



EDGAR REVIEW

**Researching and sharing Edgar family
history No 3 Nov. 2006**



Newsletter time again, this month is dedicated to some famous Edgars who have played a part in history. Richard Edgar (Portadown, N Ireland) sent me this document. I have had this document for 2 or 3 years and it was only when I read it again I realised its significance in relation to our DNA project. There are indicators to various origins of various individuals named Edgar, this may be a pointer to multi-origin beginnings.

Edgar, a Saxon forename and meaning ‚happy spear‘, was a common name in ancient time. It does seem logical that there were many sources, but, and this is a big BUT, these various origins would all have been Saxon, obviously taking any family links even farther back in time, and thus we are unable to dedicate the Saxon origin to any one individual. The document is rather long (and sometimes a bit tedious), but well worth the read.

If you have comments, please Email them to me; feedback on this will be invaluable.

PS: the family crest below is of poor quality, does anyone have a high-resolution version?



Motto: Maun Do It

The House of Edgar

Edgar is an old and peculiar surname. One might suppose that even at the present day it would be common, at any rate about large cities, and in those districts whose characteristics are still, to a certain extent, more especially Saxon. When, however, we come to inquire narrowly, and refer to Directories, we find it of rare occurrence. For example, if we take the diocese of Winchester, and run over the index of Wills in its Probate Court from 1498 down to the present time, or, at least to the close of last century, among numerous Saxon names, that of Edgar occurs but thrice and in two of these Wills, oddly enough, we meet with the same corrupt spelling of the name which, in the contemporaneous registers of the northern kingdom was so prevalent.

It is doubtful whether, prior to the present century, even where Scottish patronymics were largely infused, there were any persons of this name in the sister isle.

In England, an ancient family of the name settled in Berkshire at an early period. That and the Edgar family in Suffolk may have had a common ancestor; and it may not be saying too much to suggest their descent from one or another of the Edgars who appear in the pedigrees of the Saxon Earls of Northumbria. **(This fits the Haplotype I1c origin in Saxony, N. Germany - see July issue)**

A few persons named Edgar seem to have been in attendance upon, or connected with, the courts of several of the ancient kings of Scotland, One named "Gilbert, son of Edgar," was

witness to the execution of a charter by William the Lion about 1176. Another named Edgar, son of Henry, was witness to a charter by King David about 1208. Another, Gilbert, son of Edgar, was witness to a charter in 1200. And Walter, son of Edgar, was witness to a charter of the lands of Scrogges in 1208.

In Rymer's "Foedera" three notices of this name are to be found.

1. In the 24th Edward I. (1296), "Walterus Edger persona de Penicok vicecomiti de Edinburgh."
2. 1st Edward II. (1308) "De vadiis prisonibus Scotiae &c., "habere facias Galfrido Edger in castro nostro Ebor."
3. 7th Edward II. (1314)... "Quod Isabella de Brus in Castro praedicto sub custodia vestra, de mandato nostro, jam existens, habeat secum, ut de familia sua, Elenam Edger, Johannem de Claydon, Samuelem de Lynford et Willielmum de Preston," &c., &c.

Besides these, we find a notice of a Sir Patrick Edgar, (Ric de Barneby Domino Patricio Edger Milite) in 1272, in the Chronicle of Lanercost; and in the reign of King John (Abbrev. - Placid) "Edgar avuncul. Comitum Waldeni patris comitum Patricii fuit seisis in Dnico suo sicut de feudo de Villa de Bewic," &c.

"In the shire of Berwick," says Nisbet," besides the Homes there were other ancient families of different surnames who carried lions rampant in variation of tinctures from the old Earls of Dunbar and March; whether upon the account of descent from that eminent family, or, as vassals, carried lions in imitation of those of their patrons I shall not be positive, as the Hepburns, Rentons, and of the name of Edgar who held their lands of the old Earls of Dunbar.



The principal family of the name of Edgar there is Edgar of Wadderlie, (*pictured left*) yet extant, who carried for their proper Arms-Sable, a lion rampant argent.

As for the antiquity of the name, I shall here vouch a charter of Earl Patrick, son of Earl of Dunbar, who grants to the monks of Durham the Church and lands of Edram for prayers to be said for the soul of his father and mother, of King Malcolm, his sons, King Edgar, King Alexander, King David, and his son Earl Henry, and King Malcolm, and for the safety of his brother David, and for himself, wife, and children. The charter has no date, but is granted in the reign of King William, and in it are many witnesses, among whom are many barons in the shire of Berwick, as Stephan Papedie, Robert de Bonaire, Gilbert de Hume Henric de Prenderghest, Edward de Aldcambus, Alan de Suyntoun, Willielm de Nesbit, and Willielm filius Edgari.

"The last-mentioned William, son of Edgar, I take to be one of the progenitors of Edgar of Wadderlie.

"The aforesaid principal charter is fully repeated in the charter of confirmation of King Robert the Bruce, dated at Berwick, the 15th day of November, the 21st year of his reign.

Richard Edgar, in the reign of King Robert the Bruce, married the eldest daughter and co-heir of Ross of Sanquhar, and William Crichton married the other sister...King Robert confirms to Richard and his son Donald Edgar, the half of the lands of Sanquhar, with the manor place as the charter bears: - De capitali manerio in Baronia de Sanquhar cum mediate ejusdem

Barronie ad ipsum mannerium pertinen. It appears that Edgar of Wedderlie is descended of this Richard.

I have seen a resignation in the custody of Edgar of Wedderlie, by Richard Edgar, son of Richard Edgar of the lands of Wedderlie in favour of Robert Edgar Dominus de Wedderlie, in the year 1376, and confirmed to his son, John Edgar of Wedderlie, 1384.

And beside the Arms of Wedderlie are quartered with figures like to these of Ross of Sanquhar three water budgets or much defaced, as on an old stone on the house of Wedderlie supported by two greyhounds, and for crest, a dexter hand holding a dagger, point downwards. Motto: "Maun do it," and on a compartment below, *Salutem disponit Deus*.

It has been remarked, with reference to the origin of our Peerage, that two great Houses, one English, one Scottish, sprang from the best Saxon aristocracy. Of the old Earls of Northumberland, one named Cospatrick left England after the Conquest and settled in Scotland. He was ancestor of the Earls of Dunbar, of whom the Homes, and we believe the Edgars, are cadets. From him the Nevilles of Raby, in England, are also descended.

According to Douglas ("Peerage of Scotland:" ed. Wood, ii. 107) the descent is stated thus:

1. Cospatrick, son of Maldred by Algetha, daughter and heiress of Uchtred, Prince of Northumbria, by Elgiva, daughter of Ethelred, King of England, was father of Dolfyn and,
II. Cospatrick, 1st Earl of Dunbar, whose son,
III. Cospatrick, 2nd Earl, died in 1147, leaving 1. Cospatrick (3rd Earl). 2. Edward. 3. Edgar ("who appears to have been ancestor of those of the surname Edgar.") 4. Uchtred. In Surtees "Durham," we find, with many other collateral descents, the following:

Waltheof (circa A.D. 969) father of Uchtred, who was thrice married, and had by his 2nd wife, Elgiva, a daughter, Aldgetha, who married Maldred, and was mother of Cospatrick, whose issue follows:

1. Cospatrick, father of Cospatrick and Patrick
2. Dolfyn (1120)
3. Waldeve
4. Edgar (Nothus)
5. Gunil, who married Orme, and had Cospatrick, Dominus de Workington, father of Thomas (ob. 1152), father of Patrick.

Waltheof (circa 969), by his 3rd wife, Sigen, had Cospatrick, the father of Uchtred, father of Dolfyn (1131), father of Maldred and Patrick. This Maldred was father of five children, viz., 1. Robert, who married Isabella, daughter of G. de Neville. 2. Gilbert. 3. John. 4. Gilbert. 5. Richard. **(This fits the Haplotype I1a, Norwegian, origins, this is Steve (Toronto) and James (Melville) family)**

In his version of the pedigree of the House of Dunbar, &c., many references are given by the author to the sources of his information; it contains likewise the name of Siward, the Giant Earl of Northumberland, who is stated to have married Aelfled, the great granddaughter of Waltheof, the founder (?) of these families.

The territory once in possession of the Wedderlie family appears to have extended in a broken chain from the coast of Berwickshire to the Solway Firth. Yet many small landowners bearing the name, who were settled under a peculiar tenure in the royal patrimony at Lochmaben, may have had no distinct legitimate connection with the chief House, but at the same time it is probable there was but one family of the name.

It is probable that in the fourteenth century the House of Wedderlie was more powerfully represented in Nithsdale than in its native county; and it is a question whether the representation of the family early in the seventeenth century did not revert to the head of the House settled in the former locality.

Towards the close of the 13th century, an Edgar, Laird of Wedderlie, appears to have been married to a Countess of Home; and immediately afterwards, the fortune of this House seems to have reached the summit of its prosperity, in the reign of King Robert the Bruce, at whose marriage Richard de Edgar was a witness. One of the latter's four sons was placed by David Bruce at the head of the Clan McGowan, and Wedderlie itself seems to have been resigned to a younger brother, probably the king's godson. **(Robert the Bruce was of French stock, is this the source of the R1b Haplotype?)**

The Laird of Wedderlie, as co-representative of Robert de Ros, Lord of Sanquhar, through his wife, a daughter of the latter, was allied to the family of one of the competitors for the crown of Scotland in 1292. Thus his position must have been among the foremost.

Yet it seems strange, that when a distinction came gradually to be made between territorial and titular barons, an Edgar should have acquired the latter rank; thus losing for his descendants a nominal status, which, like many powerful barons, they perhaps undervalued, during the season of material prosperity, and before the encroachments of men inferior by birth, but more ambitious had reduced (by taking advantage of their inaptitude for war or business, or by marriage with their daughters) the once-noble possessions of the family to comparatively a few acres.

Moreover, "they were among the few families who disobeyed the act of 1672, C21, in not having their arms matriculated in the Lyon Register then established."

Then again, the direct succession seems to have been more than once broken; and, like certain other families of cognate origin, there is a period of obscurity midway in the descent, and though it is incontrovertible, that even during the most troublous times Wedderlie never was held but by an Edgar, still the then-laird may have been self sufficient and short-sighted, or ignorant of the intention of the act referred to, and content to thus proceed on the stagnating principle of "leaving well alone."

Of the Edgars of Wedderlie, in the 15th century, little is known, although it is evident that they must have continued to maintain considerable influence in their native county. In the following century, it is probable, that cadets of the House established themselves at Edinburgh.

The heads of the family seem to have been turbulent in the seventeenth century. The Laird of Wedderlie was in 1679 a rebel. In 1661, George Edgar of Newtown was proceeded against, in the Court of Session, for oppressing Ker of Mersington and his servants, and preventing them cultivating their lands, and attending to peaceful occupations.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, the irregularities of another laird brought him into frequent bad odour with the rigid Presbyterians of his parish, whose interference he resisted for a while, but he was obliged to yield to them eventually.

In this century flourished the Edgars of Peffermyln (an interesting ancient fortalice near Craigmillar), and the Edgars of Keithock, &c. The former was of the Nithsdale line of Wedderlie, and will be noticed elsewhere.

The lands of Wedderlie continued in the possession of the Edgar family until 1733-6, when they passed by sale to Robert Lord Blantyre. So late, however, as the 25th July 1736, John Edgar, the last in possession, marked the exodus of his race from their ancient patrimony by the gift to

his native parish of Westruther, of a Bible “bound in blue Turkey leather, for which the Session appoints the minister, Mr. Scott, to return thanks to Wadderlie.”

From a reference to the title deeds it would appear that the older muniments have either perished or gone astray among other collections, for the earliest is a crown charter granted in the year 1619, to John Edgar, eldest son of Robert Edgar of Wedderlie. This is a curious coincidence, inasmuch as the collateral succession of this Robert Edgar is one of the obscure links of the pedigree of Wedderlie.

Before the Reformation, the Edgars were buried in their own chapel at Wedderlie; from the Reformation to 1649 at Bassendean, and subsequently, at Westruther; all their tombstones, however, have unfortunately disappeared, with one exception, on which the last resident Laird of Wedderlie has left a memorial of himself, in his native parish, which, from its quaintness, seems characteristic of the sad and somewhat sarcastic spirit of its author.

An apocryphal story is told of the departure of the Edgars of Wedderlie from their ancient inheritance. The family were fallen and obliged to sell their estates, and in the words of the narrator, - The auld laird and leddy drove out in their carriage and four horses at mid-day; but the young laird (their only child) was broken-hearted at the thocht o' leaving the auld place, and he waited till the darkening; for he said “the sun should na shine when he left his hame.” The preserver of this anecdote was a very aged woman, named Eppy Forsyth, who died about 1840. She remembered seeing the young laird riding down the avenue alone, and she said, “it was a dark nicht when the last Edgar rode out of Wedderlie.”

The death of the last recognised male heir of Wedderlie is thus recorded, and one of the many examples of the same kind of error is here repeated.

1817, March....In Bedford Street, Bedford, Square, London aged 80, Rear Admiral Alexander Edgar, the last male descendant of the ancient Scottish family of Edgar of Wedderlie.

There are no complete pedigrees on record of the various families of Edgar in Scotland, and it would be a somewhat bold assertion to make, that there may not, at the present day, be many in the male line, of the numerous cadets of the house of Wedderlie, in the sixteenth and earlier centuries. **(I do have a pedigree (from Richard N Ireland) tracing the Edgar line back to Crinan, it is too large to put on a spreadsheet to show here. Email me with your address and I will post a copy, it shows some fascinating links into the Scottish royal family, MacBeth, Duncan—they're all there !!)**

It is quite certain, for example, that the branch of the Wedderlie family planted at Newtown in Berwickshire, flourished there until the death of Lieut. Colonel Hunter Edgar, in 1808.

But there is a probability of nearer cadets of Wedderlie being in existence. Beside the “Edgars, of Evelaw and of Westruther,” local records show, that at the opening of the eighteenth century, Edgars were still numerous in the neighbourhood of Wedderlie, and several families of the name still as lairds, others as kindly tenants - around the chief of their house. It would be perhaps impossible, to ascertain their relationship to him, considering that the last Laird of Wedderlie had no fewer than five sons, of whom the Admiral was one; it does seem remarkable that he should not have left any known male descendants.

On a reference to the records of the Commissariat of Lauder, and of Edinburgh, where the Wills of, from, or at Wedderlie, are recorded, it is at once perceived that there have been extensive offshoots, whose descendants have never been traced.

In the “Bride of Lammermoor,” there are a few marked and curious coincidences between the Ravenswood and that of Edgar of Wedderlie. Both were of the Merse, and Wedderlie is situated

at the foot of the Lammermoor Hills. The Master of Ravenswood is named Edgar. Against "Wolfs Crag" of the Romance we have "Wolfstruther," afterwards Westruther, the parish of Wedderlie. Edgar Ravenswood was related to the Humes and Douglasses; so likewise was Edgar of Wedderlie; but what is still more remarkable, both families were connected with that of Chiesly, and at the period the Ravenswoods were involved in a litigation, in which Chiesly was implicated, while in the Public Records (Decisions of the Court of Session) at the period of the Romance, Edgar of Wedderlie had a bitter lawsuit with Chiesly, the tutor of his father's younger children. Edgar of Wedderlie was impoverished by his opposition to the Presbyterian Church, just as Edgar Ravenswood opposed its minister at his father's funeral. Both families were turbulent, and brought to ruin by espousing the losing cause.

Phew !!!.....a bit long winded, I know, but it does have some fascinating insights into the Edgar name, origins and possible locations and maybe explains where our four roots are from. (four so far, but watch this space!)

Story No 5 ARTHUR EDGAR - DRUMMANMORE (near Kilkeel) COUNTY DOWN Nth. Ireland. b 1797 d 1880

My Great Grandfather was William Edgar and his parents were Arthur Edgar and Elizabeth Thompson.

William arrived in St Arnaud, Victoria, Australia in 1875 and was "married to the girl next door," Isabella Agnes McMillan, on 25 Sept 1876, he was 36 and she was 21. We know these facts from their marriage certificate and from property rate records. William and Isabella's father Robert were both involved in gold mining for alluvial gold before getting into working at sawmills, labouring, and contracting as gold went to deep mines.

William's July 1912 obituary published in the St Arnaud newspaper gave us clues to his largely untraceable past. *"ANOTHER of the old residents of St Arnaud Mr Wm Edgar has died at the age of 76 yrs. Deceased who was born in Newry, County Down, Ireland came to Australia when only a young man landing in Adelaide in the 1850's. He remained there only a few months, then moved to Victoria when the diggings were observing attractions. He subsequently tried his luck in New Zealand, where there was a gold rush at Molyneaux, not meeting much success he returned to Melbourne, and later moved northwards and arriving in*

this district in the 1870s. After working at sawmills at Charlton and Avoca forests, he finally settled in St Arnaud where he married Agnes Isabel, daughter of the late Mr & Mrs McMillan. Mr Edgar followed the occupation as a civil engineer, and carried out several works including bridge building and section of the main drain for the borough council. He was a founder of the Orange Lodge St Arnaud. Though



THE EDGAR FARM. KILKEEL, NORTHERN IRELAND

later, through failing health, he was unable to attend meetings as often as desired. He was always an inspiration to the brethren of No. 103 when able to be present. He had held honoured position of W.M. of the Royal Black Receptory. During the past few weeks

there were indications that the end was close at hand. A widow and five sons are left. Mrs Edgar has not been at all well for some time. Two sons are in Western Australia, one in Benalla, and the two youngest Henry and George are in St Arnaud. The funeral took place at St Arnaud, the burial service at the Presbyterian Church was read by Mr W.J. Meirish (missionary) and that of the Orange institution by Brother H.E. Davies (chaplain). A number of wreaths were sent by sympathizing friends including No 32 ladies, as a mark of esteem in which he was held. Two tablets (one from R.B.P. No 700 and Kara Kara No 103 were placed on the grave".

(The N.Z. reference of Port Molyneaux refers to a town that was on the mouth of the Clutha River until a flood wiped it out. It was near the now city of Dunedin). We have been unable to trace him on any ship passenger list. We think he was a ship's carpenter but have no seaman number to use to trace him on British seaman lists. This story is our only record of travel.

William & Isabella had 9 sons, Robert Arthur b 1878 d 1952 aged 74 (my Grandfather), William James b 1880 d 1944 aged 63, Frederick John b 1880 d 1951 aged 68, Andrew b 1885 d 1885 at 6 mths of whooping cough, Charles Ernest b 1886 d 1907 in a gold mine accident at Kalgoorlie West Aust. aged 20, Angus b 1891 d 1894 at 3, Henry Wallace b 1894 d 1944 aged 50, James Brown b 1896 d 1897 at less than 1, George b 1898 d 1914 at 15. The coroner's report on George's death said - "He was hit on the head by a stone thrown by a girl".

When William arrived in St Arnaud there was another Edgar family there. Edward Edgar from Tipperary was there when allotments were first sold in 1858 and he was a director of a gold mine in 1862. Alex R. Edgar, possibly a son of Edward, was a leader in the

Methodist Church in Victoria. I think they left St Arnaud not long after William arrived but have no date.

We had an Edgar reunion in 2004 in St Arnaud, which went over 3 days and each of William's sons who married and had children were represented, as well as two of our Northern Ireland relatives. In all about 80 family members attended some only for one day others the whole time. Younger generations names are known but as most are still alive I need to have their authority to publish their details.



William Edgar

William's parents were Arthur Edgar and Elizabeth Edgar nee Thompson. We think they had the following children from what we have been told and what has been found. Elizabeth b 1832 d 1916, James b 1834 d 1906 (married Jane Fleming), William (my ggf) b1840 d 1912, Robert b 1842 d 1912, Ann b ____ d ____ (married James Cooper Mar 1855), Mary b 1835 d ____ (married Joseph Sloan in Jan 1853 and had a child Eliza Sloan).

Arthur and most of the past family we know of are buried at the Mourne Presbyterian Church in Kilkeel. I think that it is a larger church than the Kilkeel Presbyterian Church. Does anyone have any histories on these and other churches in and around Kilkeel?

We have a Probate issued 30 Oct 1900 on Arthur Edgar who died 7 Oct 1880 proved by Thomas Girvan of Drummanmore and Robert Thompson of Porcreaghan, both farmers. Value of the estate was pounds 460/16/-. Will was written on 3 July 1879 and signed with his mark. He willed all his interest in his lands houses and chattels to his wife Elizabeth for her lifetime and after her death to his son Robert Edgar. He also willed his daughter Eliza the sum of 50 pounds and the use of the east room and the little garden to the east of said room. Another 25 pounds went to granddaughter Eliza Sloan to be held in trust. Son James Edgar was to get 10 pounds. (James somehow received the farm. Robert did not marry and Arthur's wife had predeceased him dieing in Jan 1880 and he died October 1880. Perhaps Robert allowed James to run the farm and left it to him when he died in 1912.)

Arthur's son James lived and worked the farm. He married Jane Fleming and

they had the following children. William b 1862 said to have gone to America, Robert Henry b 1866 (married Mary Wilson) also said to have gone to America about 1886, Arthur b 1868 d 1946 lived in Manchester UK, Martha b 1868 d 1896 (married John Baird), Elizabeth b 1870 d 1910 (married William Walmsley), Thomas b 1880 d 1953 (married Ellen Boyd) Thomas inherited the farm which was not very large but self supporting. I have enclosed a drawing of the farm house in Drummanmore which was 2 storey, upstairs two bedrooms one end boys the other girls, down stairs kitchen, main bedroom and back room for the maiden aunt. The children ate meals on the staircase, the older you were the higher up the stairs you sat. They had a seaweed allocation that allowed harvesting a set area near Greencastle. This was then used as fertiliser to grow potatoes, vegetables and feed for cattle, hens, sheep and pigs. Does anyone have any details of this seaweed scheme?

I have been unable to find any parents of Arthur or siblings. I also have had no luck with my William's ship's carpenter or seaman roles. Should you have any clues, please let me know.

Bill Edgar – Victoria, Australia.

NOTE: In the family story No 4 of Charles Edgar (Review 2) Steve(UK) and James (Mel) said they met Jacky (William John) Edgar who said his father is William, grandfather Thomas, and great grandfather Arthur. Jacky is unknown to me but these are similar names to my relatives. If James as ggf was inserted before Arthur in his list, it would match my list. This I think proves the value of the Review for gathering and providing information.

Thanks for that Bill. This vindicates the sharing of information philosophy. If Bill and Jacky were to send off a DNA sample this could confirm that our suspicion is correct.

Please send me your family stories. There are four Edgar families out there in America, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada (forgive me if you are from another country). Which root is yours? Are you searching for the wrong connection?

In the January issue I would like to concentrate on the USA. I would like all of our colonial cousins (oops! Touched a nerve there!!) in the USA to send me the names and dates of their earliest known ancestors in the USA.

Perhaps we can collate them together and reveal some good history that benefit us all.

We, in the UK, all have got "lost" relations, did they migrate? This mini-project might find them. I will ask for the same for Australia and Canada in future issues

Your feedback is invaluable for future newsletters, please e-mail your comments and, most importantly, your family stories.

Web sites of interest

<http://www.geocities.com/edgarwebsites/> Richard Edgar's Irish Web site

<http://jameswd.sasktelwebsite.net/> James Edgar's family history Web site

<http://www.clanedgar.com/> Clan Edgar homepage, based in Toronto.

<http://www.relativegenetics.com/relativegenetics> Homepage of our DNA Lab. in Salt Lake City

Contacts

Bob Edgar. Stoke on Trent – Origins Worcester, Glasgow, Portpatrick, Scotland

Bob Edgar, Monmouth, Oregon. - Origins Idaho, Nebraska.Ontario Canada Nithsdale. Common ancestry with some Edgars in Utah USA through Robert Edgar 1814-1904

Colin Edgar, N. Texas USA - Origins: Texas circa 1845 possibly England or Scotland.

G.C. Edgar, Texas USA. - Origins Arkansas and Tennessee, USA.

Gwen Edgar - Victoria Australia - Origins Glasgow Scotland - Belfast Ireland.

James Somerville Edgar, Melville, Canada - Origins. Kilkeel Co Down, N Ire.

Mary and Ron. USA - Origins Jacob Edgar, NJ/PA, 1796-1870, further back unknown.

Richard Edgar. Portadown, N Ireland. - Origins Co Armagh, N Ireland

Steve Edgar (KAM), Kamloops, BC, Canada - Origins. Kilkeel Co Down, N Ireland.

Steve Edgar (UK), Crewe, England - Origins Salford, Lancs, and Newry Co Down N Ireland.