

Juan Bautista Luis Augurio PERERA, Lawn Tennis Pioneer

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Juan Bautista Luis Augurio PERERA, Lawn Tennis Pioneer

This working paper aims to provide a comprehensive and fully documented biography of Augurio Perera, to assist future historians of lawn tennis and others interested in the Perera family and the history of Spanish communities in the UK. As a working paper, it will be updated whenever new information becomes available.

I am grateful to Fernando Arrechea and Robert Holland for their help and expertise.

Introduction: The state of the question

The Origins of Lawn Tennis

Two competing origin stories account for the emergence of lawn tennis in the last third of the nineteenth century. The most widespread, which is commemorated at the headquarters of the Lawn Tennis Association and by the Tennis Hall of Fame in Rhode Island, is that of Major Walter Clopton Wingfield (1833-1912), who in 1874 published a set of rules for a tennis-like game he called *Sphairistikè* (Alexander; 'Major Walton Clopton Wingfield'; 'Walter Clopton Wingfield'). In recent years, an alternative case has been made for crediting the foundation of the game to two friends from Birmingham, Major Harry Gem and Juan Bautista Luis Augurio Perera. In a 2005 article for the *Country Life* property website, Anna Tyzack summarizes the Gem-Perera story and states that the game was developed 'in the garden at Fairlawn [*sic*], Perera's home in Edgbaston'. According to a letter from Gem published in *The Field* in 1874, he and Perera had been playing a version of tennis, which they called 'pelota' after the Basque ballgame, at Perera's Edgbaston home from the late 1850s.

Since 1982, a blue plaque on the wall of Fairlight, Perera's former home, has commemorated its role in the game's origin. It was placed by Birmingham Civic Society, the Calthorpe Estate, Warwickshire Tennis Players, and The Calthorpe Residents' Society ('In 1865...'):



Photograph by ell brown. Source: openplaques.org

The Harry Gem Project and the revival of the Gem-Perera story

The Birmingham-based charity The Harry Gem Project is dedicated to researching and promoting Harry Gem's life and achievements, aiming in particular 'to publicise his role as the originator, with his friend JBA Perera, of lawn tennis here in Birmingham and the creator of the world's first lawn tennis club in Leamington Spa in 1872'. On 25 May 2011, two of the trustees of The Harry Gem Project re-enacted an early game on the lawn at Fairlight, which is in Edgbaston's exclusive Ampton Rd, (Mullen 'Andy Murray'):



Robert Holland as Harry Gem (left) and Chris Elks as Perera recreate Gem and Perera's early game on the very lawn where the pioneers had played more than 150 years before. Source: Mullen, 'Andy Murray'.

In June 2013, Fairlight and its tennis history were featured in an episode of the English Heritage / ITV television series *Britain's Secret Homes*, in a segment presented by former British tennis player Greg Rusedski (English Heritage; 'Greg plays...'):



Greg Rusedski at Fairlight (2013). Source: *The Harry Gem Project*

Augurio Perera: a biographical riddle

The man we know as Augurio Perera has long been an enigmatic figure. His contribution to the foundation of lawn tennis, recorded by Harry Gem in a letter to *The Field* in November 1874, is now widely recognised. He has his own Wikipedia page, which describes him as ‘a Spanish-born merchant and sportsman based in England, credited alongside his friend Major Harry Gem as the earliest inventor of the game of lawn tennis’ (‘Augurio Perera’). However, most accounts of the Gem-Perera history record little about the man himself. Even his name is often incorrectly recorded, for example as ‘Augusto Perera’ (‘Club History’), or more frequently as ‘Jean Batista Augurio Perera’ (e.g. ‘Who’s for Tennis?’; Middleton, ‘Forget Wimbledon’; English Heritage).

The most complete account of Perera’s life is that published in 2011 by the Spanish Olympic historian Fernando Arrechea Rivas (Arrechea Rivas, ‘Augurio Perera’). Arrechea argues that while the Gem-Perera story has gained traction since the 1980s, the focus on Gem has left Perera ‘paulatinamente ninguneado’ [gradually erased], with even the most basic biographical details of his life called into question. For example, he quotes a statement in the 2011 book *Court on Canvas* to the effect that ‘there is no evidence that Perera actually came from Spain.’ In response, Arrechea summarises the available documentary evidence proving Perera’s Spanish origin, including two certificates of arrival at the Port of London in 1837 and 1839, his marriage in Liverpool in 1847 and his entries on the 1841 and 1871 censuses. He concludes that while ‘Quedan dudas sobre Augurio Perera’ [doubts remain about Augurio Perera], ‘nadie podrá afirmar de nuevo que “no hay evidencias” sobre su origen’ [nobody will ever again be able to state that “there is no evidence” of his origin]. In short, ‘El padre (o uno de los padres) del tenis

moderno era español' [The father (or one of the fathers) of modern tennis was a Spaniard].¹

The Life of Juan Bautista Luis Augurio Perera Orfila, c.1822-1905

1. From Spain to London, 1822-1836

Juan Bautista Luis Augurio Perera Orfila, usually known simply as 'Augurio,' was born in the Catalan town of Manresa in 1822.² He came to England with his family as a small child and along with his parents and brothers, would make his life and career there. In his application for British citizenship, made in February 1856, Perera writes:

The Memorial of Juan Bautista Augurio Perera ... humbly sheweth ... That your memorialist is a natural born subject of the Kingdom of Spain ... That he is of the age of thirty four years ... That he has resided in England for thirty years, viz. in London until the year 1836 and at Birmingham since that time.³

Perera's parents were Augurio Perera Plà and Francisca Orfila Fàbregues. Augurio senior was a merchant, born in Manresa in around 1792. Francisca, who was some six years younger than her husband, was born in Mahón, on the Catalan-speaking island of Menorca.⁴ According to a 2017 article by Pedro Corral for the Catalan edition of *El País*, the couple met while Augurio senior was serving as a lieutenant with the Regiment d'Infanteria de Nàpols in Mahón, and they married in 1816. They returned in 1820 to Catalonia, where Augurio senior continued fighting with Liberal forces defending the Spanish constitution, and where Augurio junior was born in 1822, in his father's hometown.⁵ Like hundreds of others, the Perera family were forced to flee Spain to avoid reprisals after King Fernando VII's restoration in 1823.

According to Augurio junior's own declaration, the family came to England in 1826 and settled in London, where they remained for ten years. The Electoral Register for the City of London shows an 'Auria Pereira' occupying a house at Bartlett's Buildings in the parish of St Andrew, Holborn, in 1834 and 1835.⁶ Bartlett's Buildings was a cul-de-sac off

¹ A year after Arrechea's article, Fernando Carreño commented in a brief biography on the Marco.com sports website that Perera was still a 'nota a pie de página ... un semianónimo español ... un desconocido' [a footnote ... a semi-anonymous Spaniard ... an unknown] (Carreño, 'Augurio Perera').

² Pedro Corral, 'Joc de patriotes,' *El País*, 16 Aug. 2017.

https://elpais.com/cat/2017/08/16/cultura/1502907938_838263.html : accessed 24 November 2023.

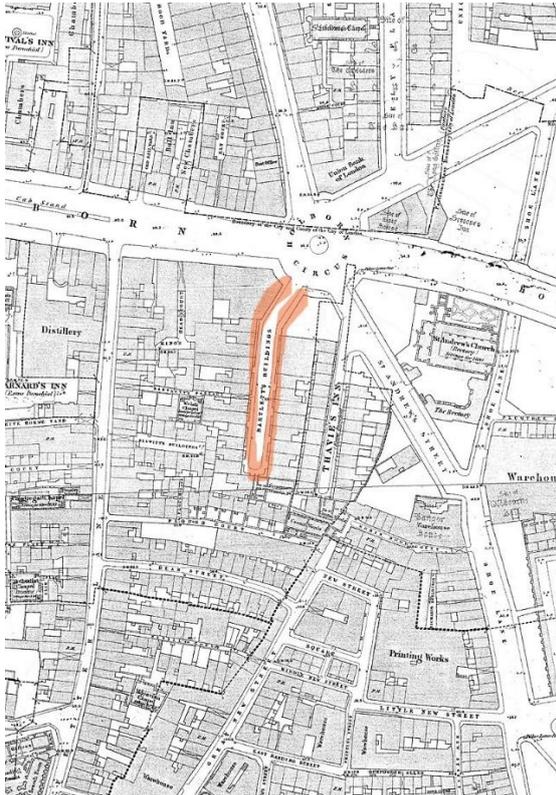
³ JBA Perera. 'Naturalization.' The National Archives. HO 1/72/2221. 12 March 1856.

⁴ Information from Fernando Arrechea (email: 15 March 2014). Minorca had a long history of British occupation, and at the time of Francisca's birth in 1798, was once again under British rule (1798-1802).

⁵ Pedro Corral, 'Joc de patriotes,' *El País*, 16 Aug. 2017. Corral gives a detailed account of Augurio senior's military career.

⁶ City of London Electoral Registers. 1834. Farringdon Without. p.396. No. 15763. Pereira, Auria. House. Bartlett's Buildings; 1835. Farringdon Without. p.413. No. 16552. Pereira, Auria. House. Bartlett's

Holborn Circus dating back at least to the seventeenth century (marked in orange on the map below). In 1828, as the watercolour below by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd shows, the Farringdon Dispensary and Lying-in Charity was established in one of the tall brick townhouses.⁷ When Perera gave it as his address in the mid-1830s, Bartlett's Buildings was a mixture of trade and residential properties, housing lawyers, merchants, surgeons, and other professionals. The whole street was destroyed in the London Blitz of 1941.



1870s Ordnance Survey map of Holborn Circus.
Source: www.wikipedia.com



Bartlett's Buildings in 1858.
Watercolour by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd.
Source: www.wikipedia.com

That 'Aurio' is in fact Augurio is corroborated by other evidence. While in London, Augurio senior and Francisca would have two more sons: Pedro Ricardo Perera (b. c.1833) and Frederick or Frederico Perera (b.c. 1835). Both sons consistently give their birthplace as 'London' and on the 1891 census returns, both specify that they were born in Holborn.

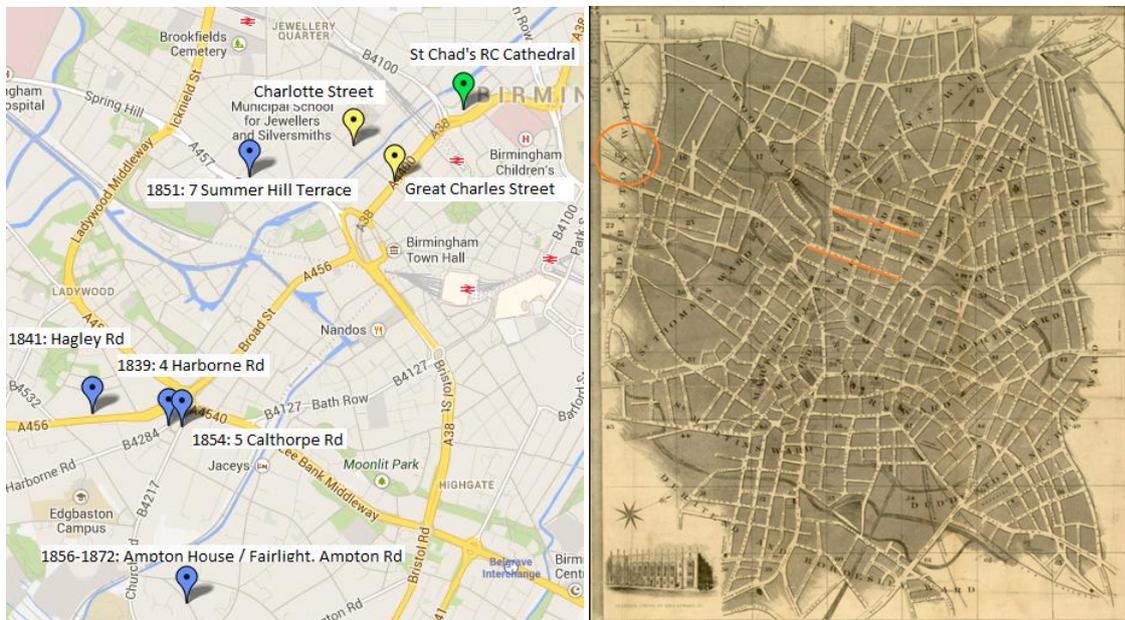
Buildings. *London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 16 November 2023.

⁷ 'Bartlett's Buildings.' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartlett%27s_Buildings : accessed 16 November 2023.

2. In Business. Birmingham, 1836-1839

Soon after Frederico's birth, the Pereras moved from London to Birmingham, where Augurio senior took over the warehouse at 28 Great Charles Street that would remain the centre of the family's Midlands operations for more than fifty years. An advert in the *Birmingham Gazette* confirms that they were in possession of the property by March 1836:

REMOVAL. Mr Augurio PERERA, Spanish Merchant, has removed from Charlotte-street to his WAREHOUSE, No. 28, Great Charles Street, where Goods and Patterns are in future to be delivered. Birmingham, March 26, 1836.⁸



Birmingham locations associated with Augurio Perera

Davies map of Birmingham (1841).

Source: www.birmingham.gov.uk

The Charlotte St and Great Charles St locations are marked as two parallel lines on the 1841 Davies map of Birmingham above (Charlotte St is the more northerly of the two). The business is recorded at the Great Charles St address in the 1839 editions of *Wrightson's Triennial Directory of Birmingham*,⁹ and *Robson's Birmingham & Sheffield Directory*.¹⁰ The family home at this time was at 4 Harborne Road in Edgbaston, on the western edge of the city in what is now the Fiveways area. It is marked with an orange circle on the Davies map.

⁸ *Birmingham Gazette*, 28 March 1836: 3.

⁹ 'PERRERA [sic], Augurio, merchant, 28, Great Charles St.'

¹⁰ 'PERERA, Anguris [sic], Spanish merchant [sic], 28 Great Charles St.'

While Augurio senior was establishing his business in Birmingham, the first documented record of Augurio junior is in August 1837, when he and two Spanish companions, Manuel and Simon Quintana, are recorded arriving at the Port of London from Hamburg aboard a ship called the *John Bull*. Augurio, now fifteen and a student, had been out of London for less than one month and carried no passport of his own. The '3 Young Gent[leme]n' were signed for by Pedro de la Torres Quintana, a Basque-born South American merchant of 26 Austin Friars and presumably a relative of the two young Quintanas.¹¹ Eighteen months later on 20 January 1839, an Augurio Perera, described as a 'Gentleman,' landed at the Port of London after a short trip overseas, this time arriving from Boulogne aboard the *Harlequin*.¹² We cannot know whether this man, who did hold a passport, was Augurio junior or his father.

By 1839 Augurio senior appears to have considered eldest his son, at almost eighteen years old, capable of running the Birmingham office alone. In May that year, the family – except for Augurio junior – relocated from Birmingham to Manchester, selling the contents of their Edgbaston home in the process:

Modern and excellent HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, valuable French Engravings, Oil Paintings, and other Effects, No. 4, Harborne Rd, opposite the Bowling Green, Edgbaston. To be SOLD by AUCTION, on the premises, on Friday the 24th day of May, commencing at eleven o'clock – all the valuable Household Furniture and effects of Mr Perera, who is changing his residence. Other particulars in future papers and in catalogues to be had four days prior to the sale. JOHN RODERICK, Auctioneer. Offices, 54, New-street.¹³

3. Two Businesses. Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, 1841-55

Thanks to Augurio senior and junior's shared name, the Birmingham business continued without a change of style, as 'PERERA, Augurio, merchant, 28 Great Charles St'.¹⁴ The Harborne Rd house disposed of, Augurio junior remained close by, in an area he would call home for another 30 years. In June 1841, we find him recorded on the census as part of the household of Joshua Morris, a clerk, at Hagley Rd, Edgbaston (within the orange circle on the 1841 Davies map, above). The 1841 census does not record relationships between members of a household, but Augurio may well have been lodging with the

¹¹ Certificate of Arrival, no. 5510-11-12. John Bull, from Hambro to London. 7 August 1837. The National Archives. HO3/5. *England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

¹² Certificate of Arrival, no. 128. Harlequin, from Boulogne to London. 20 January 1839. The National Archives. HO2/62. *England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

¹³ *Birmingham Gazette* 13 May 1839: 2.

¹⁴ Perera, Augurio. *Pigot's Directory of Birmingham for 1841*. p.53. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

Morris family. His age is given as 15 (in fact he was 19, but the 1841 census rounds ages up and down), and his profession as merchant.

The Manchester business, 1841-1855

While Augurio junior learned the ropes at the Birmingham warehouse, his father was working to establish a second branch of the business in Manchester. Early in 1841, he is recorded in *Pigot & Slater's Directory of Manchester and Salford* with an office at Irwell Buildings, Blackfriars, close to the river Irwell.¹⁵ By June 1841, he had taken the residence at 5 Wilton Terrace in the Cheetham area of the city where he would remain for the rest of his life.¹⁶ We find him there on the 1841 census with Frederic [sic], now aged five, and two female servants, one of whom – Josepha Blanquín – was foreign-born, and most likely Spanish or Catalan. Francisca and seven-year-old Pedro do not appear on the census, and it is possible they had returned to Spain, since we know that the family maintained connections there. In April 1843, we find A Perera (Merchant, Spanish) and Madam Perera (Lady, Spanish) arriving at Southampton aboard the *Iberia* from Gibraltar.¹⁷

Augurio senior moved offices several times in these early years. In 1844, he advertised the lease of a cellar warehouse beneath his own at Chapel Square,¹⁸ but he had left those premises by October the same year.¹⁹ 1847, he is recorded at 1 Dale St,²⁰ and the following year he had moved to 85/59 High St.²¹ By July 1850, he had settled at Stevenson Square.²² He evidently did well for himself in Manchester. In September 1846, his name appears among major subscribers to the newly-built railways – 'Perera, Augurio, merchant, Manchester' took out a subscription to the tune of £3000,²³ which is approximately £175,000 in today's money.²⁴ He also participated in the city's civic life. For example, in 1851, he was listed as a house visitor and inspector of the Manchester Royal Infirmary.²⁵

We have only rare indications of the specific nature of the Perera family business. María Luisa Gutiérrez Medina considers Augurio senior an important conduit between Catalan

¹⁵ Irwell Buildings, 'a new pile of warehouses' and their contents were partially destroyed by fire in August 1844 (*Spectator*, 10 Aug 1844: 10), although it is not known whether Perera was affected.

¹⁶ An image of Wilton Terrace appears in the Local Image Collection of Manchester City Council. [http://gmlives.org.uk/results.html#imu\[rid=ecatalogue.15096\]](http://gmlives.org.uk/results.html#imu[rid=ecatalogue.15096]) : accessed 24 November 2023.

¹⁷ 'List of Aliens.' Kezia, from Gibraltar to Southampton. 8 April 1843. The National Archives. HO3/28. *England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

¹⁸ *Manchester Guardian*, 13 Apr 1844: 2.

¹⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Oct 1844: 2.

²⁰ Perera, Augurio. *Slater's Directories of Important English Towns*, 1847, p. 45. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

²¹ Perera, Augurio. *Slater's Lancashire Directory*, 1848, p.254. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

²² *Manchester Guardian* 10 Jul. 1850: 1; Perera, Augurio, *Slater's Directory of Manchester & Salford*, 1850, p.276. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

²³ *Manchester Courier*, 16 Sep. 1846: 3.

²⁴ According to The National Archives currency converter, £3000 in 1850 would have the same spending worth of 2005's £175,590.

²⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 22 Mar. 1851: 10.

industrialists and Spanish expatriate businessmen in London and suggests that he may have been instrumental in facilitating the reconnaissance visit of a group of Catalans to Manchester textile factories in 1846.²⁶ His principal business, however, appears to have been importing goods from the Spanish empire. The Manchester Custom House statement of goods received under bond during the week ending 7 January 1848 recorded that A Perera had received 6 cases containing 909lb of cigars.²⁷

Marriage and family life, 1847-1856

As Augurio senior was establishing the second branch of the family business in Manchester, Augurio junior was establishing his own business and family life in Birmingham. In early summer 1847, he travelled north to Liverpool to marry Irish-born Charlotte Louisa O'Donnell.²⁸ The wedding took place two weeks later on 2 June 1847 at St Nicholas' Catholic Chapel,²⁹ and afterwards at St Peter's Anglican Church.³⁰ Hardy St, which both bride and groom gave as their residence, was off Upper Pitt St in Liverpool's waterfront district; no. 1, where Augurio was staying, was a lodging house run at the time of the 1851 census by one Mary Jolly. This suggests his stay in Liverpool was temporary, perhaps only for the wedding. The marriage was announced in Augurio senior's local newspaper:

On the 2d. inst. at St Nicholas Chapel, by the Rev. Robert Gillow, Juan Bautista Luis Augurio, eldest son of Augurio Perera, of this town, to Charlotte Louisa, fourth daughter of the late John O'Donnell, banker, of Ennis, Ireland; and afterwards at Saint Peter's Church, Liverpool, by the Rev. TG Headlam.³¹

Augurio and Charlotte Louisa (known as Louisa) soon returned to Birmingham, where their first daughter, Francisca Eliza Perera, named for her grandmother, was born in 1848. Their only son, Joseph Cortes Augurio Perera, was born on 9 January 1850 and christened on 19 April 1850 at St Chad's Cathedral. A year later, the April 1851 census records the family at 7 Summer Hill Terrace, Birmingham St Mark:

²⁶ Gutiérrez Medina 361; 691. Gutiérrez Medina also states that Augurio Perera had acted as agent for the Catalan industrialist Juan Güell when he was building the 'Vapor Vell' (p. 691, n.7), the first large modern textile factory in the industrial town of Sants.

²⁷ *Manchester Courier*, 12 Jan 1848: 4.

²⁸ The database of *Cheshire Marriage Licence Bonds and Allegations* records that on 24 May 1847, John Baptist Luis Augurio Perera [sic], Merchant, appeared in person to request a licence to marry Charlotte Louisa O'Donnell at Liverpool St Peter. Both were over 21 (i.e. of full age) and living in Liverpool. www.findmypast.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

²⁹ The Catholic marriage entry records the groom as BJA Perera, 26, Bachelor, merchant of 1 Hardy St, son of BJA Perera. The bride is recorded as CL O'Donnell, 24, spinster, of 6 Hardy St, daughter of John O'Donnell. The witnesses are recorded as LC De Londo and S O'Donnell. *Liverpool, England, Catholic Marriages*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

³⁰ The Church of England marriage entry records the groom as John Baptist Luis Augurio Perera, bachelor, full age, Merchant, of Hardy St, the son of Augurio Perera, merchant. The bride is recorded as Charlott [sic] Louisa O'Donnell, spinster, full age, of Hardy St, the daughter of John O'Donnell, banker. The witnesses were Louis Charles De Londo (a Spanish name) and Susan O'Donnell (presumably a relative of the bride). *Liverpool, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

³¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 Jun 1847: 8.

John Baptist Augurio PERERA. Head. 29. Merchant's clerk. Spain
 Charlotte Louisa. Wife. 26. Ireland
 Francesca. Daughter. 3. Birmingham
 Joseph. Son. 1. Birmingham
 [2 female servants, born Ireland and Birmingham]

Augurio and Louisa's second daughter, Adrienne Louisa Perera, was born in Birmingham on 27 February 1852 and christened at St Chad's on 21 May 1852. In 1856, they welcomed their third daughter and last child, Carmen Mariana Perera, who was christened at St Bartholomew, Edgbaston on 27 March 1856.³² Their growing family meant that at some point after census night, the family moved to a larger house, for in September 1854, we find an advert in the *Birmingham Gazette* for the leasehold of 4 and 5 Calthorpe St, the latter of which the Pereras were then renting. The advertisement gives a good idea of the scale of the property:

EDGBASTON. LOT I: The very comfortable RESIDENCE, No. 4, in Calthorpe St, containing four chambers, dressing room and attic, water closet, dining and drawing rooms, kitchen and brewhouse, two cellars and other conveniences, with Stable and Outbuildings, Garden, and Pleasure Grounds, now in the occupation of Mrs Hollington, at an annual rent of 42l, 10s. LOT II: A similar HOUSE, with Garden and Pleasure Grounds adjoining, being No. 5, in Calthorpe St, in the occupation of Mr Perera at an annual rent of 42l. The above lots are Leasehold for the remainder of a term having 57 years unexpired at Lady-day last, and are subject to an annual ground-rent of 11l 8s, which will be equally apportioned.³³

End of an era: the death of Augurio senior, 1855

In Manchester, Augurio's parents and brothers were recorded on the April 1851 census at their home at 5 Wilton Terrace, Cheetham, along with a visiting Spanish relative whose name is semi-legible on the enumerator's return, but was likely Francisco ALBACA:

Augurio PERERA. Head. 59. Merchant shipper. Spain.
 Francisca. Wife. 53. Spain
 Peter. Son. 18. Merchant's son. London
 Fanacis [sic] ALBACA. Relation. Unm. 27. Clerk. Spain.
 [2 female servants, b. Ireland, Wales]

³² Baptisms. St Bartholomew Edgbaston. 27 March 1856. Carmen Mariana, daughter of Juan Bautista Augurio (merchant) and Charlotte Louisa Perera of Edgbaston. Born February 1856. *Birmingham, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1922*. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 16 November 2023.

³³ *Birmingham Gazette*, 11 Sep. 1854: 1.

On 12 April 1855, Augurio senior died in Manchester at the age of 62.³⁴ His will, executed in London on 22 May 1855, left everything to his wife Francisca and his sons Juan Bautista Augurio, Pedro Ricardo, and Frederico.³⁵

4. The Fairlight Years. Birmingham, 1856-1872

Whether by coincidence or design, within a year of his father's death, Augurio Perera had applied for naturalization as a British citizen. His application, lodged in February 1856, was granted in March the same year. In the memorandum, he explains that he is married with four children and has a settled place of residence at Ampton House, Ampton Road, Edgbaston. *White's Directory of Birmingham* for 1855 gives the family's home address as 5 Calthorpe St, so we can date their move to Ampton Rd to late 1855 or (very) early 1856.

Harry Gem's letter to *The Field* in 1874 stated that he and Perera began playing tennis on the lawn at Fairlight in 1859. Was this the same property as 'Ampton House'? In May 1859, an advert appeared in the *Birmingham Daily Post* for 'a good plain cook,' giving the address as 'Ampton House, Ampton Road, Edgbaston' (18 May 1859). There is no name attached to the advert and the name 'Ampton House' does not appear in later records, which suggests that the Perera family changed the house's name soon afterwards – but when?



Fairlight. Photo credit: johngarghan / Foter / CC BY-NC-ND



Fairlight. Photo credit: ell brown / Foter / CC BY-SA

For reasons I haven't yet managed to ascertain, on the night of the April 1861 census, Augurio and Louisa were not in Birmingham. Augurio and son José, then aged eleven, are

³⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, 21 Apr. 1855: 10; *Manchester Courier*, 28 Apr. 1855: 10.

³⁵ Probate. Perera, Augurio. 22 May 1855. The National Archives. Prob 11/2212, no. 335.

nowhere to be found and it is possible that they had travelled to Spain. Meanwhile, Louisa and the couple's three daughters were at 11 Park Place (now Ivor Place) in London, close to Regent's Park:

Louisa PEPRERA [sic]. Wife. Married. 32. Merchant's wife. Ireland.
 Francisca. Daughter. 13. Govern...?. Birmingham
 Adrienne. Daughter. 9. Birmingham
 Carmen. Daughter. 5. Birmingham
 Eliz HOPWARD?. Governess. Unm. 25. London
 Elizabeth BROWN. Serv. Unm. 24. Birmingham

We cannot know whether this was a visit or intended to be a more permanent move.³⁶ By 1862, the family was back in the Midlands, where a 'Mr Perera' who may have been Augurio spent the first half of 1862 at the Bath Hotel in Leamington. He was alone between January and March and accompanied by his wife in June.³⁷ Back in Birmingham, Augurio was involved in the city's civic life. In 1864, he donated £2 2s to the Queen's Hospital and was a burgess of St Paul's Ward.³⁸ Reflecting his sporting interests, in January 1866, he joined the Provisional Committee of the Proposed Birmingham Gymnasium alongside Capt. [Harry] Gem.³⁹

By this time, the Pereras were definitely living at 'the home of tennis.' During the 1860s, the family appear to have had a regular turnover of servants, which allows us to trace references to 'Fairlight' in the local newspapers, beyond the first reference in a directory.⁴⁰ In October 1865 they advertised for 'A good COOK, in a Gentleman's family, at Edgbaston - Apply at Mrs Burdett's, 30c, Broad Street; or Fairlight, Ampton Road, Edgbaston'.⁴¹ In January 1868, the request was for 'a BOY, about 15, to Wait at Table, and to make himself generally useful, in a Gentleman's family.' Applicants were asked to 'apply, between One and Three o'clock' to Fairlight.⁴² The following year, they advertised for 'a thorough, good housemaid, age 25' with 'a year's character at least,' asking prospective candidates to 'apply, between Three and Five, afternoon, Fairlight, Ampton Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham'.⁴³

³⁶ Cross-referencing the 1861 census with *Kelly's Directory of Birmingham* for 1868 (which includes a street index) suggests that the property, which stands between Oakland House and the home in both 1861 and 1868 of the parish beadle, may have been tenanted in 1861 by the Lewis family and known by them as 'Holly House' (1861 census), a name that does not appear in other records.

³⁷ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 18 Jan - 29 Mar 1862; *Leamington Spa Courier*, 28 Jun 1862: 6.

³⁸ *Birmingham Journal*, 24 Dec 1864: 5; *Birmingham Journal*, 21 Oct. 1865: 8; *Birmingham Gazette*, 20 Oct. 1866.

³⁹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 11 Jan 1866: 1.

⁴⁰ Perera, Juan Baptista [sic] Augurio. *Morris's Commercial Directory of Warwickshire*, 1866, p. 236. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

⁴¹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 28 Oct. 1865: 2.

⁴² *Birmingham Daily Post*, 14 Jan. 1868: 2.

⁴³ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 5 March 1869: 3.

On 17 May 1870, Augurio and Louisa's son José Cortes Augurio Perera (known as Cortes) married Clara Maud Thorne at Greenwich St Paul and settled on the far side of Edgbaston. The 1871 census records the two families living approximately two miles, or forty minutes' walk apart:

1871 Census: Fairlight House, Ampton Rd, Edgbaston

Augurio PERERA. H. 49. Merchant. Spain NBS

Louisa. W. 39. Ireland. Co. Clare

Francisca. D. 22. Birmingham

Adrienne. D. 19

Carma [sic]. D. 15.

[3 female servants, all b. Birmingham]

1871 Census: Lorne Villa, Pershore Rd, Edgbaston

José C A PERERA. H. 21. Sth American Merchant. Birmingham

Clara M. W. 19. London

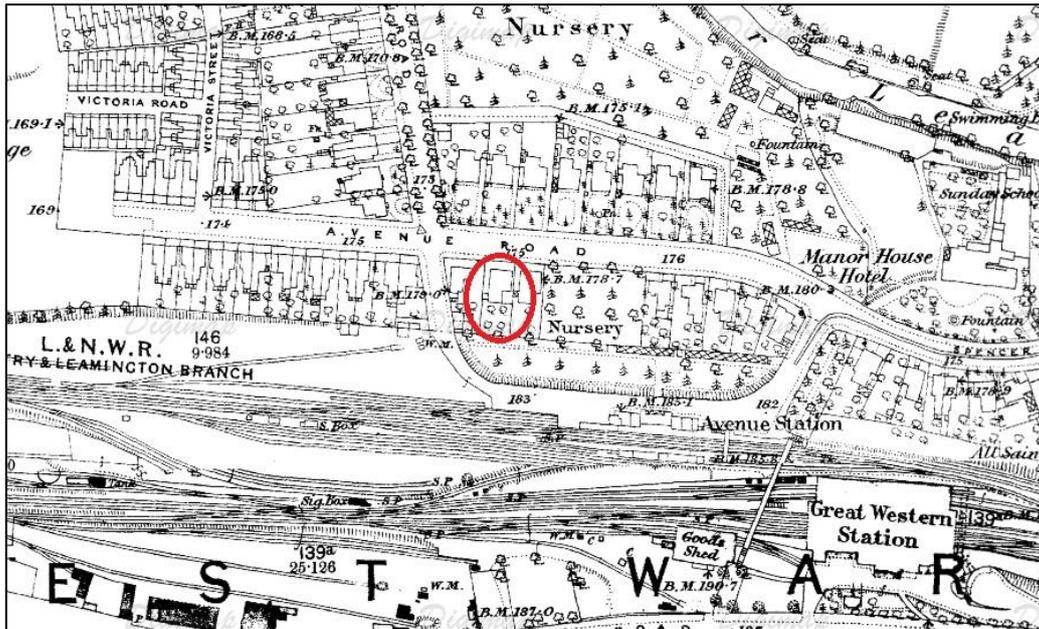
Maud H. D. 2m. Birmingham

Kate GOUGH. Serv. Unm. 34. Gnl Serv. Dublin

5. Leamington Spa, 1873-1880

Augurio and Louisa's family were growing up. A month after census night, on 25 May 1871, their eldest daughter Francisca married the solicitor John Palmer Phillips at Edgbaston,⁴⁴ leaving just nineteen-year-old Adrienne and fifteen-year-old Carmen at home with their parents. As is well known, sometime after this, Augurio, Louisa, Adrienne and Carmen moved to Leamington Spa. Most accounts, drawing on Harry Gem's letter to *The Field*, date the move from 1872. The *Leamington Spa Courier* records them under 'General Arrivals' on 8 November 1873. Their address was a villa with the familiar name of Fairlight, located in Avenue Rd on the edge of the Old Town. Close to the elegant Manor House Hotel and both the LNWR (Avenue Station) and GWR (Leamington) railway stations, 'Fairlight' was both exclusive and convenient.

⁴⁴ *Birmingham Mail*, 26 May 1871: 4; *Daily News*, 31 May 1871: 1.



1889 Ordnance Survey Map of Leamington, showing Fairlight (33 Avenue Rd) at centre.
 ©Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2013). All rights reserved. (1889).

It is unclear whether Augurio, now in his fifties, continued to play an active role in the business after his move to Leamington, although it continued to bear his name. Certainly Fairlight (Edgbaston) had been re-tenanted by 1874.⁴⁵ In 1874, the company was instrumental in co-ordinating Birmingham's response to the humanitarian crisis occasioned by the Carlist War in Spain. In March of that year, the company had sent a donation of £5 5s to the subscription fund raised by the Spanish community in London, which confirms that the Pereras were connected with, or at least known to, London's powerful Spanish business community.⁴⁶ In June 1874, 'in order that Birmingham may co-operate in the good work,' the Perera family opened a Birmingham auxiliary subscription list and organized a fundraising concert, which featured Augurio's son Cortes as violinist in the Haydn quartet.⁴⁷

Augurio and Louisa, with Adrienne and Carmen, remained in Leamington until the end of the 1877 season, but there are few records of their presence beyond the regular

⁴⁵ In May 1874, an advertisement was placed in the *Birmingham Daily Post* (21 May 1874): 'Nurse (experienced). Wanted, about 25 years of age. Apply, Fairlight, Ampton Rd, Edgbaston.' Although no contact name is given, it seems likely that this advert was placed by the Jonas family, who were in residence by Autumn that year. According to a post on the British Genealogy message board, two of the Jonas children were born at Fairlight, in September 1874 and February 1876: Phillip, 'From Berger 1861-70,' Boam, Jonas Families 3.1.2013, 7.37pm. *British Genealogy Forums*. www.british-genealogy.com : consulted 12 Aug. 2013.

⁴⁶ *Morning Post*, 30 March 1874: 8.

⁴⁷ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 6 Jun 1874: 8. The Manchester branch also set up a subscription, and in April 1874, the following advertisement appeared in the *Manchester Courier*: 'Perera Brother & Barker, of 45, Faulkner-street, earnestly SOLICIT CONTRIBUTIONS towards the FUND FOR RELIEF OF SICK AND WOUNDED IN SPAIN, whence the advices received become more and more appalling. All moneys or hospital requisites sent to above address shall be promptly forwarded to the Committee, who are now fitting up steamers for the special service'. *Manchester Courier*, 21 Apr. 1874: 1.

residents' lists published in the *Leamington Spa Courier*. A rare exception is the inclusion of Perera's name in the list of guests attending a Garden Party hosted by 'The Lawn Rackets Club' in the grounds of the Manor House Hotel, along with Major and Mrs Gem.⁴⁸ Strangely, on 12 May 1877, the family are recorded as arriving at the Manor House Hotel, which was just across the road from Fairlight, although they remain listed at their home address too.⁴⁹ On 8 September 1877, an advert appeared in the *Leamington Spa Courier* stating that Messrs. Blakemore and Co would be selling the contents of Fairlight (Leamington) by auction at midday on both 19 and 20 September,

Comprising Mahogany and Painted Bedroom Suites, Mahogany 3-door Wardrobe with glass to centre door; Brass and Iron Bedsteads and Hangings, Hair and Wool Mattresses, Feather Beds, Blankets and Quilts; Mahogany Chests of Drawers, Painted ditto; complete set of Chamber Ware; Brussels, Pile and Kidderminster Carpets; Oak Hall Furniture, Dining Room Suite covered in Leather; Mahogany Enclosed Sideboard, Mahogany Dining Table, Mahogany bookcases, Writing Table, Damask Curtains and Valances, and Timepiece, Rosewood Piano, full compass by Collard and Collard, Gilt Chimney Glasses, Walnut Drawing Room Suite in Crimson and Gold Brocade; Handsome Crimson and Gold Brocade Curtains with Rich Valances; Loo, Occasional and Card Tables in Walnut; 5ft 6in cheffioneer [?] with Plate-glass Back and Marble Top; Walnut Grand Piano full compass, by Charles Russell; Oil Paintings, Engravings, and Water Colors, China, Glass, Kitchen Furniture, Culinary Utensils, and miscellaneous Effects.

The family's last appearance in the *Leamington Spa Courier's* residents' list is 29 September 1877. While they left Fairlight, however, they only moved across the road, spending the rest of the season at the Manor House Hotel.⁵⁰

Augurio and Louisa returned to Birmingham in the autumn of 1877, but they would continue to spend part of each year in Leamington until at least 1882. In 1878, the couple (now listing their hometown as Birmingham rather than Leamington), accompanied at times by one or both unmarried daughters, spent the season at the Manor House Hotel.⁵¹ Mr Perera of Birmingham returned to the hotel alone in August 1879 and was joined by Louisa and the girls in September.⁵² The whole family returned for the summer of 1880,⁵³

⁴⁸ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 24 Jul 1875: 4.

⁴⁹ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 12 May 1877: 10.

⁵⁰ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 6 Oct - 20 Oct. 1877.

⁵¹ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 13 Jul. - 30 Nov. 1878. In October 1878, 'Mr and Mrs Perera of Birmingham' were joined at the Manor House Hotel by 'Mr and Mrs Cortes Perera of Edgbaston' (*Leamington Spa Courier*, 12 Oct., 19 Oct. 1878). In December 1878, only 'Mr Perera, Birmingham' is in residence (*Leamington Spa Courier*, 14 Dec 1878: 10).

⁵² *Leamington Spa Courier*, 9 Aug. 1879: 10; *Leamington Spa Courier*, 6 Sep. - 18 Oct., 1879. In September 1879, the family's hometown in the Manor House Hotel residents' list changes back from Birmingham to Leamington. *Leamington Spa Courier*, 13 Sep. 1879: 10.

⁵³ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 3 Jul. - 23 Oct. 1880.

and again in Autumn 1881, now listed once again as 'Mr, Mrs and the Misses Perera of Leamington' and staying not at the Manor House, but at the Clarendon Hotel.⁵⁴ Augurio stayed on alone into December, when Cortes joined him.⁵⁵



Postcard of the Manor House Hotel, Leamington.

Source: <http://www.oldstratforduponavon.com/leamington.html>

6. Birmingham, Leamington ... Paris: 1881-1888

On the night of the April 1881 census, Augurio was back in Edgbaston.⁵⁶ Listed as 'John,' we find him staying with his eldest daughter Francisca and her husband, around the corner from Cortes and his family:

1881 census: 140 Hagley Rd, Edgbaston
John PHILLIPS. H. 44. Solicitor. Birmingham
Francisca. W. 33.

John PERERA. Wife's father. Mar. 54. Merchant. Spain
Thomas PHILLIP. Brother. Mar. 42. No occupation. Bham.
[3 female servants]

1881 census: Stanmore Rd, Edgbaston
Cortes PERERA. H. 31. Merchant South America. Birmingham
Clara. W. 29. Middx Bow

⁵⁴ 'Clarendon Hotel,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 3 Sep. 1881: 9; 'Hotel Arrivals,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 5 Nov. 1881: 9.

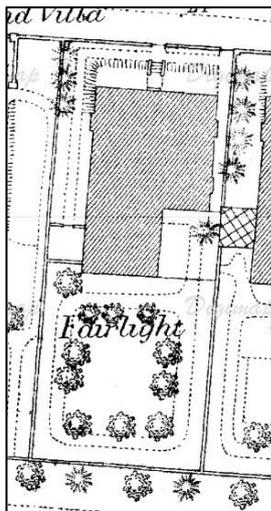
⁵⁵ 'Hotel Arrivals,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 17 Dec. 1881: 10.

⁵⁶ I have not managed to locate Louisa, Adrienne or Carmen on the 1881 census; it is possible that at some point between October 1880 and April 1881 they had gone abroad.

Maud. D. 10. Scholar. Birmingham
 Adrienne. D. 5. Scholar.
 [two female servants]

Both generations of the family continued visiting Leamington during the 1880s. Augurio remained at the Clarendon for the early part of 1882, where his fellow guests included Count Metternich, later Prussian and German ambassador in London.⁵⁷ The family joined him for the summer 1882 season, where they coincided with Colonel Jerome Buonaparte, grand-nephew of the Emperor Napoleon.⁵⁸ Augurio was back at the Clarendon in March 1883, while from October to December 1883, the whole family were listed at 51 The Parade.⁵⁹ Their departure 'from 51, the Parade to Paris' was announced on 8 December.⁶⁰ This is most probably their permanent departure from Leamington, although a 'Mr Perera, Birmingham' (most likely Cortes), briefly visited the Manor House Hotel in March 1885 in the company of a fellow Spaniard, 'Senor Estevey [sic] y Diaz' of Cadiz.⁶¹

In the spring of 1888, the Leamington Fairlight was advertised for sale or rent through the Great Charles St office by a 'Mr Perera' who may have been either Augurio or Cortes:



FAIRLIGHT, AVENUE ROAD: This most convenient Detached VILLA, containing three capital Reception Rooms, six Bed Rooms, two Kitchens, Butler's Pantry, Fruit Garden; Gas; Hard and Soft Water, and every convenience as a Family Residence. To be Let or Sold Freehold. Apply at Premises, or Mr Perera, 28, Great Charles Street, Birmingham.⁶²

Picture (left): detail of the 1887 town plan of Leamington.
 ©Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2013). All rights reserved. (1887).

We do know, however, that the family retained ownership of the house, at least until 1909. A 1904 indenture bears the signatures of both Augurio and his son in law John

⁵⁷ 'Clarendon Hotel,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 14 Jan. 1882: 10.

⁵⁸ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 24 Jun. -29 Jul. 1882.

⁵⁹ 'Clarendon Hotel,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 3 Mar. 1883: 9; 'The Parade,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 13 Oct. 1883: 10.

⁶⁰ 'Departures,' *Leamington Spa Courier*, 8 Dec. 1883: 10.

⁶¹ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 14 March 1885. This is probably José Estevez y Diaz (1853-aft. 1911), a wine agent from Jerez de la Frontera, Cádiz who was resident in Liverpool from 1876-86 and in London after 1888.

⁶² *Leamington Spa Courier*, 31 March - 5 May 1888.

Phillips,⁶³ while Phillips signed the 1909 conveyance that finally ended the Perera family's ownership of the Leamington Fairlight after more than thirty years.⁶⁴

7. Final Years: Italy, 1889-1905

After the Pereras left Leamington for Paris in December 1883, we lose their trail for a little while before they resurface in Italy. We know that on 24 September 1889 they were in Venice for Carmen's marriage to Le Chevalier Gustave Koppel, an Italian citizen. The couple first had a civil ceremony at the Municipio (Town Hall) and were then married in a Church of England ceremony by the English Chaplain Rev. Jameson.⁶⁵ The latter took place at the Palazzo Dolgorouki, a mansion on the Zattere owned by a Russian Princess who had been a longstanding mistress of Tsar Alexander II, although we don't know if she was a personal friend or had just rented out the venue for the wedding. The marriage was announced in the *Leamington Spa Courier*, which described the bride as 'youngest daughter of JBA Perera, of Birmingham'.⁶⁶

Augurio and Charlotte appear to have remained in Italy. They had some connection with the Tuscan city of Siena, for that is where they both died and were buried. Charlotte died on 18 July 1904 at the age of 81 and was buried two days later.⁶⁷ An indenture for the Leamington Fairlight dated 24 September 1904 records Augurio's address as the Hotel de France in Florence, so perhaps he travelled here after Charlotte's death to visit Carmen and Gustavo.⁶⁸ Or perhaps he was simply on holiday; the Hotel de France, incorporating a Pension Anglaise, was located at 6-8 Via Solferino, a street full of hotels and boarding houses in the NW quarter of the city.⁶⁹ Augurio himself died on 1 November 1905 and was buried two days later at Siena's main cemetery.⁷⁰

⁶³ 24 September 1904. Indenture. 'Fairlight,' Avenue Road, Leamington. Copy supplied 14 January 2021 by Robert Holland.

⁶⁴ 11 January 1909. Conveyance. 'Fairlight,' Avenue Road, Leamington. Information supplied 14 January 2021 by Robert Holland.

⁶⁵ Marriage. Palazzo Dolgoronki, Venice. Sep. 24th 1889. Gustave Koppel & Carmen Mariana Perera. *UK, Foreign and Overseas Registers of British Subjects, 1628-1969. RG33: Foreign Registers and Returns, 1627-1690. Piece 121: Venice: Marriages, 1874-1947.* p.3. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 16 November 2023.

⁶⁶ 'Marriages'. *Leamington Spa Courier*, 5 Oct., 1889: 5.

⁶⁷ Burial entry. 18 July 1904. Charlotte de Perera. Cimitero de Siena. Copy supplied 15 April 2021 by Robert Holland.

⁶⁸ 24 September 1904. Indenture. 'Fairlight,' Avenue Road, Leamington. Copy supplied 14 January 2021 by Robert Holland.

⁶⁹ *Northern Italy. Handbook for Travellers.* Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1913: 546.

⁷⁰ Burial entry. 3 November 1905. Giov. Batt. Augurio de Perera. Cimitero di Siena. Copy supplied 23 February 2021 by Robert Holland. The burial record gives his age as 85, although most other records agree he was born in 1822, meaning he was more likely 83.

What of the Perera children? Augurio and Louisa's eldest daughter Francisca was the only member of the family to remain in Edgbaston, with her solicitor husband John Palmer Phillips. The couple had no children; John died in 1913 and Francisca in 1930.⁷¹ Her brother Cortes stayed in Birmingham until 1890 and then moved to London with his family (see Appendix ii). Carmen and Adrienne both settled in Florence. Carmen's husband Gustavo died there on 28 August 1905 and was buried at the Cimiterio Evangelico degli Allori.⁷² Carmen herself died on 12 March 1931 and was buried alongside her husband.⁷³ When Adrienne died on 13 May 1938, she was buried close by.⁷⁴

Francisca's death in 1930 brought to an end the Perera family's connection with the English Midlands, almost a century after Augurio Perera senior had moved his family and his business up from London and sixty years after his son had become one of the pioneers of lawn tennis.

⁷¹ Principal Probate Registry (London): 'PHILLIPS, John Palmer of 305 Hagley Rd, Birmingham, retired solicitor, died 25 January 1913. Probate: Birmingham, 27 February to Francisca Eliza Phillips, widow, Thomas Henry Phillips, gentleman, and Charles Ekin, solicitor. Effects: £78080 1s 8d'; 'PHILLIPS, Francisca Eliza, of 305 Hagley Rd, Edgbaston, Birmingham, widow, died 23 March 1930. Probate Birmingham, 26 May, to the Midland Bank Executor and Trustee Company Limited. Effects: £2226 14s 10d.'

⁷² Memorial Page. Gustavo Koppel. Died 28 Aug. 1905. Cimiterio Evangelico degli Allori, Florence. ID 160527160. www.findagrave.com : accessed 16 November 2023.

⁷³ Memorial Page. Carmen de Perera. Died 12 March 1931. Cimiterio Evangelico degli Allori, Florence. ID 160525255. www.findagrave.com : accessed 16 November 2023.

⁷⁴ Memorial Page. Adrienne Luisa de Perera. Died 13 May 1938. Cimiterio Evangelico degli Allori, Florence. ID 160525254. www.findagrave.com : accessed 16 November 2023.

Appendices

i. A note on names

The surname PERERA is not common in Spain. Spanish naming convention normally makes use of two surnames: the patronym (father's surname) and the matronym (mother's surname). Spain's National Statistical Institute (INE) records around 12,000 people with PERERA as one of their two surnames in 2011. They are scattered throughout Spain, with notable concentrations born in the Canary Islands (Las Palmas, Santa Cruz de Tenerife) and in Badajoz.⁷⁵ Heraldic websites identify longstanding PERERA lines in Asturias, the Canary Islands, Catalonia and Aragon.⁷⁶ Eduardo J Farias Ramos states that the name originated in Asturias and spread throughout Spain, with regional variants including PEREA, PEREIRA and PEREDA.⁷⁷ Spanish women have historically retained their surnames on marriage, which can make the genealogist's job much more straightforward, but in the case of the Perera family, Francisca (the Spanish-born matriarch) seems always to have used her husband's name after their arrival in England. This may reflect the family's desire to adopt English custom, or it may be the result of English record-keeping practices.

While the family retained the original spelling of their surname PERERA in all extant records, the same is not true of their forenames. Sometimes these were anglicised (e.g. Juan => John, José => Joseph, Pedro => Peter), either by choice, or by administrators unfamiliar with the Spanish original. At other times individuals alternated between different given names. For example, 'our' Perera's full set of forenames, given on his marriage in 1847, seems to have been Juan Bautista Luis Augurio, although this is the only occasion on which he includes 'Luis'. He is most commonly recorded as Augurio (his 'professional' name and the name of his company), and on one occasion as John (1881 census; see below). Augurio was never a common forename in Spain and is now exceptionally rare; the INE records its incidence in Spain in 2012 as between 0 and 20 people in the whole country.⁷⁸

ii. Cortes Perera: Birmingham, 1871-1890 and London, 1890-?

On 17 May 1870, Augurio and Louisa's only son José Cortes Augurio Perera (known as Cortes) married Clara Maud Thorne at Greenwich St Paul. The groom, although just 20,

⁷⁵ Data taken from the Statistical use of the Register dated 1 Jan 2011. www.ine.es.

⁷⁶ For example, the website *Apellidos España*, which has an extensive entry on heraldic sources for the name PERERA in different parts of Spain. <http://www.xn--apellidosespaa-2nb.com/apellido/perera.html>

⁷⁷ The Galego-Portuguese variant PEREIRA is more common. INE records some 65,000 people with PEREIRA as one of their two surnames in 2011. Again, they are scattered throughout Spain, with significant concentrations in the Galician provinces of A Coruña, Lugo, Ourense and Pontevedra, and smaller concentrations in Huelva and León.

⁷⁸ INE. Estadística del Padrón Continuo. 1 Jan. 2012. www.ine.es.

was described as 'of full age' and a merchant, residing at the Greyhound Hotel, Greenwich. His bride, whose family home was nearby in Greenwich's Ashburnam Grove, was just 18, the daughter of Richard Samuel Thorne, described as a 'gentleman'. Cortes and Clara returned to Birmingham, where their daughter Maud Hildegard – Augurio and Louisa's first grandchild – was born in February 1871. A second daughter, Adrienne Clara, was born in 1876. By 1879, Cortes and Clara were living at a house on Stanmore Rd, Edgbaston, which like the family's other two properties, was called 'Fairlight'.⁷⁹

Cortes was a talented composer and violinist, while Clara was a singer and pianist, and the couple soon became a cornerstone of Birmingham's amateur music and theatrical scene.⁸⁰ They were active in the Edgbaston Amateur Musical Union, where Cortes became known as 'the very life and soul of the Amateur Operatic Society,' for whom he played Captain Corcoran in *HMS Pinafore* in 1887,⁸¹ and directed Clara in the starring role of Phyllis in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*.⁸² He evidently maintained a connection with his father's homeland, whether for business or family reasons, as in February 1887, *The Dart* reported that 'Mr Cortes Perera contemplates a second journey to Spain,' lamenting that 'without his valuable assistance', the Clef Club's proposed performance of "The Pirates of Penzance" 'would be difficult to get on'.⁸³ His compositions, generally for voice or piano were often premiered in Birmingham,⁸⁴ but were known much more widely. His piece for violin, *Morceu Chantant* seems to have been especially popular, being performed as far away as Australia.⁸⁵



Cortes Perera, Hon.
Secretary of the Clef Club,
as depicted in *The Dart*.

In 1885, Cortes founded and became Honorary Secretary of the Clef Club, a musical society whose Honorary President was none other than Sir Arthur Sullivan himself. The Clef Club committee were sketched for the cover of the Birmingham magazine *The Dart*, providing us with a rare depiction of a member of the Perera family (*left*).

At some point during 1890 or early 1891, Cortes, Clara and their family left Birmingham for London, where Cortes continued his business activities and Clara worked as a journalist, publishing articles in several magazines and newspapers.⁸⁶ They settled first at 30 Linden Gardens in Chiswick, where the 1891 census records Cortes as a 'Cigar

⁷⁹ Perera, José Cortes Augurio. 1880 *Kelly's Directory of Birmingham*, p.146. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

⁸⁰ Their performances are regularly reported in the local press and the national musical press, e.g., *The Musical World*.

⁸¹ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 23 Feb. 1887: 4.

⁸² 'Musical Gossip,' *The Dart*, 13 Apr. 1888: 6.

⁸³ 'Chat,' *The Dart*, 18 Feb 1887: 6.

⁸⁴ e.g. *Birmingham Daily Post*, 20 Apr 1878: 8.

⁸⁵ *The Register* [Adelaide, Australia], 17 Aug. 1912: 13.

⁸⁶ For example, 'A Trip to Parame,' *The Dart: The Birmingham Pictorial*, 12 May 1893: 14.

Merchant' with a shop at 152 Piccadilly, remaining there until at least 1896.⁸⁷ By 1898 they had moved to 4 Perryn Rd, Acton,⁸⁸ and within three had moved further west to 3 Royal Parade, North Sheen (Surrey), where the 1901 census records Cortes as a 'Wine Agent, own account'.

Things seem then to have gone downhill. In April 1904, one Cortes Perera, described as a 31-year-old [*sic* – he was 53] 'commercial traveller' of Thorney Hedge Road, Gunnersbury, was charged by Warwick County Police with 'obtaining £3 by false pretences from Harold Smith, King's Arms Hotel, Kenilworth, licensed victualler.' Apparently, Cortes, an employee of the London wine merchants Blandy Brothers, had befriended Smith over several months, selling Smith wine and making out that he held a position of responsibility in the company. Smith advanced Perera several sums of money and then discovered that not only was Perera simply a travelling salesman employed by Blandys, but he had been sacked by them in March that year. There being some confusion regarding Perera's agreement with Blandys and whether or not he had been authorised by the company to collect money on their behalf, the case was dismissed from lack of evidence.⁸⁹

The 1904 court case is the last documentary record I have found pertaining to Cortes Perera. At the time of the 1911 census, Clara is living with their married daughter Adrienne near Kew Gardens, but Cortes is nowhere to be seen.⁹⁰ Clara died at Charing Cross Hospital on Christmas Day 1915.⁹¹ Cortes's end remains unknown, although he is described in a newspaper article of 1924 (about the Edgbaston Operatic Society) as 'the late Mr Cortes Perera'.⁹²

iii. The Manchester Connection, 1855-1915

The Manchester branch of the family business appears to have developed separately from the Birmingham branch after Augurio senior's death in 1855. Pedro and Frederico took over the Manchester operation, which they renamed Messrs. Perera, Brother, and Barker.

⁸⁷ Electoral Register. 1894. Parish of St George Hanover Square. No. 2252. Perera, José Cortes Augurio, of 31 Lindon Gardens, Chiswick. Shop, 152 Piccadilly. *Electoral Registers 1832-1932*. www.findmypast.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023; Perera, Cortes. *Kelly's Directory. London Suburban, pt. 3. Northern*, 1896: 1317. www.findmypast.co.uk : accessed 24 November 2023.

⁸⁸ Perera, Cortes. *Kelly's Directory of Middlesex*, 1898: 539.

⁸⁹ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 8 Apr. 1904: 2. The article states that Perera had been employed by Blandys for three or four years; he covered the Birmingham district and was paid £5 per week to cover salary and expenses. He was arrested in London and spent some time on remand in prison.

⁹⁰ Clara is described as 'married' rather than 'widowed,' which suggests that Cortes was still alive.

⁹¹ The estate of Clara Maud Perera, of 50 Leyborne Park, Kew Gardens, Surrey (wife of José Augurio Perera), died 25 December 1915 at Charing Cross Hospital, was probated at London on 10 February 1916 to [her daughter] Adrienne Clara LUTTICKE (wife of Ernest George Theodore Lutticke) and the said EGTL, commercial clerk. Effects £21 15s 1d. Again, the description of Clara as 'wife of' rather than 'widow of' José Augurio Perera suggests that he was still (believed to be) alive at this time.

⁹² 'Midland Musical Progress,' *Birmingham Daily Post*, 30 Oct. 1924: 5.

Their principal business continued to be import of cigars by the case, although they also imported wine and other goods.⁹³ Both brothers married locally: Pedro Ricardo to Mary Sadler in Chorlton in 1856,⁹⁴ and Frederico to Mary Hannay Adshead on 27 July 1859 at St Paul's, Stalybridge.⁹⁵ Their widowed mother, Francisca, lived with one or other brother until her death on 9 August 1876 at Frederico's mansion, "The Grange" at Singleton near Blackpool.⁹⁶

Like their brother Augurio, both Pedro and Frederico were keen sportsmen, playing cricket for various local northwest teams throughout the 1850s and 1860s. In the summer of 1874, Frederico joined the committee of the project to set up a Racquet club in Manchester.⁹⁷ Could he have been influenced by his elder brother's work in Leamington? Pedro was also a notable musician, who at one time owned a cello thought to be a Stradivarius, but which turned out to be a rather inferior Ruggerius.⁹⁸

Perera, Brother, and Barker was dissolved in 1879 on Barker's bankruptcy,⁹⁹ and finally wound up in December 1893 when the brothers retired.¹⁰⁰ From 1895 until at least 1929, the Manchester company was known as Perera, Brother's successors, shipping merchants, and based at 21 Chorlton St.¹⁰¹ Frederico died on 20 April 1909 at his home on the Isle of Man. Pedro, who married three times in total, died in 1915 at his home in Hammersmith and was buried on 17 December 1915 at Hanwell Cemetery, Middlesex.

⁹³ *Manchester Courier*, various. They were also keen to build up the social side of the business; in November 1856, the partners treated their employees to 'a sumptuous dinner' at the Chatsworth Inn, Greenheys (*Manchester Times*, Nov 1856), while the annual dinner three years later in February 1859 was described as 'a most sumptuous and substantial dinner'. *Manchester Times*, 12 Feb 1859.

⁹⁴ GRO. Marriages. Perera, Pedro Ricardo and Mary Sadler. Q1 1856. Chorlton. Vol. 8c. Page 501.

⁹⁵ *Blackburn Standard*, 3 Aug. 1859: 3.

⁹⁶ *Manchester Courier*, 10 Aug 1876. Francisca's will was proved at Lancaster on 29 September 1876 by Frederick, 'the son the sole Executor.'

⁹⁷ *Manchester Times*, 1 Aug. 1874.

⁹⁸ *Lancaster Gazette*, 26 Jan 1878.

⁹⁹ 'Partnerships Dissolved,' *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 20 Jan. 1879: 3.

¹⁰⁰ 'Notice is hereby given...' *London Gazette*, 27 March 1894: 1809.

¹⁰¹ *Kelly's Directory of Manchester*, 1895; *Kelly's Directory of Manchester, Salford and Suburbs*, 1929.

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