

Memories of the Tristram Knight family.

Monica Douglas (*nee* Knight, born 1924, youngest daughter of May *nee* Tristram and WLC Knight) talking about the Turkish past

Our family had a strong connection with Turkey in the past, and we lived there, in Trebizond and in Istanbul, as children. In Istanbul we lived for a while in Kandili on the Bosphorous, with a wooden townhouse in Pera; after that in a house in Moda, Kadikoy.

When I was about six or seven (*Monica was born in Corfu in 1924*) I remember staying in the summer house of the Whittall family in Moda, Kadikoy. That is the Asian side of the city. It was a very big beautiful house with a huge wild garden full of tortoises – we used to run down the garden and jump into the Bosphorous below. I remember finding a dead donkey on the beach! We had very happy days there. I remember looking over the Bosphorous to the wonderful view of minarets on the other side. Sometimes we visited on the European side and I remember especially the huge old castle, the Rumeli Hisari. My mother (*Marie-Cecile Florence Knight nee Tristram, known always as May*) knew the Whittalls very well, they were close family friends. Some of our family were intermarried with them. The Whittalls were a very wealthy, long-established and well-known English family, with houses in Smyrna (Izmir) as well as Istanbul. They were involved with the very big trade in figs and raisins from Turkey to England. There were also the Cumberbatches, but I think they were mainly in Istanbul – they were relatives too.

Our family were in banking and diplomacy. My grandfather Uvedale Tristram worked in the Ottoman Bank in Constantinople (*he was the Chief Cashier*), and my father (*William Lowry Craig Knight*) was Consul or Consul-General at various times in different parts of Turkey, Greece and North Africa.

Did Uvedale's family have a house in Smyrna? It's very likely they did, although I don't remember hearing about it. I know my grandfather was born in Smyrna and grew up there, and that they were close friends with other English families there.

How wonderful if you found their house. If it's called Tristram House and was near the Whittalls, it must have been theirs. They were a wealthy family too, but not as wealthy as the Whittalls. Those families usually had summer houses as well as their main home, and quite often travelled between Smyrna and Constantinople.

My mother was very proud of her aristocratic descent going back to the Plantagenets, and often used to tell us about it. I believe my mother's mother and father, my grandparents, met in Constantinople. My grandmother was Italian; she died shortly after giving birth to my mother, May, so my mother was brought up by her father Uvedale Tristram's new wife, Edla (*Guarracino*), who had four more children later (*Vivian, Phyllis, Gerald Henry and Uvedale Tristram*). There was not a very great age difference between our uncle Uvedale Tristram and ourselves as children, and we often spent time together in Istanbul when we were young. Somehow I lost touch with him and all that side of the family a very long time ago.

Based on a conversation with my aunt in January 2010. The phrases in italics are my additions.

Elizabeth Knight