

From: Jacqueline Burrows
To: [Christian Biography, Dictionary of](#)
Subject: RE: Gonville Aubie ffrench Beytagh: corrections required on your webpage
Date: Monday, May 9, 2022 5:35:51 AM
Attachments: [Screenshot 2022-05-09 at 10.26.15.png](#)
[Screenshot 2022-05-09 at 10.26.46.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Dear Michele

I'd be glad to.

I am the archivist at Monkton Combe School, Bath, England where Gonville and his younger brother Michael were pupils between 1926 and 1927, before leaving us to go to Bristol Grammar School from 1927-28. I have been updating the biographies of these two interesting Old Monktonians and through contacts with various other archives and sources in the UK, South Africa, New Zealand and the USA I have been able to establish a number of errors of fact on various websites (each of which tend to copy and paste from one another) and in Michael ffrench-Beytagh's biography, published after his death (see below).

The children were brought to England from Shanghai in 1920 by Miss Esylt Newbery, following their parents' separation and effective abandonment. Miss Newbery had been a teacher at the Shanghai Cathedral Choir School when she met the ffrench-Beytagh family and befriended the children. Mr ffrench-Beytagh continued to send Miss Newbery a monthly allowance for some years but this ceased. Despite not being related to the children she continued to care for them in England and found work as a lecturer in order to pay for their upkeep. The children eventually went their separate ways: Patricia to South Africa to live with her mother who had settled there and remarried; Gonville to New Zealand and thence to South Africa; Michael to the United States, then back to England where he served during WW2 in the RAF, and finally to East Africa as a colonial administrator.

27 February 1877: Edith Helen Emma Watson (Gonville's mother) was born in Yokohama, Japan. She was the daughter of Arthur Thomas Watson (1845-1903), a chemist and druggist from Ipswich who emigrated to work in business in Yokohama in the 1870s, and his wife Emma Jane Wych. This information can be back-traced from Edith's marriage certificates and other births, baptism, marriage and death records, using Ancestry, Find My Past and similar sources, cross referenced with contemporary newspaper reports.

19 March 1898: 21-year old Edith Watson married Thomas Wallace McIlraith (29), a Scottish merchant, in Christ Church Cathedral, Yokohama. He died in 1910. This information is on Ancestry and on Find My Past as well as in contemporary newspapers.

521 312

No. 161

Marriage solemnized in Christ Church, Yokohama, Japan.

When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
March 19 1898	Thomas Wallace McLraith	29	Bachelor	Merchant	Yokohama	John McLraith (deceased)	Pastor Minister
	Edith Helen Emma Watson	21	Spinster		Yokohama	Arthur Thomas Watson	Commissioner Agent

Married in Christ Church, Yokohama, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England.

by me, John McLraith

Edith H. & Watson in the Presence of us, Arthur Thomas Watson William T. Watson Edith Helen Watson

RG 34/3

31 March 1911: Only four months after Thomas McLraith's death, Edith (rather underplaying her real age) married Leo Michael French-Beytagh (**Gonville's father**) in Holy Trinity Cathedral, Shanghai in a "very pretty wedding" celebrated by the Dean, the Revd A J Walker MA (Cantab. LMffB (29) was born in Ireland and was in business in Shanghai as a cotton merchant, associated with Messrs Ilbert & Co.

19 11 MARRIAGE solemnized at SHANGHAI, CHINA.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
48	March 31st 1911	Leo Michael French Beytagh	29	Bachelor	Merchant	Shanghai	Edward Arthur French Beytagh	Solicitor
		Edith Helen Emma Medlraith	30	Widow		Shanghai	Arthur Thomas Watson	(deceased)

Married in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, by me, Revd A J Walker

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Leo Michael French in the Presence of us, Arthur Thomas Watson Stafford McLraith

MARRIAGE.

FFRENCH BEYTAGH-MCILRAITH. —On March 31, 1911, at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Shanghai, LEO MICHAEL FFRENCH BEYTAGH, of Shanghai, to EDITH HELEN MCILRAITH, of Shanghai.

Overland China Mail, 8 April 1911

I provide the marriage certificates for Gonville's mother's first two marriages. You can see from these that she is a British subject, and that her father was Arthur Thomas Watson. He died in 1904 and is buried in Bedford, England.



Arthur Thomas Watson "late of Yokohama Japan", died May 18th 1904 aged 59

Foster Hill Road cemetery, Bedford

Michael's biography, *Shoulder the Sky* by Gil Thomas (Arthur Barker Ltd, 1959), written shortly after his death and using contemporary sources including letters from Gonville's mother, meetings with Gonville and Miss Newbery and letters from sister Patricia, makes it clear that Gonville's mother was English. Miss Newbery is quoted: "Her husband was ... Irish ... she herself was English and had had a severe Victorian upbringing". (*Shoulder the Sky*, p. 19). The biography gives Michael the status of Wing Commander - he was actually a Squadron Leader.

I hope the above is sufficient, but please let me know if you need more.

Best wishes
Jacqueline Burrows

From: Christian Biography, Dictionary of <dacb@bu.edu>
Sent: 05 May 2022 21:39
To: Jacqueline Burrows <burrowsj@monkton.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Gonville Aubie ffrench Beytagh: corrections required on your webpage

Thank you, Mrs. Burrows. I would be happy to make corrections. It would be helpful if you could send me the references/sources for the corrections and a brief one-two sentence description of yourself for the note. Thank you!

Thank you for reaching out to us.