

Antoine Villa: A History



Antoine Villa, September 2012.

Antoine Villa is one of the most significant Victorian buildings in Newlyn, and its history is a fascinating one – peopled with high Victorian drama, lived in by remarkable characters and with its fair share of mystery. This is an abridged version of a property history compiled for Karen Czernik, with whose kind permission it is offered to the Newlyn Archive. I have removed detail which gave her the background to Newlyn itself, which will be familiar to the Archive.

The story of Antoine Villa begins with a Baptism in Paul Parish Church in September of 1815.

Day Month	13-Sep
Year	1815
Parish Or Reg District	Paul
Forename	Christopher Bodinar
Surname	FOSTER
Sex	son
Father Forename	Richard
Mother Forename	Jane
Residence	Newlyn
Father Rank Profession	Cooper

record 1392952 in the Baptisms database, Cornwall Online Parish Clerks

This is the record of the baptism of the man who was to become the builder of Antoine Villa, a classic Victorian who rose from humble beginnings, it seems, through the ranks of banking and trade to become a wealthy entrepreneur.

The assertion that Foster had humble beginnings is backed up by the record of the marriage of his sister, Grace:

Marriages at Paul: 25 Jun 1844 by Banns: Philip Tonkin, Rope Maker of Paul
(Father: John Tonkin, Fisherman) to Grace Bodinar Foster, Servant of Paul
(Father: Richard Foster, Dead) Witnesses: [?] Fostr, Mary Foster

Cornwall Record Office

Grace, a servant, is marrying a rope-maker who is the son of a fisherman. (She died aged 65 in 1874).

But Christopher must have shown some sort of promise, or the family gained some sort of patronage, because we next find traces of him at the age of 23, working in London as a cashier / clerk for the firm of Edgar John Messenger, later to be an executor of his will. Messenger was linked to the powerful West Cornwall Bolitho family, which was to become immensely wealthy during the Victorian era and with whose banking and trade empire Bodinar Foster was to remain linked.

The evidence comes from a record of a fraud case at the Old Bailey in London in 1838 – a case from which we can hear the voice of Christopher Bodinar Foster. John Kidd was tried for deception and forgery on 14th May, 1838.

JOHN KIDD was indicted for feloniously forging, on the 2nd of May, a certain order, for the payment of 386l. 7s. 9d., with intent to defraud Thomas Bolitho, and others.-2nd COUNT, for uttering the same, with the like intent, knowing it to be forged.

MR. DOANE conducted the Prosecution

EDGAR JOHN MESSENGER . I am London agent and manager to Messrs.

Thomas Bolitho, and others, of Penzance, and carry on business in Fenchurch-street. The prisoner was a junior clerk—that firm have an account with Williams and Co., bankers, in Birchin-lane—Mr. Foster assists in my business—it is usual for me to sign blank cheques, and give them to Mr. Foster to fill up as he wants them-about the 2nd of May I wrote my name on four or five blank cheques, and gave them to Mr. Foster, the cashier—they were not filled up—the prisoner had no authority to fill up cheques after they were signed—Mr. Foster was the only person—the prisoner occasionally wrote cheques, with the amount in them, and brought them to me to be signed, when the cashier was absent—soon after I had given the blank cheques to Mr. Foster, one of them was missing, and then the prisoner staid away from the offices—he absented himself before the cheque was missing—the cashier missed it on Thursday night—it was mentioned to me on Friday morning—I had signed it on Tuesday or Wednesday, the 22nd—I made inquiry, and went down to York, in company with the cashier-when I got there I went to the York Tavern, and found the prisoner had put up there—we found a carpet-bag, and

had him taken into custody when he came to the hotel—about 40l. was found in the carpet bag—when the prisoner entered the room I told him I regretted meeting him under such circumstances, but to make no noise about it, but deliver to me all the money he had on his person—he gave some to the officer, who asked if that was all he had—he said he had some more in his bag—after finding that in his bag, I pressed him, and said, having had possession of 400l. only two days, he must have more about him than 97l. which had been found—he said he had lost it, but afterwards said 200l. was left at his father's house, locked up in a box—he gave me an order to have the contents of that box delivered to me—I went and got the 187l. which was in the box at his father's house—there was 137l. in gold, and a £50 note—this is the order he gave me at the York Hotel—I left him in custody there—(read)- "Please deliver to Mr. Messenger the box I left with you; it is no use of you to refuse giving the box up, for you must; it contains 200l. or more; and until you give that box up I shall remain in custody of the constable here.—John Kidd." Witness. He had 97l. in his possession at York—he afterwards gave a list of articles which he had purchased.

Cross-examined. Q. How long had he been employed? A. Four years—I recovered the property from information he gave me.

CHRISTOPHER BODINAR FOSTER . I am cashier to Bolitho and Co. About the 2nd of May I received some blank cheques, signed by Messenger—I fill them up as wanted—I put them in my desk, and locked it on the evening of the next day I missed one—I found my desk in the same state as I had left it—it must have been opened by a key—I found a key on the prisoner's desk, which I tried to my desk on the Friday morning, and it opened it easily—I went to York with Messenger.

Cross-examined. Q. The prisoner gave every facility to recover the property? A. I believe he did all in his power.

THOMAS EDWARD WOOTON . I am clerk to Williams and Deacon, bankers, in Birchin-lane (looking at the cheque.) this cheque was presented for payment at our banking-house—I cannot say who by—I gave a £5, £30, a £50, and a £300 note, and the remainder in cash, 1l. 7s. 9d.—the £300 note was No. '5675l. dated '12th January, 1838.'

EDGAR JOHN MESSENGER re-examined. The handwriting of the body of this cheque is the prisoner's—the signature is mine.

WILLIAM PARDOE . I am a constable of York. I had the prisoner in my custody—I brought him into the City of London, and he remained in custody in the City—I examined his carpet-bag, and found in it a quantity of sovereigns, and on his person ninety sovereigns, two half—sovereigns, some silver, and a pair of pistols—he was taken before the Lord Mayor.

ROBERT CONWORTH FISH . I am clerk in the Teller's Office of the Bank. I have a £300 note, No. 5675, dated 12th January, 1838—we do not issue two notes of the same date, and number, and amount—I gave three hundred sovereigns for this note on the 2nd of May—there is written on it, "Frederick and William Bolitho, Fenchurch-street."

EDGAR JOHN MESSENGER . The writing on this note (looking at it.) Is the prisoner's, "Frederick William Bolitho, Fenchurch-street."

Cross-examined. Q. Do you know any thing of a watch which has been recovered? A. Yes—it was recovered in consequence of his information—he had been with us four years, and I can give him the best of characters till the present transaction—(cheque read.)

GUILTY Aged 18—Strongly recommended to mercy by the Jury and Prosecutor
— Confined Two Years .

Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org) Ref: t18380514-1356

It is rare to hear the voice of a man born nearly 200 years ago, but here it is: we can see Bodinar Foster being scrupulously fair to the accused in his evidence, which tells us something of the man. We can also see that he is a trusted employee of a significant firm, a post maybe obtained through the West Cornwall Bolithos. We discover later that he was for many years in the employ of the Bolithos.

The Newlyn campaigner, writer and journalist Douglas Williams, to whom I spoke about Antoine Villa, tells us:

The first owner, Bodinar Foster, may well have been a relation of the Bolitho family. It is well-built of good stone in the era when the Bolithos were putting up some of the best homes in the district. Foster is a Bolitho family name – and Bodinar was, I believe, the surname of a Penzance solicitor. Bodinar was also a common surname around Mousehole and Newlyn.

Correspondence with Douglas Williams, Sept 2012

The connection to the Bolithos is an important one, for Thomas Simon Bolitho (1808-1887) and his successors are one of the most important families in Cornwall. They still live at Trengwainton and a Bolitho is still High Sherriff of Cornwall.

In Victorian times they were bankers and merchants, involved in everything from mining to shipping, and one of the richest families in the county. The *West Briton* reported TS Bolitho's death:

By Mr. Bolitho's death the county has lost one of its pillars. He was, with out exception, the most able man of which Cornwall could boast, and his advice was invariably sought in time of difficulty. He was full of information with regard to the various interests of the county. And we know not where to look for the man who can adequately fill the breach which his sudden decease has created.

West Briton, December 1887

In 1844, Christopher Bodinar Foster married Elizabeth Fendall Morgan in Newington, London. She was from Bermondsey, the daughter of a clerk named William Morgan and his wife Elizabeth – the unusual middle name comes from the family's abode at the time of Elizabeth's birth, Fendall Street in Bermondsey. Elizabeth was baptised on May 23rd, 1819, in St Mary Magdalene Church, Bermondsey.

In the 1851 census we find the young couple living in Peckham, Camberwell, Surrey. Foster is a 35-year-old merchant's clerk. Elizabeth's brother Charles Morgan is visiting.

Maybe it is in the decade from 1851 that the Foster fortunes rise sufficient to fund the construction of Antoine Villa: by 1860 Foster was also carrying on business with Robert O'Hara as a china clay merchant. Their business, at 5 Church Ct, 'CIm' Lane, is listed in the 1860 Kelly's / Post Office Directory for London, but it is soon to be wound up, as we discover from a notice in the *London Gazette*. However, as we shall see in the 1881 census, the families of Foster and O'Hara remain linked.

In the 1861 census, we find Christopher and Elizabeth living at 7 Camden Place, Camberwell, with two nephews: CF Bodinar, born in Plymouth, and John Foster, born in Penzance. Christopher senior is a merchant, the descriptive word illegible to me, but his two nephews are his clerks. It seems CF Bodinar is also a businessman: in the *London Gazette* in April 1861, at census time, we find:

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership lately ill subsisting between us the undersigned, as Whiting Manufacturers, Coal, and General Merchants, and Traders, carrying on business at St. George's-wharf, Albany-road, Camberwell, in the county of Surrey, under the firm of Jenkins and Bodinar, has been dissolved by mutual consent. All debts owing to or from the said partnership will be received and paid by the undersigned John Jenkins.—
Dated this 30th day of March, 1861.

John Jenkins.

Erastus Christopher Foster Bodinar

In July 1862, we come across a very significant development, involving this Erastus Christopher Foster Bodinar, which goes to the heart of the riddle of Antoine Villa's exotic name.

In Camberwell, at St Giles, we find a record of the baptism of Antoine De Neuter Foster; his parents are Erastus Christopher Foster and Marie Barbe Hortense Bodinar (father Pierre Antoine De Neuter). The entry in the register is botched, compared to the others, as though there was something irregular. (Bearing in mind the baptism date of July, we note that the parents married in Camberwell in January 1862, seven months before the birth).

But this is an intriguing chain of coincidences, a record bringing together some names which are very much part of the story of Antoine Villa – Antoine, Christopher, Bodinar, Foster and, indeed, Hortense, for another business record from the *London Gazette* reveals that a Hortense Bodinar, from Louvain in Belgium, was a partner with Bodinar Foster in a cooper's business in Newlyn.

This chain of links is too strong for there not to be a connection – but what was it? It seems very clear to me that the father of young Antoine was indeed Christopher Bodinar Foster's nephew CF Foster, from Plymouth (who was staying with the Fosters in the 1861 census, and working for Christopher).

The birth of Erastus Christopher Foster Bodinar was registered in Plymouth in the winter quarter of 1839 (ref 9, 424). Young Erastus can be found in Buckwell Street in the parish of Charles the Martyr (today's Charles Church ruin) in the 1841 census with his father, also Erastus. Erastus, aged 40, was a pawnbroker, formerly a ship's chandler and ironmonger trading as EC Bodinar, wound up in 1829. He was born in Devon; his wife Dorothy, 35, was *not* born in the county. For my reasoning to be correct, she must have been Christopher Bodinar Foster's sister.

And indeed she was:

Day Month	07-Oct
Year	1804
Parish Or Reg District	Paul
Forename	Dorothy
Surname	FOSTER
Sex	dau
Father Forename	Richard
Mother Forename	Jenefer

record 1407990 in the Baptisms database, Cornwall Online Parish Clerks

The *only* fragile link in the chain is the mother's Christian name – Jane in the record of Christopher's baptism, Jenefer in the record of Dorothy's. But every other link is so strong as to make this irrelevant – after all, the names are similar. Or Jane may have been a second wife – Richard and the family had no additions between Dorothy, to Jenefer, in 1804 and Richard Brewer, later to live at Antoine Villa, to Jane in 1807.

Here is the complete family from Paul Church's baptism records:

		Name	Father	Mother
Year ▲	Parish Or Reg District	Forename	Surname	Forename Forename
1802	Paul	John	FOSTER Richard	Jenefer
1804	Paul	Dorothy	FOSTER Richard	Jenefer
1807	Paul	Richard Brewer	FOSTER Richard	Jane
1809	Paul	Grace Bodinar	FOSTER Richard	Jane
1811	Paul	Mary	FOSTER Richard	Jane
1815	Paul	Christopher Bodinar	FOSTER Richard	Jane

To me, the fact that Christopher and his sister Grace were both given the middle name Bodinar is important – for Jenefer's maiden name was Bodinar. I incline to the view that Jane was a familiar name for Jenefer. This also suggests to me that Erastus may have been known to Dorothy before their marriage as some sort of relative of her mother, Jenefer Bodinar.

Where does all this take us? To the solution of the mystery of the name of Antoine Villa.

I believe we can say, conclusively in my view, that Antoine Villa was named after Christopher and Elizabeth Bodinar Foster's new-born great-nephew Antoine Bodinar, the grandson of Christopher's sister Dorothy.

It also seems possible Christopher had assumed some sort of responsibility for his nephew, Antoine's father, as Dorothy died in 1845 when her son was just six.

We know that Antoine Villa was completed by 1863; we can imagine that its construction, perched on top of Paul Hill, was a long, laborious and expensive affair, though no records of its building or cost survive to my knowledge. We do know that the proud owner had carved into the Cornish stone: 'CBF 1863'. It was as public a statement of status and success as it is possible to imagine.

Antoine De Neuter Foster Bodinar died in 1946 in Essex, leaving £814 to his widow Edith (*nee* Stephens; they had married in 1923 in Hackney). In the 1890s, Antoine Bodinar was a pioneer of cycling in Belgium, running a factory in Louvain, where Antoine's widowed mother Hortense was living in 1869.

We can but wonder whether Antoine ever saw the grand house in Newlyn that bore his name, and the initials of the childless great uncle who named it in his honour. Of his father and grandfather, Erastus and Erastus Christopher Foster, I can find no further trace; his mother we see only once again, as a young widow living in Belgium in 1869.

But we can say the naming of the property tells us more of significance about the builder of Antoine Villa: we have seen him rise from humble beginnings, we have seen his loyalty to the Bolitho empire, we have seen him entertaining his brother-in-law and his nephews in his home, and giving his nephews employment. Here, then, is a man who, with his wife, has had no children but for whom, very clearly, family is very important – so much so that his grand new home, the biggest investment and statement of his career, a very public statement of his success and status, is named not for his surname, his wife, his business, his home town or his patrons, but for his little great nephew.

We know that Antoine Villa was completed by 1863, so Foster's business interests were thriving. However, what happened between 1863 and 1871?

We know that two of Foster's businesses were wound up, from notices in the *London Gazette* – the china clay merchants O'Hara and Foster, and the coopers business in Newlyn run with his sister Grace's husband Philip Tonkin, his sister Dorothy's daughter-in-law Hortense and his brother John's widow Ann (among others; John was born in Paul in 1802 to Richard and Jenefer Foster, record 1407748 in the baptisms database of Cornwall Parish Clerks Online).

By the census, in April of 1871, the Bodinar Fosters were *not* living in their new home, and I cannot find them anywhere else. I'm presuming they were visiting, or staying, in London, a pattern which seems reasonable to extrapolate from other evidence. It is also possible they were in Belgium, if Hortense and young Antoine were in Louvain. At Antoine Villa we find:

Antoine Villa, James Ellis, Head, M(arried), 42,, (occupation) Labourer, (born in) Gulval Cornwall

Mary Ann Ellis, Wife, M, 41, St Buryan Cornwall

Mary E Ellis, Dau, U(nmarried), 17, Housekeeper, Paul Cornwall

1871 census, Piece RG10/2338 (Part 3), Enumeration District 5, Civil Parish of Paul, Eccl. District of St. Peter, Folio 91 Page 1

But there is an indecipherable squiggle scrawled next to Antoine Villa, and the Ellises are entered below; they may have lived next door in Jack Lane and the villa may have been empty.

Were improvements being carried out? If so, Foster did not live long to enjoy them.

He died on December 3rd, 1871, aged 55, according to his obituary notice in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*. Clearly, the Bolitho link was of prime importance to the family for in this notice, they decided to state that he was “for many years in the employ of Messrs Bolitho and Sons”.

We know from burial records that he was buried at Paul Parish Church six days later.

Proof of the rise to fortune he had enjoyed comes in the probate record of his will, in which his estate is worth up to £5,000, which equates to £228,500 in 2005 money (*National Archives Currency Converter*). His executors are Edgar John Messenger, his employer from at least 33 years ago, Charles Morgan, Elizabeth's brother, and his widow.

The family stayed put at Antoine Villa, though it seems Foster's widow kept close to her London family. She must have spent freely, too, or cannot have been left all of Foster's

fortune, as she left considerably less at her death. These wills are not held at Cornwall Record Office; it should be, however, possible to obtain them from the Probate Service, whose fees start from £6.

The Fosters' nephew Richard, presumably the son of Richard Brewer Foster, moved into Antoine Villa:

Antoine Villa Richard B. Foster, Nephew, Unmarried, 48, Retired Merchant,
born Penzance Cornwall

Eliza E. Hughes, Servnt, W ,39, Cook, Madron Cornwall,,

Mary J. Mollard, Servnt, U, 30, Housemaid, Germoe Cornwall

*1881 Census, Transcript of Piece RG11/2344 (Part 3), Enumeration District
5, Civil Parish of Paul, Eccl. District of St. Peter Newlyn*

Elizabeth was away when the census was taken, staying in Dorking Road in Epsom, the guest of Elizabeth Roberts, whose cousins, McNair Shaw O'Hara, Annie and Mary O'Hara were staying too. Here we see more evidence of the web of familiar names surrounding the Fosters: an O'Hara had been Christopher's partner in the china clay merchant's business. And we see more evidence of the upper middle class life to which the Fosters had become accustomed – from her grand house in Newlyn, with resident servants, to a seemingly equally grand house in Surrey, also with servants.

Elizabeth was still in residence two years later. In Kelly's Directory of Cornwall, 1883, under 'Private residents', we find: "Foster, Mrs, Antoine Villa".

A year later, in 1884, we find that her nephew Richard, who has been living at Antoine Villa too, has died. His burial is recorded at Paul Parish Church:

Died 11 Nov Richard Brewer Foster of Antoine Villa aged 52

Paul Parish Church Burials Register

Elizabeth survived Christopher by 17 years. She died in 1888, aged 69, and was buried with her husband.

FOSTER, Elizabeth F. - 1 Mar 1888, Christopher B. - 3 Dec 1871.

Paul Parish Church Burials Register

They rest with other members of the family: today, in Paul Churchyard, you can find figures from this story –

FOSTER, Richard - 4 Nov 1830, Jane - 4 May 1847, Mary - 17 Mar 1864.

FOSTER, Susan - 18 Feb 1816, Richard B. - ?? 1884, John - 1 Sep 18?4.

FOSTER, John - 30 Sep 1868, Ann - 19 Oct 1888.

The assertion that Christopher and Elizabeth had no children is confirmed from the record of Elizabeth's will: on March 19th, 1888 administration of the personal estate of Elizabeth Fendall Foster, "late of Antoine Villa", who died there on March 1st, was granted to Charles Morgan, of Northumberland House, Thicket Road, Norwood, Surrey, "gentleman, brother and only next of kin". (*National Probate Calendar*)

Her estate was worth £515 93 6d. (The equivalent of £30,000 in 2005 values, according to the National Archives Currency Converter).

Presumably Morgan (who had also been an executor of Christopher Foster's will), living far from remote West Cornwall, had little interest in Antoine Villa, for we know that a 70-year lease of the property to the Stephen Hutchens Charity was agreed the following year, 1889.

This was a charity set up by a Jamaican businessman and ship's master called Captain Stephen Hutchens in 1709; he bequeathed a huge sum, the equivalent of £18 million in today's money, to build almshouses – for six men and six women – in Paul parish and improve the parish church. The charity is still in existence as a provider of social housing: based at Hutchens House in Paul, last year it had an income of £500,000.

By 1891 a new chapter in the history of the house has opened, under the tenancy of the distinguished but mysterious Oliver Young. (Note the mis-transcription):

Ambrose Villa Jack Lane, Oliver Young, Head, S(ingle), 57, Living On Own Means, Employer, (birthplace not given)

Anthony Young, Nephew, S, 20, Student Of Medicine, birthplace London

Clara Young, Niece, S, 25, Living On Her Own Means, London

Olivia Young, Niece, S, 26, Dependent On Her Parents, St Ives Cornwall

Patience Richards, Servnt, S, 55, Domestic Servant, Employed, Burian Cornwall

Harrietta Bonetto, Servnt, S, 27, Domestic Servant, Employed, Newlyn Paul Cornwall

Edwin Mannsell, Visitr, S, 18, Student Of Medicine, St Levan Cornwall

1891 census, Enumeration District 6, Civil Parish of Paul, Eccl. Parish of St

Peter Newlyn

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Oliver Young, born in 1834, lived at Antoine Villa for some 11 years, and was clearly a remarkable man.

After serving time in London as an architect's apprentice, Oliver Young, with his older brother John Lorenzo Young, founded a famous school in Australia, the Adelaide Educational Institution:

John Lorenzo Young (30 May 1826, London - 26 July 1881, at sea) was born in London, the son of John Tonkin Young (1802?-10 April 1882), a builder from Veryan, Cornwall.



He was educated at the Communal College of Boulogne, under Professor Opel at Wiesbaden, in 1842 at the Civil Engineering College in Putney, and at King's College London from 1843 to 1845. He worked in Cornwall on railway and mining construction then left for Adelaide in 1850 on the ship *Panama*, arriving on 31 October 1850. He joined the rush to the Victorian goldfields but soon returned.

In 1851 he became second master at South Australian High School but the venture failed by the end of the year. After the South Australian High School folded he was persuaded in 1852 to open his own school at the rear of the old chapel in Ebenezer Street off Rundle Street East, and soon moved to larger premises in Stephens Place. His brother, Oliver Young, held classes for some time, (and acted headmaster in 1860 while J. L. Young was away on recuperation leave) but returned to Cornwall in 1866. Oliver never married.

On 29 October 1855, John married Martha Paynter Young (Young was also her maiden name).

John retired in 1880 and closed the school, with the intention of joining his wife and large family who were visiting brother Oliver and his father in

Cornwall. On his retirement, a testimonial was held 17 December 1880 by his old scholars, and he was presented with a purse of sovereigns. His 16-room residence, with schoolhouse and various other houses on Young Street, after several auction attempts in February 1881, was eventually purchased by Alfred Allen Simpson. The two Parkside buildings, which may still be seen at 61-71 Young Street, were sold by Alfred A., Fred N. and Violet Laura Simpson to Mr. C. O. A. Lapidge in 1922.

He embarked on the steamer *John Elder* in 1881 to visit England (where his father was still living), his family having preceded him, but died on 26 July 1881 while crossing the Red Sea. He was buried at sea. Martha returned to Adelaide, at first living in Kent Town then settled in Glenelg. She died 6 April 1887 aged 57.

Fred W. Sims, formerly Deputy Registrar of Companies in the Supreme Court, wrote in *The Advertiser*: “I could tell you quite a lot about John L. Young’s school— ‘dear old Johnny’ as we used to call him ... Mr. Young possessed, among his other fine qualities, the saving grace of humor. It is recorded that his first two pupils were Caleb Peacock and John Partridge. He remarked at the time that, whether he met with success or not as a schoolmaster, he would anyway die ‘game’.”

Wikipedia (citations checked)

**MR. J. L. YOUNG’S
SCHOOL.
OLD SCHOLARS’ REUNION.
DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATED.**

Anything that can trace its history back sixty years in South Australia can claim association with the State during the greater part of its life. A gathering of old scholars of the Adelaide Educational Institution, established by Mr. J. L. Young in 1852 and closed in 1880, celebrated at a social at Bricknell’s cafe on Friday evening, the diamond jubilee of the opening of the institution. The

reunion had a second aim of equal importance-to found a scholarship or prize in memory of the master who, it was obvious, had been revered and deeply loved by all his scholars. Mr. Frank Johnson presided over a large attendance of men of various ages, representative of big business firms, the various professions, civic life, and the public service.

The Chairman, after the loyal toast had been honored, proposed, amid great enthusiasm, "The Old School-the Adelaide Educational Institution." They were met he said, to do honor to the memory of the school to which they owed everything in life, and the master who would be venerated as long as an old Young's scholar drew breath. (Applause.)

He yielded to none in his admiration of the institution, his connection with which had begun in August, 1863 and ended in December, 1869. His first entry, he well remembered because he was on that occasion smartly attired in his first pair of 'pants.' (Laughter.) He could not but be stirred by the recollection of his association with their dear old friend, Thomas Bennett, whose wonderful penmanship was a record for all time in the history of the school.

They had not forgotten either Oliver Young, familiarly known as 'Cocky.' To the lasting credit of the school it might be said that the unfortunate disability under which he suffered was never held up against him. In the school he was 'Mr. Oliver,' although he became 'Cocky' in the playground (Laughter.)

From *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, October 12th 1912

What was the puzzling disability from which Oliver Young suffered? We may never know. He certainly seemed to live a quiet life, and never married. He worked for a time as bailiff and superintendent for his father's 127-acre farm at Parc Behan, Veryan. After moving to Newlyn, Young was one of the founding trustees, in 1895, of the Passmore Edwards Art Gallery. He was listed as a private resident of 'Antoine House' in the 1893 Kelly's Directory.

He died in 1898, the event reported in Cornwall and Australia:

THE LATE MR. OLIVER YOUNG.

In referring to the death of Mr. Oliver Young, a brother of the late Mr. J. L. Young, of the Adelaide Educational Institution, the *Cornish Telegraph* states: 'We regret to record the death of Mr. Oliver Young, at the age of sixty-three years, which took place very suddenly at his residence, Antoine Villa, Newlyn, on Tuesday. Mr. Young was never a robust man but he had been in his usual health and transacted business until the last few days, and his death came as a great shock to his relatives. The deceased gentleman was a member of a respected St Ives family, and for about ten years had lived at Antoine Villa, which he was on the point of leaving. Mr. Young never took any part in public affairs, but was much respected in the neighbourhood, and his sudden and unexpected death is sincerely deplored by all who knew him. He was unmarried. The funeral will take place at Veryan.'

South Australia Register, March 8, 1898

He's buried with his parents:

Parish Or Reg District	Veryan
Day Month	24-Aug
Year	1871
Forename	Lucy
Surname	YOUNG
Age Or Dob	
Location	VIII 1
Inscription	In Memory of Lucy The beloved wife of John Tonkin Young Born Oct 24th 1801 Died Aug 24th 1871 Also of John Tonkin Young Born Mar 29th 1802 Died April 10th 1882 All, all on earth is shadow All beyond is substance In Memory of Marc

Young Grandson of J. T. Young Died
March 3rd 1878 Aged 5 years In
Memory of Oliver Young Son of John
Tonkin And Lucy Young Born 4th
Sept 1834 Died 1st Feby 1898

Record 36702 in the Cornwall Online Parish Clerks database

Oliver Young died a *very* wealthy man: he left £7,947, equivalent to more than £450,000 today (National Archives Currency Converter). Probate was granted to Francis Cowper Young in London, a banker's clerk and presumably a relative.

After Oliver Young may have come a lady named Louisa A Rogers; she is recorded as the tenant of Antoine Villa in the 1910 land valuation maps (held in Cornwall Record Office). The Finance Act 1910 introduced taxation on the increase in the value of land, and in order to tax the increase the land had to be valued to begin with. (A Liberal government was introducing costly and controversial social legislation, including old age pensions). The work was done by the District Valuation Offices of the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue. It involved the compilation of field books and maps that listed all property. Local estate agent G E (George Edwin) Jenkin is recorded as the owner of Antoine Villa (having presumably bought a lease from the Hutchens Charity, which as we shall see was in ownership in the 1950s).

Frustratingly, I have so far found it impossible to trace Antoine Villa in the 1901 and 1911 census returns as the property was not specified by name – even though both census takers used it as a landmark, by name, to denote the boundary of the enumeration districts in Newlyn. It is possible that it was empty when the census was taken – between tenants.

GE Jenkin certainly gave Antoine as his address, as did his son, retired Royal Artillery officer Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Charles Jenkin: we have a record of him involved in a Penzance house sale in 1921.

RefNo [BRA2591/56](#)
Title Conveyance, 4 Princes Street, Penzance
Date 14 Mar 1921
Format Manuscript
Extent 1 piece
Description Parties: 1) Frederick Charles Jenkin, formerly of Antoine, Paul, but now of Penzance, lieutenant colonel Royal Army 2) William Nicholas of 4 Princes Street, Penzance [as sold]. Dwelling house and premises, 4 Princes Street, Penzance. Consideration: £250. Recites: will of George Edwin Jenkin as recited in BRA2591/55.

BRA 2591, British Telecom Deeds, Cornwall Record Office

Jenkin inherited properties from Penzance to Torpoint from his father George Edwin. He had left Antoine Villa before 1921, as we can see; who then lived there until the Second World War I cannot at present tell you.

However, we do know of one drama with which Antoine Villa was very remotely connected through the Jenkins:

PENZANCE MAN SHOT DEAD
MR. F.C. JENKIN, KC
TRAGIC END TO BRILLIANT CAREER
HONG KONG, Wednesday

Mr. Francis Charles Jenkin, 53, King's Counsel, and Justice of the Peace, was found shot dead in his exclusive residence in the Peak District to-day.

Mr. Jenkin, who took a leading part in the social life of Hong Kong, celebrated his silver wedding a week ago. To-morrow a film starring his ward, Miss Wendy Barrie, is scheduled to be shown here.

Mr. Jenkin was the son of Mr. Alfred Charles Jenkin, a well-known auctioneer, of Parade Passage, Penzance, and of The Rosary, Heamoor.

He started life in the London office of the G.W.R., Company, but later relinquished this post to study for the bar. He made rapid progress, and after being “called” travelled the Western Circuit, and appeared in several notable trials.

An offer of a lucrative appointment abroad took him to the Far East, where he quickly made a name for himself.

He was a nephew of the late Mr. George E. Jenkin, of Antoine, Newlyn.

The Cornishman, Thursday 5 March 1936

THE LATE MR. F. C. JENKIN, K.C.

“WENDY BARRIE” NOT AN ADOPTED DAUGHTER

DETAILS OF A DISTINGUISHED CAREER

In view of certain statements which have appeared in various papers, it may be interesting to learn that Wendy Barrie, the famous film star, is the daughter—and not the step-daughter—of Mr. F. C. Jenkin, K.C.

Mr. Jenkin was married in 1911, and Wendy was born in 1912. When she was three months old she was taken to Hong Kong by her father and mother. Their other daughter was born in Hong Kong.

Some years later, Mrs. Jenkin and the children returned to England in consequence of ill-health and for the daughters’ education. Subsequently Mrs. Jenkin and Wendy went to Hollywood.

Mr. Jenkin’s career was a particularly distinguished and brilliant one. In 1901 he passed the examination for gentlemen cadets at Woolwich. From 1901-6, he was in the G.W.R. Company’s departments. In 1907 he read with the G.W.R. Parliamentary solicitors at Westminster. In 1908 he was gazetted captain in the Royal Fusiliers. In 1908 he was called to the bar and practised in London and on the Western Circuit.

In 1912, he left England to practice in Hong Kong, and Mrs. Jenkin and Wendy went with him.

In 1913, by his own request he was appointed Deputy Captain Superintendent of Police at Hong Kong, and held this position until 1919, and was given the duty of organising the training and administration of the Hong Kong Reserve Armed Police Force, composed of 800 British, Portuguese,

Chinese and Indians, and refused to accept any pay.

In 1916, at the request of the Straits Settlements Government he advised on the organisation of an Auxiliary Police Force.

In 1917, at the request of the Shanghai Municipal Government, he advised them on the organisation of an Auxiliary Police Force, and he was appointed honorary aide de camp to the Governor.

He visited the Metropolitan Police Department, Tokio, in 1918. In 1919 the honour of Commander of the British Empire was conferred upon him for distinguished war work.

The Cornishman, Thursday 12 March 1936

ECHO OF MR F. C. J. C. JENKIN'S DEATH

ADOPTED DAUGHTER LANDS IN LONDON

Miss Hazel Mills Jenkin, the 19-years-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Mills, of Hazledean, Haroldsleigh-avenue, Crownhill, Plymouth, landed at the Royal Victoria Docks, London, from the Japanese liner Tasakuni Maru on Tuesday, after a voyage from Hong Kong.

She was the adopted daughter of Mr. Francis Charles John Cragoe Jenkin, K.C. (son of the late Mr. Alfred Charles Jenkin, of Penzance) a noted Hong Kong barrister, who was found shot dead at his house at Hong Kong on March 4. The tragedy occurred while Miss Mills Jenkin was on the liner bound home to her real parents at Plymouth. She was met by her mother, and she knew nothing of the tragedy, the news of which was kept from her while she was on board the liner.

The Cornishman, Thursday 19 March 1936

I do know that Francis Jenkin once represented the Vietnamese campaigner later known to history as Ho Chi Minh during a court tussle in the 1930s in which the French, then colonial masters of Vietnam, attempted to extradite Ho from Hong Kong. Beyond that, I do not know the outcome of this 1930s murder mystery.

From the Jenkin family involvement, we have to leap forward a couple of decades at this point. Douglas Williams tells us of Antoine Villa in the middle of the last century:

My memories are of it being used as a 'Centre' during the 1939-45 war for youth and adults – I believe a Miss Biddle ran the show for some years, probably for the County Council. I know they had such things as dances and whist drives there and it was a popular spot! I'm told that for a time after the war it was the home of Mr and Mrs Power who owned and ran the Gaiety Cinema close to Newlyn Bridge, now the Newlyn Meadery.

Correspondence with Douglas Williams, September 2012.

We also know that during the war the site was used for air raid defences:

RefNo	X1293/59
Title	Plan, store room, Antoine Villa, Newlyn
Date	4 Jun 1942
Format	Plan
Extent	1 piece
Description	Plan showing proposed repairs to be made to a tool shed at Antoine Villa for it to be used as a store room for rescue squad number 2, Penzance.

X1293, Air raid shelter plans, Cornwall Record Office

From 1954, there was a dispute between the trustees of the Stephen Hutchens Charity and Major Kenneth Arthur Werrell, who, with his mother, was running Antoine as a guest house, over Werrell's wish to renew the lease when it ran out in 1959. The Trust's secretary was L Tonkin, of 'Sheldon', Tredavoe Lane, Newlyn.

The Trust's solicitors, AWH Harvey of Penzance, advised the trust of their difficulty in retaining possession of the property: because of the villa's use as a business the tenant had powers under law to force a court to grant an extension of the lease. There was considerable dispute about the length and terms of any renewed lease, the Trust asking £260 on a yearly basis and Werrell offering £160 a year over 20 years.

The dispute rumbled on between the Trust and Major Werrell until 1961 (there's a 60-page correspondence file in the Cornwall Record Office), when it was finally agreed to sell Antoine Villa to a Mr and Mrs Power for £5,000. Werrell had offered £4,100, which was turned down by the trustees (*source P172/25/15, Hutchens Charity papers 1954-1961, held at Cornwall Record Office*). This also makes it clear that the Trust was empowered to sell Antoine Villa at the termination of the lease; whether this is because of the expiry of the Foster line, presumably the freehold owners, or whether this was set up under the terms of the original lease in 1889, is not yet known.

The correspondence shows it was the Powers' intention to convert Antoine Villa into flats.

Kenneth Werrell was a very well-known figure in West Cornwall. Here's his obituary.

KENNETH WERRELL, who spent most of his retired life in Penzance, died at the age of 90 earlier this year.

Born in 1919 in London, he initially trained to be a solicitor but, due to the Second World War, gave up his training and after being stationed with the Scottish Guards, was sent to Sandhurst to be commissioned as an officer. He arrived in India in 1942 as Second Lieutenant of 5th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, later joining the Intelligence Corps and ending up as Major. He preferred to work at the front and volunteered to go to Burma, where he was involved with the prolonged and hard-fought battle of Imphal-Kohima in 1944.

Kenneth's linguistic flair first became evident as he picked up Urdu while he was in the Far East and he became a great fan of the Gurkhas.

As a young officer, he became friendly with a local Hindu, who showed him different types of temples, the experience sparking an interest in spiritualism. After he came back from the war in 1946, he initially stayed with his mother in Newlyn, who had been evacuated from London, and took up farming in Newham, Sancreed, so that he could supply fresh food to his mother's guest house, Antoine. He married his first wife, Stella, and their first daughter Sarah was born in Sancreed.

He was the first farmer in the area who left the cattle outdoors through the winter, against their convention of keeping them in the shed during the cold season.

He also had a licence for rock drilling and blasting so that he was able to clear fields for farming.

After seven years in farming, he became a salesman, choosing to sell sweets, and moving to Bristol where his second daughter Alice was born.

He became a sales manager of Nuttalls and Rileys in 1956 and moved again to Ilkely, Yorkshire, to look after three factories in the north of England.

In 1966 he was made managing director and in 1974, he moved to the South East to form Callard & Bowser and Nuttall Ltd. In 1978, he became Chairman of Associated Deliveries Ltd. During this period, he came across Iyengar Yoga and became one of his first UK disciples, directly taught by Mr Iyengar himself while Kenneth himself taught the practice in Ilkely in the early 1960s.

He then moved on to Japanese Oki Yoga and helped to set up their charity in the UK.

He also took up macrobiotic diet and became a trustee of the East West Centre in Old Street, London. He passed an O-level in Japanese 1982.

After his retirement, he moved back to his spiritual home in Penzance with his second wife, Yukari.

Their daughter Jane was born in 1989 and he also acted as the chairman of Penlee House Museum in Penzance between 1991 and 1994, helping bring about the refurbishment of the museum.

Aside from his work and family life, he found time for numerous hobbies. In both Sancreed and Yorkshire, he took up pen and ink sketching, photography (with his own dark room in Yorkshire), piano playing, chess and studied French and German.

When living in Yorkshire, he enjoyed weekends walking the fells in the Lake District and acquired a pilot license.

In London and Penzance, he took up bee-keeping, squash, Aikido, and philately, specialising in the stamps printed during the Japanese occupation in China.

At a buffet party to celebrate his life held in Penzance during the summer, one of his grandsons read out a message left by Kenneth: "Please apologise for any trouble I may have caused others, and wish all my friends and relatives good health, happiness, a love of life, thoughtfulness for others, and a hope that they may contribute to the care of this beautiful world, and, in particular, West Penwith."

Kenneth Werrell, who died on June 15, is survived by his first wife, Stella, his second wife, Yukari, three daughters, Sarah, Alice and Jane, and two grandsons, Matthew and Joseph.

The Cornishman, December 9 2010.

His second wife, Yukari, lives today at The Studio, North Corner, Newlyn.

In more recent times, the flats created by the Powers at Antoine Villa have increased steadily in value:

- 2000: Flat 4 sold for £79,950
- 2001: Flat 3 sold for £84,500
- 2003: Flat 1 sold for £142,870
- 2006: Flat 4 sold for £240,000
- 2012: Two-bedroomed ground floor flat for sale through Miller and Son at £249,995.

Rightmove.co.uk

Today, Antoine Villa is still one of the most significant houses in Newlyn.

Stuart Fraser

September 2012

Revised March 2014.