

# SWINNERTON Family History



*Some members of the Betley Family gathered outside their grandfather's old home in Madeley Staffs in September 2004. The group includes our members Valerie Dall (centre) and Peter Swinnerton (right)*

THE JOURNAL OF THE SWINNERTON SOCIETY

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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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## SWINNERTON FAMILY HISTORY

*Volume 12  
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*Editor – I.S.Swinnerton*

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN – Roger Swynnerton

First, and most importantly, I have to apologise for giving the date of this year's AGM as Sat 9<sup>th</sup> June instead of Sat 5<sup>th</sup> June. Of course, there is no Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> as one very observant member of the society told me.

Diaries seem to become more important, rather than less, once one has retired. Firstly, one's memory isn't what it was. I never agree to any invitation without first consulting the diary. But there is another reason. When you are working, life follows a familiar pattern. Monday to Friday – "go to work". Saturday and Sunday – "don't go to work". Not much need for a diary there. But retire, and your whole year is made up of appointments, visits, engagements, trips to the doctor or dentist, reminders of birthdays, and holidays. Fixing a date for a holiday this year has been very difficult, finding a "window of opportunity" as they say. I used to think - how could retired people talk of going on holiday when life was one long holiday? How wrong I was!"

There is of course another sort of diary, the personal diary. I was never very good at this. When I was young, I tried, but by the fourth of January I was wavering, and I never got beyond the tenth. How much should you include?

What if someone should read it? Pepys tried writing in code, but it wasn't long before his code was cracked.

And would it have been so well known, if it didn't include the Great Fire of London? Alan Clark was the only politician to tell the whole truth in his diaries., and now we are enjoying it on TV. Only Tony Benn appears to be keeping up the great tradition of diary-writing. We Swinnertons have Ann Bagot's diary, of course, but how many other diaries are there in the Swinnerton families? Too few, I guess. If you know of any interesting ones, please let me know. How I would have loved to read pages from a diary kept by my grand-father Frederick, the artist who went to live and work in India. But, alas, as far as I know, he never kept a diary. Travel writers, like Paul Theroux, keep detailed diaries, so they can write books about their travels when they return home, but otherwise the art of diary writing is moribund. All we end up knowing about many of our Swinnerton ancestors is - John Swinnerton b.1821 d.1888. Not a lot to show for a life's work.

See you at this year's AGM on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June, at Swynnerton, of course.

*Roger Swynnerton*

## St.Peter's Church Wolverhampton

*Extracts from an article by Richard Wyatt in the Wolverhampton Chronicle July 17, 2003*

St Peter's Church has been barely touched for the past 500 years but during the Middle Ages both Wolverhampton and the church itself were to change

The church had been dedicated to St Mary since Saxon times but was changed to St Peter during the period of King Henry III.

It is believed that between 1295 and 1308, when Deans Philip and John de Everdon served the church, that the nave and isles were largely built which produced the ground plan which can still be found today. Major reconstruction of the church began with a commission on July 1 1439.

Different theories exist as to why the work was carried out. Wealthy traders may have wanted to leave their mark on the town for selfish or religious reasons and believed the prospering town required a better building.

The commission was made to John Hampton, **Thomas Swynnerton**, William Leveson, James and Nicholas Leveson and William

Salford. They were given the responsibility to '*take and provide the stone required to build the church*'. Members of both the Leveson and Salford families were merchants in the wool trade.

The clerestory above the arches contained two rows of stained glass windows which displayed the shields of the families who had donated money to the reconstruction. These windows were later lost and replaced with new stained glass in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The cost of the pulpit is likely to have been met by Humphrey Swynnerton as his coat of arms appears on the balustrade of the staircase to the pulpit.



## The Gresleys of Drakelow

Page 43. Johanna de Gresley, daughter of Sir Robert de Stafford was forcibly abducted from Drakelow by **Sir John Swinnerton**. She later escaped to marry Sir Walter de Montgomery – a connection of the Swinnertons. (d.1324).

Page 48. **Roger de Swynnerton**, 1344, had wardship of John de Gresley who married **Alice de Swinnerton** 1345.



# Persevering for Preservation.

*Hertfordshire Advertiser 30 Dec 2003.*

**Great – grandmother Margaret Taylor has just shared an American award for her part in an unusual conservation project.**

Mrs Taylor, now aged 88, has been working with her daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter for eight years on a project to restore a village, known as Mormon Row, in the Grand Teton National Park.

She has just returned from the annual conference in Denver of the American National Trust for Historic Preservation where she and her family, together with another member of the group, received the trust's National.

Preservation Honour Award. Mrs Taylor, who lives in The Dell, St Albans, said that her daughter, Dr Judith Taylor, son-in-law Ed Brown and 18-year-old granddaughter Elizabeth, told her about the project when they visited her for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

She said "Mormon Row is around 100 years old and although it is in a national park, nothing has been done to preserve it because the land was bought to protect the animals".



**Margaret Taylor and the Michigan Volunteers**

She and the group, known as the Michigan Volunteers, have now almost completed the task of restoring the village and have also taken on historic log cabins in other parts of the USA including Alaska. Although she originally took

on some of the manual work, she now specialises in recording the group's endeavours.

At first the park managers were not very convinced that the restoration work was feasible or desirable but have now changed their minds having seen what is possible.

At the Denver conference, Gale Norton, the US Secretary of State of the Interior, announced that funds were to be made available for a training centre where others could learn the preservation skills the Michigan Volunteers had put to such good use. It will be based at White Dude Ranch, one of the complexes already rescued by the group. Mrs Taylor said "Wyoming is a tremendous place. We camp and the scenery is really spectacular and I am looking forward to going back next year".

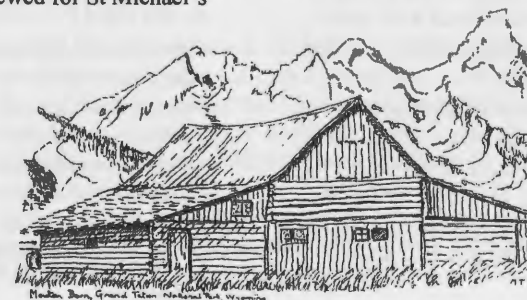
Mrs Taylor, whose husband was the headmaster of the Haberdasher Aske's School in Elstree, is a past-president of the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society and has worked on many local archaeological excavations.

When interviewed for St Michael's

(St Albans) parish magazine, Margaret said that the ceremony at which her team had received the certificate was very impressive. It was held in the Paramount Theatre, Denver - a nostalgic 1930s cinema complete with Art Deco and a Wurlitzer organ. The final session of the conference next morning was held in a magnificent amphitheatre at Red Rocks.

Margaret says that her role in the team has now become less that of a skilled manual labourer, apart from picking up the roofing rubbish, and more that of chronicling by sketching the buildings, before and after restoration, and the sketching the workers while they are hammering away on the roof-tops or removing and replacing rotten logs in the barns, pumphouse, chicken coops, granary and homestead out-buildings.

Our congratulations to her and her team – she is an example to us all. She is, of course, our member Mrs Margaret Taylor (née Swinnerton) the youngest daughter of Professor Henry Hurd Swinnerton, the eminent palaeontologist. Further information on the project can be found on [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).





## One of Her Majesty's Jollies.

Her Majesty's Jollies, as those of you who know your Kipling will recall, were the Royal Marines. They were called jollies from the fact that their allocated boat to go ashore in was the jolly boat. "Going for a Jolly" is a term used in the army as well and means going for an outing. Kipling described the Marines so well in his poem *Soldier and Sailor Too*.

**William Swinnerton**, who said he had been born at Hull and had been a boilermaker, joined the Royal Marine Light Infantry at Warwick on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1857 giving his age as 18 years for which he received a bounty of £2. He was posted to 14 Company of the Portsmouth Division.



ROYAL MARINES

He was described as being 5ft 7ins tall with a fresh complexion, brown eyes and black hair, pock pitted and with an anchor tattooed on his left arm.

He was obviously a good Marine and so when, on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1862, he 'respectfully requested to be transferred to the Woolwich Division as his parents are now residing at that place',

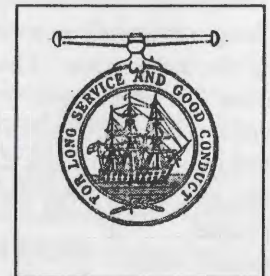
his request was granted and he was posted to 44 Company.

### Promotion at last

Having served for just over 9 years he was promoted Corporal on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1866. Having originally signed on for 12 years and his conduct having been rated as 'very good' throughout (his only recorded offence was 'for making use of improper language when warned for guard on 16 June 1858' for which he was awarded 14 days extra duties), he was permitted to re-engage for another 9 years in 1868, for which he received £7 which was made up of a bounty of £1, gratuity of £1, allowance in lieu of kit of £1 (he would have had a complete kit as he was a serving marine and £1 for 20 day's allowance. He was attested before a Justice of the Peace at Woolwich on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1868. On the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1869 he was transferred back to the Portsmouth Division and joined 30 Company. On the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1873, he was promoted Sergeant.

He finally retired from the service (in fact he was invalided out) on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1877 at Haslar Hospital because of a *disease of the heart contracted in the Service*. He was awarded a pension towards which he was allowed to count his four good conduct badges each worth 1d per day. He was also awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, his conduct having been described as 'exemplary'.

Of his total service of 20 years and 274 days, he spent 10 years and 47 days ashore and 10 years and 227 days afloat. He served for 3 years and 283 days on HMS Victor Emmanuel, 251 days on HMS Edinburgh, 2 years and 61 days on HMS Trafalgar, 2 years and 363 days on HMS Duke of Wellington and 364 days on HMS Serapis. I shall find out more about these ships and where he served in due course.



All this information was found from his discharge papers in ADM157/554 at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office) at Kew.

### Who was William?

If he was telling the truth when he said he was aged 18 in January 1857, we would expect to find the record of his birth around 1839 - all births, marriages and deaths were supposed to have been registered since the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1837. It was not compulsory until 1875 and we do know that some were missed in the early years. However, we have no record of a birth or baptism in Hull at this period and a check of the indexes to births reveals that only two William Swinnertons were registered between 1837 and 1840.

One was in 1838 in Bangor registration district and we know that this was the son of George and Lydia Swinnerton. This William married in 1862 (when Marine William was at sea) and went on to have seven children all born in Chester Castle so that rules him out.

The other was in Newport, Shropshire in 1839. But did William know where he was born? I did not for many years and I am a genealogist! I had always assumed, as I think a lot of people do, that I had been born in the place where I had grown up which was in Stourbridge, Worcestershire. It was not until many years later when I was required to produce my birth certificate for military purposes, that I discovered that I had, in fact, been born over the border in Staffordshire (which pleased me being our ancestral county!) but had lived in Stourbridge since I was a baby. Also did William falsify his age (many did) and what was he doing in Warwick. Much more investigation is needed.



## An Energetic Priest

The greatest disadvantage which the religious idealist had to face was the government's conviction that heresy and sedition were two sides of the same coin. The energy of Mr. Swynnerton, who preached even on workdays, was disconcerting enough to elderly and conservative ecclesiastics, but his zeal and even his impudence in claiming to know the King's mind might have been forgiven him if the authorities had not feared that he was consorting with 'light people', minds with and religious justification for civil disobedience. Behind ribaldry and sacrilege lurked the spectre of social revolution. The crazed Mr. Collins was imprisoned because he defamed the crucifix by shooting an arrow at the figure of Christ and shouting out to the effigy 'to defend itself', but he died at the stake in 1538 because he was 'wont to exclaim against the nobility and great men of the kingdom, and rashly to bring forward against them many passages of holy Scripture'.

The 'Mr Swynnerton' mentioned was the Reverend Thomas Swynnerton (TS.170) – the rabid anti-Catholic priest who eventually had to flee to Holland to avoid capture and execution.

### Found in the National Library of Wales

#### Tredegar Estate Records (uncatalogued)

A draft release to be dated 2 July 1816, from Martha, Mary and Elizabeth Swinnerton, all of Butterton, Staffordshire, spinsters, to Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar, Monmouthshire, bart, and John Archer Houblon of Hallingbury Place, Essex, gent., executors of the will of Lady Martha Milborne of the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, Middlesex, widow, decd., the grandmother of Martha, Mary and Elizabeth Swinnerton. The will was dated 11 March 1803, Martha Milborne died in May 1803, and the will was proved in the PCC on the [blank] 1803.

There is no indication on the draft that the release was ever implemented.

## edain

**E**dain have recently returned from the world renowned Port Fairy Folk Festival and the Apollo Bay Music Festival. Their performances were received with rave reviews and full houses.

In September last year **Edain** performed live on the ABC's national Saturday program "Recovery". They participated in the Celtic Affair celebrated with a performance at Dallas Brookes Hall, and have been seen around town at The Punters Club, Abyss night club, Shed 14 at the Victorian Docks and the Corner Hotel. Last year they also

supported Ireland's champion fiddle player, Martin Hayes, on his Melbourne Tour.

**Edain** have supported Chris Wilson and Shane O'Mara, Jen Andersons Duo (of Wedding Parties Anything), Things of Stone and Wood, and the Fureys.

Edain's music is a unique blend of pop with a Celtic feel. They perform the odd traditional Irish tune throughout the set to keep the crowd jiggling along. The band was formed in 1996 by Elizabeth and Lynelle Moran. The sisters were born in Ireland and raised in Australia.

**Elizabeth Moran** is 25 and performs violin, keyboards, bodran and vocals. She composes the majority of Edain's original material and graduated from Melbourne University where she studied music.

**Dan West** is 23 and performs guitar. He has a Bachelor of Music from Melbourne University, has a special interest in contemporary jazz and his other bands include Kadoonkah and Entropy.

**Anna Kelly** is 22 and performs vocals, tin whistles, flute and keyboards. She also has a Bachelor of Music from Melbourne University and she performs accapella with her other interests.

**George Andrews** is 22 and plays drums for the band. He studied at the Victorian College of the Arts with a focus on Tabla and Indian Percussion.

**Julian Swinnerton** is 24 and performs cello for Edain. He also plays with various musicals around town such as "Beauty and the Beast". Aside from his cello playing in the Stevie Wonders Orchestra you can hear him performing in "Hay Stack".

**Lynelle Moran** is 23 and performs lead vocals, tin whistle and flute for Edain. She also has a Bachelor of Music from Melbourne University and has recorded a Celtic Concerto with the Victorian State Orchestra.

This report of this obviously highly talented group of young people is a couple of years old but, as a devotee of Folk and a regular visitor to the Annual Sidmouth International Folk Festival, I hope they are still going strong. You can see pictures of them on [www.mbcmr.unimelb.edu.au/edain](http://www.mbcmr.unimelb.edu.au/edain)



## JOSEPH SWYNNERTON the Sculptor (1848 – 1910)

**T**here is much to tell about Joseph, and even more about Charles, his father, who was the founder of the I.O.M. branch of the Swynnerton family. I can understand their love for this Isle. I have been many times, especially when young, and always in September.

In the autumn the IOM is outstandingly beautiful and peaceful. I always went over for the Manx Grand Prix which was racing for the amateurs. The Island is most famous, perhaps notorious, for the T.T. held in June which I have never attended.

By the time I realised that the Manx Swynnertons were so interesting, I had got to know Frank Swynnerton who had retired to the Island from the Potteries. Frank and Helen taught us a great deal about the I.O.M. and were extremely kind to both Anne, my wife, and me. Frank knew an enormous amount about the Manx Swynnertons and Mona's Isle in particular. It is the late Frank Swynnerton who we must thank for a great deal of what follows.

Joseph Swynnerton became the foremost of the Manx sculptors. He was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1848, in Douglas. His father, Charles, made sure he worked hard at his studies at the old Douglas Grammar School. At thirteen, he left the school and began work as an apprentice to his father. It was certainly a firm tradition in the Betley branch that all the children had to be "trained", and the mark of

approval was to serve an apprenticeship. The Manx family were from, and of, the Betley tradition. A good example was my grandfather William who, although heir to a farm, was required to complete an apprenticeship as a bricklayer and stonecutter.

Joseph lived in the era of "Self-help" and the Mechanics Institutes,

*by the Revd Brian Swynnerton*

which enabled Joseph, like his brothers, to extend his learning in the realms of music, art, drama and religion – the desire for a liberal education was getting under way. In the evenings the students, trainees and apprentices came together to read and exchange art and technological journals in both their homes and the institutions.

Charles was delighted with his son's enthusiasm for self-improvement. He was at the forefront of discussions within the

family and recognised Joseph's ability and artistic aspirations.

When Joseph approached his father and asked to be released from his apprenticeship at the age of twenty, Charles readily agreed. He was released from the family building business, and financed by his father so that he could enter Edinburgh University to read Art Studies.

### *Joseph's first sculptures*

In his first term, Joseph won the Clay modelling prize, and on his next vocation at home, he produced busts of some of the family. The bust of his brother Robert was taken back to the University and earned a report which read "Highly promising work which shows a fine sense of form and proportion, curious in one who has not studied or drawn the human figure."

Robert's bust was put on display in the University and greatly admired by all and sundry. One young lady student was absolutely captivated by Robert's handsome features. When Robert came to visit Joseph, the young lady was on hand with invitations for both Joseph the craftsman and Robert the sitter. The wealthy and influential Edinburgh family, of Italian origin, to which Olivia Sylvani belonged, welcomed the young men to its bosom. Olivia was to become Mrs. Robert Swynnerton.

Joseph was keen to work hard, but the university life was ponderous.

A year on and Joseph, encouraged by the Sylvani family, decided to visit Rome, pursuing his studies with happy enthusiasm. He had letters of introduction to the Academy of Saint Luke, which had been founded by the Vatican and Frederigo Zucarro in honour of the writer of the third gospel who was a physician and an artist.

This sixteenth century college was world famous. It trained painters, sculptors, architects and designers. They came from all parts of Europe to hone their skills and appreciated the aesthetics of Rome and the classical world. In two years there, Joseph worked incredibly hard.

His output of finished work was phenomenal, and he won Pope Pius IX's Silver Medal at the end of his first year. When he was in his second and final year, he was invited to meet the Pope. His Holiness thanked him for his good example and presented him with the much prized Gold Medal of the Academy. Outstanding progress! An apprenticeship properly completed and plenty to show at the graduation.

### *Joseph goes to war*

Joseph was very popular. He spoke Italian well; he loved the Roman smiles, the laughter and romantic atmosphere of the Eternal City. As is so often the case when things are going well, the Devil steps in! Along with young workers, and especially students,

## Joseph's Girl Comes Home

(see Swinnerton Family History Vol.12 No.4 August 2003)

Right: The statue  
as found in the  
garden



Left: After restoration  
on display in  
Liz Yeandle's home.



Joseph's statue of St. Winifred at Holywell, North Wales



there was a strong desire to support the great Italian patriot Garibaldi and the King, Victor Emmanuel. Joseph made a good soldier; plenty of self-discipline and determination!

When the breach at Porta pia was blown, there was Joseph leading the Student Volunteer Regiment. He was wounded and deafened, but became, like so many that day, both veteran and a hero. Later, he met both the King and Garibaldi, and he befriended the great Italian folk hero who never forgot Joseph.

Garibaldi loved England and the English. He had been welcomed by all in 1864 on his last visit. A million or more had thronged the streets of London to cheer him. The boys of Eton College, led by their masters, had treated him as though he had just won them a match against Harrow. Queen Victoria was always an admirer and was captivated by him. She assured him of "all our support and especially my Crimean veterans". Indeed, Garibaldi had already received considerable support from British folk on his unifying march from Palermo to Naples. For example, the British ladies who lived in Naples organised a military hospital for him. He, in gratitude, gave them land for a magnificent English church. Meeting Brits like Joseph must have been "The icing on the cake".

### Honours and Rewards

St.Luke's Academy bestowed on Joseph many honours. He was also elected as a full member of the British Academy in Rome. He now had his own studio at Piazza Trinita de Monti. The commissions flowed in. Work for some of Europe's best architectural and sculptural specialists came his way. One outstanding work was "Cain" which was placed on display in the Royal Academy, London, and received high praise.

The next year he received greater acclamation from even the notorious Academy critics. This was when the Academy placed his "Cupid and Psyche" in pride of place, on display in the main entrance. Joseph's reputation was assured.

From 1872 onwards, Joseph travelled home every year for "a holiday" which made his brothers laugh. Brother Godfrey pronounced "we Swynnertons don't holiday; we just enjoy a working change of scene." Thus, Joseph aimed to spend part of every year in the I.O.M. In those holidays he executed some exquisite busts of Manx family and friends. Nearly all the family, when on hand, were "done". However, many of his brothers were away in those years, on what father Charles

called "Imperial Business" – Mark in North America, Rev. Charles in India, Robert in Scotland and Italy, Godfrey a sailor, and young Frederick a prolific and hardworking oil painter in Rome. How delighted they all must have been to hear of each other's progress and achievements.

Charles had built a house on Gansey Point in the south of the Island. He called it "The Studio". It is there for all to admire. Well constructed with a fine north facing studio window. It is forward-looking and an

Edwardian/Italianate style of strong engineering brick and ceramic style decoration. On it's exterior can be seen the coat armour of the Swinnertons of Betley (*on a Cross flory, a bend Gules*).

### Joseph's marriage

On one of Joseph's journeys back to Rome, he encountered a lovely lady artist named Annie Robinson, and they fell in love and were married in 1883. Annie was a Manchester artist whose family lived near Kersal Moor, Rochdale, where her father was a

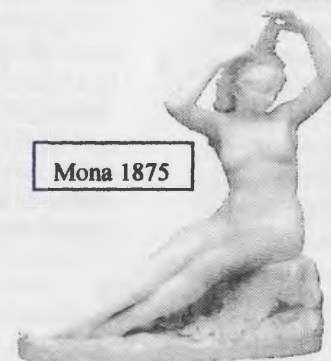
solicitor. Joseph would probably know of the Robinson links with the Swinnerton family and with Swynnerton church where two of the family had been incumbents.

Joseph would certainly know of the great English sculptor and draughtsman Sir Francis Chantrey (1781-1848) and it was he who had created the magnificent

memorial to the two young Robinson girls who had died so tragically in a house fire. The memorial should be seen by everyone in our family; there we see again the Swinnerton family coat armour and

at the same time we gaze at the very best of the stonemason's art.

The Dictionary of British Artists tells of both Annie and Joseph Swynnerton. Of course, there is a great deal about Annie, but little about Joseph. Annie is described as being the first woman to receive academic honour from the Royal Academy in 1922 since Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser were made foundation members in 1768. One could write a fascinating book about the days of Angelica and Mary and their membership qualifications! Such an account would be light years away from the hard-



Mona 1875



Such an account would be light years away from the hard-working times of our relatives in the nineteenth century.

Joseph learnt his oil-painting skills from Annie and he became very able in his own right. His entry in the Dictionary states simply: "Joseph William (1848-1910) Sculptor, b. Isle of Man. Address: Roma and London 1884. 1 exhibition, Grosvenor Gallery; 6 exhibitions, Walker Gallery Liverpool; 4 exhibitions Manchester City Art Gallery; 13 exhibitions The New Gallery; 7 exhibitions Royal Academy.

Annie and Joseph worked very hard together in the Rome studio in Piazza Trinita de

Monti. However, Joseph was keen to have a house of his own, and decided to have one built to his own design in Via Monebello.

It was designed with the whole of the ground floor as a studio, and also for entertaining visitors. Above that ground floor they had their home. Annie and Joseph were good for each other and their work flourished. A happy match and both incredibly hardworking.

The Robinsons were a Scottish family, and Scotland was visited and enjoyed, but the young couple loved their visits to the Isle of Man. Everyone agreed that the finest landscapes she had ever produced were her Manx subjects.

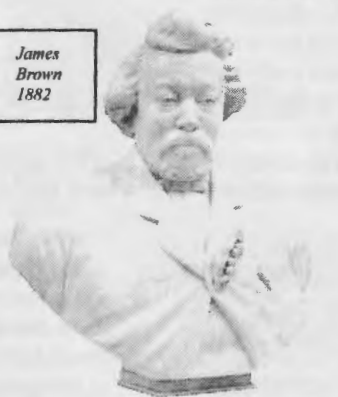
Despite all this professional activity and pressure, the pair managed to spend days walking and exploring in Italy. Joseph had been a member of the Academy Climbing club since arriving in Rome. He had camped amidst the Sabine Hills, canoed on the Italian lakes and climbed in the Italian Alps. Now

he had Annie for company, and they stayed at rural hostleries, and enjoyed the wines and places of archaeological and architectural interest.

The young pair entertained at their new home. The house was ideal for parties as

well as their work. They were very popular with all and sundry in the Eternal City. They entertained lots of friends and relatives from Scotland, the Isle of Man and Manchester. Even my grandfather William

James Brown 1882



spoke proudly of being their guest, but he was staying with them in Annie's London residence. Their London address, near Putney, became very important as demand for their work rapidly increased.

The youngest member of these eager Swynnertons was Frederick who wrote to his older brother Mark in 1888 telling him of his restless youth. He was helped a great deal to get started as a professional artist by Joseph, and he had innate skill and ability. Annie went out of her way to help and encourage him, but Frederick was a very anxious young man, moving frequently and keen to progress. He sounded very pleased that he had purchased a small house and studio in the Isle of Man. He tells Mark that he had raised a mortgage on it, and bought it from his father who had built it. He also tells Mark that his father is still residing in the house, and sister Catherine occupies it on rental in the summer months, saving Frederick the bother about raising interest.

From their childhood together in the Island, another frequent visitor was Joseph's school friend John Nicholson. John was another able artist from an Edinburgh family. John was thrilled to stay with the Swynnertons in Rome and go watercolour painting with them. However, Frederick, in his letter

to Mark, writes: "John Nicholson is doing awful pot-boilers just now. He has dropped watercolour work – the only thing he was master of in painting."

Annie and Joseph enjoyed Rome and obviously got to know it well.

They were ever pleased to share the rich history and beauty with others. Joseph was invited to give talks to groups about Rome's historic architecture. The Italian Army requested him to give a series of lectures for their young soldiers. The driving force behind the military desire of further education was Queen Margarita who was not just a royal patron, but a very able and lively teacher herself. In Joseph she found a kindred spirit. Joseph was a good instructor and enjoyed the opportunities to teach.

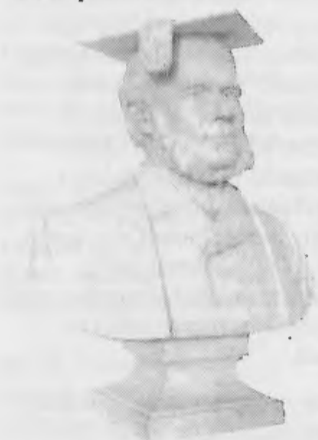
Joseph and Annie were pleased to have a London home. The development of steamships and railways was changing their lives. Like everyone else in this "Get up and go" family, the new transport "made life so easy!"

The great Manx writer Hall Caine wrote to Joseph asking to have a bust executed. "Next time you are here". Annie and Joseph enjoyed the Manx writers, Hall Caine and T. Brown. They were steadily building a fine library. The Hall Caine bust was much praised, and



put on public display for a year in Douglas.

The pundits tell us that Joseph's greatest works were "Mona", "Ganymede", "Virginia", "The Victor", and "Loves Chalice". He executed a great bust of Garibaldi at his home on the island of Caprera in order to make preliminary models and produce a piece of work which would please



**T.E. Brown 1909**

the General. When the work was completed, Garibaldi was so delighted that he requested the bust be placed on its plinth outside his bedroom window. There it still remains to the present day. Two friends of mine recently went to view it for me, and they planned to take photographs of it. Unfortunately, they were told that photography was not allowed so that the lady

visitor decided she would paint a watercolour whilst her husband did pencil sketches. Needless to say, I was delighted with their efforts.

Joseph undertook many commissions which had religious themes. "Christ at the Pillar" can be viewed at the Jesuit church in Farm Street, in Mayfair, London. At the same place of worship can be seen "Santa Francesca Romana" which is described as being in the Medieval tradition. For we who reside in the North-West, a visit to Holywell in North Wales enables us to view the patron saint of this hallowed place – "Saint Winifred". Before this piece of work left Rome, his Holiness Pope Leo XIII requested to see it and bless it. "Immortal Youth", which was exhibited at the National Exhibition in Rome, won first prize and, in addition, Joseph received the National Medal. This work was described by the leading art critic of the day as his "masterpiece". Another critic wrote "he has coped successfully with the most difficult of all branches of art form, which is the representation of the ideal human being adapted to utilitarian purposes".

Joseph had great artistic appreciation and perception; he displayed a very considerable knowledge of anatomy, and was a superb draughtsman. His clay modelling skill was second to

none. Even so, Joseph and Annie never wanted fame or publicity. They simply enjoyed their work and all the challenges that came their way.

The couple kept up their hard working, yet happy, life into the twentieth century. When father Charles died in 1907, the master craftsman, who the young apprentice had followed diligently, was no longer there to urge and encourage his son to greater heights of success. Joseph felt the loss deeply, and began to have bouts of illness and depression. This caused Annie to bring Joseph home to his beloved Mona's Isle.

The works of Joseph, both sculptures and oil paintings, are now on display all over the world. He never expected public acclaim, nor did Annie. Nevertheless, all of us who are part of the Swinnerton family should be proud of the great tradition of skill and hard work that they showed us in their lifetime.

Joseph is buried in the ancient churchyard of Kirk Maughold. This beautiful site is two miles from Ramsey in the north of the Isle of Man. The whole district is rich in Celtic Christian history. The shrine of Saint Maughold is here. He was a student of St. Patrick in Ireland and on this site he established one of the earliest

Christian communities dedicated to worship, education and caring. Joseph has his resting place in a spot he dearly loved.

Finally, my thanks again to the late Frank Swinnerton of Laxey. He took Anne and me to many places which have links with the Isle of Man branch of our family. He had a wonderful memory, and a great sense of humour.

Frank gave me lots of notes, including one relating to Joseph, published in a newspaper in June 1977, which stated that a Victorian Exhibition was being held at Balcony House, Castletown, IOM and featured the work of three Manx artists of international repute: Knox, Nicholson, and Swynnerton. It stated that Joseph Swynnerton was a legend in his own time, a self-taught sculptor, but his fame and following had virtually disappeared.

I hope that the spirit of Annie and Joseph will be an inspiration to future generations. May they be uplifted by their examples of hard work and creativity.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever". May Annie and Joseph rest in peace.



## Membership Matters

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Society in 1974. In 1973, I had edited a series of papers by the Revd. Brian Swinnerton and had them printed as *Swynnerton and the Swinnertons*. On the 1<sup>st</sup> February of that year I sent copies of these to a number of Swinnertons with whom I had been in correspondence over the years and to others whose addresses I had garnered from the telephone directories.

The response was most encouraging and as a result, with the support of the Revd Brian Swinnerton, John Swinnerton of Rickmansworth and Ken Armitstead of Dartmouth, I founded the Swinnerton Society in 1974. The Revd Charles Swynnerton had run a correspondence association of Swinnertons back in 1880 but they were not a formally constituted society or ever met as a body. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to him for the work he did on the family history.

Brian, John and Ken are regarded as the Founder Members. The latter two both served as Chairman of the Society but are now, sadly, no longer with us.

The first issue of *Swinnerton Family History* (a single sheet of A4 paper printed on both sides!) was sent out in May 1974 and we held our first Family Gathering in June of that year of which you will hear more next year.

Sadly, the end of the year figures for 2003 show that our membership is steadily declining. Due to the unavoidable change-over of

treasurers half way through each of the last two years, the list had got rather out of date. However, a thorough review has now been carried out and it reveals that at the 1<sup>st</sup> of January this year, we had only 140 members - the lowest ever - and, of these, as I write, only 103 have renewed their subscriptions for 2004.

This is a worrying situation.

Without the financial support of the family we shall not be able to continue to carry out our twin aims as laid down in our constitution - to research and publish historical records of the family and to support Swynnerton Church.

So - I do appeal to those of you who have not renewed your subscription to do so now. There is a renewal form enclosed with your journal. There is also a Gift Aid Form in everyone's journal - please consider signing one of these, we can reclaim the tax you have already paid on that money to the Inland Revenue. *IT COSTS YOU NOTHING* and is of great financial benefit to the society.

## Family Matters

### Changes of Address

Mrs Elizabeth Yeandle to [redacted]

Julie Bauer-Belfrage to [redacted]

Mrs Mary Papps to [redacted]

Mr B.E. Swinnerton to [redacted]

### Resignations

Mr Eric Swinnerton of [redacted] Eric joined the Society in 1981 but says he is now 80 and doesn't get around much any more. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak he says.

Mrs Irene Swinnerton of [redacted]. Irene became a member in her own right on the death of her husband, our long-time chairman Joe Swinnerton, in 1999.

### Deaths

We are very sorry to hear of the deaths of the following members:

Arthur Swinnerton of Scot Hay, Newcastle who died in December 2002. Arthur was a member of the Betley Branch. He joined the society in 1977 and was always a regular attender at our Gatherings and AGMs.

Miss Jesse Swenerton of Magharafelt, Co. Londonderry. Jesse was the only member left in Ireland of the original Irish branch who went over there in the 1600s and we now have no representative of that branch.

Miss Joan Swinnerton of Llandudno, sister of our member Anne Hamer, who died in January 2003. Joan, the last member of her family to bear our name, was the second of the four daughters of John Bernard Swinnerton of the Adbaston Branch.

Mrs Elizabeth May of Newmarket. Elizabeth was a member of the Adbaston Branch being the eldest daughter of Professor Henry Hurd Swinnerton and the older sister of Margaret Taylor about whose activities there is an article on page 100.



Lastly, Mr Douglas Swinnerton Hawley of Newcastle. Douglas joined us in 1983 and was our authority for the history of the Swinnerton Pottery firm. He was the source for the bulk of the material which formed the basis of the history of the firm that I wrote back in 1989. He was a grandson of Joseph Hawley who married Elizabeth Swinnerton of the Yew Tree Branch.

We shall miss them all.

**M**uch better news is that we have some new members some of whom have not been previously introduced.

Mrs Elizabeth Yeandle who wrote the article "Joseph's Girl Comes Home" for our August issue last year, is a descendant of Catherine Margaret, the only daughter of Charles Swinnerton, the stonemason who emigrated to the Isle of Man. Catherine was sister to the Revd Charles Swynnerton, the first historian of the family and Joseph Swynnerton, the sculptor, about whom the Revd. Brian has written in this issue. Catherine married Robert Platt Blakely in Douglas, IOM, on the 15 January 1866.

Mr Harold Cook and his daughter Penelope, who were mentioned as having joined in the August 2002 issue, have now been established as descendants of Francis Swinnerton of the Adbaston Branch who married Jane Timmis at High Offley on the 13 August 1832. They had a daughter Emma, who we were not previously aware of who married Lewis Timmis. Confusingly, Francis's sister Ann married a Samuel Timmis so we have some sorting out to do here.

Mrs Janet Ann Aldhous [redacted] is a descendant of Henry Swinnerton (HS.98) of the Adbaston Branch and Sarah Anne. Their daughter Elsie was Janet's grandmother.

Colin Swinnerton tells me that he has been treading the boards again. He appeared in a local production of *The Boy Friend* in 1999 as a Lecherous Lord! In 2003, he got the part of an ageing Spanish gigolo in *The Odd Couple*. Some typesetting appears to have crept in. Last year he combined his song and dance and acting by playing Avram, the bookseller, in *Fiddler on the Roof* and this year he will be appearing in the chorus of *The Sound of Musicals*. He also tells me that his younger son Paul James married Kimberley Dawn Hales of the USA on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2004 in New York City.

Please keep the news of family events coming in and keep a careful eye on your local newspapers for any news of the family in your area.

**T**he List of Members issued with the last journal had a page missing! After a great deal of careful work to get it bang up to date, I managed to omit a page from the copy I sent to the printers and they missed it also! My apologies again to all the members who appeared on that page (they were all sent a copy) but for the benefit of the rest of the members, here is the missing page.



**The Annual General Meeting**  
of the  
**Swinnerton Society**  
will be held on  
**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2004**  
in the  
**Church Hall, Swinnerton, Staffordshire**  
at 11.00am.

Coffee/Tea etc will be served from 10.30am.

Annual General Meetings are normally boring affairs but we have to have one to approve the business of the society, elect officers and fix the programme. This year we hope to make it a much more interesting and social affair so we do hope you will come and join us.

It is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet and get to know the members of your society council and a chance to tell them what you think of the society and what you would like to see it doing.

You can either bring your own lunch or come and join us for a

social drink and lunch in the Fitzherbert Arms.

After lunch, council members will be working on the archives, cataloguing and filing them and there will be plenty of time for you to talk to them and look at the archives which contain some very interesting items. Shields, watches, medals as well as programmes, certificates, newspaper cuttings and, of course, the Family Trees.

You will even be able to see yourself on the tree on a computer! Do come and join us.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am indebted to my old friend Alan East of the East Family History Society for this. He spotted it in the magazine of the Droitwich Canals Trust. *The contents of this magazine are intended to be informative, entertaining and amusing: but this does not preclude the possibility that they will be contentious, inflammatory, provocative, cynical, misspelt, sarcastic, ill-advised or even deadly boring.*

I hope this does not apply to our journal – we are trying to improve its layout and presentation. Do let us know what you think.

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE SWINNERTON SOCIETY

### *Swinnerton Family History* (The Quarterly Journal of the Society)

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

*All the above are available from Mr Keith Livesey,*