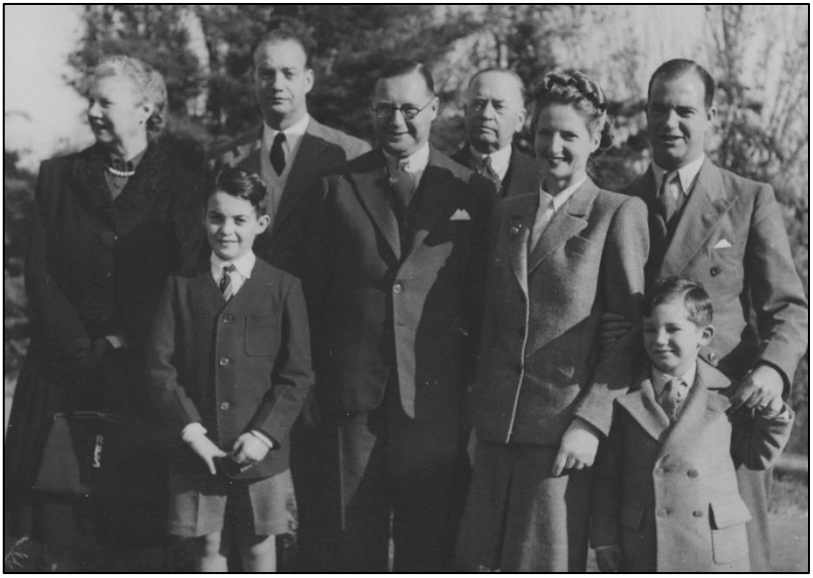
The Sellers Family in Portugal – Part 3

The Fourth and Fifth Generations – up to 2024

This is the third and last (for now!) of a three-part series on the Oporto-based Sellers family, which has been in Portugal since the early 19th century. Part I of the story outlined the beginnings of the family's long association with Portugal and, in particular, the exploits and achievements of the 'founding father', FWS.[1] Part 2 shared a lesser known episode of FWS's life,[2] and Part 3 brings us up to the contemporary history of the fourth and fifth generations.

By Michael Sellers



The Third, Fourth and Fifth Generations of Sellers

From left: Beatrice Emily (Adam); Brian; Ronald; Fred (Frederick Custance); Joan; Freddie. The boys are Ian (left) and Michael (right)

[1] Published in the BHSP's 47th Annual Report and Review, 2020: https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/the-sellers-family-in-portugal-part-1.
[2] Published in the BHSP's 48th Annual Report and Review, 2021: https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/the-sellers-family-in-portugal-part-2-frederick-william-sellers-(1815-1877)-and-his-second-family.

The Fourth Generation

With communications continuing to improve as the world moved into the twentieth century, sea travel between Portugal and England became more frequent and reliably served by the Royal Mail and Booth lines on their runs to South America, calling in at Oporto and Lisbon on both their outward and return voyages.

Boys from the British families in these two cities, who would have previously been home tutored or in small private schools, began to go to boarding schools in England or Scotland. Fred's three sons were no exception. Not having been to boarding school himself, Fred took advice from family and friends within the communities that had already sent boys to England. Thus Ronald, the eldest son, at the age of 14 was dispatched to Lancing as soon as WW1 had ended. His brother Brian followed to Tonbridge five years later. Finally, Freddie, the youngest of the family went off in the summer of 1927 to yet a third school, St. Edward's Oxford where Philip Kendall and John and Willie Smithes, all from Oporto wine families, were already studying.

Life cannot have been easy for the three Sellers boys in travelling to school in England. Fred had never registered their births in the appropriate Registry in Lisbon, neither had he registered them with the British Embassy to claim either Portuguese or British citizenship. Consequently, they had to obtain Certificates of Registration under the provisions of the Aliens Order of 1920 to attend schools in England. Freddie's Certificate, issued by the Oxford City Council, states him to be of "No Nationality", as authorized by a letter of the Home Office dated 1st December 1930. The provisions of this document required the holder to report to the Police for every change of address, on arrival in any new district or when ceasing to be resident in the United Kingdom.

These restrictions, allied to the irregularity of passenger vessel sailing times, meant that the shorter school holidays of Christmas and Easter were mostly spent with relations in Scotland or the Home Counties; the long summer holidays being all the more enjoyable for both boys and parents. Only much later with the introduction of train

services to the Peninsular via Paris did it become possible for most school children to be able to travel home for the shorter school holidays.

In a letter written by Fred Sellers from Lisbon to his son Freddie in February 1948 concerning some family documents, in a sort of "mea culpa" Fred confesses that……

> "*None of you were registered civilly, nor was my father, nor any of the family. It evidently wasn't bothered about in those days. When the War broke out in '39 and you boys wanted to join up, I had to go to the Registo Civil, at the age of 61, and give notice of my birth, after which, at the same Registo, I registered the births of Ronald, Brian, Joan and you. It is all such a nuisance!"*

After leaving Oxford in the summer of 1932, Freddie returned briefly to Lisbon before moving to Oporto where he joined the group of first cousins and their friends enjoying the carefree life of Oporto in the Thirties. Much of life reverted around the beaches of Leça da Palmeira and the sports facilities of the Oporto Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club in Campo Alegre, close to the homes of many British families at that time.

Rugby and rowing took up much of Freddie's time, both sports being strongly supported by the many young men then living in Oporto and Lisbon in the period prior to WWII. Freddie captained the Oporto XV against Lisbon as well as leading the Combined Portugal XV against the Royal Navy. On the river Douro rowing enjoyed a golden era amongst the members of the Oporto Boat Club, which had been founded in June 1866 and its competitors, the Clube Naval Portuense (1868) and the Clube Fluvial Portuense (1876).

Notable among the members of the OBC were the brothers Joaõ, Rui and Eduardo Brito e Cunha, as well as Fernando and other members of the Nicolau d'Aldeida family, many of whom had attended schools in England and brought their enthusiasm for all sports back to their home country. Cricket was excluded from their enthusiasm, being considered an activity that took up too much time when the beaches and tennis had the added benefit of attracting the fairer sex!

Other members of the OBC were Harold and Leonard Flower, whose brother, Eric, had been Sales Manager in Lisbon for Coats & Clark, the Vila Nova de Gaia-based Scottish thread makers. Eric moved the HQ of sales back to Oporto in the early Thirties, assuming responsibility for the sales for the whole country, which required strengthening the sales operation, Eric recruited Freddie Sellers into the team, tasking him with expanding the company's sales into the interior of the country, from the northern border with Spain to below Coimbra. Over a period of four years, Freddie covered this large area, travelling to the remotest parts of Portugal and forming a love of the Minho, Tras-os-montes and the Beiras which remained with him for the rest of his life.

Freddie's success in sales prompted the local management to widen his knowledge of other areas of the business and in early 1937 Freddie was packed off to Manchester, then the wool buying and processing centre of the Coats Group, where he went through a six month training period in the sourcing operations of the raw materials that supplied the thread manufacturing plants around the world. He returned briefly to Oporto before proceeding in 1938 to Paisley in Scotland, the headquarters of the Coats Patons group, where he completed his knowledge of the administration and overall organization of the world-wide thread conglomerate.

Leça beach in the 1930s; Freddie, Fred, Brian and Joan Sellers

Joan and Freddie Sellers with their father's 1929 Rolls Royce

It was in Paisley that he met and fell in love with Loretta (Lorna), the only daughter of John and Anne Ross of Ayr, who was working in Paisley as secretary to one of the senior directors of the company. Lorna's father John hailed originally from Tain in County Ross and had moved south to Coatbridge near Glasgow after the end of WWI, having taken part in the Gallipoli landings on 28th May 1915 and been in many of the actions until he was severely wounded on 1st January 1916. He was evacuated to hospital in Egypt and subsequently transferred to Greenwich Hospital, where he underwent a series of operations. He rejoined his battalion and saw action at the Somme, Vimy Ridge and Arras, before being captured on 29th March 1916 and remained a PoW until the end of the War. He died on 15th April 1957 from complications caused by inoperable shrapnel received during the actions in Turkey.

With the threat of war with Germany becoming increasingly likely, Freddie volunteered for army service and was enlisted in the Military Police. Early training took place in Aldershot and he was then deployed to military duties in Kent. With the outbreak of war in September 1939, travel within Britain became more restricted and Freddie and Lorna had little opportunity to see each other until they married in a quiet ceremony in Glasgow on 23rd March 1940.

During WWI the need early on in the conflict for military information on the movements of enemy forces, the development of armaments and the prediction of opposing strategy lead to the formation, in August 1914, of the Intelligence Corps (IC), which remained active beyond the end of the war until it was disbanded in 1929. In July 1940 King George VI formally agreed to the re-establishment of the Corps in the face of the relentless bombardment of London and key military targets around the country, and on 15th July a new Corps was created by Army Order 112. It was clear that the threat of invasion by Hitler's forces was very real and Britain's military command required urgent sourcing of reliable information, such as had been supplied by the Intelligence Corps in the earlier conflict. An urgent recruitment drive sought out the former members of the group disbanded in 1929, some of whom had rejoined the military at the outbreak of the war. All regiments and military units were canvassed for personnel who had achieved a certain level of academic standard, had travel experience and knowledge of the Continent and, above all, had a command of any European languages. Freddie's unit, having identified that he met all the criteria, advanced his name for enrollment into the IC and, in early 1941, he transferred initially to the training centre at Maresfield in East Sussex, then subsequently to Ashford in Kent, as well as a period at Bletchley Park, where many of the personnel were from the IC.

On 28th October 1940, Lorna gave birth to their first son, Michael Warren, at 10 Oakley Terrace in the District of Camlachie, Glasgow. On the birth certificate, Freddie's occupation is given as 'Cotton Manufacturers Agent (Lance Corporal Intelligence Corps)'.

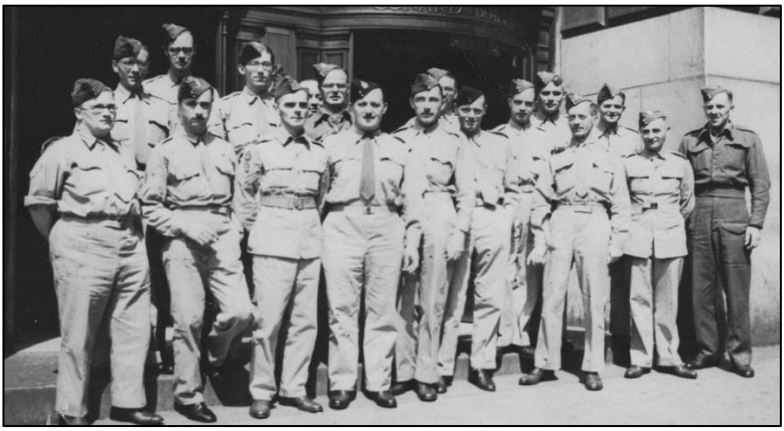
On the early morning of 7th December 1941, the Japanese air force and navy attacked the United States naval base at Pearl Harbour. While the US government and the Japanese authorities had been negotiating their respective interests in the Pacific theatre, neither the US military, nor the government had been aware of the gathering threat from Japan and were completely taken by surprise at the attack which destroyed

much of the US Pacific Fleet. On that same day, the Japanese forces simultaneously attacked all other US territories in the Pacific, as well as the British territories of Hong Kong, Malaya and Singapore. On the 8th December, the United States Congress declared war on Japan and entered the war in Europe by declaring war on Germany and Italy.

Until the attack on Pearl Harbour, American military intelligence had been a minor part of the overall armed forces, BUT the Japanese war crime changed forever the attitude of US governments on the question of intelligence gathering and homeland security. The President, Franklin D Roosevelt, tasked J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with the job of reinforcing the internal security of the US borders and expanding external intelligence gathering to further strengthen those borders. Hoover had been the Director of the Bureau of Investigation since 1924, subsequently founding the FBI in June 1935. He was well aware of the vulnerability of the underbelly of the US represented by nations and territories outside the control of the American government, many of these being the islands of the West Indies – territories under the jurisdiction of the British Crown.

The United Kingdom, which was already at war with Nazi Germany, had also declared war on Japan in the immediate aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbour, and thus there was, from that time, a mutual interest in the intelligence gathering activity of both nations. In early 1942, Edgar Hoover requested the assistance of the British security services (MI6) to identify and dispatch a group of trained intelligence officers to be based in the West Indies (WI). Their task was to be twofold: the transmission of intelligence to the US government security forces of anti-American activities in the area and detention of such suspects; and the gathering of information of all maritime movements by the interrogation of the crews of merchant vessels calling at WI ports. Among the required qualifications for this unit destined for the WI was fluency in Spanish and Portuguese, there being many Hispanic speakers in the islands and ships crews, the latter frequently being Portuguese.

Freddie was quickly identified from the IC and seconded to the group which sailed for New York to undergo joint training and familiarization with their American counter intelligence colleagues. While based in New York, Freddie met the legendary Edgar Hoover during the three months of intensive training prior to his transfer to the IC HQ at Bretton Hall in Trinidad, which was to remain his base for the duration of the War and from whence he travelled extensively throughout the West Indies, interrogating ships' crews for sightings of German warships or information on enemy activity picked up by seamen during shore leave in the bars and ports of South America and the Caribbean.



Training with the FBI in New York 1942. Freddie Sellers 6th from right

Intelligence HQ Trinidade 1944. Freddie Sellers 4th from right middle row

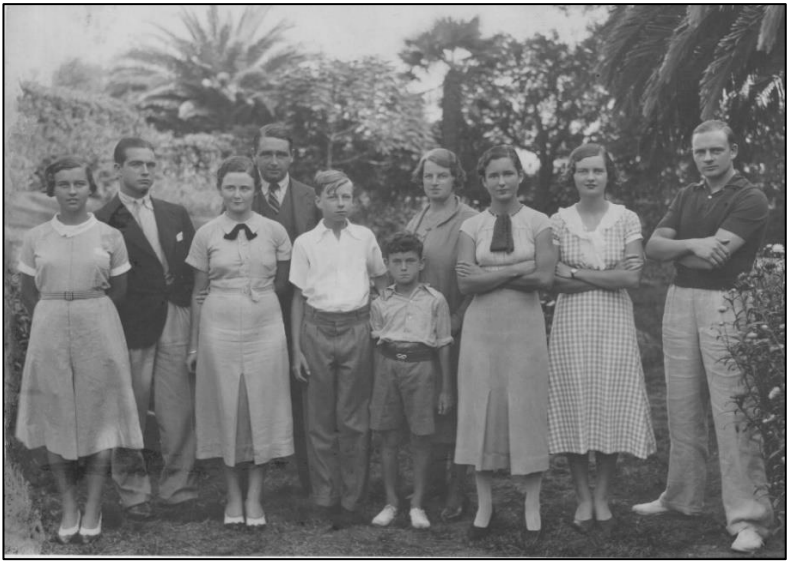
Meantime, Freddie's eldest brother Ronald had joined the RAF in an administrative role, his eyesight preventing him from the active service that he had sought. He rejoined the Socony Vacuum oil company at the end of the War and managed the company´s affairs in West Africa from his base in Dakar until his retirement to Estoril in the early 1960s. Brian, Freddie's second brother, was excused from military activity due to health reasons and, after an early career in the Anglo Portuguese Telephone Company, was to spend the rest of his life as a trader in Africa. Joan, his only sister, married Leland Herbert Gilbert in Lisbon in 1936, Leland being the son of Herbert Gilbert, the senior partner of Fábrica de Loiça de Sacavém (FLS).

With the Allies forcing the German forces to retreat in Europe, the IC HQ in Trinidad was wound up in early 1945 and all personnel returned to Britain. Thus Freddie was able to celebrate his young son's 4th birthday, having missed all previous birthdays due to his overseas posting. Once back in Scotland and with the end of hostilities with Germany, Freddie planned to rejoin Coats & Clark in Portugal – his previous employers before the outbreak of war. While making travel arrangements to return to Coats in Oporto, Freddie received an invitation from his brother-in-law, Leland Gilbert, to work for FLS in Lisbon. Strongly encouraged by his father Fred and sister Joan, Freddie agreed to join the company, Coats & Clark having agreed. Herbert Gilbert wrote to Freddie on 6th November 1945, welcoming him into the firm and assuring him that the change from thread manufacturing to ceramics would not be a problem, as he would be working in a market with which he was already very familiar. Sir Rupert Howorth, a partner in Fábrica de Loiça de Sacavém (FLS), was written to at the House of Lords asking him to assist in speeding up Freddie's demobilization.

The family sailed from the Clyde in early March 1946 on the steamship '*Baron Forbes*', destined for Lisbon. They then settled into one of the houses built for senior members of FLS staff in the grounds of the factory's estate outside Lisbon. Freddie and his family lived on the Sacavém estate for 18 months until October 1947, when he was

transferred to Oporto to take on the role of the FLS representative as the Director of Fábrica Cerâmica de Carvalhinho (FCC), a large ceramics factory in Devezas, Vila Nova de Gaia, in which FLS held a 75% interest acquired from the Pinto de Freitas family in January 1930. Apart from a brief return to the factory in Sacavém in the following year, Freddie and Lorna were to make Foz do Douro their home for the next 17 years and where their two sons – Frederick John (FJS) and Richard Douglas (RDS) – were born at the old British Hospital at Miragaia in February 1948 and November 1953, respectively.

In 1952, FLS acquired the remaining shares in FCC from Antonio de Almeida Pinto de Freitas and Freddie became the managing director of the now wholly-owned Devezas company, whose registered office was transferred to that of Sacavém's in Lisbon. The *Estatutos* (Articles of Association) of FLS were revised in December 1957, with the admission of new shareholders, Freddie being amongst them and he was simultaneously appointed a director of the company



The Oporto first cousins family group in 1947

From left: ???, Freddie Sellers, Marjorie Vigne, Felix Vigne, Gerald Cobb, ??? ; Eileen Symington, Auriel Shaw, Edith Cobb, Reg Cobb

The Sellers extended family at the Parque Eduardo VII reunion in 1947

From left: Ronald, Ronald's wife Myrtle, Brian, Brian's wife Vera, Beatrice Emily (Adam), Joan, Fred (Frederick Custance), Leland Gilbert holding daughter Evelyne, Freddie's wife Lorna, Freddie

Front row: Ian, Clive and Michael

The 'Carvalhinho' years (1948-1965) were undoubtedly the happiest times for Freddie and his family, who spent much of their leisure time discovering the amazing countryside of the Minho, Tras-os-Montes and the Beiras – trout fishing taking a major role in these discoveries!

The requirement by FLS to finance the necessary modernization of the factory's installations, kilns and equipment in the face of emerging competition from foreign manufacturers arising from the impending opening of EFTA borders, resulted in the Sacavém shareholders deciding to sell FCC back to the original owners, the Pinto de Freitas family, with the agreement of the Board. Although a number of northern ceramic manufacturers wanted to recruit him for their operations, Freddie decided to move with the family to Lisbon and return to FLS.

The years leading up to the 25th April Revolution in 1974 were relatively uneventful; in 1969 the last of the Howorth family shares were purchased by FLS and the management structure was comprised of Leland Gilbert as Chairman, Freddie as MD, Clive Gilbert and Fernando Barros becoming deputy directors. Much has been written of the events of that time which are recorded for posterity in the admirable book "*Sacavém - é outra Loiça*" ('Sacavem – pottery like no other') published in 2019 by Loures Council and by Clive and Emma Gilbert. A past Chair of the British Historical Society of Portugal, Clive has written several articles on the firm for the Society.[3]

Visit by the President of Portugal to Fábrica de Loiça de Sacavém in 1962

Manuel Freitas, Freddie Sellers, Leland Gilbert, a Government Minister, President Américo Tomas, an ADC. Evelyne is seated behind her father

[3] 30th Annual Report and Review, 2003: https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/fabrica-de-loica-de-sacavem-and-its-british-connections
38th Annual Report and Review, 2011: https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/a-short-history-of-fabrica-de-loica-de-sacavem-(1856-1994)
39th Annual Report and Review, 2012: https://www.bhsportugal.org/library/articles/the-english-bakeries-sacavem-and-fernando-pessoa

Suffice it to say that the years following the 1974 revolution were extremely difficult for FLS situated, as it was, in the heart of the industrial belt of Lisbon and in the permanent shadow of the Portuguese Communist Party. Strikes and protests were an almost daily occurrence and productivity suffered greatly.

Leland Gilbert, incapacitated following a heart operation in 1975, decided to retire and leave the country – his son, Clive, assuming the overall family control of the business as managing director, with Freddie becoming chairman. In 1977 and with the appointment of Diamantino Monteiro Pereira as a new director to turn around the factory's prospects by focusing on the construction of a new modern factory outside Lisbon, Freddie began to ease himself towards retirement in a property he and Lorna had bought at Azeitão, in the foothills of the Serra de Arrabida, south of Lisbon.

Clive Gilbert with his son Andrew, Granny Sellers and mother Joan

The assassination of Monteiro Pereira in December 1982 by the revolutionary group FP25 compelled Freddie to return to full time management in Sacavém, all attempts to recruit a suitable replacement for the director having failed, for obvious reasons. This situation, allied with the financial and production problems that had accumulated since the Revolution, lead to the inevitable bankruptcy of FLS in 1994, Freddie having fully retired earlier - he and Lorna moving to a retirement home in the north of Portugal in 1988.

They lived happily in Povoa de Varzim until Lorna suffered a massive stroke in March 1999, remaining incapacitated until her death in April 2000. Freddie was greatly affected by her death and only

survived her by a few months, dying of pneumonia in December the same year. They were both buried in the family tomb at St. George's Church cemetery in Lisbon, resting with his parents and with his elder brother Ronald. Of that generation, Joan died in England in August 1989, Leland having predeceased her in January 1979; Ronald died without issue in 1970 and Brian in Africa in October 1985.

The Fifth Generation

Ian Frederick, the first of the 5th Generation and the only son of Brian and Vera Sellers, was born in Lisbon on 19th July 1936. He attended primary school at St Julian's in Carcavelos before moving to the Banda School in Kenya with his parents towards the end of the war and completed his secondary education at St. Edward's School, Oxford, following the path of his uncle Freddie (see above).

Leaving St. Edward's and England in 1952, he returned to Africa and was employed by a franchise bottler and distributor of Coca-Cola, whose main operation was based in South Africa. Ian became a full time executive with the US Coca-Cola company in 1955 and headed up the Southern Africa activities and, subsequently, those in Brazil from 1956 to 1979. In 1979, Ian was transferred to the headquarters of Coca-Cola in Atlanta, Georgia, the city in which the company was founded in 1892. He was appointed Vice President World Sales of Coke, as a result of his achievements for the success of the brand in Africa and South America and in an effort to reverse the falling market share to Pepsi-Cola, its deadly rival and a slightly sweeter drink.

On the 23rd April 1985, Coca-Cola launched new Coke Light to appeal to the younger generation and to counter the growing threat from Pepsi. It was to prove to be a disaster and one of the most infamous mistakes in marketing history! The product was withdrawn after a few months by Robert Goizueta and Donald Keuogh, CEO and COO respectively, who survived to revive the company´s fortunes. The entire Sales and Marketing Division Directors and senior staff were sacked however and Ian found himself jobless and back in Europe.

Ian had married Marielis Lechner in Switzerland in 1961 and they had 3 children; Ivan Patrick (2nd May 1963), Alexandra Verena (2nd February 1965), and Toyine Menon (3rd September 1967). Ian and Marielis divorced shortly after his departure from Coca-Cola and he then married Lois Kay Greene, who bore him a son, Andrew Robert on 25th August 1989. Ian Frederick Sellers died on 2nd February 2002 as a result of a domestic accident at his home in Lausanne, aged 66. After a banking and entrepreneurial career in Europe and South America, his eldest son, Ivan Patrick, retired to Portugal and lives near Tomar, dedicating his time to environmental and horticultural activities.

Brian's sister, Joan, secured the dynasty of the Gilbert family by giving birth in Lisbon to Clive Edward (17th December 1938) and to Evelyne Joan (20h September 1945). Clive was a pupil at St Julian's in Carcavelos before completing his schooling at Mill Hill School in England, while Evelyne studied at Malvern College. Clive married Emma Andresen of Colares, whose family, the Gilmans, had been long associated with Fábrica de Loiça de Sacavém, albeit the majority shareholders were Clive's family. They had two sons, Andrew Clive (30th August 1963) and Peter Alexander (29th April 1965). Evelyne married Antonio Morais and had two children – Filipa (8th July 1971) and Diogo (23rd March 1975).

The three Freddie Sellers boys – Michael, Frederick John (FJS) and Richard – were all pupils at the Oporto British School from 1950 to 1966, all three winning the Victor Ludorum, the school's top award for athletics. Michael and Richard went on to St Edward's in Oxford, following in their father's and cousin's footsteps, while John boarded at Worksop College in Derbyshire. Of the three boys, only Michael spent all his working life in Portugal, John and Richard only returning infrequently to the country of their birth after leaving school.

Freddie with his three sons: John (FJS), Richard and Michael (right)

On completing his formal education, John went on to study at a catering college in Ramsgate, before undertaking extended training in the kitchens of the Berkeley Group of hotels. He lived briefly in New York, where he met a number of Portuguese from the Azores who convinced him to seek an opportunity in those islands; he worked for a while on Faial at a hotel belonging to the Bensaude group before opening his own restaurant and small hotel in Ponta Delgada. John and his wife, Shamin Samrullah, whom he had married shortly after arriving in the Azores, lived happily there for a few years until the 1974 revolution on mainland Portugal, when a downturn in business led to the closure of his hotel when the bank withdrew its support.

Leaving Ponta Delgada and returning to Lisbon to stay with his parents, the young couple decided to visit Shamin's sister in Uganda, who was married to the German ambassador to that country. John was immediately smitten with Africa, as had been his uncles and cousin before him. A chance contact in Kampala enabled him to establish a catering business supplying the Ugandan Army. This activity was progressing well until the Ugandan Armed Forces Minister declined to settle the outstanding accounts with his company, and when challenged,

he declared John to be a *persona non grata*, expelling him from the country. John and Shamin returned to Europe, settling in the South of France, where John started to give cookery classes along the Cote d'Azur and lectured on international and oriental cuisine. A lifelong smoker, John developed severe lung cancer, from which he eventually succumbed on 4th May 2016 at the Princess Grace Hospital in Monaco. Shamin continues to live between Antibes and Monaco.

After leaving school, John's younger brother, Richard, took an on-the-spur of the moment job in a London gambling club and trained to be a croupier. This was to become his life´s employment – first at the prestigious Curzon Club in London and then to Atlanta in the United States. His American girl friend in London was Joan Lee, only daughter of Stan Lee, the founder of Marvel Comics and creator of Spider Man and numerous other renowned cartoon characters. On return to the US, she encouraged Richard to try his hand in the newly emerging gambling casinos on the East coast. Although he broke up with Joan shortly after arriving in America in 1975, he moved to Las Vegas and has lived in the States ever since.

Richard married Lisa Zaccaro, a first generation Italian-American, who was also working in the Las Vegas casinos and they had two sons – Alexander Warren, born on 5th April 1986 and Jordan Ross born on 16th October 1989. Richard´s career took him to all the major casinos on the Las Vegas Strip as a croupier but also as a dealer in all the classic card games. He and Lisa eventually divorced and he re-married Nang, who hailed from the Hmong tribe of South East Asia. Richard and Nang have now retired and split their time between Las Vegas and a property Richard bought in Bandon, a small country town in Oregon.

Richard's eldest son, Alexander, moved to Florida, where he works in the entertainment and hospitality business. He and his partner having a young son, Nico. Jordan Ross remains a bachelor, with a base in Seattle, but travels extensively, working occasionally for Bill Gates, of Microsoft fame.

Michael, the eldest of Freddie Sellers' three sons, left St Edward´s in 1958 and, having narrowly missed National Service which had been abolished the previous year, he was persuaded by his father to go straight into accountancy training, instead of attending university. Destined to follow the family into the ceramics business, an articled clerkship in an accountancy firm in Stoke-on-Trent was arranged and, a few months after leaving 'Teddies', he started training in October 1958 in the Potteries in Staffordshire, the centre of the UK pottery industry, where his cousin Clive was already studying at the ceramics technical university.

For the next five years, Michael remained based in Stoke with work-related trips into neighbouring Cheshire, Derbyshire and North Wales and, as part of the local Rugby club, he played fixtures against clubs in Lancashire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. A few years before leaving Staffordshire, Michael was invited by a friend and colleague to join Sale, the premier Rugby club in Cheshire, some of whose players were regular members of the England XV. Portugal was a distant memory, only being visited for summer holidays and the occasional Christmas. Moving to London in the spring of 1964, Michael joined Price Waterhouse (as it then was) in the City and found accommodation in South Kensington at the same address as others from Oporto. Work was largely concentrated on insurance and banking audits in the City, with occasional out-of-town audits, one of which required signing the Official Secrets Act prior to an extensive visit to the HQ of Hawker Siddeley, the aerospace and defence contractor.

In the summer of 1965, the PW staff Partner invited Michael to consider joining the PW Partnership in Rio de Janeiro. By extraordinary coincidence, on returning to his flat that evening, Michael received a letter from Robin Reid – the MD of Croft & Co. Ltd of London & Oporto – inviting him to take up the post of accountant to the port wine shipping company at its base in Oporto! Having just become engaged to Angela Chambers during their summer holidays in Oporto (Angela also worked in London at the Cumberland Hotel in

Marble Arch), they were able to discuss the two 'out-of-the-blue' offers that evening. With both having a strong desire of to return to Portugal after several years in London and in the light of the existing unrest in Brazil, then under a military dictatorship, they decided to accept the Croft offer from Portugal. Michael subsequently turned down the offer from Brazil, but secured a guarantee of a place in that partnership should the Portugal venture be unsatisfactory.

Michael and Angela were married on 16th April 1966 at St James' Church in Oporto, followed by a reception at the Factory House. This wedding brought together many of the resident British families and some of Porto's most distinguished Portuguese families, as the bride´s father, Anthony (Tony) Chambers, was related to the Andresen family of Porto and whose mother was from the well-known Bulhão Pato family. The couple settled in Foz, with Michael taking up his post at Croft & Ca. in June as understudy to Tom Higgins, then the head of accounts and finance, who was to return to England the following year upon his wife's insistence; years later he was to return to Oporto as chief accountant to Sandemans, the Port and Sherry shipper.

Angela gave birth to a daughter, Julie Rosalind, at the British Hospital on 30th January 1967 and to a son, Nicholas Charles Warren, at the Hospital da Trindade, in the heart of Oporto on 13th April 1969. Both children having the right to be called 'tripeiros', having been born within the walls of the City!

In 1968, Croft acquired the Port shipping House of Delaforce Sons & Co, Michael being appointed a director of Croft and its new addition and taking on the post of Group Financial director. The family moved briefly to London for a period between 1971 and 1973, where Michael joined colleagues in the Croft marketing arm and gained insight into the Port Company's parent company, International Distillers & Vintners (IDV). Michael and Angela returned to an apartment in Campo Alegre and had barely settled the children into the Oporto British School (OBS), when the Revolution struck on the morning of 25th April 1974. On the eve of that event Angela, was admitted to the Carcereira Hospital

where she was operated on her spine, awaking from the operation to find the surgeon in a red bandana and singing one of the revolutionary songs! On that day, Robin Reid, Michael and the senior Port management were all in London attending a conference run by IDV. It took them three days to get back to Porto, as all flights and train services were cancelled and the Portuguese frontier was closed to all movement.

The following 20 months proved to be an exceedingly dramatic time for the wine trade, and also for the Factory House which Michael oversaw as Treasurer, for the British communities in Portugal, and for the country's population as a whole. Although much has been written about that period, much of events in Oporto remain to be told, which will be the subject of another tale!

Michael remained as Deputy Managing Director of the Croft Group in Porto until the conclusion of the company's Tercentenary celebrations, which were held throughout 1978, after which he resigned over a series of disagreements on company policy emanating from the newly appointed London directors led by George Bull, who himself had just been appointed MD of the European Division of IDV. Michael was sounded out for the Financial Director position in the Taylor Fladgate group, but a mutually agreeable contract proved to be unattainable and he was invited by Peter (Barney) Wall to join his shipping and freight forwarding operation in Lisbon & Porto. Thus, in early 1979 he became a partner in Wall & Co, which has interests in slate mining, coal distribution and general trading, albeit the key activity was acting as agents for Ellerman Lines and Canadian Pacific, both major container operators with destinations in the UK to London and Liverpool and to Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

The change of activity proved to be a successful challenge and the company prospered as trade between Britain and Portugal resumed normal activity after the pauses of the Revolution. All was progressing well, until a major disagreement developed between the agent and Ellerman Lines management. Sir John Ellerman, who was reputed to be the wealthiest man in Britain, inherited the shipping line bearing his

name from his father, the 1st Baronet. Shortly before his death in July 1973 at the young age of 63, Sir John converted his extensive empire into a charitable Trust, nominating his widow, Lady Esther Ellerman, his only heir, who became a Trustee. The Ellermans had appointed a number of agents in the territories where they traded, building up a very personal relationship with their chosen representatives; Sir John and Lady Ellerman made frequent visits to each of the countries to ensure the maintenance of trust and friendship. With the creation of the Trust, Ellerman Lines gradually lost ground in trading in European shipping and its position began to erode. A number of inappropriate appointments were made to oversee the Trust, which adopted a policy of replacing historic agents with wholly-owned subsidiaries in the Mediterranean and Iberia. Within this change, Ellermans sacked Wall & Co as its agent in Portugal. Deprived of its prime source of business, the partners in the company were unable to find replacement shipping companies and were obliged to close the company's doors in 1981.

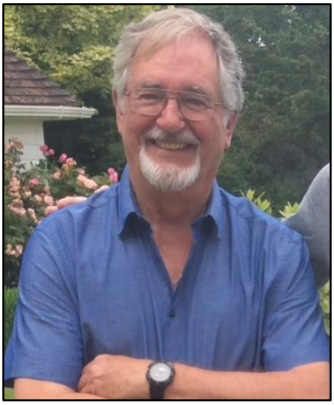
Michael Symington had been looking for experienced management to fill key posts in the family Port shipping group, pending the arrival of the next young Symington generation, who at that time were still gaining experience in diverse banking and trading concerns in England and Europe. He invited Michael Sellers to join the family group as a director of the prestigious brands Warre & Co, Silva & Cosens and W. & J. Graham, where he continued his career in the Port Wine trade as director in charge of shipping and representing the Symington Group in trade organisations. Michael left the Symingtons in 1990, completing 20 years in the wine trade in the Croft & Symington groups. From 1990 to 1992, Michael filled the post of Managing Director of SGB Portugal, a UK company with European subsidiaries in France, Denmark and the Netherlands that was active in the construction business as a scaffolding, structural support and bridge building specialist. In Portugal, the company had offices in Porto and Lisbon and was providing much of the infrastructure for the construction of the bridge over the Rio Arade at Portimão on the EN 125. At that time, SGB expanded into Spain, forming a partnership with

Mecanotubo SA, a Bilbao-based construction company, with branches in Barcelona, Madrid and Seville. Michael chaired this new partnership and travelled extensively throughout Spain and Portugal during 1990-1991, completing 99 flights in the process. During 1991-1992, the UK construction industry suffered a major downturn in business activity and the board of John Mowlem & Co, the parent company of SGB, was forced to divest some of its investments, with emphasis on non-UK companies. The former managers in Mecanotubo SA made a takeover bid for the company, which was accepted by Mowlems, which subsequently exited the Iberian market with the sale of SGB Portugal.

In 1993, Michael and Angela separated and he activated a consultancy company that he and Angela had formed prior to joining SGB. He then undertook a number of assignments in a variety of projects ranging from frozen food processing and footwear manufacturing to management restructuring in a wine business and the presentation of a study into the development for vineyard accommodation and tourism in the Douro valley. An invitation to become bursar at the Oporto British School during 1995/6 completed the consultancy cycle which also marked his divorce.

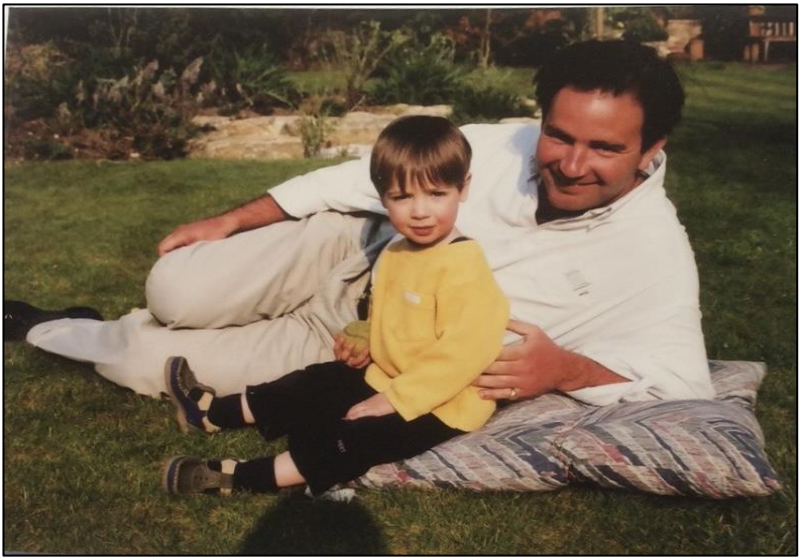
In response to an advertisement in the Expresso newspaper for a Resort accommodation manager in the Western Algarve, Michael's application led to his appointment to that role and, on 1st June 1997, he started as assistant director at the Parque da Floresta golf and leisure resort in Salema, west of Lagos, responsible for the management of the facilities offered by the resort and the gardens, swimming pools of the 400+ Villas and Townhouses on the estate. In the year following his arrival, the department director resigned and Michael became fully responsible to the Board for the management of properties on behalf of their owners. Initially this meant living on the resort, but in 1998 Michael and his partner, Marion Seara Cardoso, moved to a townhouse overlooking the beach at Salema, where they lived until moving to a newly built house at Porto de Mós, a western suburb of Lagos, at the end of 2002.

Michael retired from Parque da Floresta at the end of 2007 at the age of 66, after having completed ten years at the Resort. For the next two years he travelled Portugal extensively as a Consultant for HQS Ltd, a UK hospital health accreditation organization which had origins in the King's Fund. This company was owned by Graham Melville Harries, an owner at Parque da Floresta, who had become firm friends with Michael and Marion from early in their respective lives at the Resort; he and his wife Mary having arrived at the same time as Michael and Marion in 1997. Graham had been looking to expand the presence of his company in the Portuguese health market and asked Michael to take on the role of selling the advantages of accreditation to both the Public and Private hospitals in the country, having already achieved a portfolio of hospitals in the Public sector. This he did until 2009, when Graham sold HQS/CHKS to a large health care group in England. During his two years, Michael visited the Azores and signed up the three main hospitals on the archipelago.



Michael Sellers

Michael and Marion lived happily in retirement in Lagos, enjoying the incomparable climate of the Algarve with their many friends and taking a full part in the life of the Church of England Chaplaincy of St. Vincent´s, Michael having filled the role of Hon Treasurer for a number of years. But this cycle too came to an end, as they decided to return to their origins in Oporto and the North of Portugal, as both being now in their 80s wished to live closer to their children, most of whom lived in Oporto. Sadly, Elizabeth Angela Sellers, to whom Michael had been married from 1966 to 1996 died in the Oporto oncology hospital (IPO) on 12th March 2025 after a short and courageous battle with cancer, having celebrated her 80th birthday the previous December, surrounded by her children and many friends at her home in Paredes de Coura.



Michael's son Nick and oldest grandson – the 6th and 7th Generations

Michael with his grandchildren (7th Generation)

Michael and Marion chose to settle in the Minho in Vila Nova de Cerveira and are looking forward to the next chapter in the family story, secure in the knowledge that the Sixth and Seventh Generation are already well established in Oporto!

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Michael Sellers *was born in Glasgow, being the only male member of his family not to have been born in Portugal for 183 years – the last British-born member of his family being his great-great-grandfather (FWS), who was born in Yorkshire in 1815. Michael Sellers, is a member of the fifth generation of this well-known family and a great-great-nephew of the fabled author Charles Sellers, who wrote the classic work entitled 'Oporto, Old and New Old' in 1899.*[4] *Michael arrived in Oporto in March 1946, and has spent all his life in Portugal, except for a period between 1955 and 1966 when he attended school in Oxford and studied to be a chartered accountant in the Midlands and London, qualifying in 1965. Based in Oporto, Michael worked in the Port wine trade for over 20 years, followed by a varied career in shipping and civil construction until moving to the Algarve in 1997 to oversee the management of a golf resort. He is now retired, living in Vila Nova de Cerveira in the Minho.*

[4] 'Oporto, Old and New Old: being a Historical Record of the Port Wine Trade, and a Tribute to British Commercial Enterprize in the North of Portugal', by Charles Sellers. Published in 1899 by Howard & Jones, 15 & 16 Cullum Street, Fenchurch Street, E.C.