

SWINNERTON

Family History



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The Swinnerton Society

A non-profit making organisation devoted to the welfare of Swynnerton Church and the research and publication of Swinnerton Family Records

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The picture on the front cover shows the Rev.Brian Swynnerton talking at the start of the Swynnerton Steeplechase in June. On the left is Diana Cunningham from Texas and in the centre Douglas and Eileen Bolitho from New Zealand.

SWINNERTON FAMILY HISTORY

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Editor - Iain Spencer Swinnerton

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FOREWORD

The Chairman

I have written many forewords or editorials over the 21 years of the Society's existence as the original organiser and editor and, later, as secretary and occasional treasurer but never expected to have to write one as chairman. However, in accordance with the Society's constitution approved by the Charity Commissioners, no one is allowed to serve on the Council of the Society for more than six years and so our chairman, Joe Swinnerton, secretary, David Brock, and Council Members, Leslie Swinnerton and Timothy Swynnerton have all had to retire.

This has left a big gap in our organisation; I am delighted to say we have now recruited some replacements for the Council but there was no one else with the necessary experience, as yet, to fill the office of chairman so here I am.

Joe was elected as our fourth chairman in 1992, having already served the Council as PRO since 1980! He amazed us all by his energy and drive and quite often wore us out with his enthusiasm and continual efforts to put the Swinnertons on the map. One can only admire someone who, at 80 years of age, decides he must have a more up-to-date computer! His Masonic, Rotary and caravanning commitments kept him very busy and finding him at home or on the end of a telephone often proved to be very difficult. Despite all this, he was a very hard-working chairman and we are most grateful for all his efforts on our behalf.

You will see from the minutes of the Annual General Meeting printed later in this journal that Mrs Elizabeth Livesey has now taken over as secretary in succession to David Brock. This means we now have a husband and wife team doing Treasurer and Secretary which is very useful. David was elected secretary in 1989 and his legal training has proved useful on many occasions in persuading us to stick by the rules!

Leslie and Timothy have both been invaluable with their wise advice and business experience. Leslie has also been a tower of strength in administering our covenant scheme and Timothy has provided us with much-needed storage for our archives and back numbers of this Journal.

Our thanks to all of them, they have all served the society very well indeed and we are most grateful for all their hard work.

Iain Swinnerton

GREAT TOOLEY of Ipswich

THE TOWNSMAN OF IPSWICH

John Webb

Thomas Bilney, had disputed at Ipswich with Friar Bruisyard before being put to death for his Zwinglian views.²¹ A few years later, a well-known figure in the town was Richard Argentine, who, so it was said, 'at his first coming to Ipswich, came in a serving man's coat'. Whatever the truth of this, he was undoubtedly a scholar of some standing, a physician and linguist, and eventually Master of the borough grammar school. His preaching impressed not only the townspeople but also many of the inhabitants of the surrounding area who flocked into Ipswich to hear him.²² For a time he was the tenant of one of Tooley's houses.²³ Another notable propagandist was *Thomas Swynnerton alias* John Roberts, to whom, in 1538, the merchant Thomas Cutler willed money 'to make three sarmonds (*sermons*) in the parish church of St. Clement's', an anticipation, so it has been said, of the funeral sermons so popular with the Puritans in place of masses.²⁴ In the same year a certain Peke of Earl Stonham was burned on the Cornhill. According to Foxe the martyrologist, he refused to recant even when embraced by the flames, and so the learned Dr Redyng cried, 'To as many as shall cast a stick to the burning of this heretic, is granted forty days of pardon by my lord bishop of Norwich'. Then Lord Curson, Sir John Audley, 'with many others of estimation' cut down boughs and threw them into the fire. A few years later Kerby was apprehended and burned in the same place, there being present Lord Wentworth 'with the most part of all the justices of those quarters'. Large crowds of people were said to have surged along the narrow streets to view this spectacle.²⁵ Tooley, a town justice at this period, may well have been among those present. If not, such an event must inevitably have caused a deep impression on him, even in this age which also saw a man suffer the torments of pressing to death on the Cornhill.²⁶ Of his own religious views not a hint remains, but there is evidence enough of the strong Protestant opinions which Alice held in the days of her widowhood.²⁷

It was in the late 1530s that Henry came into conflict with the authorities. The court book for this important period is no longer among the town records, and the sole evidence of his misbehaviour is contained in a few words in Bacon's entry for 3 September 1539:

All the above mentioned 12 and 24, except 7 persons named, have agreed that Hen: Tooly shall pay a fine of 40 li for his

*disobed-ience, which he now refusing to pay, is dismissed of his Burgessship and freedome of this towne.*²⁸

Why Tooley was fined so heavily is now not known, but his offence must have been considered an exceptionally grave one.

REFERENCES

- 21 V.C.H. Suffolk, ii. 27.
- 22 I. E. Gray and W. E. Potter, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-6.
- 23 R.D.W., F. 115R.
- 24 Summaries, x(i). 3.
- 25 John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*
(ed. Rev. G. Townsend, 1846), v. 254, 530-3.
- 26 Annals, p. 193.
- 27 See p. 156.

THE 1881 CENSUS

A census of the population has been taken in Great Britain every 10 years since 1801 with the exception, for obvious reasons, of 1941. However, until 1841 they were merely 'counts of heads' although a few enumerators (as those who went round collecting the information were called) did give some more details.

In 1841 all this changed and, for the first time, names, sex, marital status, occupations and addresses were given. The information given though was still minimal and although each dwelling was listed, no relationships between persons in the same house were given; ages of those above 15 were rounded down to the nearest 5 years and persons were only asked to answer Yes or No to the question as to whether they had been born in the county in which they were then residing or not.

By 1851, the government had learned a lot and from now on, the decennial censuses are some of the most valuable sources for family history researchers. That for 1851, which gives a place of birth for the first time, enabling us to make the great leap back from civil registration of births, marriages and deaths (which commenced on the 1st of July 1837) to church records (which commenced in 1538) and thus to our ancestors' parish of origin, is one of the most helpful but unfortunately has only been transcribed in fragmented parts and in many different formats.

The census for 1881 is equally valuable as, for most of us, it will be the first which gives details that are outside the memory range of our immediate predecessors.

Now, thanks, to the enthusiasm and hard work of a great many people, for the first time we have a complete, fully indexed transcription of this 1881 census which will stand for all time as an invaluable aid not only to family historians but also to local and national historians and demographers.

This could not have been achieved without the great generosity of the Mormons, who have provided the funds for the original enumerator's books to be copied, paid postage costs where necessary and supplied all the computers and software, or without those members of the LDS church who have given so much of their time and effort to input all the transcribed returns into their computers and carried out all the checking and double-checking necessary to make it as accurate a transcription as was humanly possible.

However, before they could start, they needed the transcriptions and for these we shall be eternally grateful to all the member societies of the Federation of Family History Societies who co-operated in the project, many of whom bore quite heavy postage and other expenses to see the project through and, above all, to the many thousands of their members who put in countless hours poring over the copy documents and either transcribing them or checking other people's work. Having had a go at it myself, I know exactly just how much sheer hard work was involved and I know that many transcribed more than one set of records. We must also remember all the co-ordinators who correlated all the records for each area.

As a family we are already benefiting greatly from this work as we have been purchasing the microfiche for each county as they came out. Although this has taken up a large slice of our research funds, it has been very worthwhile and has already assisted us to fit in some stray branches of the family. A typical example is in the County of Caernarvonshire where I did not expect to find any of the family but, in fact, did find just one - a William H. Swinnerton aged 20, described as a Dentist's Assistant born at Princes End, Tipton, Staffordshire and residing in the house of William S. Penney.

Now that was very interesting on two counts. Firstly, I do have a mysterious little branch the first reference to which I found in that same Princes End, and, secondly, in Stourbridge, which was formerly in Worcestershire, where I grew up, there was a dentist named Fred Hanley who told me that he started as a junior partner to a Mr. Swinnerton. I never knew Mr Swinnerton but my father did and

he said that the dentist always said we must be related. I am not sure yet on that score but I would never have found that man had it not been for the transcription of the 1881 census for which we are all most grateful.

Here is an example of the sort of information they contain:

9 Lime Street, Cheetham, Manchester

| Name | Rel. | Stat. | Age | Occupation | Born |
|---------------------|------|-------|-----|---------------------|-------------|
| James H. Swinnerton | Head | M | 25 | Master printer | Stafford |
| Florence Swinnerton | Wife | | M | emp. 1 man & 3 boys | Bristol |
| James A. Swinnerton | Son | | 1 | | Manchester |
| Robert D. Smallpage | App. | | 15 | Printer (Appr) | Burnley |
| Thomas Nutbrown | App. | | 15 | Printer (Appr) | Howden, Yks |

The fiche are very easy to use. The first set is a complete alphabetical index of everyone in the county on the night of the 3rd of April, 1881. This leads you to a second set of fiche which give a copy of the actual enumerators' returns for every household. There is also an index by place of census and one of miscellaneous data. Hospitals, schools, prisons, workhouses, barracks etc. are all included as are ships and canal barges.

Wales is now complete as is most of England; only the very large counties of Yorkshire, Surrey, Norfolk, Durham, Kent, Middlesex and Lancashire remain to be issued (they are all transcribed) and it is hoped to complete the project by July 1996. Scotland is complete except for Lanarkshire.

The last one to be issued was our own Staffordshire which only came out last week. This was the largest county so far with a population of 955,785.

When the project is complete, two national indexes are going to be produced from the master computer in Salt Lake City. The first will be an alphabetical Surname Index of everyone in the census and the second will be a Birthplace Index. These will be of enormous value in tracking our migrant ancestors who seemed to delight in moving as often as possible!

In the next Journal, I will give you some figures of Swinnertons alive in 1881 as I have extracted all the members of our family but, of course, the indexes also give us details of all the people who married into the family! If anyone wishes to consult them, write to our secretary who has already done quite a bit of research using them.

I have, over the years, extracted records from all the censuses from 1841 wherever I could. 1891 is the last you are allowed to see as the 100 year confidentiality rule applies.

THE INTERNET

I am sure you must all have seen this mentioned in the newspapers and on the media but may be surprised to hear that it is already helping us. I am on it but am only using it at present for sending letters by eMail. What this means is that I can type a letter on my computer just as I am typing this article now and, when I have finished, because my computer is connected to the telephone system by a little black box called a *Modem*, I can send the letter straight down the telephone to anyone who has a computer and is also connected to the system, anywhere in the world.

No more addressing envelopes or going to the Post Office to buy stamps and, what's more, the letter arrives at its destination in seconds rather than weeks. Ordinary mail is now known to the aficionados as Snail-Mail! The only problem is that I am likely to get a reply within minutes before I have had time to draw breath.

Several members of the society are on the Internet. They are:

Vice-President Bill Swinarton (Canada)
 Kevin Bowers (Canada)
 Bob Cunningham (USA)
 Myself (UK)

The strange numbers and symbols after each name are the electronic addresses on the internet; Bill and I both use a service called Compuserve, Kevin is on Interlog and Bob on America-on-Line. Are there any other family members out there using the service?

Through seeing Bill advertising his Family interests on the Internet on what is known as a *Bulletin Board*, a number of people have sent information on members of the family they have known or heard about. One such was from a Dr I.K. Bloor who had found a copy of a programme of a musical play that had been written about the ordnance factory at Swynnerton during the last war where between 20 and 30,000 people were employed, mostly women between the ages of 18 and 35. The play, by Bob Eaton, was called *'I don't want to set the world on fire'* and was staged at the New Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent in 1991. The programme contains many photographs of the factory and lists many names of people who worked there. It is a fascinating document: I expect many Swinnertons were amongst those who 'did their bit' there and they may have seen the play. If they did, we would like to know - please write to me.

CHARLES SWINNERTON - Musician

Another bonus which came from the Internet was a message to Bill from a Bob Fairbrother who said that although he had no connection with our family himself, he remembered that somewhere he had the autograph of a Charlie Swinnerton who played the saxophone with Billy Cotton's Band in England many years ago. He obtained it around 1955 when the band visited the Gaumont Theatre in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Bill asked if I could be sent a copy and eventually it landed on my desk. It re-kindled my interest in the man, I remembered that I had seen a picture of him myself many years ago so I took another look at his family tree which is reproduced on the centre pages.

I also wrote to our members Diana Martin, his daughter and her step-mother, Charles's widow, Mrs Marjorie Swinnerton (his first wife died in 1940) who have now sent me a considerable amount of additional information.

Mrs Martin says that her family knowledge is that her grandfather, Charles Mason Swinnerton married Annie Louisa Whitbread who lived for many years in Shooter's Hill, Blackheath until her marriage. She was told that her grandfather, Charles Mason Swinnerton committed suicide by throwing himself off Lambeth Bridge. They had 8 children, of whom only 2 survived and because of the many difficulties she now faced, she had to place her son Charles, Mrs Martin's father, in Kennington Orphanage where he learned to play the Saxophone and perhaps entertained a famous fellow inmate - Charles Chaplin.

Charles, the sax player, met his first wife in Edinburgh in 1922 or 1923 while he was on tour. By the time Diana was born, Charles was a member of the Debroy Somers Band which I am sure many of you will remember.

Mrs Swinnerton has sent me some very interesting items for our archives, one or two I have reprinted here. If any of you have anything in your scrapbooks about him, we would be delighted to have copies for our archives.

Charles died in 1970 and is buried in Ilford.

Charles Swinnerton
Billy Cotton Band

Reprinted from "Melody Maker" October 1st, 1955

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Name

Address

MM 1/1055

WILLIAM SWINNERTON = Elizabeth Sargent
 b.c. 1790 Lambeth 29Apr1816
 d.26Oct1872 Camberwell St. Giles
 (WS.112) b. Holborn

THOMAS SWINNERTON = Sarah Cole
 b.c. 1826 Lambeth 15Dec1845
 Porter (TS.83) b.c. 1825 Bethnal Green
 (WS.113)

WILLIAM SWINNERTON = Amelia Williams
 b.c. 1831 Lambeth 24Nov1845
 d.20Jul1891 Cawnpore
 (WS.113)

HENRY SWINNERTON = JOHN
 b.c. 1831 Lambeth 24Nov1845
 (HS.150) (JS.492)

MARY (MS.290) = MARY (MS.290)
 b.c. 1831 Lambeth bp.16Feb1817

MARIA (MS.368) = ELIZA (ES.279)
 b.c. 1831 Lambeth bp.8Jul1832
 un.

CHARLES SARGENT SWINNERTON = Ellen Louisa Quigley
 b.27Aug1857 Lambeth d. 1932 Lambeth (CS.70)

ELIZA (ES.366) = b.c. 1845 Lambeth

EMILY (ES.367) = b.c. 1851 Lambeth

WILLIAM SWINNERTON = bp.4Apr1847 Subathoo ?d.inf.1847 (WS.114)

HENRY CHARLES SWINNERTON = bp.3Jun1851 Gowhatty (HS.102)

EDWARD SWINNERTON = bp.25Sep1853 Agra d.2Nov1874 Allahabad (ES.191)

ROBERT WILL SWINNERTON = bp.20Jan185 Dum Dum d.25May1947 Toronto (RS.96)

Thurza Francis Joanna Cullen Craig 22Dec1891 Bombay b. d.17Apr1905 Ramsgate

FREDERICK THOMAS (1) SWINNERTON = bp.23Nov1858 Agra d.19Mar1871 Allahabad (FS.68)

Alice Flora Scott 8Sep1896 Murree b.c. 1866

JOHN CHRISTOPHER = (2) SWINNERTON = bp.21Jan1869 Allahabad (b.23Dec1868) (JS.341)

Emily H... 1906

MARIA DELICIA (MS.199) = bp.12Aug1861 Fort William Calcutta

AMELIA DELICIA SERGENT (AS.138) = bp.16May1871 Allahabad

FLORENCE (FS.69) = LOUISA 1890 Umbella

AMELIA E..... (AS.193) = bp. 1849 Bengal pres.d.inf.

CHARLES MASON SWINNERTON = Annie Louise Wheatbread
 b. 1878 Lambeth (CS.55) d. May1957 Bedford

JOHN THOMAS SWINNERTON = b.4Apr1880 Lambeth d. 1936 Bexhill (JS.190)

Florence A..... Whitmore 1907 Southwark d. 1958 Tooting

AYSCEAU FRANCIS ROBERT WILLIAM SWINNERTON = b.10Oct1892 Bolarum Killed in Action 1Mar1917 Vimy (AS.107)

AYLNER ABERFFRAW = Mary Myrt Armstrong 16Sep1922 Toronto b.26Apr18 Toronto

THURZA FRANCES ELSIE (TS.106) = b.28Feb1903 Ramsgate d.17Apr1963 Toronto

VIOLET SCOTT (VS.9) = b. 1897 Rawalpindi

DOROTHY PHYLLIS (DS.81) = bp.13Apr1902 Rawalpindi

(1) Margaret Mary = CHARLES RICHARD = (2) Merjorie Rose
 Hunter SWINNERTON Richards 23Jan1942 Ilford b.11Jul1922 (LS.8)

LEONARD FRANK = Vera Irwin 1936 Fulham b.22Apr1913 Fulham (LS.8)

JOHN SIDNEY SWINNERTON = Gwendoline Ma Turner 3Jun1935 Toot b.31Aug1911 Willesdon (JS.191)

FLORENCE LILY SWINNERTON = (FS.51) b.18Dec1910 Wandsworth Edward Crawley 1941 Tooting

DORIS E..... SWINNERTON = (DS.30) b.18Mar1914 Wandsworth d.c. 1961 Wimbledon William Breeze 1942 Tooting

JOAN THURZA (JS.284) = b.1Feb1924 Toronto Derek Dawkins 1948 Sutton,Surrey

DEREK RICHARD SWINNERTON = b.31Aug1925 London d.3Sep1955 Ilford un. (DS.61)

MARY DIANA (MS.221) = b.25Dec1927 Dulwich = Arthur Martin 2Jul1955 Salisbury,Rhodesia b.16Jul1922 Bradford

CAROLE ANN MARJORIE = b.1Jun1942 Ilford (CS.52) = Stanley Foster 19Aug1967 Ilford

RAYMOND FRANK = Barbara Franklin 23Sep1967 Bedford (RS.58)

KENNETH PAUL SWINNERTON = b. 1941 Bedford (KS.12)

PAMELA JOYCE (PS) = b.10Dec1942 Bedford = Ian Morraill 1965 Bedford

AMANDA JANE (AS.60) = b. 1973 Bedford

SUZANNE OLIVER (SS.62) = b.21May1944 Bedford = David Stephen H 27Apr1972 Bedford

ALAN JOHN SWINNERTON = Valerie Rose Hobbs 12Mar1960 Stoke Poges b.30Jul1939 Slough (AS.67)

COLIN GEOFFREY SWINNERTON = Valerie Ann Welstead 25Nov1967 Maidenhead (CS.56)

ANGELA SUSAN (AS.68) = b.11Aug1945 Slough = Peter White Dec1964 Slough

NIGEL JOHN SWINNERTON = b.19Nov1960 Stoke Poges (NS.8)

PAUL ALAN SWINNERTON = b.30May1965 Crewkerne (PS.17)

MATTHEW SWINNERTON = b.17Mar1969 Crewkerne (MS.118)

PETER MICHAEL SWINNERTON = b.1Jun1973 Yeovil (PS.5)

DAVID JAMES SWINNERTON = b. 1973 Yeovil (DS.31)

JOHN PAUL SWINNERTON = b. 1977 Yeovil (JS.345)

PAMELA JESSICA MASON (PS.45) = b.20Apr1936 Fulham = John Ramsey Sep1971 Ilford

Herbert Ballinger 29Aug1954 Indiana, USA.

THE SAX—MAN WHO AUDITIONED FOR HITLER BUT ENDED WITH MR WAKEY WAKEY

The envelope was addressed quite simply —Herr Adolph Hitler Department of Music, Berlin, Germany. Inside was yet another simplicity—a formal application for the post of Germany's proposed answer to Henry Hall. Two months' later the Corporal dispatched an emissary to London to audition the man who had the effrontery to write to him direct. The report was favourable the band was temporarily booked—but then came the snag

Due to the dictators racial prejudices no suitable agent could be found to cover the 29-month tour of the successful orchestra.

Today some 22 years later saxophonist Charlie Swinnerton of Little Gearies, Ilford, remembers the event with a twinkle in his eye—but a moral in his mind. In the music business the breaks are never easy and the heartache plentiful.

But since that unfortunate period in 1937, Charlie Swinnerton has become an integral part of one of show businesses most famous and honoured outfits—The Billy Cotton Band.

WONDERFUL

For 18 years he has worked with the organisation that has earned the reputation of never being out of work and of bringing more pleasure to the public than score of also-rans.

Fitting snugly into the comfortable outfit which believes in entertainment first and last, he has enjoyed a career which he openly admits has been hard—but a wonderful experience.

It is difficult to analyse the Cotton formula. His seeming happy and enjoyable approach to the business has dubbed him "The best band out of a difficult set."

It is a fact that the majority of his artistes have stayed with him for the best part of tells its own story of genuine happy loyalty. Swinnerton himself believes that the Cotton secret is two fold: versatility and an appeal to everybody except the teenager's.

Something of this spirit is seen in Charlie Swinnerton. The work, which takes him during the summer to the major coastal resorts, means a hotel-life.

There is little private time for a band—the leader of which has an income around the £30,000 a year mark.

But to balance this on the happiness sheet, is the comradeship of fellow players; the thrill of exciting and making an audience happy, and the knowledge of being with a first rate group.

VARIETY

There are countless outfits who put all their eggs into one "basket" he says "they enjoy the top while the fad lasts but once it is over where are they."

A look at a typical Cotton variety programme supports Cottons claim. It ranges from full scale orchestral arrangements which are comparable with Ted Heath to the most bawdy comic songs of the

It appeals to the mums, dads and the kids only the teenagers don't like it. But the Cotton band can fill more theatres for longer periods than any of the top dance or orchestras.

Swinnerton is the bands lead saxophonist; but the job doesn't end there the clowning, joking, ribbing and humour which accompanies a Cotton programme is as important as the music.

SOMETIMES

The thing about The Old Man says Swinnerton is that he knows what he wants and he knows the way to get it. We talk about ideas; we're not bullied into them. We work in fact as a team.

The show must always go on and with regular TV dates the half-hour Sunday radio show—which has run continuously for over two years—and the weekly bookings, the strain is great.

A self taught player—from a Woolworth's tutor—Swinnerton became a competent player.

UNKNOWN

From there Swinnerton joined the great American Paul Whiteman's Romance of Rhythm band for a tour of Germany; opened a club in Edinburgh—Jack Payne was the unknown pianist—and then went to Germany again as musical director of Odeon records. (He was renamed Clive Williams because Swinnerton wasn't English enough.)

This was the period of the hotel orchestra and Swinnerton soon found himself with Debroy Summers—as principal sax.

"My most vivid memory of that outfit was playing for the Prince of Wales until four or five in the morning," he remembers. "The tune he loved to hear all night was 'Birds of the Blues'."

In 1927, Swinnerton was in Royal Command Performance with Summers. In that year there were 13 acts; in 1953, his last Command Performance there were nearly 60.

YOUNGER

Bands as Hylton Payne Hall and others kept him busy until 1937 when circumstances stopped him becoming one of "Hitler's aides."

At war's outbreak Swinnerton was put in a factory but not for long. After an injury he met some of Cotton's band in a pub; heard they needed a saxist, got the job after an audition—and hasn't stopped since.

In the same year, 1941, he married local girl Marjorie Richards who was a member of the then famous Betty Hobb's Globe Girls.

Today, Charlie Swinnerton is reasonably contented. "The money is good," he says "but the hours are long."

Aged 56, but looking a deal younger, he hopes to soon own his own public house. But with the spirit that exists in the Cotton fraternity, it seems improbable that their librarian, union steward and lead sax will retire yet.

After hearing "Wakey-Wakey" for so many years it will be difficult to shut down the blinds.

THE VICTORIA PALACE

Monday, May 16th, 1960

Messrs. Prince Littler, Jack Hylton & Arthur Scott

tender their congratulations to

Charles Swinnerton

on being selected to appear before

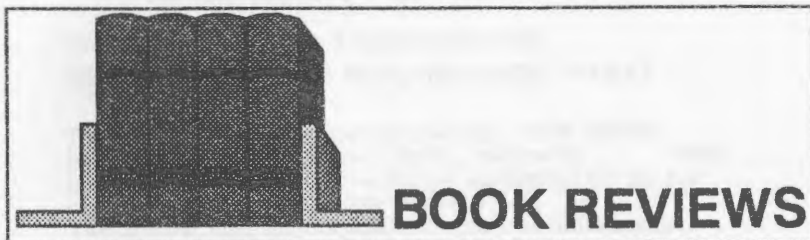
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

on the occasion of the

ROYAL COMMAND PERFORMANCE

in aid of the

Variety Artists' Benevolent Fund



Daughter of the Raj. Margery Thomas. Swinnerton Society. 1995

I have to declare an interest. Margery, the author of this autobiography, born Margery Swynnerton, is my aunt, now aged 101, President of the Swinnerton Society, and very remarkable for her age, - a great and lovable character. Margery has written her life story covering a century of great change; her childhood in Simla, in Victorian India; her experiences as a nurse during the First World War; her life in the 'Gold Coast,' now Ghana, and her life in England during the last half century.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book for me was her account of her early childhood in Simla, where she roamed the countryside with her brother Dicky, my father. Her father was an artist who made a living painting pictures of Maharajahs, Rajas and teaching pupils. Simla, a hill station in the foothills of the Himalayas, was the summer retreat for the British when the temperature on the plain became too high. The children were supposed to be accompanied by their 'ayah' when they went for their walks, but she often left them with their dog Woollie, once they were out of sight of their home. As children do, Margery soon picked up Hindustani, spoken by the servants, and was often called upon by her father to translate for him. The book is a fascinating glimpse of a childhood in the days of the British Empire. Margery was a young girl when the news of the death of Queen Victoria finally reached Simla. In later life, Margery returned to India and Simla, but like many other return visits to places known in one's youth, it was, I think, a bit of a disappointment. When she was young, she saw the British Empire through the eyes of a child, and found little to criticise. "Years later," she writes, "it was a shock to find that 'The Government', 'The Raj', which we children, anyway, had thought was so godlike in its goodness and cleverness, was not always so good nor so clever."

It is amazing to realise that Margery was a nurse in India and Mesopotamia, now Iraq, during the First World War. When she was still too young to enter a training hospital, she worked at the Cottage

Hospital at Mussoorie, a very small hospital in which she was the only nurse, with the English Matron, and one resident patient, a retired doctor dying of cancer of the throat, who couldn't speak. One night, Margery was left in charge of the hospital, when a man who had cut his throat was brought into the hospital. Margery, with typical sang-froid, aroused the doctor out of his bed. He wrote instructions with pencil and paper on how to deal with the man, while Margery carried them out. Only when it was all over, and help had arrived, did Margery allow herself to collapse and cry.

The book is full of such stories that illustrate Margery's common-sense and courage.

At the age of 58, in 1952, she decided to cross the Sahara. She was due to return to West Africa to join her husband in the 'Gold Coast', but instead of travelling by ship, the normal way, she decided to go by bus from Algiers to Kano, in the north of Nigeria. She kept a diary of the journey, and I remember hearing her reading her account on the radio shortly after her return.

Her style of writing is like her manner, terse and not given to flights of literary description. Another writer, with far less to tell, would have filled 600 pages.

Naturally, the last half of her life has been less full of incident than the first, but Margery has continued to travel abroad, to India, the United States and Europe. She says little in her book of her painting skills, but she has inherited a great deal of talent from her father and has continued to paint in oils until very recently. Her book stops before her hundredth birthday, which was a great day of celebration at St. Bartholomew's hospital, where she was trained so many years ago.

A few days ago, my wife and I had a lunch with Margery in an Indian restaurant. Afterwards, she chatted with the waiter, and found he came from Katmadhu. "Oh really!" she said. "I haven't been there - yet." Margery is a lady who still looks forward.

The Church in the Wood: The Story of St. Thomas's, Butterson, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

This beautifully produced booklet, with colour and black and white illustrations, celebrates 150 years of St. Thomas's Parish Church, and also relates the history of the parish, which is near Swynnerton, from its first record in the Domesday Book. Four maps show it as it was in 1280, 1750, 1850 and 1995.

There have been Swinnertons in Butterson since 1540 when William Swinnerton built the Old Hall and moved into the township. In 1809 the Old Hall was out-moded, and Sir John Soane was commissioned to design a new Hall, but it was never built. It was not until 1842 that a special Act of Parliament allowed the provisions of the will of William Swinnerton, relative to the building of a New Hall and a Church, to be carried out. William had three daughters, one of whom, Mary, married Sir William Pilkington of Chevet. Sir William sold estate timber to the value of £1500 to defray the cost of this new Church of St. Thomas, which was consecrated in 1845.

In 1850 Sir William died, aged 75. His heir, Thomas, died in an accident in London in 1854, and his other son died shortly afterwards. Dame Mary also died in 1854.

In 1915, the Hall was abandoned, but the Church continues to thrive, and is in good shape as those of us who attended the special commemoration service there the day after our Gathering in June can testify.

Roger Swynnerton

Copies of our President's book may be obtained from the chairman (see address on the inside front cover) at £5.00 post paid (Overseas by air £6).

Copies of 'The Church in the Wood', all proceeds from which go to the church, may also be obtained from the chairman at £3.50 post paid (overseas air £4.50)

(Roger Swynnerton is one of our new council members: a prolific computer in-putter of society data and a retired librarian.)

* * * * *

Tulip - The Biography of a Mouse. Volume One: Fairweather Farm by Charlie Swynnerton. (Our member Charles Iain Swynnerton) Ramshackle Press £11.99 Hardback.

This is a charming story for younger readers, written with wit and the necessary light touch to keep children and their parents entertained. Many animal tales for small children are cloying and trite and short on plot, but this is lively, amusing and almost entirely free of sentiment, though good behaviour, moral courage and the love of the family are all central themes.

Tulip Mouskin is the youngest of 7 mice born to Mr and Mrs Mouskin of Fairweather Farm. She is born with unusual bat-like flaps of skin between her front and hind legs, which, she eventually learns (mostly by accident), enable her to fly. The book follows the adventures of this curious mouse as she learns not only to use this

exceptional ability, but also to avoid the farmhouse cat, steal cheese from the pantry, outwit the devious Rotten Rat and learn to survive the perils of life on the farm and in the outside world. There are narrow escapes, thrilling adventures and touching scenes, all told with warmth and humour. The author uses a few too many long words for readers of this age, when shorter words would have done just as well, such as emboldened, commiserated, disconsolately and ensconced; the clichés occasionally hold up the narrative - 'sticking to his guns through thick and thin until he was blue in the face'; and one or two bloodthirsty scenes will make parents blanch, though the children will no doubt love them.

But these are small criticisms, and are eclipsed by some charming human characters (particularly the grumpy butler) and plenty of enter-taining ideas and lists, such as the concept of mousematics, and the exhaustive list of species of mice - droopy-drawered drizzle mice, natty-knickered nibble mice, wet-weather wellie mice - which will appeal to every child's love for playing with words, especially rude ones.

There is plenty of extra material supplied at the end of the book to make it more fun to read and use, such as songs, lists and maps, and the whole is illustrated with black-and-white sketches and old-fashioned colour plates on glossy paper, complete with captions.

Jo Swinnerton

(Jo Swinnerton is a professional editor, specialising in children's books, formerly with Penguin and Pavilion but now freelance.)

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

All these books would make excellent Christmas presents. We also

have Christmas cards in stock with a lovely black and white picture of St. Mary's Church, Swynnerton on the front. They are available from the secretary (address on inside front cover) and, complete with envelopes, cost 25p each.

The parish has produced a lovely new coloured card this year, also with a painting of our church on the front. Proceeds from the sale of these will go to the St. Mary's Restoration Fund. An order form is enclosed.

THE COMPETITION

The winner of the competition for the best written family history was our new secretary, Elizabeth Livesey. She is now an experienced family historian and together with her husband, our treasurer Keith, runs the monthly bookstall at the meetings of a branch of the Cheshire Family History Society. Elizabeth is also a member of the Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry which covers the three midland counties of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Swynnerton on Saturday 3rd June 1995.

The Chairman, Joe Swinnerton, opened the meeting and welcomed all those present, especially the overseas members, a record number of whom were attending. Joe also thanked the Rev. Barry Brewer for his hospitality. Especial mention was made of our President, Mrs. Margery Thomas, who will be 101 in August, and Vice-Presidents Norman Swinnerton of the U.S.A. and Bill Swinarton of Canada. He also gave a warm welcome to two special guests, Mrs Pauline Saul and Mrs Pauline Litton, who had both been of great assistance to our secretary over the years. Joe went on to encourage friendliness between members of The Family and invited us all to introduce ourselves to our neighbours. Introductions over, Joe declared the meeting open.

1.95 APOLOGIES were received from Vice President Bill Swinnerton (Australia), Mrs. Davis (Sutton Coldfield), David Swinnerton (Middlesbrough), Peter Swinnerton (Wallington, Surrey) and Alastair and Julie Swinnerton (London).

There were 101 members and family present.

2.95 THE MINUTES of the last Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 13th August 1994, were taken as read.

3.95 MATTERS ARISING - There were no matters arising.

4.95 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Joe Swinnerton referred to his foreword in the current journal. He reported that the Council had met on two occasions since the last Annual General Meeting. Most of the discussions at the meetings had referred to arrangements for the Gathering.

5.95 TREASURER'S REPORT:

Keith Livesey reported that the accounts had not yet been audited due to illness but would be handed over to the auditor later in the day. Questions were asked regarding the meaning of some of the initials referred to on the balance sheet and these were satisfactorily explained. The accounts were proposed, seconded and carried. A full copy of the Treasurer's Report is attached.

6.95 ARCHIVIST'S REPORT:

Iain Swinnerton explained that most of the results of his research over the years were on display in the Hall. He reported a steady expansion of information, now being computerised at a steady rate. Iain thanked the 'in-putters' - Joe Swinnerton, David Brock, Elizabeth and Keith Livesey and Roger Swynnerton for their work on the family trees and archives. He reminded everyone of the work that has been carried out on Swynnerton Church, made possible by the Society's support. Special mention was made of the beautiful kneelers created by Eileen Bolitho of New Zealand who was present and her mother. Leaflets were available for anyone who would like to learn how to make kneelers. Iain reported that everyone present could find themselves on a tree in the hall except for the South Wales contingent who he had yet to tie into the family. He finished by giving a special welcome to Noel Swenarton from Northern Ireland.

7.95 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Joe Swinnerton explained that he, David Brock and Leslie Swinnerton must retire because they had come to the end of their time under the rules of the constitution. As a time-saving exercise Iain had canvassed members he thought would be willing to serve as officers. Joe suggested adopting the officers en masse and 'advertised' vacancies for two council members. Ronald Swinnerton volunteered to fill one of the vacancies.

The following officers were then elected, officers to serve for the next twelve months, Council members for the next three years.

Chairman - Iain Swinnerton Secretary - Elizabeth Livesey
Council - Roger Swynnerton, Elizabeth Swynnerton, Ronald Swinnerton
Proposed - William Swinnerton (California)
Seconded - Kay Sabell (Solihull)
The motion was carried unanimously.

8.95 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

This was fixed provisionally for 2nd June 1996 at Swynnerton village.

9.95 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Tim Swynnerton offered a vote of thanks to Joe for being such a very very good Chairman at the grand age of 82 and to David for his six years as Secretary. Iain recalled his first meeting with Leslie. Whilst the council members were lunching at the Fitzherbert Arms and

discussing whether to restore the church organ or replace it with a new electronic model, a young man sitting close by, having overheard the references to the name 'Swinnerton', curiously enquired what was afoot as his name was Swinnerton - Leslie Swinnerton! He has been on the council ever since and Iain thanked him for all his contribution to the Society.

Joe reported that at the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry he had seen family trees being beautifully illustrated and had had one prepared for himself. It was on display in the Hall and Joe would give details to anyone who would like to have their own version. The cost would be £150.00.

The winner of the competition for the written family history would be announced at the birthday party.

Finally, Joe thanked everyone for attending and for the attention given and with exhortations to 'Make friends', he declared the meeting closed.

THE 21ST BIRTHDAY GATHERING

This was generally agreed to have been a great success and much enjoyed by all. It was notable for the fact that we had members from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and the United States of America attending - the biggest overseas contingent ever. For the first time too, the great majority of us stayed in the same hotel which meant the party went on after the day's events were over. I have been promised a full account of the weekend by Larry Swinnerton from the USA and will publish this in the December issue.

FAMILY NOTES

Best wishes to our member, the Reverend Ernest Swinnerton, Vicar of St. Matthew with St. Barnabas, Bolton on his retirement noted in the Church Times and hope this means he will now be able to get to a future meeting.

Just as we go to print, I have heard of the deaths of two of our long-standing members, George Maurice Swinnerton of Blurton, Stoke on Trent and Thomas Henry (Harry) Swinnerton of Birmingham. I will give full details in the next issue but in the meantime we send our sincere sympathy to their families.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SWINNERTON SOCIETY

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UK £12 USA \$20 Canada \$30 Australia \$27

All prices include postage and packing.

Overseas members please send dollar notes as the commissions deducted by the banks for exchanging dollar cheques are prohibitive.