

CHARLES JONATHAN SARELL ONGLEY Born 1852: Died 14th June 1934
Charles Jonathan Sarell Ongley was born on the 10th November 1852 at Chalepa near Canea (Hania) on the island of Crete. His father was Henry Sarell Ongley, who had been appointed as the British Consul in 1837 to the island of Crete. His mother was Lucy Sarell, who was Henry's first cousin. Charles Jonathan was the seventh child to be born, and a further six children were to be born after him. When he was three, his mother had a daughter, Lucy, but she died aged two and a quarter, in 1857. In 1858, when Charles was five, the family moved to Patras, where Henry Sarell Ongley was now the British Consul. Another baby, Percy, was born almost immediately the family arrived, in November of that year. Charles grew up in Patras [postcard views] with his brothers and sisters, a large family even though death claimed one of his elder brothers, Alfred. The family was also in touch with their cousins in Constantinople where their grandmother Euphrosyne Sarell and Lucy's brothers and sisters were living. In 1870, Charlotte, Charles Jonathan's eldest sister was married to Francis Henry Stafford O'Brien, a Royal Navy Lieutenant. The wedding took place in two parts, the religious ceremony took place on board the H.M.S. Enterprise on the 30th November 1870, and the civil ceremony in her father's office on the twelfth of December. His elder brother Henry Hardy Ongley, had by this time, secured employment first with his father as a Clerk in the Consulate in Patras at the age of sixteen, and then in 1866 he had become Acting Consul in Resht before joining his Uncle, Charles Alison in Tehran. It is likely that Charles joined his father also in the Consulate, when he turned sixteen, But he chose not to pursue a career in the Consular service and in February 1875 he obtained a commission as a Sub Lieutenant in the British Army in the First West India Regiment which was at that time in Sierra Leon. His career as an Officer was very short lived. Before the end of 1875, Charles had resigned his commission. Events concerning his brother, Henry Hardy Ongley, and his father, had resulted in his father commuting his pension in July of 1875, and in Charles's words becoming "insolvent". As a result, Charles felt obliged to resign his commission. From this point on there appears to be a rift between Charles and his family, although he kept in touch with his elder sister Caroline (Charlotte's twin) and also his niece, Henry's daughter. Charles enlisted under the name Charles Jonathan Sarell into the 7th Hussars as a private, and rose through the ranks to become a regimental sergeant, ending up in South Africa. On 16th August 1881, he married Susan Smith, still using his assumed name, at Pinetown in Natal, which was the command of the 7th Hussars. Shortly afterwards he left the army for a second time. In 1883 Susan bore him a son, Grey Sarell Ongley, followed in January of 1885 with another Thomas de Stafford Wessels Ongley. They would have two more children, Irene born in 1890, and Aristides born in 1894. But the marriage ended in divorce. Charles lost touch with his children who remained with their mother. In 1898, he married Emily Harriet Skinner in Barberton, but became engulfed in the Boer War, when he was made a prisoner of war, though he had not taken up arms. He was imprisoned in Capetown, and whilst there, his house was burgled. It was at this time, that Charles lost his remaining contact with his sister and niece, and for nearly thirty years had no news from his family. Furthermore, he also lost touch with his children, though as his daughter Irene grew up she made a concerted effort to keep in touch. After his time in the 7th Hussars, Charles, had a number of jobs in South

Africa, and certainly applied for employment in Government posts. But he also became employed in book-keeping for a hotel. With his second wife, he adopted Iris, but this caused Irene great hurt, that he should spend his time on his adopted daughter and not on her, his own flesh and blood. In 1926, Charles's younger brother Frederick made enquiries of the Provincial Secretary of Natal as to whether there were any descendants of Charles, and as a consequence, contact was briefly and tenuously re-established with Charles who was living at Garth House, S. Coast Junction, Natal. Contact was also made between Fred and his niece Irene. At this time Charles describes himself, at the age of seventy-three as: "probably thanks to a clean and abstemious life and to health surroundings, I am not only still alive but comparatively strong and healthy, though getting on in years." At the age of 82 Charles Jonathan Sarell Ongley died on the 14th June 1934 at 360 Berea Rd Durban. He was buried at Stellawood Cemetery. * * * Postscript: Charles's son Grey Sarell Ongley had a daughter, Doreen, who with her Grand-daughter Michelle Frost, were intrigued by their lost family history. After the ending of apartheid, South Africa was opened up in many ways, one of which was the arrival of an Australian soap opera on the local television. The director was one Richard Sarell, the grandson of William Sarell who was Charles Jonathan Sarell Ongley's cousin. Contact was made and through Richard, Michelle made contact with the Sarell's in Britain, and with Peter Ongley, Frederick Ongley's son.