfather, **ARTHUR BANCKS PROUSE** (ABP), of Bristol, in England. He was a physician and a surgeon by career, but one of his many hobbies was that of genealogy & he amassed a wealth of information during his lifetime, traveling around the west of England copying down every available piece of information that he could find in court records, and wills, & from any other source that he could lay hands on.

Origins of the Family Name

- **De PREAUX** meaning 'of' or 'from' Preaux
- Changed to the Latin forms of **PROBUS** & **PRATELLIS** in the 12th century
- Changes to **PROUZ** – with a 'z', and **PROUS** – with an 's', by the 13th century
- Finally changed to **PROWSE**, or **PROUSE** in the early 1500's.



Arthur Bancks Prowse, M.D., FRCS, (1856 – 1925)

Slide #11: Unfortunately, I have not been able to verify the distinguished Norman link from **EUDO De PREAUX**, that my grandfather, ABP, favored, although it is true that Eudo died at the Castle of Preaux in 1120. We think he was only "in possession" of the castle in his lifetime, probably as a reward for services rendered to William the Conqueror or to his son, William Rufus, but that he did not inherit the castle, nor was able to pass it on to his heirs.

Slide #12: Certainly all the information on this very worthy **Norman** who married into the family of the Dukes of Normandy, only mention that he had a daughter, Margaret, and NOT the two sons, **Osbert Probus & Ralph Pratellis**, that ABP contended he had. Unfortunately ABP left no sources for this belief of his.

Incidentally, Eudo married into the De Clare family, members of whom were heavily implicated in the **murder of King William Rufus** in 1100 in the New Forest not far from here (see pages 28/29 in the 3rd edition of my Prowse Family History book).

It should be noted that even without Eudo's ancestry, we can still trace ourselves back to **Rollo the Northman**, the 1st Duke of Normandy, and even to Charlemagne, through several other descents, including our early De Cailly/De Preaux ancestry, and through a later Prowse marriage between John Prowse to **Agnes Bamfield** in or around 1406.

It is through this marriage of John Prowse to Agnes Bamfield (or Bampfield) that we are also linked to the Gilbert & Raleigh families – **Sir Humphrey Gilbert** (who founded the colony of Newfoundland in 1583) being an descendant of Agnes Bamfield Prowse – and Sir Humphrey Gilbert's half-brother was **Sir Walter Raleigh**, captain of Queen Elizabeth 1's Guard & colonizer of Virginia.



Eudo de Preaux, reputed (but now mostly disputed!) ancestor of our de Preaux family died at the Castle of Preaux, near Rouen, in Normandy, in 1120.

He was the son of **Hubert the Rie**, guardian of the young William the Conqueror.

Eudo, although in possession of Preaux Castle, did not inherit it & there does not appear to be any link to our Preaux line anywhere that Eudo is mentioned, merely his possession of Preaux Castle.

EUDO de PREAUX married **ROHAISE de CLARE**, descended from the Dukes of **NORMANDY** and **ROLLO the NORTHMAN**, 1st Duke of Normandy. Members of the de Clare family were heavily implicated in the murder of King William Rufus in the New Forest in 1100.

Eudo & Rohaise's daughter, **MARGARET**, married into the powerful **DE MANDEVILLE** family.

ABP (Arthur Bancks Prowse) asserts that **EUDO** also had 2 sons, **OSBERT PROBUS** & **RALPH PRATELLIS**, although he left no sources for this information.

However, we can also trace our ancestry back to **ROLLO**, & also to **CHARLEMAGNE**, through the marriage of **JOHN PROWSE** of Chagford, born about 1377, to **AGNES BAMFIELD**, so these lines are not entirely lost to us!

Slide #13: As to our **Norman ancestry**, further research by one of our modern day family historians, **Martin Prowse** of Castle Douglas in Scotland, has unearthed some intriguing information on our probable Norman ancestor, one **OSBERT DE CAILLY**, who somewhere in the early to mid-1100's, married **HEUDEBERGE, DAME DE PREAUX**, & took the "name, arms and property of the ancient house of Preaux".

Slide #14 One notable **pedigree** of the **deCailly** family, which I received from Randy Prouse in Oregon, USA, shows a descent from **Richard 1**, 3rd Duke of Normandy, known as 'Richard the Fearless', (whose grandfather was **Rollo the Northman**), through Richard's son, **Geoffrey**, Count of Eu & Brionne, down through his son, **Gilbert, Earl of Brionne**, to **Osbern de Cailly**, who is shown in this pedigree as the younger brother of **Richard FitzGilbert de Clare**, father-in-law of Eudo de Preaux, and **Baldwin de Meules**, builder of the original Gidleigh Castle.

OSBERN (who was born before 1040 & died after 1107), had a son named **William de Cailly**, & his son was another **Osbern** (or **Osbert**) **De Cailly/De Preaux** (approx. 1066 - 1156). This Osbert's father-in-law was **Ingelran** Plantagenet **De Preaux**.

This seems, on the whole, to mesh nicely with Martin's take on our Norman roots, although there are some inconsistencies present in this pedigree, especially in the wives' names. Remember our warning about taking everything with a pinch of salt!

Also shown in this pedigree, added by myself, is a possible partial descent, hi-lited in yellow, of the De Preaux family from **BERNARD the DANE**. This very early line is still being researched.

Osbert de Cailly/De Preaux was a vassal of **Richard de Vernon** –& incidentally, some three generations later, we find another link between the de Preaux and the de Vernon families in the marriage of Peter de Preaux, the 3rd Crusader, to Mary de Vernon.

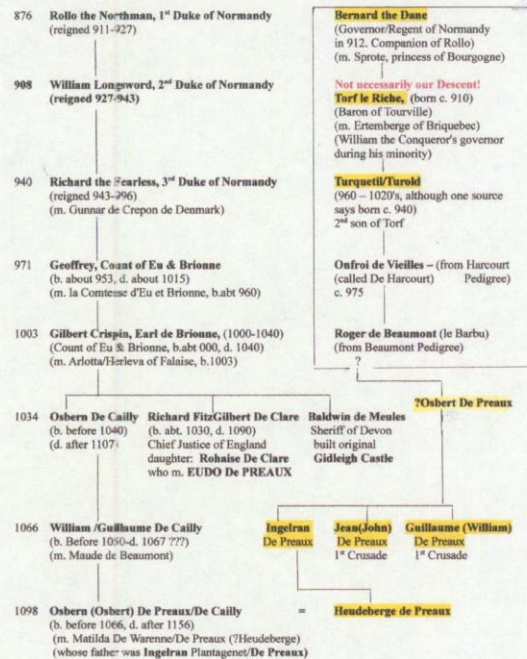
Martin Prowse of Castle Douglas, Scotland, suggests instead that:

OSBERT 11 de CAILLY is our likely Norman ancestor

Osbert married **HEUDEBERGE, Dame de PREAUX**, in the early to mid 1100's

He took the **NAME, ARMS & PROPERTY** of the ancient house of **PREAUX**.

POSSIBLE EARLY NORMAN DESCENDENCY/CAILLY/De PREAUX



Slide #15: These next few slides show scenes from **Preaux Castle** near Rouen, in Normandy.

I'd like to acknowledge & thank both **Martin & Isabel Prowse**, (of Castle Douglas, Scotland) shown here, when they visited Preaux in 1998, and my sister, **Anne Cash & her husband, Noel**, (of Desborough, Northants, England) who provided me with these photos and drawings.

Slide #16: Another view of the ancient walls at the ruins of **Preaux Castle**



Martin & Isobel Prowse at Preaux Castle Ruins,
NE of Rouen, in Normandy



Ancient Walls at the Ruins of Preaux Castle nr. Rouen

Slide #17: As you can see, not very much remains of this **ancient castle** today, except for some
Slide #18: ruined walls and tower remnants.

Slide #19: However, drawings done in **1863**, some 148 years ago, give a much better idea of the
scope of this castle and what it might have looked like in its **hey-day**, when Heudeberge
& Osbert made their home there.

(see also overleaf)



Part of the Tower Walls of Preaux Castle, near Rouen

The Ruins of the Castle of Preaux in 1863

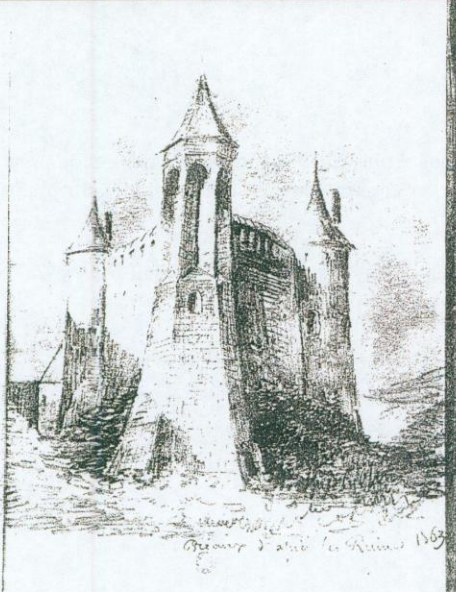


Cite - Est. Preaux 1863
Lemondan

Slide #19 The **castle of Preaux** , near Rouen, Normandy, as it probably looked like in its original form.

Slide #20: Nearby are the ruins of **Beaulieu Abbey**, founded by Heudeberge & Osbert's grandson, Jean de Preaux, in 1189

The Castle of Preaux, near Rouen,
as it probably looked like originally



Remains of Beaulieu Abbey, founded by Osbert &
Heudeberge's grandson, Jean de Preaux in 1189



Slide #21: Remains of **Beaulieu Abbey**, still retaining the impression of a fairly large abbey, but which is now used as an agricultural barn to store farm implements.

In the church at Preaux, there are several large wall panels which were transported at some time from **Beaulieu Abbey**.

Slide #22: Now, **Heudeberge's ancestors**, as we have already discovered, descended from **Bernard le Danois** (Bernard the Dane), who, if not also related to Rollo the Northman, the 1st Duke of Normandy, was certainly a close companion, governor and regent of Normandy in 912, during Rollo's tenure.

Her uncles, **John (Jean) and William (Guillaume) de Preaux**, were standard bearers during the first Crusade to the Holy Land in 1096-1099. It is also possible that this **William de Preaux**, Heudeberge's uncle (or perhaps his father, ?Osbert) was among the first English Prouz/Probus ancestors to settle in England. This remains to be researched.

Beaulieu Abbey



Our Norman Ancestors

Heudeberge's ancestors may have descended from Bernard le Danois (Bernard the Dane), who was possibly related to ROLLO the Northman, 1st Duke of Normandy, via INGLERAN de PREAUX, Heudeberge's father.

Bernard was certainly Rollo's companion & governor & regent of Normandy in 912 during Rollo's tenure as Duke of Normandy.

Heudeberge's uncles, JEAN (John) & GUILLAUME (William) de PREAUX were standard bearers during the FIRST CRUSADE in 1096-1099.

This William de Preaux, or more likely, his father, Osbert, was probably the first of our Prouz ancestors to settle in England.

A "Sire de Preaux" (?Jean de Preaux) was among William the Conqueror's companions on his Conquest of England in 1066.

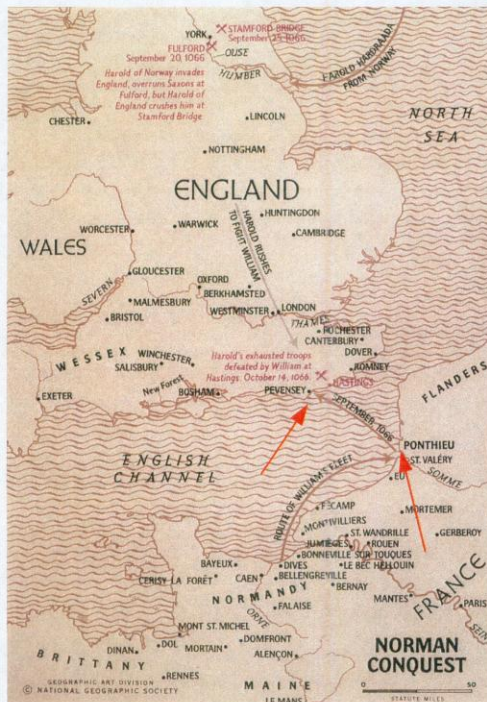
Slide #23: Certainly, a “**Sire de Preaux**”, whom we believe to be Heudeberge's uncle, **Jean (John) de Preaux**, was shown to be among the companions who accompanied William the Conqueror on his Conquest of England in 1066.....and his name appears on The Roll of Battle Abbey as 'Preaus'.

Slide #24: **The Norman Fleet**, under William the Conqueror, set off from the mouth of the River Somme in Normandy, and landed on Pevensey Beach, very close to where my sister, Anne, and myself went to school, and only a few miles from Hastings, where on October 14, 1066, they defeated the Saxons, led by King Harold Godwinson, at the **Battle of Senlac** (otherwise known as the Battle of Hastings).



The
Roll of Battle
Abbey
A.D. 1066

Our ancestor
is mentioned in
the 7th column
across, nine names
down from the
top, as "Preaus"



The Norman Conquest

The Normans set off from the mouth of the River Somme on their Conquest of England, and landed on Pevensey Beach, close to Hastings, where William the Conqueror's forces defeated the Saxons at the Battle of Senlac on October 14, 1066

Slide #25: These scenes from the **Battle of Senlac** give an idea of the ferocity of the battle and show the superiority of the mounted Normans against the exhausted Saxon house-carls, who had just completed a forced march of several hundred miles from the north of England, where they had defeated the forces of Tostig (King Harold's brother) & Harold Hardrada at Stamfordbridge.

Slide #26: **The Battle of Senlac**, which was to be included in every listing of the decisive battles of the world, changed the course of English history, & also that of our ancestors..... the Norman invasion brought sweeping changes to Britain, especially in the language, in law & order, administration & architecture of the land. English was not spoken again for almost 300 years, except by the peasant class, & French became the language of the land. Castles sprang up everywhere.

Battle of Senlac (Hastings)
October 14, 1066



The English were bloodily vanquished.....

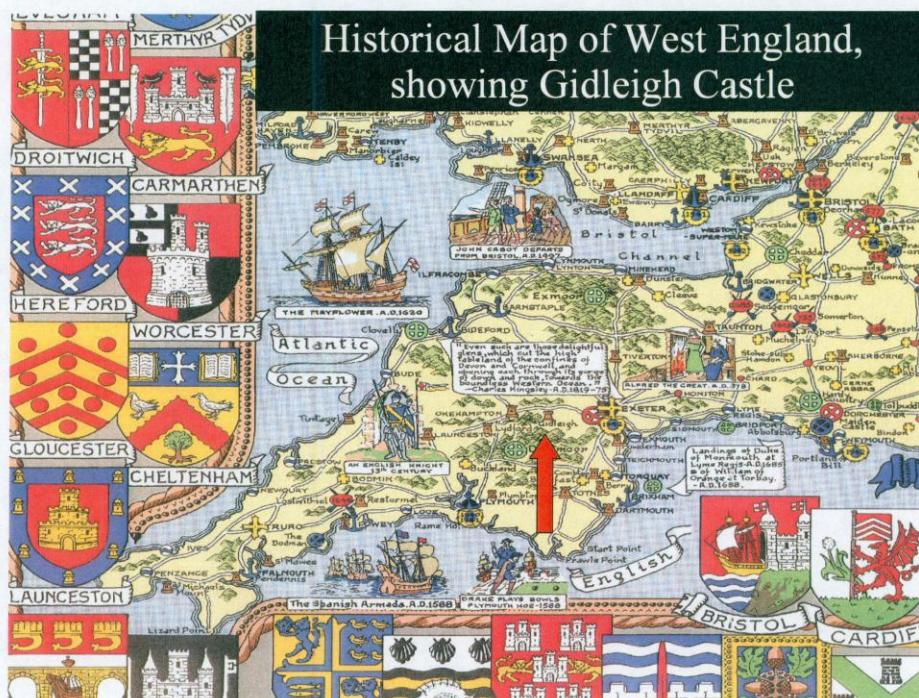


Slide #27: So, as we have noted before, it is more than likely that our first Norman/English ancestor was **OSBERT PROBUS**, who settled in the County of Devon, where records show that he held several villages around 1098, approx. 30 years after the Conquest. It was his son, **William Probus**, who went on the 2nd Crusade, & his grandson, **Walter Prouz** was in possession of Gidleigh during Henry 11's reign in 1154-1189.

The records state that the "ancient progeny of the Prouzes...whereof most were called William" appeared at **GIDLEIGH CASTLE**, "soon after the Norman Conquest".

Slide #28: This **historical map of Devon** shows the location of Gidleigh Castle in Devon

- First Norman/English ancestor was probably OSBERT PROBUS, who settled in the County of Devon.
- Osbert was from Creedy & Upton Helion & also held Dacombe & Wille, all in Devon, circa 1098, in the time of King William Rufus 11 & King Henry 1's reigns.
- Osbert's son, William Probus, went on 2nd Crusade, in 1147.
- Osbert's grandson, WALTER PROUS, was in possession of Gidleigh in Henry 11's reign (1154-1189)
- The 'ancient progeny of the Prouzes...whereof most were called William' came to GIDLEIGH CASTLE 'soon after the Norman Conquest'.



Slide #29: This **map of Dartmoor**, also shows the locations of both **Chagford**, another early Prowse stronghold, as well as **Lustleigh** to the south east, & to the north east, the city of **Exeter**, all of which feature in our family story.

Slide #30: **The name Gidleigh** is derived from the Saxon word 'gydda' meaning a 'clearing', & 'leah', meaning 'land not under cultivation', & not, as tradition has it, named after Gydda, the 1st Lady of the Manor.

Gidleigh did indeed belong at the time of the Norman invasion in 1066 to King Harold Godwinson's mother, **GYTHA**, (or **GYDDA**). It is even conjectured that King Harold was born at Gidleigh.

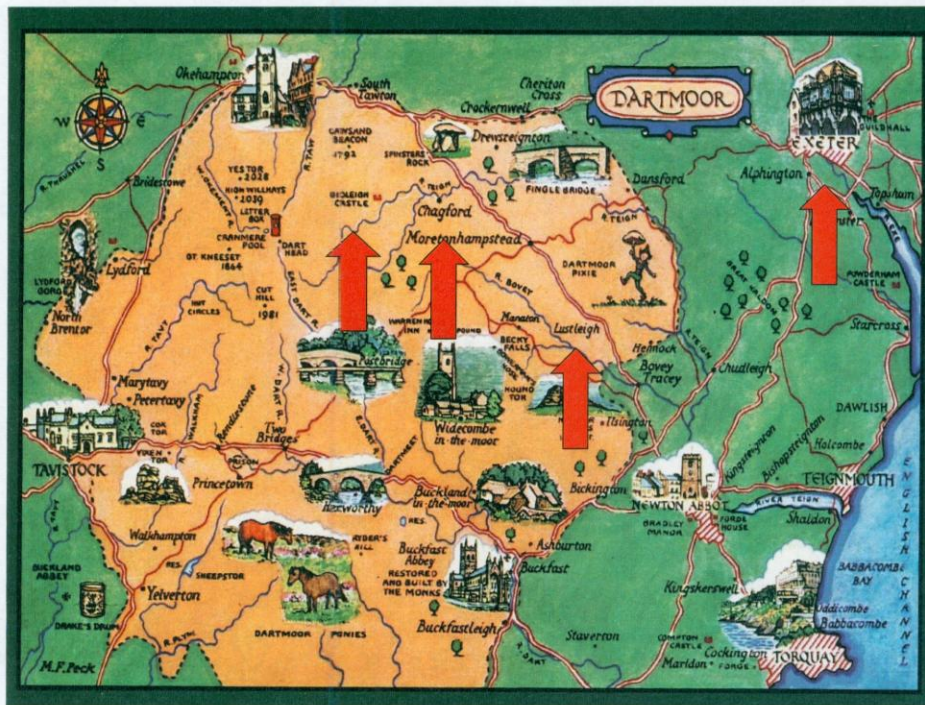
After the fatal battle of Senlac in which Harold was killed, Gytha retired back to Devon & a year later, she was in Exeter when King William the Conqueror marched against the city. She fled from the invading Normans to a desolate island in the Bristol Channel - some say down a secret passage from Gidleigh to the River Teign - and ended her life in exile, probably in Flanders.

Following the Conquest, Gydda's confiscated Manor of Giddeleia was given to Robert, earl of Mortain, who was the half-brother of William the Conqueror & presumably, soon after this, **GIDLEIGH** came into the possession of the ancient Prouz family, either as a reward for their involvement in the invasion of England, but more likely through an advantageous marriage.

Six generations of the **PROBUS/PROUS/le PROUZ** family owned, and **lived at, Gidleigh Castle from around 1160-1335.**

Incidentally, the Castle at Exeter was given to **BALDWIN de MEULES**, and Baldwin & his descendants were appointed Sheriffs of Devon. **Baldwin**, who was the brother of **Richard FitzGilbert de Clare** (Eudo de Preaux's father-in-law!) & also apparently, the older brother of **Osbern De Cailly**, (presumed grandfather of **Osbert De Preaux, who married Heudeberg**) built the original Norman **Gidleigh Castle** on the site of Gydda's fortified manor house, and he also owned parts of Chagford. (see p. 12)

Two & a half centuries later, **ALICE le PROUZ**, who was the last of the PROUZ family to own Gidleigh Castle, married, in turn, 2 brothers - a Sir Roger & a Sir William **de MOELES**, and it is entirely possible that these 2 brothers were descendants of that first Baldwin de Meules of Exeter Castle.



- The name, Gidleigh, is derived from the Saxon word 'gydda' meaning a 'clearing', and 'leah' meaning 'land not under cultivation', and not, as tradition has it, named after the Lady Gydda, 1st Lady of the Manor.
- In 1066, GIDLEIGH belonged to GYTHA, or GYDDA, the mother of King Harold Godwinson, who was killed at the Battle of Senlac (Hastings). It is conjectured that King Harold may have been born at Gidleigh.
- Following the Conquest, the confiscated manor of Gidleigh was given to Robert, earl of Mortain, half-brother of William the Conqueror.
- BALDWIN de MEULES, brother of Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, (father-in-law of Eudo de Preaux!) built the original Norman Gidleigh Castle on the site of Gydda's Manor House.

Now to answer the 1st of my early questions!

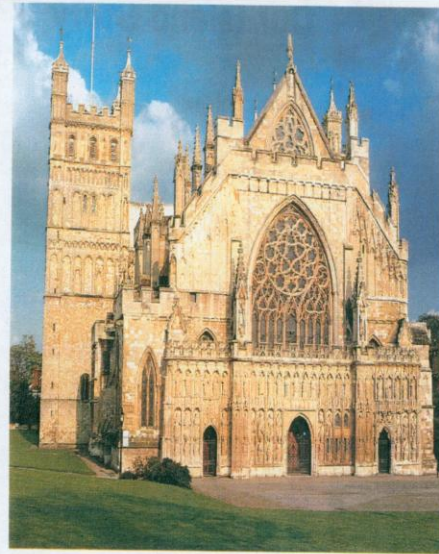
Slide #31: It was ALICE le PROUZ's father, **Sir William le Prouz, last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, who was buried in the wrong location** and it was 14 years AFTER his death before his daughter, ALICE, his sole heir, discovered that an error had been made & she then stubbornly petitioned 3 Bishops of Exeter – all in one year, 1326 – to have his body exhumed & re-interred at LUSTLEIGH.

The first 2 bishops, who turned her down, both died unexpectedly, and the third, **Bishop John Grandisson**, hastily granted her request! In an age of superstition, it appears he was not going to take any chances with the '**witch of Lustleigh**', as one local Devonian historian today has dubbed the Lady Alice! (John Grandisson certainly lived for another 44 years which he devoted to building the magnificent Nave of Exeter Cathedral).

Slide #32: And so it is in **LUSTLEIGH**, a picturesque little village a few miles southeast of Chagford, that **Sir William le Prouz**, Lord of Gidleigh, Throwleigh, Lustleigh & several other villages in the area (Holberton, Widworthy, Aveton-Giffard & Ashholt), finally lies contentedly in state in the church –

Exeter Cathedral

- Alice le Prouz's father was Sir William le Prouz, last lord of Gidleigh Castle.
- Alice petitioned 3 Bishops of Exeter in 1326 to have him exhumed & re-interred at Lustleigh



Above: Exeter Cathedral was originally a Norman foundation, but its stunning west front was rebuilt during the reign of King Edward III.



Sir William Le Prouz was Lord of Gidleigh, Throwleigh, Lustleigh, Holberton, Widworthy & he inherited Aveton-Gifford & Asholt.

Scenes from
Lustleigh Village



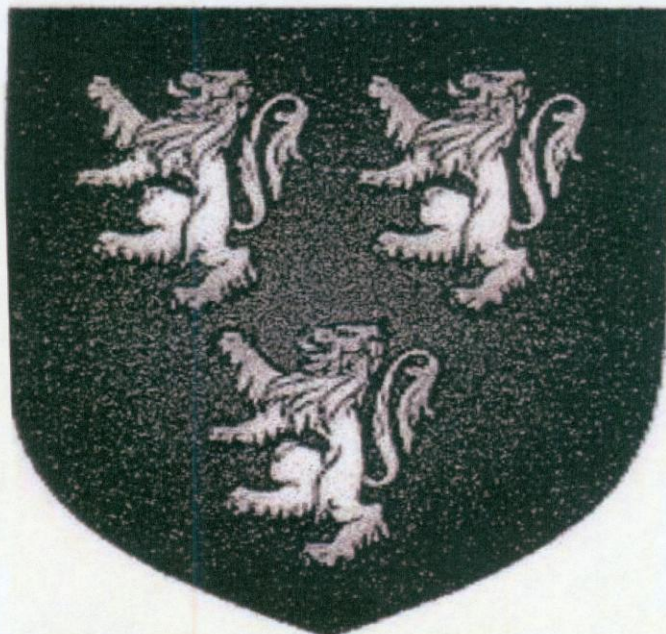
Slide #33 **Sir William le Prouz** lying in state in an alcove in the southwest transept of the church, his effigy supporting a shield whose coat of arms is long worn off, but of which a book published in 1877 assures us was of "three lions"

Slide #34: the arms of the family of **PROUZ** – the blazoning of which states ,
'Sable, three lions rampant, argent' – which translates as: "A black field with three silver rampant lions".



Lustleigh Church, where Sir William le Prouz, Last Lord of Gidleigh, was re-interred by Bishop John Grandisson, 14 years after his death

Effigy of Sir William le Prouz, with his Shield of Three Lions, lies contentedly in state in an alcove in the South Transept of the church.



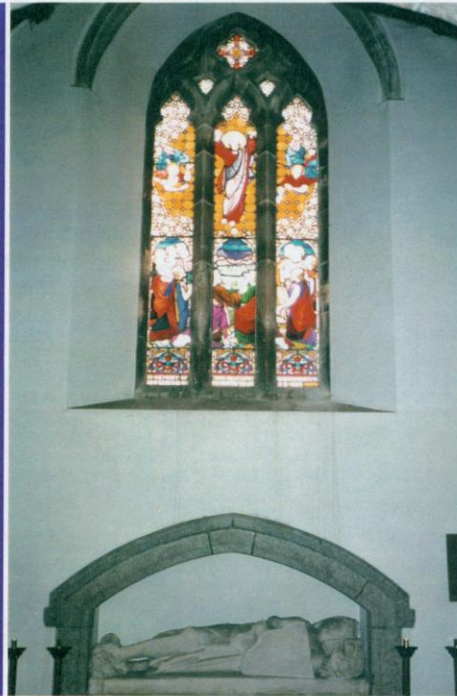
Prouz: Sable, three lions rampant, argent

Slide #35: This then is the view of the **south transept** of Lustleigh Church, with Sir William's last resting place.

Slide #36: **The PROUSE SHIELD of Three Lions**, (at top left), with it's 22 quarterings, tells us quite a lot about these early ancestors of ours, as the Prowse daughters married into powerful and prominent Devon families, including:
the **Dinhams**, (who owned vast estates in Devon & other counties);
the **Ferrers**, (descended from the Earls of Derby, the founder of whom was Henry de Ferrers, a very great friend & companion of William the Conqueror, who inherited 210 lordships in 14 counties after the Conquest & who was his Master of Horse, hence the horse-shoes on his coat of arms!); and
the **Redvers de Vernon** (Earls of Devon), & had it not been for a twist in fate, the PROUZ's, and not the COURTENAYS, would have succeeded to the Earldom of Devon in 1216.

Indeed, the **Prouz** family history is heavily intertwined with that of the **Courtenays**, who always seemed to benefit from the association by inheriting several Prouz family estates through marriage and the lack of male Prouz heirs!

The South Transept of Lustleigh Church with Sir William Le Prouz's effigy.



PROUZ, PROUSE, PROWSE
 SHIELD of ARMS of PARISH CHURCH of CHAGFORD, CO. DEVON...
 showing the 22 quarterings with their family names.

The PROUZ Shield with its 22 quarterings tells us a lot about our early ancestors & the families they married into. Note particularly, the de Redvers arms (Earls of Devon); the Dinham arms (owned vast estates in Devon & elsewhere) and the arms of the Ferrers who were descended from the Earls of Derby, the founder of whom was William Ferrers, the Conqueror's great friend.

Slide #37: This is interesting in that it is believed that **Sir William le Prouz**, last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, rebuilt his exquisite little castle in the late 13th century using the same master mason employed by the Courtenays to build their impressive castle in Okehampton & using stone from the same quarry (at Hatherleigh). There is much that is apparently similar in the construction of these two castles.

Ironically, **Sir William died in 1269** at the vast age, for that time, of 70, without any male heirs to inherit his castle & estates, which passed to his only daughter, **Alice le Prouz**, who married the de Moels brothers.

Slide #38: These next few slides are of our ancestral castle in Devon, **GIDLEIGH CASTLE**. The keep consists of an upper story (**the Solar**), which was the private living quarters of the successive lords of the manor, with the narrow door at the north end leading to

(see next page)

Gidleigh Castle, Devon, in 1990



Sir William Le Prouz, Last Lord of Gidleigh, built the existing Castle & despite his great title, vast lands (and great age, 70!) he died in 1269 without any male heirs to inherit. The castle & estates passed to his daughter's descendants (the de Moeles). 6 generations of the Prouz family owned Gidleigh from 1160 on.

The Solar & North Door at Gidleigh



Slide #39: the women's chambers, which contain the original **recessed granite fireplace** and three deeply splayed windows, like this one, suitable for archers.

Slide #40: The granite walls of the castle are nearly 7 feet thick, as you can see in this slide, & the well-worn **staircase**, only 6 feet in diameter, goes down from the solar to the main entrance of the castle & is lit by one narrow window embrasure.

Deeply splayed windows suitable for archers & original recessed fireplace at Gidleigh



Stair-well, looking down to main entry



Slide #41: At the base of the turret staircase is the **dungeon**, with its barrel roof with 3 splendid ribbed arches and an earth floor, dimly lit by one window, & it is the source of at least one ghost story attributed to the castle. It was last occupied as a dungeon in Plantagenet days (mid 12th through late 15th centuries).

Slide #42: The roof was probably once covered in lead & the building is believed to have been embattled. The commanding **view** from the castle ramparts must have been very like this lovely one taken in the 1990's, only much more forested.



Gidleigh Castle
Dungeon

View from Gidleigh Castle



Slide #43: Gidleigh castle underwent a 40,000 pound **restoration** in the early 1990's, sponsored in part by English Heritage, Devon County Council, & by the present owners, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hardy.

Slide #44: **Today, the improvement shows and the stability of the castle has been restored.**

Gidleigh Castle underwent a 40,000 sterling pound restoration in the early 1990's, sponsored in part by English Heritage, Devon County Council and by the present owners, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Hardy



Gidleigh in 2006



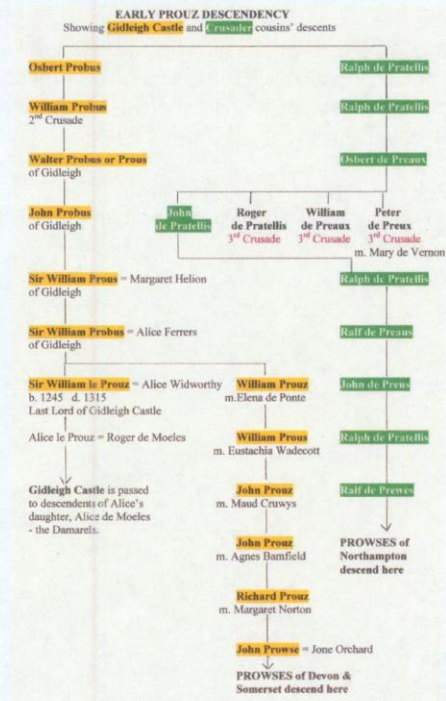
Slide #45: Sir William le Prouz's younger brother, & my direct ancestor, who rather confusingly bore the same name, **William**, as his elder brother, set up home in **CHAGFORD**.

This younger William was the progenitor of a prolific & sturdy breed of Prouzes who all did their duty in ensuring the future of the family name. It is safe to say that the majority of Prouses/Prowses **today** owe their existence to **William the Younger & his wife, Elena de Ponte...**

Slide #46: Looking at this simplified **Genealogy Map**, you will see the lines of descent from the brothers, **Osbert Probus and Ralph de Pratellis - Ralph's** line, shown in green, takes us down through the 3 brothers who accompanied Richard the Lionheart on the **3rd Crusade**, descending to the Prowses of **Northampton**:

Osbert's descent, shown here in yellow, follows the Gidleigh Castle branch of the family, and then from Sir William le Prouz's younger brother, **William Prouz the Younger & his wife, Elena de Pont**, (down to John Prouz & Joan Orchard) and thus to the Prowses of **Devon, Somerset & Dorset**.

All roads lead to.....

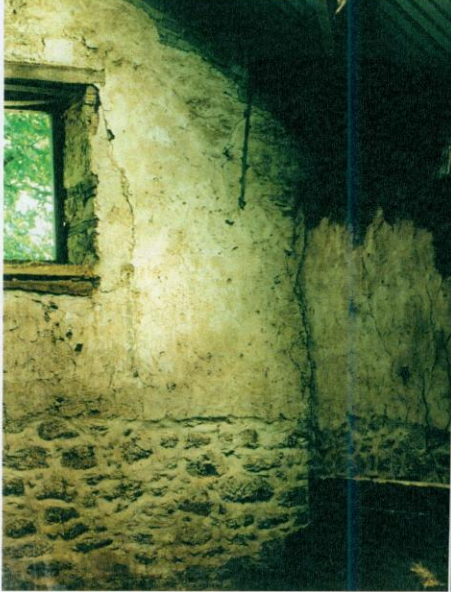


Slide # 47: William Prouz & Elena de Ponte's son, another William Prouz, came into possession of the manor of **Waye Barton in Chagford** in 1345. The house still stands today, although the original home is now used as a barn.

Slide #48: Eleven generations of the Prouz family lived at Waye until the late 17th century – when it passed to the Courtenays! The **medieval section of Waye**, built by JOHN PROUSE, gt-gt-gt-grandson of William & Elena, in the late 1400's, is an enormously attractive mellow-stoned manor house with mullioned windows & built in the style of the Devonshire long-house.

Here it is shown in the early 20th century and again in 2006.

Prouz's at Waye Barton, Chagford, from
1345 – late 17th Century



William Le Prouz & Elena de Ponte's son, another William Prouz, was the 1st Prouz owner of Waye in 1345. The original home, at left, is now a barn.

Waye Barton in early 20th century & today, 2006



11 generations of the Prouz family lived at Waye until the late 17th century.....

...when it passed to the Courtenays in 1664 because of the lack of male Prouz heirs.



Slide #49: It is still a lovely home with a central through passage, heavily **paneled** & with chambers on either side with blackened Tudor roof timbers & whitewashed walls.

In what was the principal bedroom of the Tudor wing is a **plaster inscription** high on the wall celebrating the wedding of yet another JOHN PROWSE & his wife, JUDITH SOUTHCOTE, showing their initials, ages (27 & 23), & the year of their marriage, 1636. Sadly, this union produced no offspring & John was the last of the Chagford Prowses.

Slide # 50: He died in 1664 & was buried in **Chagford Church**, where his magnificent epitaph.....

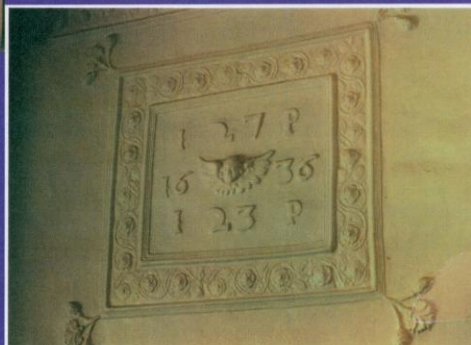
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Tudor Panelling & 1636 Wedding Inscription

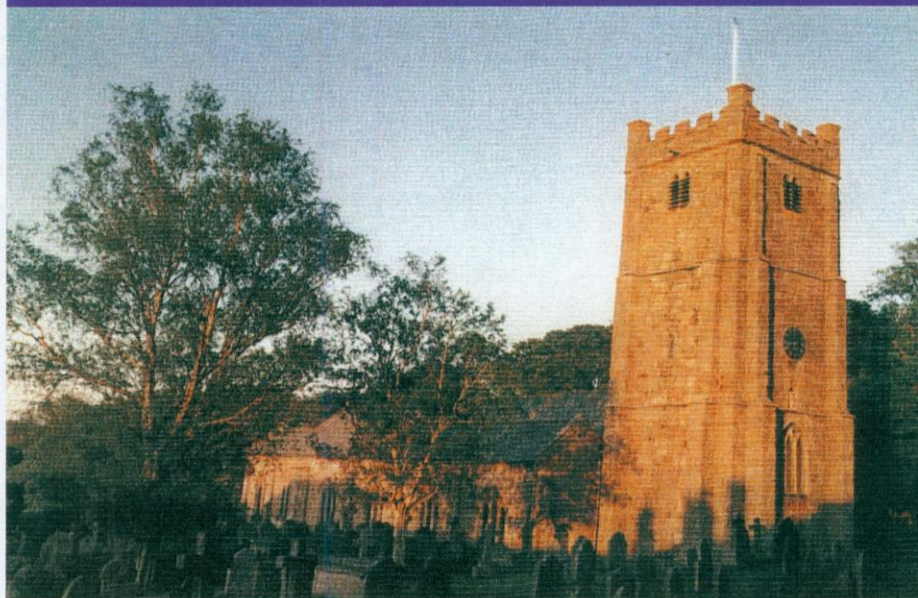


John Prouz, last owner of Waye Barton, & Judith Southcote were ages 27 & 23 on their wedding day in 1636.

Medieval section of Waye built in the late 1400's by John Prowse, gt-gt-gt- grandson of William Le Prouz & Elena de Ponte.



Chagford Church



Slide #51: ...emblazoned with the **Prowse Shield of Arms** can be found together with the funereal helmet of the Prouz family which preceded all the funeral processions of our medieval ancestors. It hangs high up in the roof of the Lady Chapel, perhaps to discourage thieves who have already stolen the original Prouz Shield of Arms from John's memorial.

Slide #52: At this point, I am going to take you back 187 years to 1477, when William & Elena's gt-gt-gt-grandson, **JOHN PROUS** (who built the Tudor Waye Barton), married **JONE ORCHARD**, daughter & heiress of John Orchard of **West Challacombe** in Combe Martin, on the north coast of Devon.

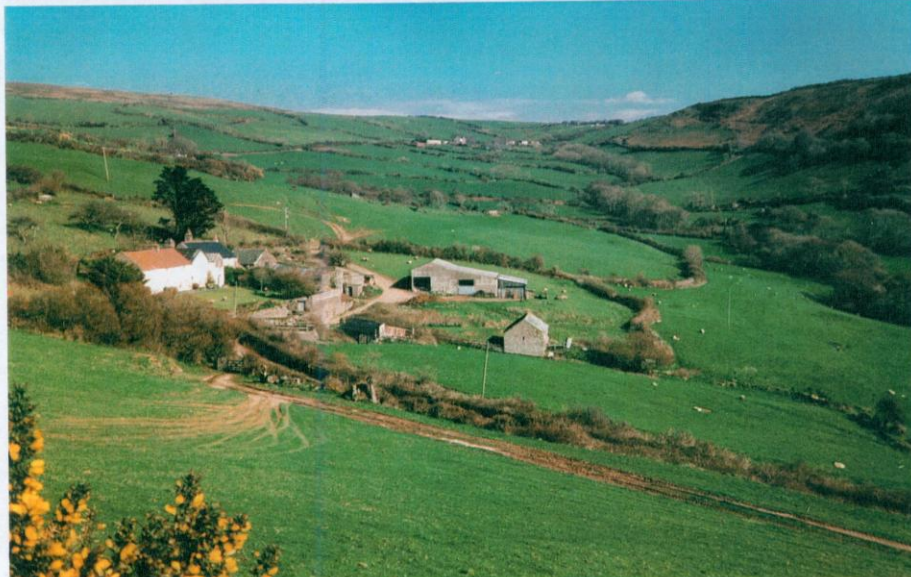
Their eleven children, including 8 sons, spread the family to London, Essex, Tiverton and Ouldcliffe in Somerset. Their grandsons and great-grandsons became **mayors** of Exeter, Barnstaple & Southampton, and one was Chamberlain of Exeter. There are numerous descendants of this prolific family living today!

In the early sixteenth century, the **Prouz family** is described as an 'up and coming Tudor family, one of the many who made fortunes for themselves in the great economic, social & political changes of the 16th century.'

John Prouz's Epitaph & Prouz Funereal Helmet
in Chagford Church, Devon



West Challacombe Farm in Coombe Martin,
Devon, home of John & Jone Orchard Prouz



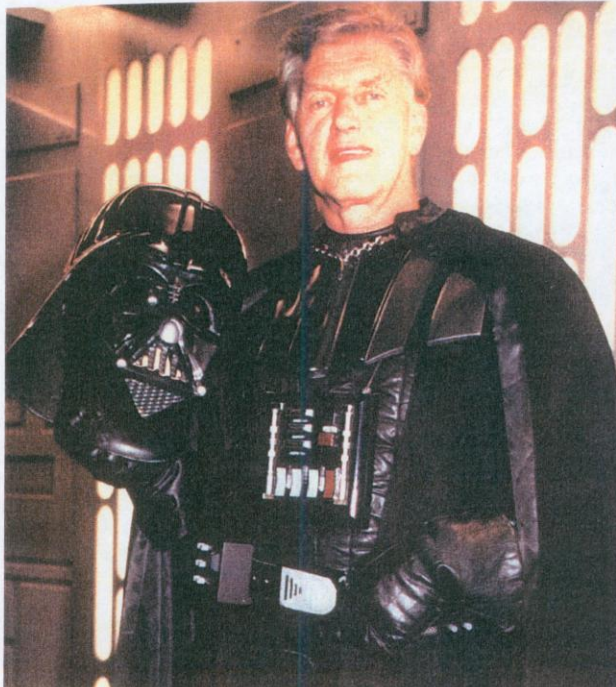
Slide # 53: West Challacombe was far more than just a large farmhouse, having a **Great Hall**, 40 feet long & spanned with superb Gothic arches carved by hand. Walls are in most places 4 feet thick, and in the porch there is an **ancient carved door** resembling that of an old English monastery. Over the door is a **carved coat of arms**, the design of which is barely discernible but which has been identified as those of the Prouz family together with the crests of the Cruwys and Norton families, John Prouz' mother being a **Norton**, & her mother being a Cruwys (who married William Norton).

How long West Challacombe remained in the Prouz family is unknown, but it is probable that it did so until at least the beginning of the 17th century.

West Challacombe Farm, built in the 15th century, has recently been bought by the English National Trust

Slide #54: Before the National Trust became involved, I had corresponded with **David Prowse**, **alias Darth Vader of 'Star Wars' fame**, about the availability of his purchasing this ancient Prowse family home, to keep it 'in the family' so to speak! Dave was immensely interested but the decision was taken out of his hands by the involvement of the National Trust. Some of you may remember that Dave & his wife, Norma, came to our first International Prowse Reunion in Gidleigh & Chagford in 1990, and we have followed Dave's inspiring success story over the last 3 to 4 decades.....a story that will have to be told on another occasion.

West Challacombe Farm, Coombe Martin



Dave 'Darth
Vader' Prowse
of
'Star Wars'
fame

PART 2 - HEROES:

Slide #55: According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "**PROWESS**" and its form, 'PROWSE', denote "valour, bravery, gallantry, martial daring, manly courage and active fortitude"! Throw in 'chivalrous' and 'valiant', words frequently used in most other sources to describe the word 'PROWESS', and you get an inkling of what we, as descendants of the De Preux family, have to live up to!

Slide # 56: There is no doubt that many of **our ancestors** throughout the ages displayed all of the above characteristics, as the following stories attest to, but perhaps none more so than our **ancestral crusaders**, who traveled more than 3000 miles from their homeland, through 10 countries, in often grim conditions, enduring years of battles, starvation, and disease, in an enigmatic quest that locked Europe and the Middle East in a clash of cultures that has no end to this day.

We already know that **John & William de Preaux**, uncles of Heudeberge de Preaux (the wife of Osbert II de Cailly), set off in 1096 on the First Crusade in a response to a calling to arms by the then Pope Urban II, to win back Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks.

Here they are setting off on the **First Crusade**, and by the next year, they & tens of thousands of knights, foot soldiers and pilgrims had converged on Constantinople. They marched on to the Holy Land & besieged the city of Jerusalem.

The Word 'PROWESS', & its form,
'PROWSE', denotes:

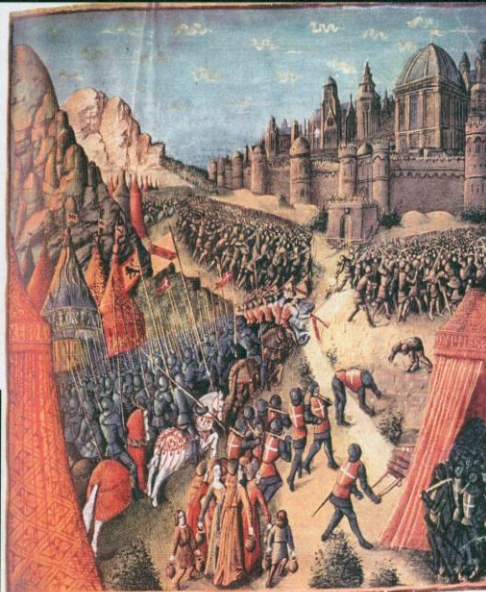
- Valour
- Bravery
- Gallantry
- Martial Daring
- Manly Courage
- Active Fortitude
- Chivalry

Can we live up to it?!



Jean (John) & Guillaume
(William) de Preaux set
off on the First Crusade
in 1096

The Capture of Jerusalem in
1099



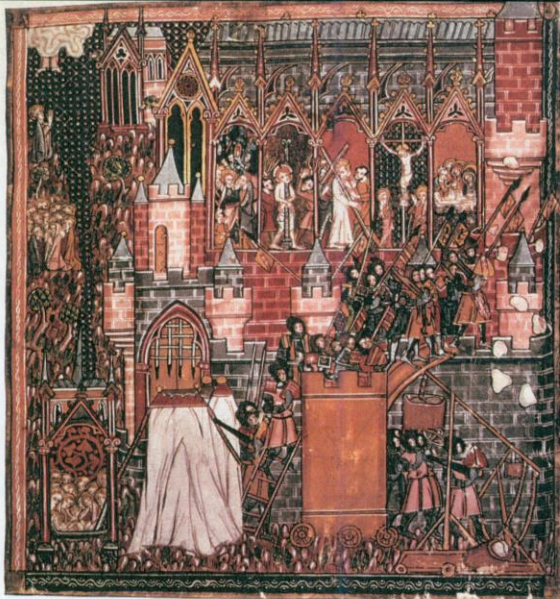
Slide #57: This **map of the First Crusade** shows the routes taken by the various crusading armies that met in Constantinople & then proceeded together down to Jerusalem. We don't know whether John & William joined Peter the Hermit & Geoffrey de Bouillon's 20,000 strong army, or whether they took one of the southern routes led by Raymond of Toulouse or Robert of Flanders, but I suspect that they were more likely to have joined Geoffrey de Bouillon's group.

Slide #58: When **Jerusalem fell** after 3 weeks, the crusaders overran the ramparts & brutally slaughtered every man, woman and child within the city walls. Nevertheless, they completed the only truly successful Crusade to the Holy Land & the kingdom they established was to last nearly a century before Saladin, the great King of Egypt & Syria won it back.

In 1147, **WILLIAM PROBUS**, son of our Osbert Probus, the first Norman ancestor to come to Devon after the 1066 Invasion, went off to the Holy Land on the **2nd Crusade**. Apparently, in spite of the nobles being well organized, all but a few in the ranks of these crusaders were thieves and murderers, so William must have spent an interesting two years in their company! This crusade actually achieved nothing and after two futile years, and enormous loss of life, the crusade just melted away.



Siege of Jerusalem ends after 3 weeks when Godfrey de Bouillon & his knights overrun the ramparts



They capture the Holy City. The Kingdom they establish lasts for nearly a century before Saladin wins it back. Meanwhile, in 1147 – William Probus, Osbert's son, goes on the 2nd Crusade which lasts 2 years.

Slide #59: Now the English contingent of the THIRD CRUSADE, about 40 years later in 1189-92, was led by **RICHARD the LIONHEART**, King of England, in response to the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin. He was accompanied, among many others, by three brothers, all ancestors of ours. They were descended through OSBERT PROBUS's brother, **RALPH de PRATELLIS**, and were nephews of WALTER PROBUS, the first owner of Gidleigh Castle. These three were all members of the royal household from a very early age and **Peter and William de Preaux**, in particular, were also known throughout the tournament circuit as fierce warriors and distinguished knights.

(Read Elizabeth Chadwick's book "**The Greatest Knight**", about William Marshall, but which briefly mentions our De Preaux ancestors).

Slide # 60: **ROGER de PREUX**, the third brother, was the King's Server Dapifer, and included in his duties was that of the King's Food Taster – a very hazardous occupation in those days! But **Roger** was not to die of food poisoning, but on the battlefield during this 3rd Crusade, and here is a 14th century **miniature painting**, which is kept in the Bibliotheque Nationale in France, depicting his rather undignified-looking death.



Death of Roger le Preux during the 3rd Crusade

Slide #61 **WILLIAM de PREAUX**, the 2nd brother, whose inspiring story was, astonishingly(!), depicted in a serial entitled 'The Crusade' in the popular television science fiction series, Doctor Who, in 1965; (his character, shown here, being played by actor, John Flint), was the hero of a famous exploit at JAFFA, which is the modern-day Tel Aviv. The Royal Party was out hawking & the Saracens drew them into an ambush, where but for the quick thinking and 'selfless devotion' of **WILLIAM de PREAUX**, King Richard the Lionheart would certainly have been taken prisoner.

William cried out in the Saracen language, "I am the King" (Melich Ric), and was himself captured while Richard & most of the rest of his party made good their escape. To his credit, Richard negotiated for **William de Preaux's release** before he left the Holy Land and finally William was exchanged for 10 of the greatest Saracen nobles among the English prisoners.

Slide #62: **PETER de PREAUX**, who was given the honor of being the King's Royal Standard Bearer, and who, with his brother, William, was known to be with King Richard at several major battles & sieges along the way (Vezeley, Marseille, Sicily, the conquest of Cyprus, the Siege of Acre, the Battle of Arsuf, the march to Jaffa, & the advance on Jerusalem, Darum) **including the Battle of Jaffa**, where he is mentioned in a dashing affair involving the rescue of the Christian garrison, in which he and Richard the Lionheart led an attack of a handful of Crusaders against the mass of Saladin's army, 20,000 strong, wading through the sea shooting bolts at the Moslims until they reached shore, when they drew their swords and overran the city.

After the truce between Richard & Saladin had been established, Peter was assigned an important mission with other knights in which he was sent ahead of the first battalion of Richard's crusaders on their way to complete their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to obtain safe conducts for them. The delightful, if embarrassing, story goes that Peter & his cohorts fell asleep en route and the crusaders charged ahead without receiving their safe conducts! When Peter & his company awoke, they realized that they were already behind the Christian host & made all haste to catch up. They were, of course, severely reprimanded by the column's commander, the king's cousin, Andrew de Chauvigny!

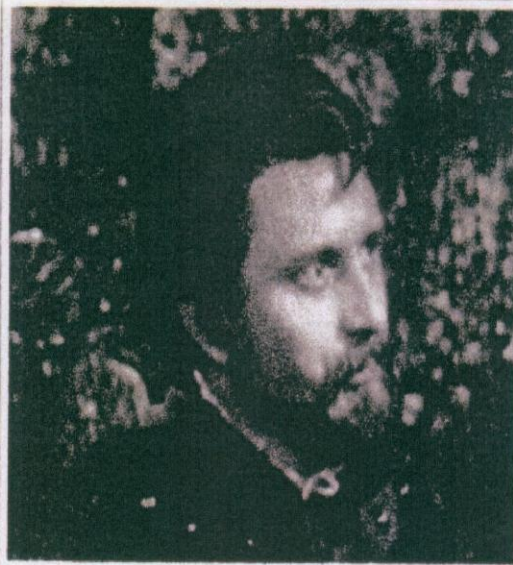
On his return to Normandy, **Peter** served both King Richard & King John throughout their wars against Philip II of France, between 1194 & 1204, & King John made both Peter and William de Preaux **important territorial military governors in Normandy**. However, by the end of 1203, King John left Normandy never to return.

At this point, the family becomes divided. **John de Pratellis**, Peter & William's oldest brother, sided with Philip of France against King John. His brothers did not follow him into this treason.

King John had left Peter in command of the defense of Rouen, but by the Spring of the next year, Rouen was surrounded by King Philip's forces and Peter surrendered to Philip of France. He took ship for England, where he was well received by King John, & was granted his brother, John's, dispossessed lands.



Guillaume des
Préaux



William des Preaux

**Richard the Lionheart & Peter de Preaux
storm Jaffa**



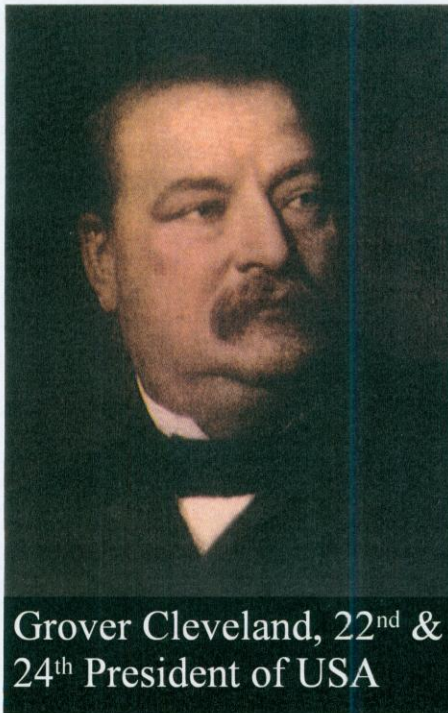
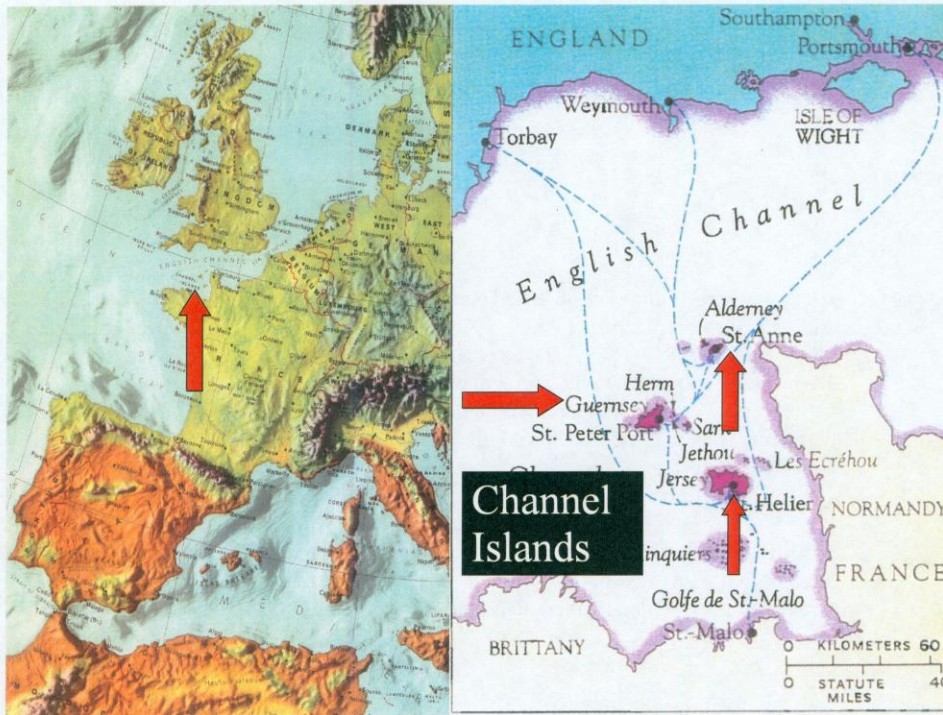
Slide #63: **Peter** was also married to **MARY**, who was the heiress of **WILLIAM de REDVERS de VERNON**, Earl of Devon & Lord of the Isle of Wight, and Peter was also granted lands in Jersey, Guernsey & Alderney, in the **Channel Islands**, as a reward for his services. He eventually retired to a quiet life on his English estates & died in the year, 1212.

There are **two very interesting facts** about **PETER**: one is that if he had lived only 4 years longer, he would have succeeded to the **Earldom of Devon** after his father-in-law's death. As it was, his widow, **MARY de VERNON**, remarried **RICHARD COURTNEY**, and it was the Courtney descendants who inherited the title of Earls of Devon.

Slide # 64: Secondly, it is through **PETER's** wife, **MARY de Vernon**, that we Prowses share the same heritage as the man who was the **22nd & 24th President of the United States** of America, **GROVER CLEVELAND**, whose **unfortunate mishap in his bathtub** did not prevent him from becoming the only man in history to occupy the White House for 4 years, suffer a defeat at the Presidential polls, only to return to fight again and win!

Cleveland was the first **Democrat** to be elected since the Civil War & was also a bachelor when he entered the White House in 1885. A year later, the first wedding ceremony to take place in the White House united Cleveland and Frances Folsom. The bride was 21, the groom 49!

As a President, Grover Cleveland was an exceptional man who restored honesty & impartiality to government and he left an example of political courage that never 'surrendered an iota of principal to expediency'. He died in 1908.



Grover Cleveland, 22nd & 24th President of USA



Frances Folsom Cleveland
 Their wedding was the first to take place in the White House. The Bride was 21, the groom, 49!

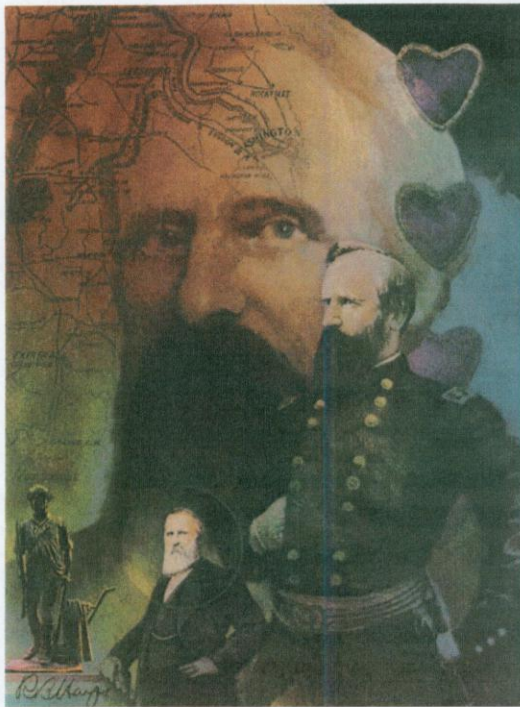
Slide #65: An earlier **President of the United States** was also descended from the Gidleigh Castle and Chagford branch of the PROUZ family & that was **RUTHERFORD B. HAYES**, 19th President (1877-1881). Hayes was a war hero, governor of Ohio & a member of the **Republican Party** when he won the election in 1877 on a much disputed and controversial vote count (for a while, he was called **Ruther"fraud" Hayes** by his detractors) but as President, his administration was an honest one and also one of enormous progress.

President Hayes is regarded as a hero in **Paraguay** where to this day, the citizens of this small South American country have a holiday, a province, a town, a museum and a soccer team all named in his honor. all thanks to an 1878 arbitration decision against Argentina in which he handed Paraguay 60 percent of its land!

Slide #66 : His wife, **Lucy Webb**, was the first Presidential wife to hold a college degree but was subjected to considerable criticism because she prohibited the serving of liquor in the White House & she was nicknamed "Lemonade Lucy" by the Washington insiders.

President Hayes's **link to the Prouz family** is through the marriage of Agnes Prowse around 1700, to John **Trowbridge**. Agnes is descended from John Prouz & Jone Orchard of West Challacombe in Combe Martin, Devon.

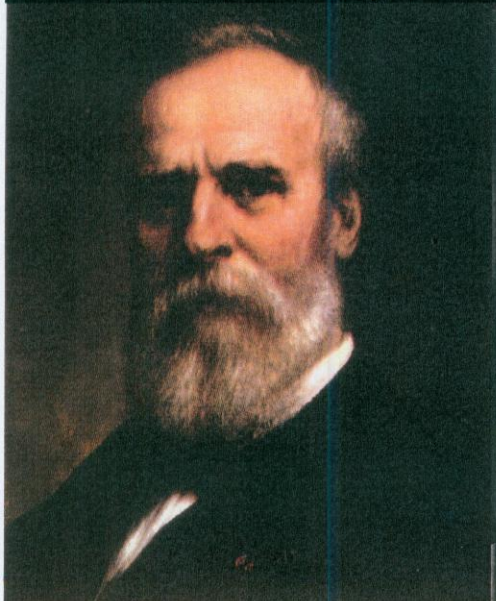
Their son, **Thomas Trowbridge** was a captain in Cromwell's army during the English Civil War & he was an immigrant ancestor to America where he & his sons were merchants, trading between Massachusetts, England and the Azores.



Rutherford B. Hayes
19th President
(1877 – 1881)
War hero, governor of
Ohio & member of the
Republican Party.

He declined to run for a
2nd term & retired home to
Fremont, Ohio.
His wife, Lucy Webb was
1st Presidential Lady to
hold a college degree.

Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th
President (1877-1881)



Lucy Webb Hayes



Slide #67: Our ancestors started to emigrate to the **NEW WORLD** as early as 1619, the incentive being that families were offered 50 acres of land per head, & this of course enticed quite a few of the **PROUSES** that we find in the lists of early American immigrants.

Following the **English Civil War** in the mid-1600's, many Prowse Royalist sympathizers, together with the families that they married into, were either transported or decided to **emigrate to America** of their own volition & we find them turning up on the eastern shores of Maryland.

We know of at least two Prowses who either went missing after Indian raids or were massacred by Indians, including one Master Prowse, age & first name unknown, killed on Good Friday, March 22, 1622, at the great **Indian Massacre** in Virginia, in which 347 people were killed out of a total population of 1240 . Life was not easy in the American colonies for our family's early immigrants, even if they did manage to avoid the wrecks & sea-monsters off the coast when first landing!

Slide #68: It is also quite possible that **PROUSES** came over in the fishing fleet every summer from Devon to **NEWFOUNDLAND**. Certainly, **JUDGE DANIEL WOODLEY PROWSE**, of Newfoundland, who corresponded with my grandfather, ABP, & who is the author of a book entitled "The History of Newfoundland", believed so, & he maintains that in 1588, the flotilla of Devon fishermen did NOT arrive because of the threatened invasion of the **SPANISH ARMADA** and their need to stay home to help defend their country.

And this brings us to another of our great Prowse Family Legends!



Judge Daniel Woodley Prowse of Newfoundland



Born 1834, grandson of Samuel Prowse, privateer

Author of 'The History of Newfoundland' published in 1896.

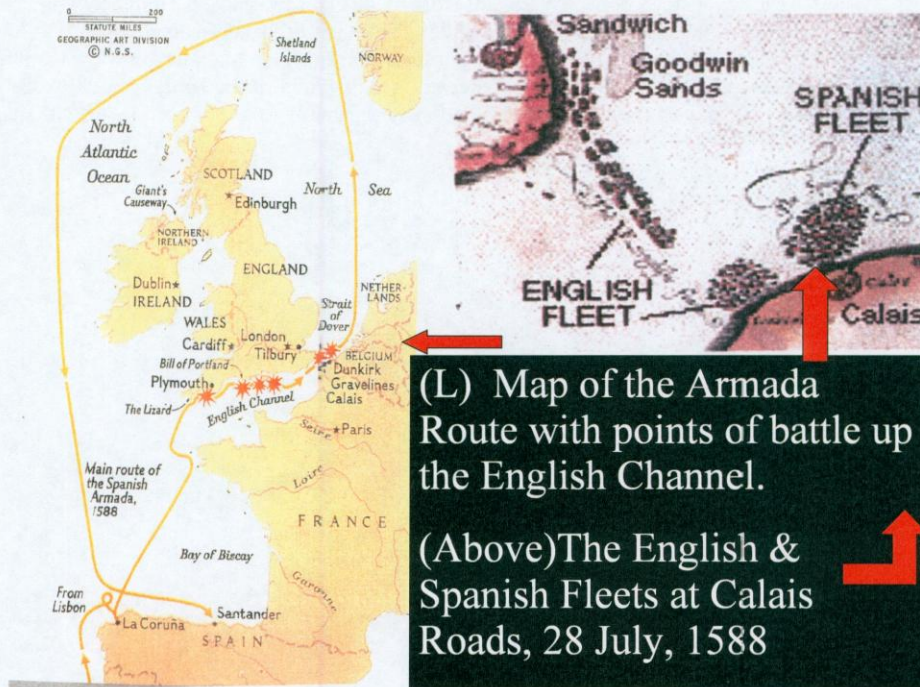
Judge of the Central District Court of Newfoundland in 1869

Slide #69: The **ARMADA** was a massive naval fleet – the biggest naval & military force ever assembled in the history of the world up to that time – sent by King Philip II of Catholic Spain to assist in the attempted invasion of Protestant England. The prime purpose of the Armada was to crush the English Navy & force Queen Elizabeth I into submission, thus restoring Catholicism to England.

Slide # 70: After two weeks of battling their way up the **English Channel**, the English grew desperate as they had not managed to inflict much damage on the massive Spanish galleons. On the evening of August 6, 1588, the Spanish commander, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, dropped anchor at Calais Roads and the English decided that their only hope of destroying the Spanish Armada was to send in **FIRESHIPS**.

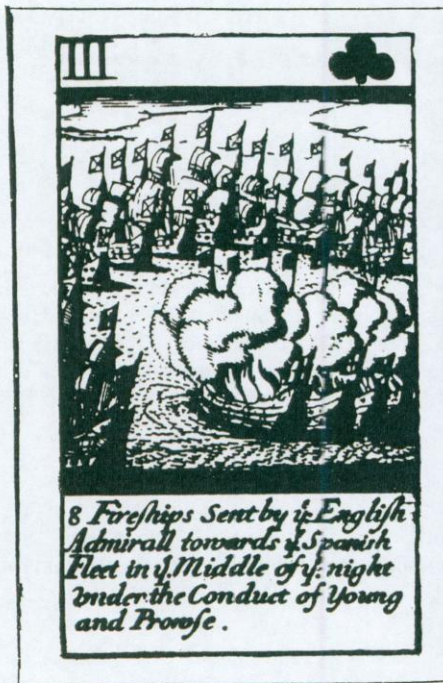
Eight ships were recruited & were placed under the command of a Captain Young & a **Captain Prowse**, who immediately set their crews to work getting the ships ready & stuffing them with everything available that would make a blaze.

The Spanish Armada 1588



Slide #71: Medina Sidonia saw what was happening & tried to organize a barrier to catch the **fireships** & tow them away before they could reach his tightly packed anchorage.

Slide # 72: At midnight on the night of August 6th & 7th, 1588 – and I am now quoting from Charles Kingsley's book, "Westward Ho!" - "the eight fireships, besmirched with wildfire, brimstone, pitch and resin and with all their ordnance charged with bullets....stealed down the wind straight for the Spanish fleet, guided by two valiant men of Devon, **Young & Prowse (Let their names live long in the land)** – the ships are fired, the men of Devon steal back, and in a moment more, the heaven is red with glare."



‘The propaganda passes into legend: 17th century English playing cards recount the story of the Armada’ ...

‘Fireships sent by the English Admirall towards ye Spanish Fleet in y^e Middle of y^e night under the conduct of Young and Prowse.’

The Fireship Attack on the Spanish Armada, 28th July, 1588. (Painting attributed to Aert van Antum)...their finest hour..the invincible Armada about to be scattered by English Fireships commanded by Captains Young & Prowse - “Let their names live long in the land” -



Slide # 73: This was, of course, the critical moment but once the double shotted guns started going off spraying their shot at random all over the waters, the **Spanish fleet panicked**, cut their cables & running before the wind, scattered all over the sands of the Flemish coast. Only 5 ships, including Medina Sidonia's flagship remained in the morning when the English closed in for the final attack. The Armada was a beaten, shattered fleet & no invasion of England took place.

A Spanish captain said later on that the English "**had dislodged us with 8 vessels**, something that they could not do with 130", and one Naval historian has written that "the eight ships were prepared for the attack at a total cost of 5,100 pounds and ten shillings, **perhaps the cheapest National investment that this country (Britain) has ever made**".

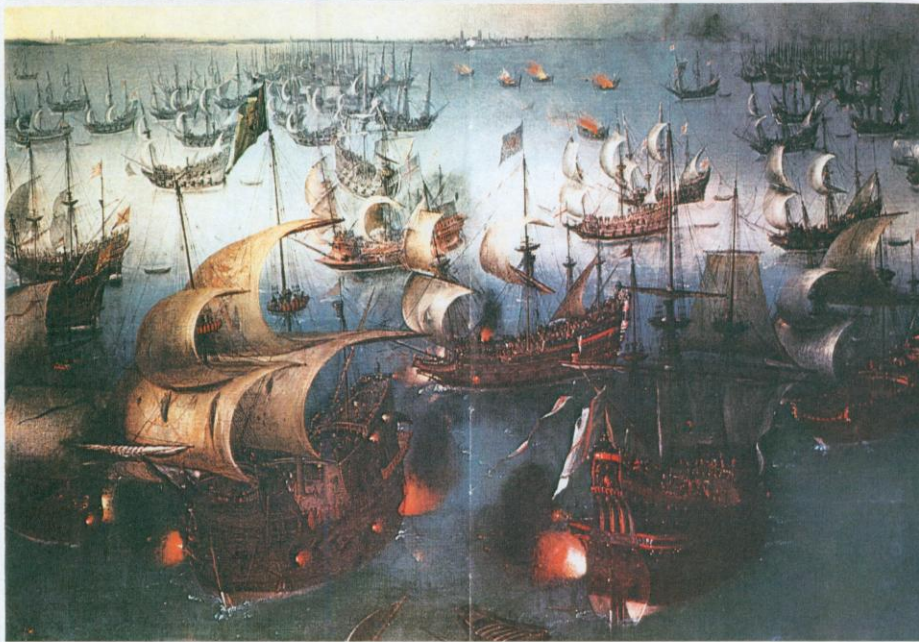
Slide # 74: The burning question (pun intended!!!) of course is, just **who** was the Captain Prowse mentioned in dispatches as a captain of the **fireships** which scattered the Spanish Armada?

There are at least **3 contenders** for this mysterious hero, two of whom are 'W' Prowses (Laurence Prowse of Southampton & William Prowse the Younger of Devon), and the third of whom was a Cornish 'U' Prowse, first name unknown. There is compelling evidence existing for each of these heroic men to have been the Fireships captain, but we may never truly know his identity except that he was undoubtedly a courageous member of our family.....**playing with fire is not for sissies!**

What we do know is that **Laurence Prowse** was a profitable ship-owner/privateer based in Southampton who eventually became Mayor of Southampton in 1618. A professional privateer could expect to take home well over half of the prize money from a successful voyage & there are several reports of Laurence & William Prowse bringing home prizes worth around 4,000 to 5,000 pounds – a fortune in those days.

William Prowse made several journeys as captain of Laurence's ships and he was eventually to die, off the coast of Spain, in 1595, eleven years after the Fireships incident. I, personally, lean towards William as being the Captain of the Fireships.

Fireships painting by an unknown artist



Queen Elizabeth inspires her troops at Tilbury.
In the background are the fireships!

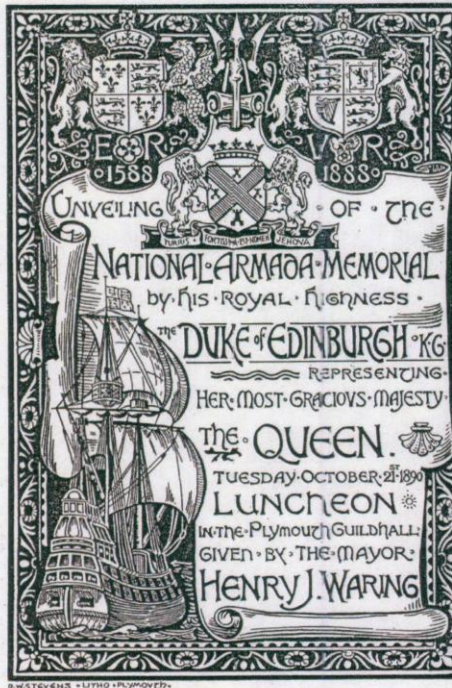


Slide # 75: Those of you who attended our family reunion in Plymouth, Devon, at the site of the **National Armada Monument**, in 2004, will have noted the magnificent bronze Prowse Shield of 3 Lions at the base of the monument. My grandfather, ABP, was instrumental in perpetuating this legacy of our family for us and for future generations and he represented the family at the Unveiling Ceremony in 1890.

Slide #76: This was the beautiful, if rather ostentatious **invitation** he received on that occasion. Eight family members responded to ABP's request for donations to cover the ten guineas cost for the Prowse Shield for the National Armada Monument.

It should be mentioned here that another of our ancestors, and a contemporary of my grandfather, ABP, having been born in the same year, 1856, was **ALBERT SAMUEL WHITCHURCH PROWSE**, who was the founder of the Vancouver, Canada branch of the family where he emigrated to in 1909.

The National Armada Monument, Plymouth, Devon with close-up of the PROWSE Shield of 3 Lions at the base.



Invitation received by Dr. Arthur Banks Prowse to the Unveiling Ceremony of the National Armada Monument in 1890 in Plymouth, Devon.

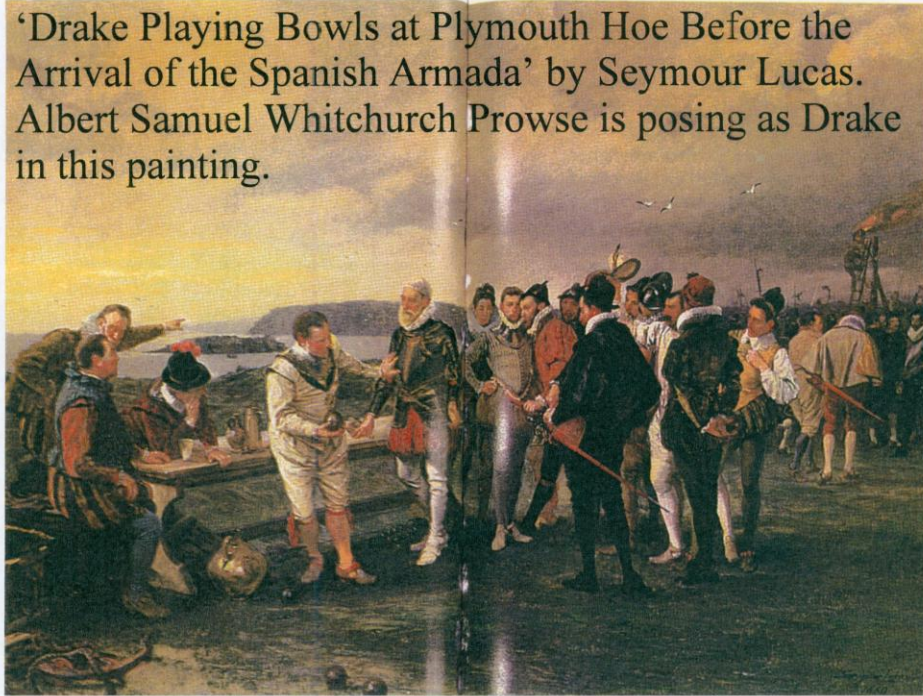
Family members donated the ten guinea fee for the bronze Prowse Shield of Three Lions Rampant at the base of the monument.

Slide # 77: Before he emigrated however, **Albert**, who had studied Medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, posed as Sir Walter Drake for this **famous painting** of "**Drake Playing Bowls at Plymouth Hoe Before the Arrival of the Spanish Armada**", by Seymour Lucas – the painting is now in the Art Gallery in Sydney, NSW.

Slide #78 The Newfoundland branch of the **Canadian Prowses** seemingly stemmed from Samuel Prowse, "the famous privateer", whose brother, **Tom**, was **press-ganged for the Navy "in the chops of the Channel"**, and was "**promised**" a commission by the naval Slide captain "**if he kept quiet about it**"! Poor Tom Prowse ended up at the **Battle of Trafalgar** as Flag Lieutenant in HMS Ajax, where he was the only commissioned officer left unwounded to command her after the great victory.

He was promoted to Commodore & appointed to convoy a large fleet of merchantmen to the West Indies. In a terrible hurricane off Bermuda, the whole convoy sank without any survivors. Tom Prowse's wife earned the unwelcome distinction of being "maid, wife & widow" all within one year.

'Drake Playing Bowls at Plymouth Hoe Before the Arrival of the Spanish Armada' by Seymour Lucas. Albert Samuel Whitchurch Prowse is posing as Drake in this painting.



The Battle of Trafalgar, 21 October, 1805,
by John Christian Schetky

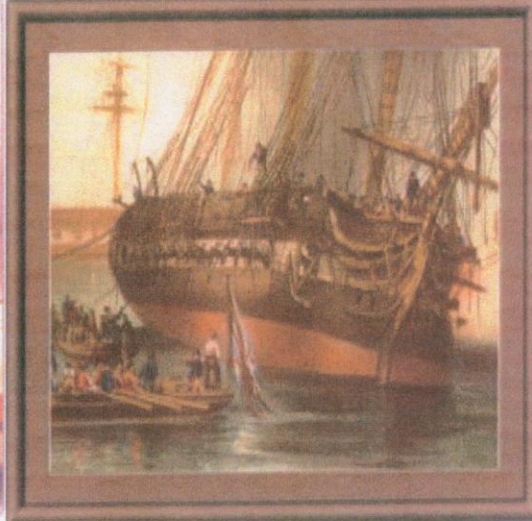
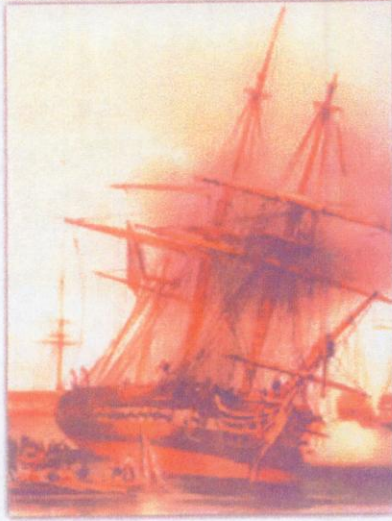


Slide #79: This brings us to the next attempted invasion of England which occurred 200 years after the Spanish Armada, and it was instigated by none other than Napoleon Bonaparte, & this is where we come to one of my favorite PROWSE ancestors, a Naval officer & the Commander of **HMS SIRIUS** at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, by the name of **WILLIAM PROWSE**.

He was born in Devonshire around 1752, the son, and I am quoting from his naval biography, "of parents in a humble station", which makes it all the more amazing that, in an era that definitely favored those born to the rank & file, he was able to rise through the ranks, finally ending up as a **Rear-Admiral of the Blue** (one record even says 'of the White', which is the second highest of the 3 ranks of Admiral in the British Navy) & a Companion of the Most Honorable Military Order of the Bath.

Slide # 80: He was one of the last persons to talk with Lord Nelson, as he was on board his flagship, **HMS VICTORY**, with him for several hours prior to the beginning of the battle and he remained at Nelson's side until "within gunshot of the enemy's line". He left the Victory to return to his ship, the Sirius, just before the tragic death of Lord Nelson.

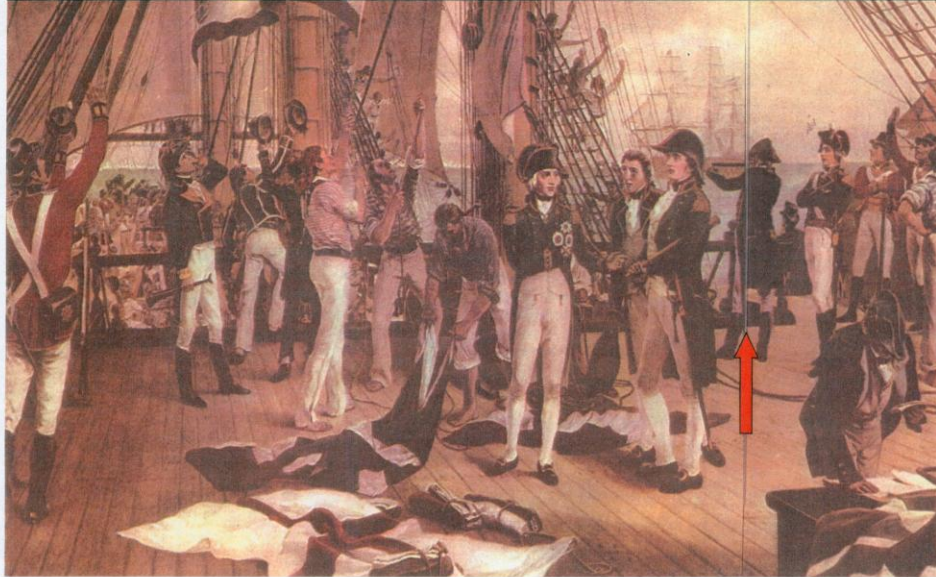
HMS Sirius captained by William Prowse



Slide #81: Here, **William Prowse** is shown on the deck of the Victory, watching his frigate, Sirius, or perhaps the ship's boat, coming to fetch him, through a telescope, in this painting by Thomas Davidson called "**Hoisting the Signal 'England Expects'.....**" (the remaining words of this famous signal being "that every man will do his duty".)

Slide #82: **SIRIUS** played an instrumental role in the whole drama of Trafalgar, when she was the **first** of the British fleet to observe the combined French & Spanish Fleet coming out from Cadiz, & she sent the very **first** critical signals to warn Nelson that the enemy was leaving port. Then she was the very **first** of Nelson's fleet to come under fire from the French fleet.

'Hoisting the Signal 'England expects...', by Thomas Davidson. William Prowse on board the 'Victory' at R. rear looking through his telescope for the Sirius's boat .

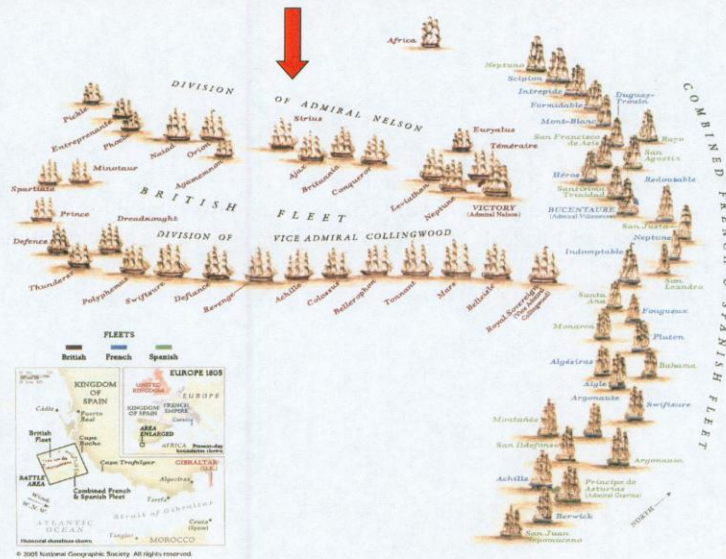


Slide #83: For the next 48 hours, Sirius and Captain Blackwood's frigate (Euryalus) dodged in and out of gunshot of the **enemy fleet** until, with the remaining frigates, they brought the two great enemy fleets together at dawn on the 21st of October, 1805. In this depiction of the battle plan, Sirius and HMS Ajax, Tom Prowse's ship, are stationed together here in Nelson's division.

Sirius's part in the drama of Trafalgar has been described as a 'masterpiece of observation, seamanship and anticipation'.

Slide #84: It is this naval hero of the battle of Trafalgar, **Rear-Admiral William Prowse, who has a quiet London street in Camden named after him.** It is called **PROWSE PLACE** & is described as being a 'quaint cobbled mews in the hub of Camden Town'. William, born in 1753, died in 1826 & is buried in a nearby cemetery in Camden. He is described in his naval biography as having fought 'more single-ship engagements, captured more Frenchmen single-handed....than any other commander in that great fleet. **Nelson knew his value....**".

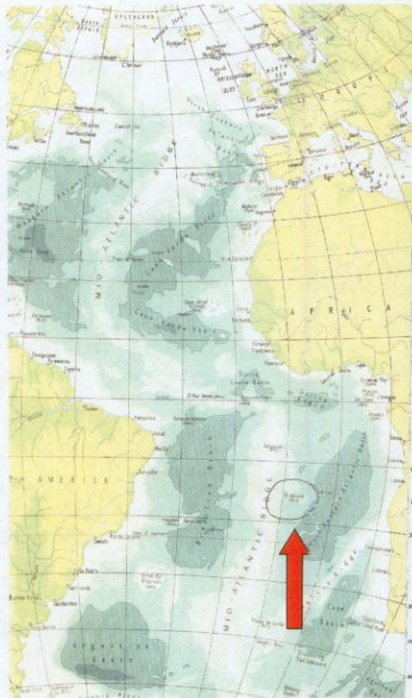
British & combined French /Spanish Fleets Prepare for Battle



Prowse Place in Camden Town, London, England, is named for Rear Admiral of the Blue, William Prowse, who commanded HMS Sirius at the Battle of Trafalgar. 'Prowse had fought more single-ship engagements, captured more Frenchmen single-handed ...than any other commander in that great fleet. Nelson knew his value...'

Slide # 85: After the great Naval victory at Trafalgar, Napoleon Bonaparte abandoned his ideas of an invasion of England, and in 1815, after abdicating as Emperor of France, Napoleon was exiled on the island of **St. Helena**. These maps show the location of this barren volcanic island, 47 sq. miles in size, in a remote part of the southern Atlantic Ocean, & this was where another of our ancestors was a lieutenant on the guardship, HMS Conqueror in 1819.

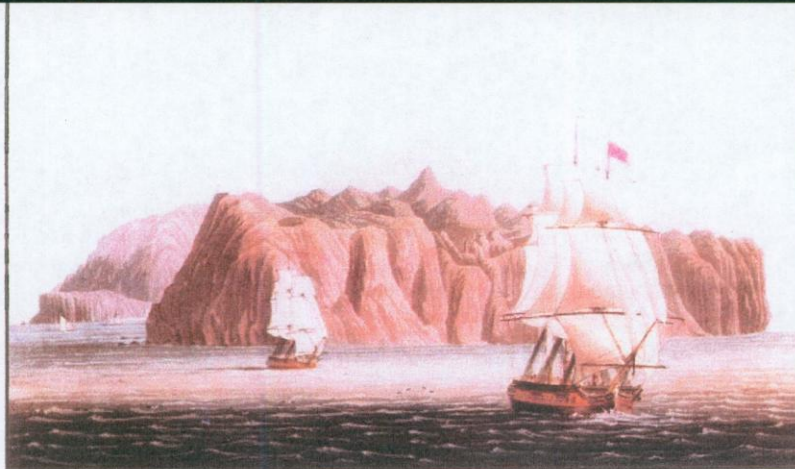
Slide #86: **This duty involved long months at sea patrolling around St.Helena to thwart any attempted rescue of it's famous prisoner, & must have been exceedingly tedious work!** Napoleon was exiled here until his death in 1821.



Maps showing location of St. Helena in the Atlantic Ocean. Lieut. William Jones Prowse of HMS Conqueror guarded Napoleon while he was in exile here in 1819.



St. Helena, a barren volcanic island, only 47 sq. miles in size, in a remote area of the Atlantic Ocean, shown at the time of Napoleon's exile, (1815 until his death in 1821)



Slide # 87: This ancestor of ours was **WILLIAM JONES PROWSE**, who became a Captain in 1841 & married into the British nobility (The Hon. Rachel Emily Irby, eldest daughter of George, 3rd Lord Boston of Hedsoe). He was also the **grandfather of two brothers**, who, a century later, during the First World War, were both to die within a month of each other in two momentous battles of that epic struggle.

The first was **CECIL IRBY PROWSE**, age 48 years (shown here on the right), who was Commander of the Queen Mary, a battle-cruiser which sank at the Battle of Jutland on May 31, 1916, and the 2nd was **CHARLES BERTIE PROWSE**, age 47 (at left). He was the Brigadier-General of the 1st Somerset Light Infantry, who was commanding the 11th Infantry Brigade at the time he was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme on July 1, 1916.

Their father, **Captain George James William Prowse** of St. Edith's in Chippenham, Wilts. was the biggest contributor (after ABP) to ABP's request for donations for the Armada Monument **Prowse shield**, sending the sum of two guineas; the smallest contribution came from a maiden aunt, **Miss Sophia Maria Prowse**, living in Pisa, Italy at the time, who sent the sum of 2 shillings & sixpence!

(The third brother, shown standing second from the left, is **George William Thursby Prowse**, who rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel)

Slide #88: The **confrontation** of Germany's High Seas Fleet and Great Britain's Grand Fleet at the battle of Jutland has been called the "greatest drama of modern naval warfare". It was certainly history's biggest naval battle & for the first time in modern naval history, there was a direct clash between great battleships.

Brig. Gen Charles Bertie Prowse (L) & Captain Cecil Irby Prowse, RN, © Captain of HMS Queen Mary



British Battle-cruiser,
HMS Queen Mary, at
Jutland.

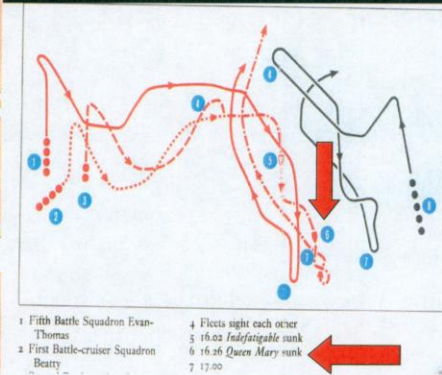
The Battle of Jutland
has been called the
greatest drama of
modern naval
warfare.

- Slide #89: This **map** shows the location of the battle of Jutland in the North Sea & also a chart showing how the British & German fleets engaged and the battle proceeded. Both the Germans and the British claimed it as a victory, and the British did manage to maintain their naval superiority until the end of the war in 1918, but there was a fundamental design flaw in the British battle-cruisers, including the **Queen Mary**, in which their magazines were insufficiently protected against fire spreading from the gun turrets.
- Slide #90:

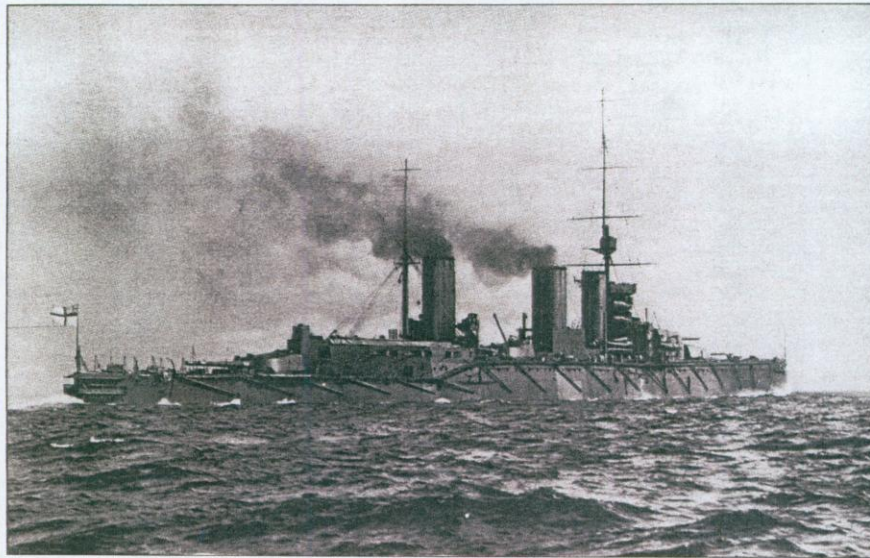
Map 1: Location of the Battle of Jutland in the North Sea (L) and Map 2: the British & German Fleets engage, May 31, 1916



The confrontation was called 'the greatest drama of modern naval warfare'



Type of Gigantic Battle Cruisers of British Navy



THE QUEEN MARY, HERE SHOWN, WAS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BATTLE CRUISERS OF GREAT BRITAIN'S FLEET. SHE WAS SUNK BY GERMAN GUN FIRE IN THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND MAY 31, 1916.
(© Underwood & Underwood.)

Slide #91: **The British** suffered severely and at 4:26 PM, HMS Queen Mary, under the command of Captain Cecil Irby Prowse, met her end. She **exploded** & went down so quickly that the next battle-cruiser in line behind her had to turn sharply to avoid running onto the sinking ship. Of a crew of 1,275 men, there were only 9 survivors. Captain Prowse went down with his ship.

In total, more than 6000 British and 2,500 German seamen died in those few hours in the North Sea.

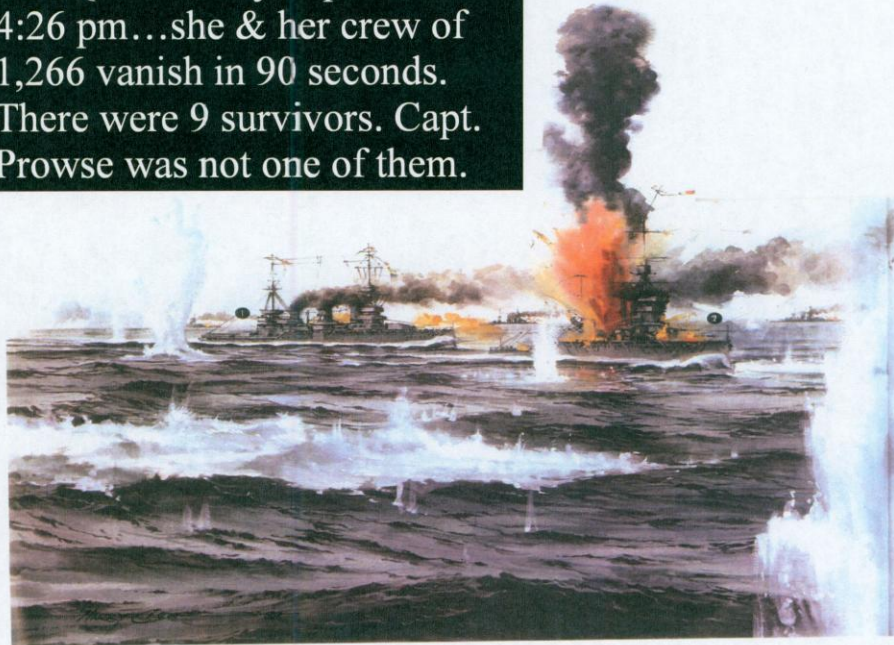
Incidentally, Cecil Irby's son, **GEOFFREY VERNON PROWSE**, born in 1912, so only 4 years old when his father drowned at Jutland, was also lost at sea, at the age of 29, in the submarine, 'Snapper', in Feb 1941, during the 2nd World War.

'Snapper' was either sunk by German warships or perhaps fell victim to a German minefield. The records state that three German minesweepers were attacked on the night of February 10/11th by a submarine, which was presumed to be 'Snapper', & she was then subjected to a counter attack in which 56 depth charges were dropped in her position in the Bay of Biscay.

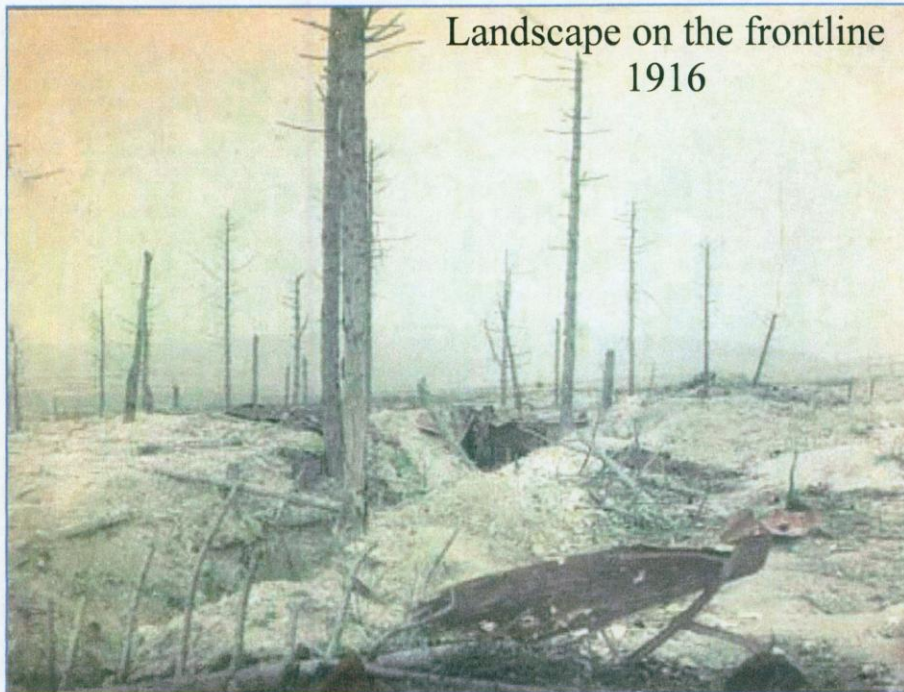
Slide #92: **The Battle of the Somme** was fought between the British & French forces against the German forces & this 5 month long battle, known for the first use of tanks by the British, is often considered to be the real turning point for the Allies in the First World War.

However, it was costly on both sides – with the Allies sustaining about 600,000 casualties and the Germans about 450,000, for an advance that was nowhere more than 5 miles and which had no strategic value. In the first hour of battle alone, deaths, at a conservative estimate, totaled 30,000, & nearly half the original British force(60,000) had fallen or been taken prisoner on that first day. It truly boggles the mind.

The Queen Mary explodes at 4:26 pm...she & her crew of 1,266 vanish in 90 seconds. There were 9 survivors. Capt. Prowse was not one of them.



Landscape on the frontline
1916



Slide #93: **Charles Bertie Prowse**, DSO, who rose very rapidly through the ranks from a junior major to brigadier-general in 9 months, & who was commanding the 11th Infantry Brigade, was one of those killed on the first day of the battle, by a German machine gun, after moving his brigade HQ into the former German front line, believing it to be clear of the enemy. All the brigade's battalion commanders were also killed or wounded in the attack. **Charles Bertie Prowse** died exactly one month after his older brother, Cecil Irby, had died at Jutland.

Slide #94: He took part in the early battles of the war & **he lent his name to a farm, Prowse Point Farm**, (in Ploegsteert Wood, just south of Ypres), in November of 1914. This became the only cemetery in the Salient to be named after a person, & is the site of a stand by the Hampshire Regiment & the Somerset Light Infantry in October 1914, which featured the heroism of (then) Major Charles Bertie Prowse.

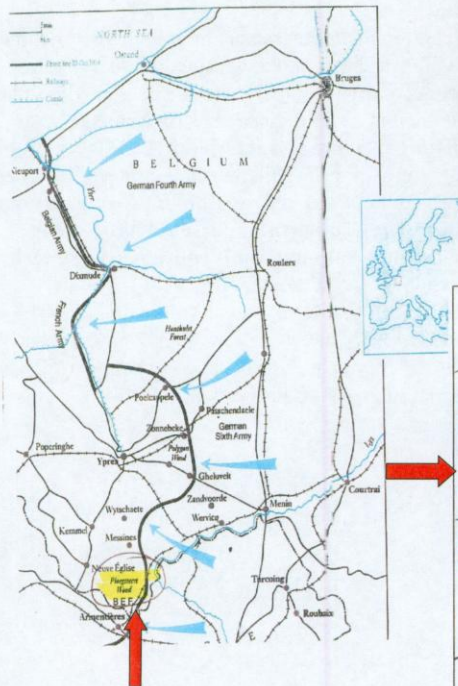


Charles Bertie Prowse, DSO

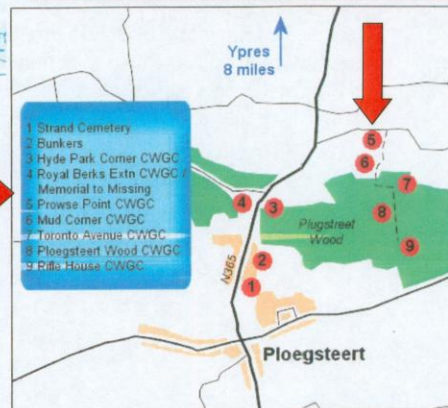
Brigadier-General

Commanding the 11th Infantry
Brigade at the Battle of the
Somme.

Killed on the first day of the
Battle - July 1, 1916



Two maps of Ploegsteert
Wood, (nicknamed
Plugstreet), site of Prowse
Farm & Prowse Point
Cemetery, named after
Brig. Gen. C.B. Prowse.



Slide #95: The **Cemetery** was in use from November 1914 until April 1918 & contains 233 British, Canadian, Australian & New Zealand graves and 12 German graves, however, Charles Bertie Prowse is not buried here, but in Louvencourt Military Cemetery in the Somme, (Grave reference: Panel #: Plot 1, Row E, Grave 9).

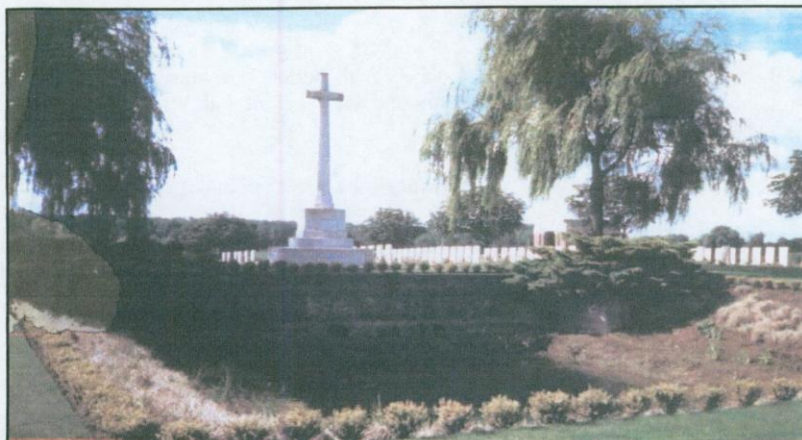
Slide #96: We cannot leave the Somme without mentioning another exceptionally heroic member of our family, **GEORGE PROWSE**, who was born into a working class family in Swansea, Wales. In fact, he was a collier & an avid football (soccer) player, who in the First World War was wounded twice & cited in several dispatches for heroism, culminating in his winning both the **Distinguished Conduct Medal** AND the **Victoria Cross**, Britain's highest & most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy, in 1918. His citation states that he received the Victoria Cross for "**most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty with complete disregard of personal danger, his magnificent example & leadership were inspirational & his courage was superb**".

He was 32 years old & a Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve when he was killed in action near Arleux in France, on the 29th September, 1918, just 45 days before the end of the war, & his body was never recovered. (His name is inscribed on the Vis en Artois Memorial in Pas-de-Calais).

PROWSE POINT MILITARY CEMETERY

(CWGC Ref 5/94)

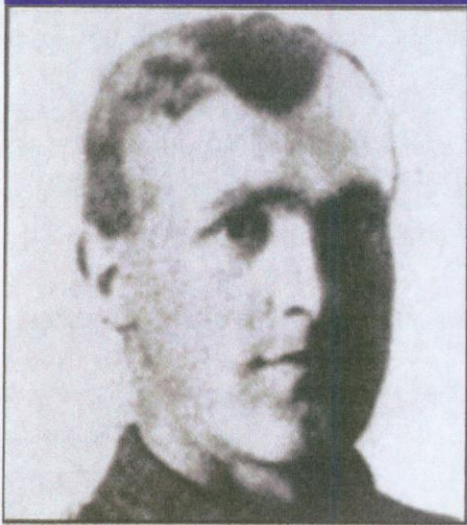
The only cemetery in the Salient to named after a person, Major Charles Bertie Prowse DSO (later Brigadier General) 1st Somerset LI (died 1st July 1916 on the Somme)



Charles Bertie Prowse is not buried here but in Louvencourt Military Cemetery on the Somme

Chief Petty Officer George Prowse, VC, DCM

Drake Bn, R.N. Div. Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, died 27th September, 1918. He received the Victoria Cross.



Britain's highest medal for gallantry 'for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty with complete disregard of personal danger, his magnificent example & leadership were inspirational & his courage was superb.' His body was never found & his name is inscribed on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial.

So this brings us back, geographically at least, to where it all started 11 centuries earlier, in Northern France, at the mouth of the River Somme, where our ancestors set sail with William the Conqueror's fleet, on the invasion of England in 1066.

#97: **At the beginning of this talk, we posed 7 questions** about our ancestors which we can now answer.....

1. Who was buried in the wrong location & what was done about it?
Answer: Sir William le Prouz, last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, whose daughter, Alice, had his body exhumed & re-interred at Lustleigh Church in 1326.
2. Which of our ancestors impersonated a King? And why?
Answer: William de Preaux, to save Richard the Lionheart from being taken prisoner by the Saracens during the 3rd Crusade.
3. Which one of our ancestors played with fire?
Answer: The Armada Fireships captain in 1588.
4. Who was pressganged & promised a commission in the British Navy if he kept quiet about it?
Answer: Tom Prowse, Flag Lieutenant of HMS Ajax at the Battle of Trafalgar.
5. Who guarded the exiled Napoleon Bonaparte at St. Helena?
Answer: William Jones Prowse, lieutenant in HMS Conqueror in 1819.
- * 6. Who are Prowse Place in London & Prowse Farm & Prowse Point Cemetary in Normandy named for?
Answer: (a) Rear-Admiral William Prowse of HMS Sirius (b) Brigadier General Charles Bertie Prowse.
7. Which one of our ancestors fell through the floor in his bathtub & lived to become President of the United States?
Answer: Grover Cleveland, 22nd & 24th US President.

Slide #98: So, having finally answered all those questions, plus quite a few more(!), this brings us **to the end** of this presentation - & although we do have our fair share of rogues & scoundrels & just plain quarrelsome Prowses amongst our forebears, it is this very fine Naval & Military tradition, that ultimately defines who we are and what we have accomplished in the past 1000 years of our family story.

Viva Prouz!

- Who was buried in the wrong location & what was done about it?
Answer: Sir William le Preuz, last Lord of Gidleigh Castle, whose daughter, Alice, had his body exhumed and re-interred at Lustleigh Church in 1326
- Which of our ancestors impersonated a King? And why?
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- Who guarded the exiled Napoleon Bonaparte at St. Helena?
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- Who are Prowse Place in London & Prowse Farm & Prowse Point Cemetery in Normandy named after?
Answer: Brigadier General Charles Bertie Prowse
- Which one of our ancestors fell through the floor in his bathtub & lived to become President of the United States?
Answer: Grover Cleveland, 22nd and 24th US President

* See correct answer on page 96



Laurie Littlelike at Gidleigh Castle, 2004

Good-bye! So long!
& special thanks to Mary
& to Mark Prowse for
their magnificent
hospitality this weekend in
Southampton
September 2-4, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This mammoth presentation, involving a vast amount of research over the last 25 years or so, could not have been undertaken without the invaluable assistance of several other Prowse family members, including **Martin Prowse**, for the early Normandy genealogy & Armada shipping details, & **Randy Prowse** of Oregon, USA, for the early Norman GEDCOM file he sent me, and to **Thea Parsons**, for the stories of her World War I family heroes, Charles Bertie & Cecil Irby Prowse and of his son, Geoffrey Vernon Prowse.

To my son, **Nick Tako**, for his unfailing patience and valuable technical assistance. I absolutely could not have pulled this off without you – you rescued me on so many memorable occasions!

To **Mary Prowse**, who not only got me started on the family history back in the early 1980's & who has provided me with a wealth of family history information, all from my grandfather, ABP's, trunk full of papers which her husband, **Roger Prowse** inherited, but who has also, like my sister & brother-in-law, **Anne & Noel Cash**, driven me over the length & breadth of England to explore our shared past & chronicle it for future generations, my eternal thanks and apologies for embarrassing you on those occasions when I dragged you to the front doors of complete strangers' houses and asked for a "tour of my ancestor's home"! It always worked, even though you had to apologize for your 'American' cousin's/sister's brashness!

I have to admit that on many occasions, Noel has been known to mutter, "What would the country have done without the Prowses?", to which there is only one answer, of course, & that is, "What indeed?"!

Finally, I read once that the **perfect audience** is one that is **intelligent, well-educated & grimly determined** - & in true Prowse tradition, you have all certainly lived up to those sterling qualities today!

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She always loves to hear from family members and distant cousins!