

SWINNERTON

FAMILY HISTORY

Heraldic and Genealogical Studies

of the family

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THE FAMILY NAME

We are still coming across, or being sent, variations in spelling of our name. Recent additions include Swininten (1194), Swyneforton (1263), Swynereston (1265), Swynemerton (1288) and Swaynarton (1467). There is also, of course, the 'French' rendering by Frossiart - the 14th century chronicler, as 'Sequaqueton' (see 'Swynnerton & the Swinnertons') This brings the total number of variations so far discovered to 40

THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

Sir John Swynnerton or Swinnerton (JS/84) mentioned in our last issue, amassed a fortune from his control of the Wine Office in the time of Queen Elizabeth I. His father, John Swinnerton (JS/83) had come to London from Oswestry in the days when it was quite common for younger sons of the Landed Gentry to turn their hands to commerce and set up as merchants in London and the principal towns. As a young man Sir John had travelled extensively on the continent, particularly in Spain and had obtained the equivalent of a modern Royal Warrant to be the sole supplier of wine to Queen Elizabeth. With this fortune he purchased, amongst other properties, Stanway Hall in Essex which - as Professor Armitstead has pointed out in a note recently received - is now Colchester Zoo which many of you must have seen at various times on Television. The full story of this branch of the family, which died out in the male line in the middle of the 1600's but is represented today by Sir Leonard Swinnerton-Dyer, Bart., is given in Canon Bridgman's General History of the Family mentioned in issue No. 1

THE FAMILY IN IRELAND

A new correspondent, Mrs. A. Barnard of Ontario, Canada, has provided us with our first knowledge of any Swinnertons in Ireland. Her great-grandfather THOMAS SAMUEL SWINNERTON (TS/70) was born in Co. Down on 21 May 1821. We do not yet know who his parents were but either they or he, when he grew up, emigrated to Canada and he became a member of the 1st Parliament of Ontario Province 1867-71. He married Eliza Parker, a native of Coventry, Ontario and raised a large family there. We hope to find out eventually where his family came from and how they came to be in Ireland.

THE FAMILY IN SCOTLAND

We have no knowledge of any branch of the family existing in Scotland. In 1348 Stephen de Swynnerton had been granted the manor of Moreton in Dumfries by King Edward III as a reward for his fighting services but there is no record of him having lived there or of any family.

THE FAMILY IN WALES

Staffordshire and Shropshire, the main homes of the family, are both close to the Welsh Borders and so there are many Welsh connections. From the middle 1600's to the early 1800's a large clan lived in and around Oswestry but we don't yet know what happened to them after this date. In the middle to late 1800's there appears to have been quite a family in the Wrexham area but again we have as yet no knowledge of what has happened to these. It is possible that these two families are connected.

THE BETLEY SWINNERTONS

Mention was made in both our previous issues of WILLIAM SWINNERTON of Betley (WS/14), one of the three progenitors of the majority of the present day Swinnertons.

William was baptised at Betley on the 25th February 1739/40, the third son of JOHN SWINNERTON and MARY BIRTSHALL. His father had moved to Betley from Haslington in Cheshire before 1738 and had either inherited or acquired a small freehold known as Hodgkin's Crop or Croft, together with a dwelling house known as Paradise.

You will see that we write 1739/40 because until 1752 the ecclesiastical and legal year began on the 25th March and therefore his birth on 25th February was in the legal year of 1739 but in the historical year of 1740 as we know it today.

He married a local girl, Hannah Hilditch of Betley in 1762 and succeeded his father as the representative of the family at Betley at the age of 43, raising a family of four sons and six daughters there. Various descriptions as Market Gardener, Gardener and Seedsman, he was obviously a great character. He died on 31st May 1809 and his epitaph in Betley churchyard speaks of a 'kind father, a faithful husband, a good neighbour and an honest man'. His obituary in the Staffordshire Advertiser says that he "travelled as a Market Gardener to Newcastle and the Potteries for upwards of 50 years - a good Christian neighbour".

He was proud of his family line - the Swynnertons of Whitmore - which he could trace back to Richard de Swynnerton of Whitmore, a younger son of Sir Roger de Swynnerton, Lord of Swynnerton in the time of Edward II and, through him to Alan, the first of the Swynnertons, the Domesday tenant of Swynnerton in 1086.

His father used as his bookplate the heraldic arms of Swynnerton of Whitmore, to which he believed himself entitled, which were (as traditionally received and as given both by Guillim & Shaw) :- "Argent, a cross flory sable, overall a bend gules." In layman's language this is a black cross with flowered or 'fleur-de-lys' ends on a silver shield with a diagonal red stripe going across it from left to right. These were the same arms as those used by the Swynnertons of Butterson and the Swynnertons of Eccleshall being the ancient Cross Flory of the Swynnertons of Swynnerton differenced with the Bend Gules for a cadet branch

His great-great granddaughter HANNAH SWINNERTON (HS/42) writing in 1960 (she was then 97 and had emigrated to Canada in Victorian times with her parents) remembered the home of her grandparents on Betley Common very well. It was a small cottage with a milk-house and a garden full of fruit trees. The cow was kept down the road. She remembered picking blackberries in the lane leading to the house. Although the house was quite small, it had a large farmhouse-type kitchen in which she remembered joining in the family Sunday Service sitting on a long bench with her brothers and sisters in a form of Nonconformist worship. She was told that all her uncles and aunts - ten in all - were born there.

WILLIAM SWINNERTON of Shotton (WS/55) born 1893 at Betley, writing in 1973, told us that he had in his possession a jug which had been in the family as long as he could remember and known to them all as 'The Christening Jug' (an Apostle Jug in fact) which was used at the Baptismal Services in the farm house at Betley Common. In his boyhood this was known as Keen's Croft not Hodgkin's Croft. He believes that a smaller, similar jug also used in the services went to Canada with the emigrants. A fascinating link with the past.

We mentioned in our last issue that we hoped to produce at a later date a second volume of "Swinnerton Family Trees" bringing those in Vol. I up to the present day and here now is the first of these showing the immediate family of William of Betley and the descendants of his eldest son John.

TABLE 2

Continued from Table I: Swynerton of
Whitmore (Swinnerton Family Trees
Vol. I, p. 7 : Collections for a History
of Staffs. Vol. VII Pt. II pp. 158-161)

WILLIAM SWINNERTON =
of Betley, Staffs.
3rd son of John & Mary
Swinnerton of Haslington
(WS. 15)
Market Gardener
& Seedsman)³⁹
Bap. 25. 2. 17³⁹/₄₀)
d. 31. 5. 1809) all at
bur. at Betley) Betley

Hannah, dau. of Joseph
Hilditch of Betley.

Bap. 21. 1. 1741)
m. 27. 5. 1762) all at
d. 20. 3. 1828) Betley

JOHN SWINNERTON = Elizabeth
of Betley, Staffs.
(JS. 42)
bap. 1. 9. 1770)
(b. 30 July) at
bur. 7. 3. 1797) Betley

TABLE 2a

WILLIAM SWINNERTON = Margaret Cooper
of Betley, Staffs.
(WS. 14)
bap. 17. 5. 1772)
(b. 7 May)
d. 12. 10. 1839)
bur. 19. 11. 1839)
Gardener

TABLE 2b

RALPH SWINNERTON = Sarah Robinson
of Betley, Staffs.
(RS. 13)
bap. 4. 1. 1774)
(b. 2 Dec. '73) at
d. 3. 7. 1858) Betley
Bricklayer

TABLE 2c

JOSEPH SWINNERTON = Hannah Dod
(JS. 43)
bap. 21. 5. 1777) at
(b. 6 March) Betley
d. 23. 7. 1836 at Liverpool
Master of the Charity School,
Betley.
b. 21. 2. 1776
m.
d. 16. 1. 1840

TABLE 2d



Facsimile of an old plate of John Swinnerton
of Haslington, great-grandfather of William
of Betley above, viv-temp. Charles II.

- III
1. ANN (AS. 28)
bap. =
Hugh Cork
of Betley
 2. MARY (MS. 34)
bap. Betley
27. 5. 1764
=
Wm. Hodgkins
of Craddocks Moss
 3. LIDIA (LS. 1)
bap. Betley
19. 1. 1766
=
Wm. Plant of
Stockport at
Betley 4. 6. 1781

- III
4. SARAH (SS. 21)
bap. 31. 1. 1768
bur. 27. 9. 1768
both at Betley
 5. ELIZABETH (ES. 33)
(Twin with John)
=
Thomas Wharton
of Barthomley
 10. HANNAH (HS. 12)
bap. Betley
14. 1. 1780
=
Rev. Wm. Evans
of Stoke at
Betley 21. 12. 1797

