

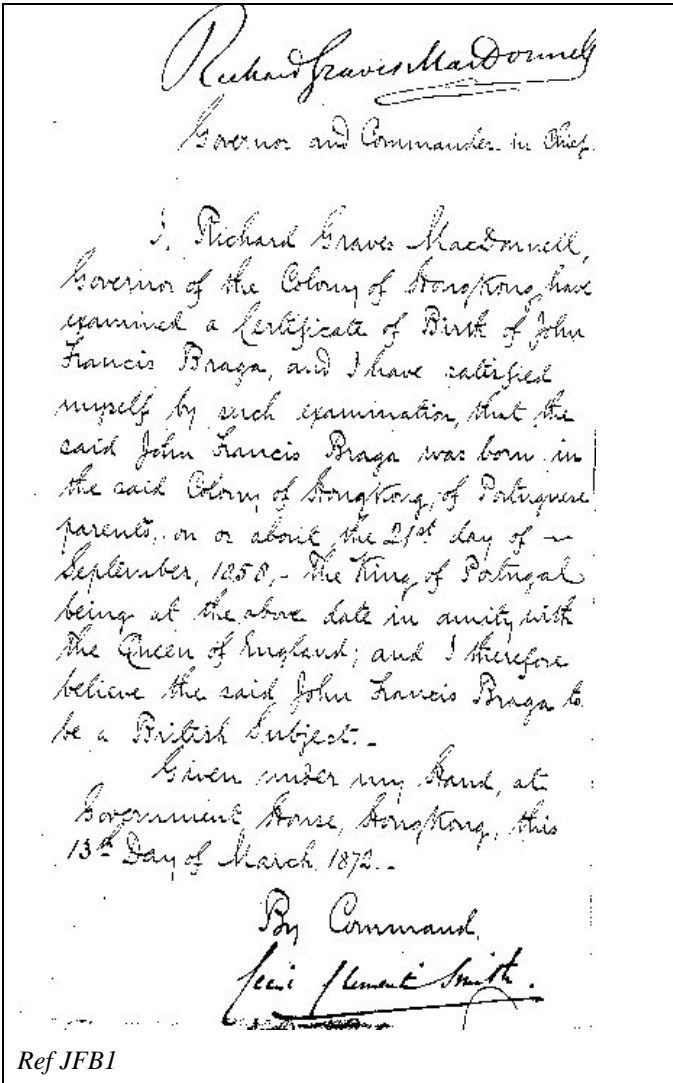
John Francis Braga (1858-1905)

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to summarise what we know about Dr John, my great-grandfather. Although we have a clear view of the overall framework of his life, there are many gaps. Perhaps some family members may have further information which we can add. There are many unanswered questions in this document, and I would welcome comments and perhaps some answers!

Since he died in 1905 there are now no people still alive with first-hand acquaintance with him. All anecdotes are second-hand.

Origins.

 <p><i>Richard Graves Macdonnell</i> Governor and Commander-in-Chief.</p> <p>I, Richard Graves Macdonnell, Governor of the Colony of Hong Kong have examined a Certificate of Birth of John Francis Braga, and I have satisfied myself by such examination, that the said John Francis Braga was born in the said Colony of Hong Kong, of Portuguese parents, on or about the 21st day of September, 1858, - the King of Portugal being at the above date in amity with the Queen of England; and I therefore believe the said John Francis Braga to be a British Subject.</p> <p>Given under my hand, at Government House, Hong Kong, this 13th Day of March 1872.</p> <p>By Command, <i>J. J. Smith</i></p>	<p>We know that he was born in Hong-Kong in "on or about the 21st September, 1858". No birth-certificate has been found so far, but a document dated 1872 [See Ref JFB1] signed by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Hong-Kong can be taken as a substitute. We presume the family needed it to prove to the UK authorities that he was a British Subject.</p> <p>The same document states that his parents were Portuguese. Were they living in (British) Hong-Kong or in the neighbouring (Portuguese) colony of Macau? If the latter, is it possible that they may have moved to Hong-Kong for the birth to ensure that their son could claim to be a British citizen?</p> <p>He arrived in this country in 1867, aged 9 or 10, with his parents João Joaquim and Vicentia Paula [nee de Carvalho]. The family are believed to have owned property in Macau from which, presumably they had an income. On João Joaquim's death certificate his occupation is given as "Gentleman", i.e. someone who does not need to work for a living. He is believed to have been awarded a "Papal Knighthood" for services to the Catholic Church; evidently a man of substance.</p>
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Why did the family come to the UK? Was there unrest in Hong-Kong or Macau at the time? Did they want their son to be brought up an Englishman?

Father's Death

His father João Joaquim died in 1876 at 51 High Holborn [London]. The death certificate gives the address of John Francis (the "informant") as Norfolk Street, The Strand [London]. He was of course only 18 or 19 years old at this time. We do not yet know the significance of these 2 addresses. Was 51 High Holborn a hospital and Norfolk Street the family address at the time? The fact that he died of "apoplexy (2nd attack)" would perhaps indicate that he was already ill and could have been moved to a hospital.

Schooling

We know nothing of John Francis's early education. Did he have a private tutor? Did he go to school in Hong-Kong or in the UK? Presumably he was brought up speaking Portuguese as his mother tongue? How good was his English when he first arrived in the UK? The family has always reported that his mother spoke only a few words of English all her life (she died aged 82 after residing in the UK for 47 years).

Note that the above-mentioned Hong-Kong document [Ref JFB1] is dated 1872, at which time the family had been in UK for 5 years and John Francis was about 14. What event prompted the family to seek proof of citizenship at that time?

Did the family ever report Dr John speaking Portuguese, or speaking with a Portuguese accent? It is very likely that he worked hard to appear truly English - to "fit in" to the class-conscious and race-conscious Victorian Society in which he found himself. To our eyes now, society at that time was snobbish and racist. An "English Gentleman", i.e. someone of English extraction with a private income and preferably an English public-school education was seen as the pinnacle of society. Dr John, if he was at all ambitious, would have sought to emulate this model.

Further Education

An entry in the Medical Register of 1888 gives his name as:

BRAGA, João Francisco

and his qualifications as

Lic. Society of Apothecaries London 1881

Lic. Apothecary Hall Dublin 1887

(Kings College London and University of Edinburgh)

F.C.S F.R.G.S

Mem. British Medical Association.

(Note the surprising use of the Portuguese rather than the English forms of the Christian names in the Medical Register).

His date and place of registration is given as 1881, June 13th, England.



Ref. JB2

Our earliest photo of is of a proud young graduate in his cap and gown. If we estimate his age as upwards of 20, this indicates a date of 1880'ish. Could this photo therefore relate to June 1881 when he apparently gained his first medical qualification?

The photographer is J.Deane Hilton, Savoy House, 115 Strand [London]

In the Medical Register of 1899 and 1901 his qualifications are:

Lic. Society of Apothecaries London 1881
Lic. Apothecary Hall Dublin 1887
Diploma of Public Health Royal College Phys, Surg. 1891
Diploma Public Health Cambridge 1891

In the 1902 Medical Directory his entry appears as:

BRAGA, John Francis [NB. now fully anglicised]

L.S.A 1881
L.A.H Dublin 1887
Diploma Public Health Cambridge 1891
Diploma Public Health Eng. Conj. Bd. 1891
(King's College London, Universities of Edinburgh and Lisbon)
F.C.S; F.L.S; F.G.S; F.R.G.S.
Assoc. King's College
Fellow of the Sanitary Institute
Member of the Society of Med.Offs of Health
Member of W. London Med. Chir. Society
British Med. Ass. Epidemic Society
Beckenham & Penge Medical Society

[NB. F.C.S Fellow of the Chemistry Society.
F.L.S Fellow of the Linnean Society
F.G.S Fellow of the Geological Society
F.R.G.S Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society]

We also have various certificates showing that he attended courses of lectures. These are still to be classified.

The picture is arguably that of a young man of independent means acquiring diplomas in what might be described as a dilettante fashion in London, Dublin and Edinburgh, rather than that of the normal dedicated and impoverished medical student.



Ref JFB8

His age here would appear to be late 20s. The photographer is Barraud, 264 Oxford St. [London] W.

All his photos show him wearing glasses (except the graduation photo in which he sports a monocle). He does not appear strong (his death certificate shows he died of Tuberculosis).

London Addresses

Date	Address	Notes
27 th May 1876	27 Norfolk Street, Strand	"Residence of Informant" on father's death certificate
1881	32 Bernard Road, St. Pancras	1881 Census
8 th March 1886	38 Sterndale Rd, Kensington Park	Marriage Certificate
15 th October 1886	49 Warbeck Road, Shepherds Bush	Birth Certificate of first-born son Leonard Francisco Joaquim
1888	60 Sterndale Rd, West Kensington Pk	Medical Register

1889	67 Shepherds Bush Road, West Kensington Park, Middx	Will dated 1889
1899	1 Albert Villas, High Road, Chiswick	Medical Register
1901	as above	Medical Register
1902	138 Croydon Road, Penge	Medical Register
1903	as above	Directory of Penge 1903, Anerley Public Library
1904	as above	Codicil to Will
7 th January 1905	as above	Death certificate.

Census Data

The 1881 census shows John Francis with his widowed mother living at 32 Bernard Street, St. Pancras, London. The entry as recorded in the 1881 CD is:

Dwelling: 32 Bernard St
Census Place: St Pancras, London, Middlesex, England
Source: FHL Film 1341043 PRO Ref RG11 Piece 0192 Folio 32 Page 14

Name	Marr	Age	Sex	Birthplace
Vincenzie D. C. BRAGA Rel: Head Occ: Owner of House Property	W	45	M	Portuguese Colony F
Fra.. Francisco BRAGA Rel: Son Occ: Student of Medecine	U	28	M	Portuguese Colony F
Sophia MACARTNEY Rel: Visitor Occ: Ladys Companion (D)	U	28	F	Hackney, Middlesex, England
Caroline MACARTNEY Rel: Visitor Occ: Scholar	U	11	F	Hackney, Middlesex, England
Eliza MACARTNEY Rel: Servt Occ: General Dom Servt	U	19	F	Hackney, Middlesex, England

This raises many questions! There are clearly errors (Vincenzie is recorded as Sex M!), and we believe John Francis to have been aged 23 not 28. I need to find and check the original census form.

Questions.

- Did the widowed mother own just this house? The occupation "Owner of House Property" would seem to imply more than one house, and that the properties were worked as investments.
- In later years Caroline Macartney's daughter May said that Sophia Macartney kept a boarding house and that is how they met. But was 32 Bernard Street the boarding house, owned not by the Macartneys but by the Bragas?
- John Francis's future wife Sophia was present as a visitor. They were to marry 5 years later. Who was she visiting? Her sister Eliza who was working in the house as a servant?
- Did the Macartney sisters board at the house, or were they on a short visit?
- Who was Sophia a Ladys companion to? To the owner of the house Vincenzie?

The 1871 and 1891 census entries are still to be investigated.

Photographs



Ref JFB3

This attractive photo of 3 generations can be dated approximately 1888. The child is John Francis' first son Leonard Francisco who was born in October 1886.

The photographer is A J Isard, 46 Seaside Road, Eastbourne. Were the family on holiday? They appear formally dressed.

John Francis with his eldest son Leonard. Again, the age of the child means that this is dated approximately 1888.

A holiday snap? The photographer is not stated, but this could surely also have been Eastbourne. Was this John Francis's normal sporting attire?! Note the badly tied tie, the too-small blazer, the creased trousers.



Ref JFB4



Ref JFB5

This group photo is taken in the front door of 138 Croydon Road, Penge, where John Francis lived from 1902 (and perhaps earlier) to his death in 1905.

The man on the left may be Dr Samuel, a close friend of John Francis. Edith Braga [daughter] is centre back. She was born in 1888, so would have been about 14 here. John Francis is back right.

Middle row: Lou Braga [youngest son, born 1892], Sophia Braga, the Doctor's wife, unknown lady, Vic Braga [son, born 1891]. In the front row, the child on the right is May Roby, daughter of Caroline Macartney [the father, died young, and May came to live with the Bragas. The other 2 children are unknown.



Ref JFB6

Almost certainly taken in the back garden of 138 Croydon Road, Penge, John Francis is with his daughter Edith (standing) and his "adopted" niece May Roby.

Did Dr John normally garden in a hat?! Or had he just been out on his rounds? May told us in later life that she clearly remembered going out in the Doctor's pony and trap.

The front door of The Larches, 138 Croydon Road, Penge, and photographed about 1900.



Ref croy2



Ref croy3

The present No. 138 [left] has had its front altered at some point, but No. 136 [below] has seen very little external change:



Ref croy4

(photographs taken in April 2001)



The two younger Braga sons John Vincent and Edmund Louis playing soldiers in the back garden of 138 Croydon Road about 1900/1901.

Ref JVB1

In April 2001, I spoke to the owners of 134 Croydon Road, who kindly invited me to take a photo from the back garden. No. 134 is virtually identical to No. 138 and remains substantially unaltered.



Ref Croy1



Ref JFB7

Dr John's grave, in Elmers End Cemetery, Penge, photographed in April 2001. It is also the grave of his mother (died 1914) and granddaughter Louise (died aged 15 days in 1915). The inscription on the front reads:

"In loving Memory of Dr John Francis Braga L.S.A, L.A.H, late of Anerley who died 7th January 1905 aged 46 years. R.I.P".

On the left hand side is:

"Also his granddaughter Little LOUISE. Died 23rd March 1914 aged 15 days"

On the right hand side is:

"And his dearly beloved mother Vicencia Paula Braga who died February 14th 1914"