SWINNERTON Family History

Vice-President (USA) Norman Swinnerton who died in September 2004

THE JOURNAL OF THE SWINNERTON SOCIETY

VOLUME 12. No 8 DECEMBER 2004

The Swinnerton Society

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

Registered as Charity No.518184 in the United Kingdom

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SWINNERTON FAMILY HISTORY

Volume 12
Number 8

December 2004

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Editor – I.S.Swinnerton

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

At our last council meeting in September we were saddened to hear of the death's of May Brock and Norman Swinnerton (our Vice President USA). On behalf of the Society I would like to send our sincerest condolences to both their families.

May was born on the 2nd Dec 1916, the daughter of John Wykes and Ada Sallie Swinnerton . She was an early member of the society and was the mother of our former secretary, David Brock.

The last council meeting was held at the Reverend Brian Swynnerton's home in the small village of Hales which is only a stone's throw from the battlefield of Blore Heath.

The date of the meeting had been arranged to coincide with the anniversary date of the battle which took place on the 25 September 1459 and was part of the Wars of the Roses. As many of you know a number of Swinnertons are thought to have fought on the Lancastrian side under Lord Audley.

Inspite of superior numbers, the Lancastrian army was defeated by the Yorkists under Lord Salisbury. There is a document hanging on the western wall of St. Mary's Church in Mucklestone which is an interesting summary of the battle. Queen Margaret of Anjou, the wife of Henry V1, was reported to have watched the battle from Mucklestone church, fleeing on horseback as the result became clear.

After our meeting Brian took us on a brief tour of the area where a re-enactment of the battle took place over the weekend. This was a very colourful event with medieval costumes, tents and battle accoutrements.

Margaret and I have recently purchased a property in Middleton, a tiny village next to Rhossili at the end of the Gower peninsular in South Wales. Middleton is about 3 miles west of the village of Scurlage. Looking through the list of Knights who fought on the Lancastrian side I found the name of Sir Philip Maunsell of Scurlage, Glamorgan.

The 'Mansel' family were reported to be the most talented and famous of all the old families of Gower. The most successful scion of the Gower Mansels was Rice Mansel who was born at Oxwich Castle in 1487. His father, Jenkin Mansel, was an ardent Lancastrian and may well have marched with Henry Tudor to Bosworth field in 1485. I believe Sir Philip Maunsell may well have been related to the Mansels of Oxwich castle which is only about 4 miles from Scurlage. It's a small world!

Finally if I can remind everybody to keep the date of the family gathering free. This has now been confirmed as the 4th June 2005. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend to meet old friends and relatives in Swynnerton.

In the meantime Margaret and I would like to send you our best wishes for A Happy Christmas and A Peaceful New Year.

Barrie Swinnerton

Notes from Council

We are sorry to say that Mary Vivash has had to resign from Council due to ill health. Thank you Mary for all your work on our behalf – it was always difficult for Mary to get to meetings as she does not drive and lived over in Huntingdonshire but she invariably managed using coach and train.

People are always complaining about the lack of rural transport but it is not true - you can get anywhere but you have to be patient! I have been back and forth to my boat by bus and train many times when I have left her moored in remote places all over the country.

We send Mary our very best wishes. This leaves a vacancy on the Council – any volunteers?

The date for the Gathering and AGM next year has finally been fixed for the traditional first Saturday in June 2005 (4th) and not on the 9th July as was provisionally given in the Chairman's message in the August Journal. The change is due to the fact that Swynnerton PCC think they will no longer be able to mount a Summer Fair. Council apologises to anyone who has been inconvenienced by this change of date. The church, hall and caterers have all now been booked.

It was reported that our paid-up membership has dropped to 136, the lowest for some 20 years. We now have 91 members in the United Kingdom, 6 in Canada, 3 in New Zealand, 1 in South Africa, 14 in Australia and 21 in the United States.

It was suggested that the inclusion in the Journal of more personalised data and current information might be of interest and I take this to mean more accounts of what present-day Swinnertons are up to as well as what they did in the past.

I have included three examples this time but, of course, I am reliant on you providing details of what your family are doing and your continual perusal of your local newspapers.

* * * * *

An unknown connection

I have received an email from Ann Cossar in which she says that **William Swinnerton Lander** married Margaret Cossar at St.James, Westminster on the 23 July 1825 and did I know who he was? I don't – yet! The only Lander connection in our database at the moment is in 1631.

Televisual,

25 August 2004, Home page

A touch of frost

Indian technical expertise and humour are bringing a classic British tale of childhood to life for a BBC Christmas special that combines traditional and cutting-edge animation techniques

When scriptwriter-turned-producer Alastair Swinnerton of Corsham Entertainment set out to produce his first animated film, he based it on a new book by renowned children's author-illustrator David Melling. ***The Tale of Jack Frost*** wasn't even published when Swinnerton snapped up the rights, but he felt Melling's gentle tale of a boy who wakes up in an enchanted wood, learns to love it, then has to leave it, had all the hallmarks of a classic.

Swinnerton optioned the book in September 2002, and put together an illustrious team of industry veterans - most of them old friends - to make the show. Oscar-winning Gary Kurtz (*Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back, Dark Crystal*) is sharing the producer credit, Gary Andrews *(Beatrix Potter, The Tigger Movie, Heidi)* is animation director, Colin White (formerly of ILM in San Francisco, whose credits include *Watership Down, Plague Dogs, Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and more) did the drawings, and John Coates *(The Snowman, Grandpa, Father Christmas, Yellow Submarine)* is an executive producer.

> *If you're going to do a Christmas classic, it should be on the BBC*

Armed with these names, Swinnerton went to see the BBC. He got the nod from CBBC's outgoing head of acquisitions and co-productions, Theresa Plummer-Andrews, in November 2002. "The book was utterly charming," she recalls. "The characters were lovely, it was obviously good family viewing, and there was a great team behind it."

It wasn't until 10 months later, though, that there was an official yes. And Swinnerton didn't spend the time twiddling his thumbs. But although he pitched to broadcasters around the world, when the rest of the cash came in, it came from an address closer to home. "In the end, BBC Worldwide offered to fully-fund it. And that was great. I wanted it to be a BBC show. If you're going to do a Christmas classic, it should be on the BBC."

Swinnerton wrote the script. "Converting the narrative of a short picture-book into one that can sustain half an hour of animation takes a lot of work," he says. "It requires embellishing the story, while staying true to the original concept. John Coates was very involved in this. His experience with The Snowman was invaluable." The animation is to be "toon-shaded cgi," which allows the animators to reproduce the hand-drawn quality of Melling's pictures using 3D

computer software. "It's cgi," says Swinnerton. "But it's rendered flat, so it looks like drawn animation." To do it, he needed a UK animation house that could create the show, and a cgi studio overseas that could animate it.

He turned to Soho's newest cgi studio, Zoo Films in Wells Street. Established in 2002 by former Disney UK heads of department, Neil Graham and Nic Camecho, Zoo was just completing its first half-hour animated special at the time. Swinnerton had helped out on this, and when Graham and Camecho saw the potential of The Tale of Jack Frost, they offered to return the favour.

Zoo was to design and build the cg characters, design and paint the 2D backgrounds and textures, and do all the pre-production, including traditional key-posed animation and timed dope-sheets all combined within the final animatic as elements for the animators to reference.

Cgi was to be done in India, and as cgi director, it fell to Camecho - after setting up the pipeline in London - to pack his bags and move to Mumbai for six months. "Nic is our ace-in-the-hole," says Swinnerton. "He has 13 years of experience supervising animated series, promos and features in the Philippines, Korea and India" for the likes of Disney, Nickelodeon, Universal, Film Roman, BBC, Klasky Csupo/Paramount, PBS and Mike Young Productions. Most recently he has set up and supervised cgi interstitials for Nickelodeon UK at Maya Entertainment and on Jakers! The Adventures of Piggley Winks at Mumbai's Crest Communications.

With Jack Frost, though, there wasn't time to ramp up a studio. Instead, Nic had to test several existing facilities in cities across India and pick the one that could offer the best combination of skills, software, creativity and management. There was no shortage of offers and all of them had their different strengths. "Several of the key studios like Crest, Maya Entertainment, UTV and DQ Entertainment cut their teeth on visual effects and cgi for commercials and the huge local feature film market," says Camecho.

> ***It helps that many Indians speak our language***

"Some have cleverly aligned themselves with large IT firms such as Intel, to secure the stable financial base and hardware/software support they need to take on big projects. And they're now being tested by US animation houses and post-production shops for upcoming projects."

It helps that many Indians speak our language. "I've spent the last nine years trying to supervise productions through translators, and it's like pushing water up Everest," says Camecho. "But in India, most people in the media industry speak fluent English, and they understand the niceties of humour and story, which is invaluable for projects with higher production values."

After extensive research, Camecho opted for Maya Entertainment in Mumbai because it tested well creatively, and had the technical infrastructure in the shape of 80 workstations, 80 CPU blade render

boxes, film-resolution Flames through Combustion II and Shake to Boujou. It also had very experienced personnel and the space within its production schedule.

"Maya Entertainment did some very impressive test scenes,"" says Camecho. "More importantly for me, and off their own backs, they were adding gags and making the acting visually funnier. You don't get that too often." They also did something a little unusual: "They not only invested in the project financially, but they increased their studio floor-space and added an additional render-farm just for the Jack Frost production." Camecho regards Maya as eminently capable of handling all aspects of the cgi production. "In a perfect world, I would prefer to design, model, texture and rig all characters at our studio in the UK, as well as doing the character animation, and testing, modelling, texturing and lighting a couple of key locations to give us ultimate control of the final look," he says. "With the storyboards, designs and animatics, this gives the basis of a solid pre-production package. In practice, though, and with a tight schedule, we've been letting Maya Entertainment model some of our characters and do most of the character rigging and location modelling. And the results have been bang on - particularly the location models, which are superb."

> ***"In a perfect world, I would prefer to design, model, texture and rig all characters at our studio in the UK"***

Even so, says Graham, the pre-production materials sent to Maya Entertainment were much more elaborate than are usually delivered. "You could almost take our digital animatic, in-between the frames, and create a 2D film on its own."

Animation director Gary Andrews went a step further. To get the comic timing exactly right, he recorded key scenes on video, shooting them in his kitchen, and playing all the roles - goblins, unicorns and small boys - himself. These clips were sent to the animators as Quicktime files on channels as part of the animatic to act as guides to expressions and action. In some crowd-scenes, Andrews plays the part of several different characters, and all are displayed simultaneously using split-screen. It's an extremely helpful resource for the animators - as well as being quite hilarious in its own right (it should definitely be in the "extras'"on the DVD).

Voices were recorded at Soundtracks Studio with Hugh Laurie providing the narration, voiceover artiste extraordinaire Gary Martin (Honey Monster, Judge Dredd, Neverending Story) voicing the characters, and 12-year-old Jonathan Bee starring as Jack Frost. Background music is by Colin Towns and two theme songs have been recorded by the emerging queen of folk, Kate Rusby. "Kate sent me her song Moonshadow, and that's why I booked her," says Swinnerton. "But I realised that the song was perfect for the film, so we

rewrote the script a little so that we could use it." Again, The Snowman is looking over their shoulder - but this time The Lion King is there too. "Moonshadow is the Walking in the Air moment," says Swinnerton. "We use her other song in the middle: that's the Hakuna Matata moment."

If all goes according to plan, the result will be seen on CBBC (Children's BBC) at Christmas, just six months after the pre-production elements started to arrive Maya Entertainment.

"I'm a traditionalist," says Swinnerton. "I prefer drawn animation to the Final Fantasy style, or the squeaky-clean bath-toy approach. The trick is to marry the artistic qualities of drawn animation with the economic advantages of 3D. It looks like 2D, but it's a drawn environment you can move around in. We're not the first to use it - there are similar techniques in the Spiderman series, Dragon Busters and John Wagner's Terranoids. But we're making the best use of the technology without the Disney budgets."

* * * *

Remembrance Day

I write this after our usual village Remembrance Day service – just two years after the horrific events of 9/11 that have brought so much trouble and bloodshed in their wake. I am sure that, like me, many were thinking of our relatives and friends in that great country with love and affection and, above all, with the greatest sympathy, as well of our war dead.

We are only a small village but 35 turned out for our little service first in the church and then outside the front gate by our village memorial where the poppies made a bright splash on a dull November day. Only four left with medals but *tempus fugit.*

In Flanders fields, the poppies grow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard beneath the guns below.

We are the dead, short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from fading hands we throw
The Torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with those who died

As I stood there in the silence, seeing those blood-red poppies, I was reminded of that wonderful poem written by a Canadian doctor, Colonel John McCrae of the Medical Corps as he sheltered in a trench during the second battle of Ypres in 1915.

In January 1918 he was fatally wounded and as he lay dying in a French hospital, it was his wish that the common field poppy of his poem should come to represent the everlasting rest of those who fell in battle which it still does today.

HAROLD NORMAN SWINNERTON

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Harold Norman Swinnerton on 9 September 2004 in Santa Barbara, California. Norman had been the USA Vice-president of the Swinnerton Society for many years and took an active interest in the Swinnerton family worldwide.

Harold Norman Swinnerton was born on 6 May 1916, the ninth of ten children of John and Rosie Swinnerton. They lived in a small terraced house in Ponsonby Street, Liverpool that had only two bedrooms yet Rosie managed to bring the children up by herself whilst her husband John was at sea.

A trait of the family is perseverance and this was very evident with Norman who succeeded in life, often in the face of adversity. Whilst a young boy at school in Liverpool, he caught ringworm from wearing another boy's cap, but it was not noticed immediately as he had thick hair, so it became badly affected. He was taken to hospital by his sister Sarah to receive radio treatment which was an innovation at that time. His hair was cut off and he was put under the machine meanwhile Sarah and the nurse went off to listen to the Grand National horse race on the radio. It was the first time the race had been broadcast and they became so absorbed that they forgot Norman. He was left under the machine too long and as a result his hair never fully grew back. This led to Norman being teased at school which made him more determined to be better than the other boys and this he generally achieved both academically and on the sports field.

After leaving school, Norman's eldest brother Bill qualified as an architect. He worked for Woolworth stores around Northwest England. Norman became a carpenter and joiner and worked on the construction of new Woolworth stores designed by his brother, many of which still stand today.

Norman had a passion for dancing and he would regularly go dancing at the Rialto in Toxteth. His sister Edie also danced there with her husband-to-be, Marcus Parsons.

Norman joined the Royal Air Force on Christmas Eve in 1940 in the hope of becoming a pilot but it was found that he had a perforated eardrum which meant he could not fly. The ear had been damaged some years earlier by a nurse cleaning his ears.

In 1942 Norman married Maria Carter at All Saints Church in Speke, Liverpool. Norman remained in the RAF during WW2 and volunteered to work on the extension of the Maginot Line. Luckily, this did not take place, or he would have been captured when it fell. Because of his skills as a carpenter, he was employed in building Horsa wooden gliders which were used at the allied landing at Arnhem. During the latter

part of the war he worked on packing fighter planes into crates for shipping to Persia and other places.

Whilst in the RAF Norman had occasionally played the drums in a pipe band. They played for the last time at their demob in 1947 but there was not much of the band left also they had not played for a long time. Norman recalled that he had lost his touch and it didn't go too well.

Norman and Molly sailed to South Africa on the Caernarfon Castle in 1947 with the intention of settling there. They had been attracted by the warm climate but decided to move to Rhodesia the following year due to the nationalist government and apartheid in South Africa.

In 1952 they moved to Canada but found it too cold. Norman was working outside in Ontario in cold winds with temperatures at -15O so they returned to Rhodesia early in 1954. They decided to move again in 1958 and having thought about the climate that would suit them best, they moved to Santa Barbara, California.

Norman was initiated as a Mason in 1964. He worked on various building projects whilst Molly worked in banking. Norman was very proud when in 1971 he achieved his ASc degree after two years studying - he had always regretted not being able to attend university as a young man because of lack of finance. He designed and built a superb house constructed on the steep side of one of the lower mountain slopes in Santa Barbara. The elevation that looked down the valley mostly comprised full height glass to allow unobstructed views and outside was a balcony that was cantilevered out in front of the glass panels.

As part of their travels they took a cruise ship to Australia where they stayed with Norman's sister Eva for four months. They also frequently travelled to England to visit family and friends. They invariably sailed over, not least because there was plenty of dancing whilst on board.

Norman lost most of his Liverpudlian accent from living in different countries. He used to tell the story of a time when he met an acquaintance in Liverpool and stopped for a chat. They talked for a while then said goodbye and as they separated Norman heard the friend of his acquaintance ask "Who was that?" to which the reply was "I think he is some sort of Colonial". That really summed Norman up as he had lived in many of the colonies during his life and he seemed rather proud to have been described thus. An image of him in later life related to his bald head as he greatly resembled the television character of Kojak, and that name stuck with him for a while.

Molly had suffered from Alzheimer's disease for much of her life and was the cause of her death in 1992. She was buried in the lovely cemetery overlooking the sea at Santa Barbara. After Molly's death, Norman continued taking cruises to all parts of the world then managed to find a position as a cruise line Gentleman Host which entailed being available to dance with unattached ladies (but not getting involved!)

In 1994, Norman married Mary Ann Rowntree, he being her fourth husband. However, the marriage did not run smoothly and they were divorced in 1999.

The illnesses that Norman had suffered as a youth continued throughout his life necessitating a lot of surgery. In 1996 he successfully underwent a quintuple bypass operation from which he recovered well. Unfortunately, he suffered a stroke in 1999 which left him paralysed down his left side and virtually unable to walk. In addition, his eyesight had deteriorated to about 10%. The amazing thing about Norman was that he remained eternally optimistic about recovery and although he required much

help, worked hard to recover. He always believed that improvement would come and he used to say that he concentrated on the things he could do and did not think of what he was unable to do.

Norman's mind was always as sharp as a tack and his memory was astounding. He could recall in great detail events right back to his boyhood. He took an interest in everyone he met, be they family or acquaintances, and kept in touch with people all round the world, visiting them whenever possible. As a result of his extensive travels, he had an enormous fund of stories, anecdotes and jokes and could engage easily in conversation with young or old alike. It was also a trait of his that, besides being of a kind nature himself, he would always look for the good in others.

Norman was admitted to hospital in September this year after a fall from which it was later found that he had received damage to his skull. He underwent an operation and appeared to have recovered when he suddenly passed away. He was buried next to his wife Molly on 15 October 2004. The gravestone already carried his name and date of birth from the time when Molly was buried and only the date of his death had to be added.

Norman was the last surviving member of his family. He had been the focal point of the descendants of the family including those attached by marriage for many years. For that, and his unswervingly optimistic and generous nature, he will not be easily forgotten.

Malcolm Smith

* * * * *

Quite a problem!

Many many years ago when I was twenty three,
I got married to a widow who was pretty as could be.
This widow had a grown-up daughter who had hair of red.
My father fell in love with her, and soon the two were wed.
This made my dad my son-in-law and changed my very life.
My daughter was my mother, for she was my father's wife.
To complicate the matters worse, although it brought me joy,
I soon became the father of a bouncing baby boy.
My little baby then became a brother-in-law to dad.
And so became my uncle, though it made me very sad.
For if he was my uncle, then that also made him brother
To the widow's grown-up daughter who, of course, was my step-mother.
Father's wife then had a son, who kept them on the run.
And he became my grandson, for he was my daughter's son.
My wife is now my mother's mother and it makes me blue.
Because, although she is my wife, she is my grandma too.
If my wife is my grandmother, then I am her grandchild.
And every time I think of it, it simply drives me wild.
For now I have become the strangest case you ever saw.
As the husband of my grandmother, I am my own grandpa.

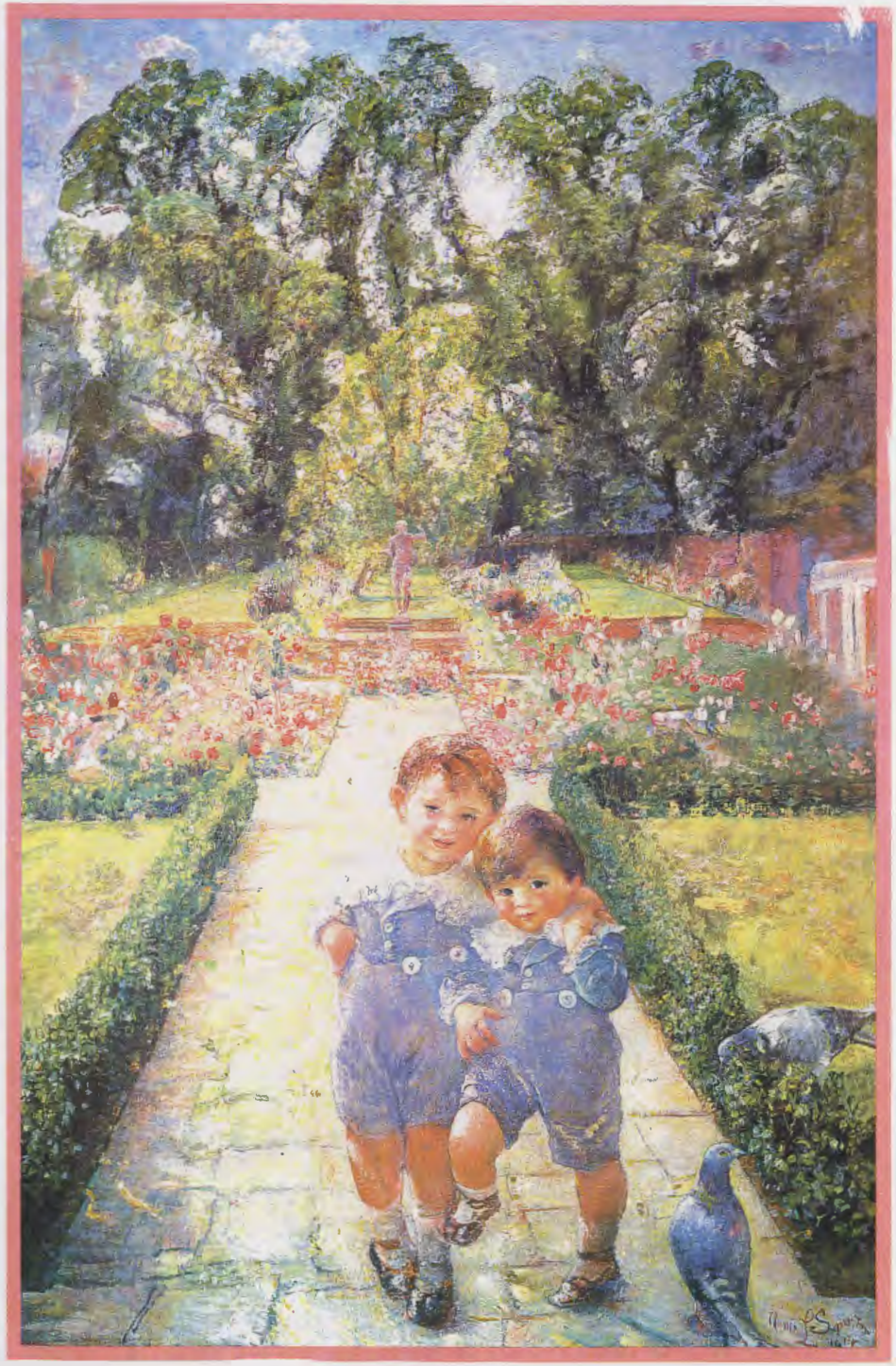
(Sent to me by a cousin in Australia - I believe it to be the basis of an old music-hall song).

Council have elected Mrs Diana Cunningham as your new Vice-President (USA) in recognition of the sterling work she has done for the society over many years not least by distributing our journal free of charge in the USA. Here she is at Stonehenge with her husband Bob.

A small part of Geoffrey Swinnerton's collection of Swinnerton pottery and china which will be on display at the Gathering this year.

Above – Cupid and Psyche by Annie Swynnerton ARA 1891

Opposite- David and Jonathan Fenwick also by Annie



Eileen Bolitho JP, present day descendant of William Swinnerton (see page 159) with the editor in New Zealand in 2000.

LIFESTYLE

The Times 19 Aug 2004

There is much pleasure to be gained from useless knowledge, as Bertrand Russell put it. It tickles our fancy, gives us something with which to amuse ourselves for a moment, and lightens the burden of real, true knowledge.

But is the trivial indeed trivial? Did you know, for instance, that researchers have concluded that, for perfect toast, the bread needs to reach 120C (248F) to turn golden brown, that the butter should be taken from the fridge and spread on the toast within 2 minutes of its popping up from the toaster, and that the butter should be one-seventeenth the thickness of the bread? You may already be aware that to ask for a Duke of York for your Jack the Ripper in a Cockney caff is to ask for a fork for your kipper, that A Jerusalem artichoke is neither from Jerusalem nor an artichoke, and that you can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. Or you may not.

Behind the trivia can lie the path to real knowledge. *The Cook's Companion,* he latest in the series of Companions published in the Think Book series, starts with an anonymous quotation that reveals a great truth.

"Always take a good look at what you are about to eat," it baldly states. "It's not so important to know what it is but it's critical to know what it was". Amusing and cynical, perhaps. Or amusing and very relevant to the current state of the agrichemical industry in Britain?

These funny little books often open doors to the sort of questions that only non-funny big books can answer, in a literary version of "phone a friend". It is mildly entertaining to know, for instance, that the tin-opener was invented in 1855 – 45 years after the invention of the first tin. But it is not enough to be mildly entertained. What happened? Why the delay?

This book won't give you the answers, because it's just a little cook-teaser. But there are some wonderful food reference books in the world, so off you go, on your own sleuthing journey. .....

Go to these, then, to solve the mystery of the missing tin-opener. (It is a great nuisance, as Somerset Maugham said, that knowledge can be acquired only through hard work). So we larn that a British merchant, Peter Durand, patented the tin can in 1810, and John Hall and Brian Durkin opened the first commercial canning factory in England in 1813. These early cans were bulk containers, made of thick metal and hand soldered seams and had to be opened wwith a hammer and chisel. They were also expensive and developed mainly for ships at sea for long periods, Arctic explorations and special military needs. It took another 45 years before peas, tomatoes, peaches and the like were canned in the United States in smaller tins for domestic use. In 1858, Ezra J.Warner, of Waterbury, Connecticut, patented the first tin-opener, which was put to good use by the US military during the Civil War.

And I always thought the Cook's Companion was a Campari and soda. Shows how much I know.

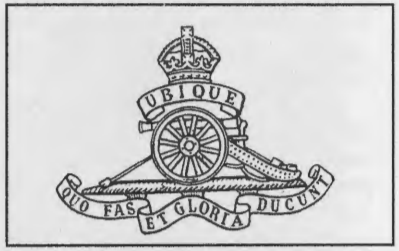
Jill Duplex

The Cook's Companion edited by **Jo Swinnerton** is published by Robson Books.

Once a Gunner, Always a Gunner.

So the old saying goes. I have just discovered the records of a Gunner of the 19th Century whilst searching for a client the soldiers' discharge and attestation papers in Class WO97 at The National Archives, Kew.

When he was recruited on the 28th March, 1882, **William Harry Swinnerton** said he was 21 years old, a clerk and had been born in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire. On being asked if he was, or had been, an apprentice, he answered, rather surprisingly, that he had served three years with Mr W.C.Reeve of Lombard Street, Philadelphia, America.



On being questioned, he said he had never served in the armed forces before including the Marines, Royal Navy, Naval Artillery Volunteers, Militia or Volunteers or been rejected for service.

He was duly attested and took the oath of allegiance before Joseph Smallwood, a Justice of the Peace, at Birmingham. He signed his name with a good, clear hand and then was taken to Warwick for his primary medical examination by a civilian doctor. They were required to look for phtisis (TB), syphilis, impaired constitution, defective intelligence, defects of vision, voice or hearing, hernia, hæmorroids, varicose veins beyond a limited extent, marked varicocele with unduly pendent testicle, inveterate cutaneous disease, chronic ulcers, traces of corporal punishment or evidence of having
been marked with the letters 'D' (deserted) or 'BC' (bad character) – both would show he had had
previous service – contracted or deformed chest, abnormal curvature of spine, or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He had to be able to see at 'the required distance' with either eye, to have healthy heart and lungs, free use of joints and limbs and was required to declare that he was not subject to fits of any description.

A pretty rigorous examination you may think but knowing that the army was always short of recruits, and remembering the occasion when, suffering from a knee injury, a civilian doctor examined my right leg twice to enable me to get through an army medical, I wonder just how thorough they were!

The examination showed that he was 5ft 5¾ins in height, weighed 143lbs and had a chest measurement of 36¾inches. He was generally in good health and had a ruddy complexion with brown eyes and hair. It was noted hat he had a 'large scar of burn' on his left arm. I wonder what story that concealed?

He was then returned to Birmingham for his final medical by an Army doctor and was then sent to Sheffield where he officially joined the Royal Regiment of Artillery, as it is properly known, on the 3rd April 1882. He was attested as a Driver in 5 Brigade RA which became 3 Brigade on the 1 April 1882 as part of the general reorganisation of the Artillery following the Cardwell Reforms of the Army in 1881.

He stayed in this country for 2 years and 195 days and was obviously doing well in his new life because he was appointed Paid Acting Bombardier on the 28th February 1823 and granted his first Good Conduct Badge and extra pay at 1d per day on the 28th March.

He did a Short Course of Gunnery from February to March 1882 and achieved a rating of 'Good'. He later qualified as a Range Finder in 1896, having passed the examinations for both 3rd and 2nd Class Certificates of Education in 1882.


A Range-taker's badge

On the 9th October 1994, his Battery was posted to India where he served for the next 4 years. His progress up the ladder of promotion continued: he was promoted to substantive Bombardier on the 1st June 1884 and to Corporal on the 1st June 1885.

On the 12 May, 1888 he attained the rank of Sergeant and would undoubtedly have gone on to Sgt-Major and perhaps even, with his training as a clerk, to a commission as a Quartermaster, had he sadly not died at the Station Hospital, Peshawar on the 22nd November, 1888 from 'Abcess of the Liver'.

His next of kin is named as his sister Mrs A.B.Moore, c/o A.Moore, Union Street, Wednesbury, Staffordshire. He appears to be the William Henry Swinnerton born in the last quarter of 1860 and registered in the Dudley Registration District but we do not have any more details so will have to investigate.

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The Royal Regiment of Artillery (shortened by most people to just the Royal Artillery) has its origins in the *Traynes of Artillery* raised for specific campaigns. The military guns were drawn by horses attended by civilian drivers: special regiments were raised to guard them called Fusiliers because they were issued with Fusils rather than muskets because the flaming matches used to fire muskets were dangerous to have around gunpowder! Their job was also to stop the civilian drivers running away when things got a bit hot. Modern Fusiliers do not like to be reminded of this!

On the 26 May 1716, two regular companies (later called batteries) of field artillery were raised at Woolwich. The Royal Horse Artillery was raised in 1793 and in 1899 the regiment was formed into two groups Field and Horse in one, Coast Defence, Mountain and Heavy Batteries into the other known collectively as the Royal Garrison Artillery..

Unlike infantry regiments, the Artillery has no colours – its colours are its guns which is why, at great military ceremonies such as Trooping the Colour, you will see the spectators stand and the men remove their hats as the guns go by.

Likewise the regiment has no Battle Honours because there are no colours to put them on: the Royal Regiment has fought in every battle so it bears the single honour 'Ubique' on its badge.

More Swinnertons in Australia

In this journal in April 2003 I told the story of John Swinnerton from Astley, Shropshire who emigrated to Australia in 1878 and in August of the same year, the story of Joseph Swinnerton from Manchester who had gone out nearly 30 years earlier in 1841.

Now I have to tell the story of William Swinnerton from Betley in Staffordshire who sailed to Australia on the *Berkshire* in 1848.

William was baptised at Forton, Staffs, on the 7th of January, 1821, second son of Thomas Swinnerton and his first wife Esther (née Lunt). Thomas was the eldest grandson of William of Betley, the founder of the Betley Branch.

On the 8th April 1851, William married Eliza McQuade at Christ Church, Geelong. Eliza had been born in Armagh, Ireland about 1831, the daughter of Henry McQuade and Harriet whose maiden name was Cutchinson or possibly Hutchinson, we are not quite sure. On her death certificate, Armagh is described as being in 'South Ireland' but after the partition of the country in 1922, it became part of today's Northern Ireland and has featured many times in the news in recent years.

We do not yet know when her family went to Australia but it could have been as a result of the great famines in Ireland which commenced in 1845 when the potato crop, the staple diet of the Irish peasantry, rotted in the ground causing immense suffering and hardship.

William and Eliza prospered in their new country and had a long and happy marriage raising 13 children. In 1873, William is listed as a farmer and in 1876 as a shepherd. Having married in Geelong, their first home was in Ballarat, then Maryborough, Crowland and Landsborough in Victoria. All these are fairly close together and within 60 miles or so north and north west of Ballarat.

William died in Ararat on the 22nd of December, 1898 from "malignant cystitis and exhaustion" having lived to the ripe old age, for those days, of 78. He was buried in the cemetery there.

Esther survived him by 11 years eventually dying on the 25th January 1910, also having achieved 78 years. She was buried in Warringal Cemetery in a Catholic ceremony as one would expect for an Irish lady.

Although we know the names of all their children, there is much work still to be done in tracing them down to the present day. Last year, with the help of our Australian contact Glenda Simpson, we did a mail shot of all 65 Swinnertons listed in the Australian telephone directory who were not members of the society. The CDRom had been kindly given to us by Kerry Swinnerton, the wife of our member Dennis.. Only two replied! It appears that most modern-day Australians are very reluctant to acknowledge their ancestors and we don't even have a single convict amongst them!

The children were:

Mary (1852), William (1854), Esther (1855), John (1857), Harriet (1859), Henry (1861), Eliza (1863), Sarah (1865), Margaret (1867), Mary (1869), Thomas (1871), Jesse (1873) and Jane (1877).

Obviously the first Mary must have died in infancy.

The name Jesse is unusual, there have been six in the family to our knowledge. It originated with Jesse, the younger brother of Thomas who was born in 1803 and seems to have been restricted to descendants of the Betley family in Australia and New Zealand although two of those sometimes called themselves John or Joseph. It was last used in 1977 for the birth of a descendant of the senior Australian Branch.

Of William, the eldest child, we do know a great deal and I suspect many of those who failed to respond to our mail shot are his descendants. We will trace out what we do know about his children in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, we are sure of the family of his second daughter Esther, obviously named after her great-grandmother, because she was the grt-grt grandmother of our member Eileen Bolitho.

Esther Swinnerton married Ephraim Arnold, a widower with one child, at Shay's Flat, near Landsborough in Victoria in 1876. She had 14 children of her own and died in 1925 at St.Arnaud, Victoria.

* * *

The other family to go to Australia has caused some confusion in our records in the past. The man who emigrated was John Swinnerton who was born at Liverpool on the 31 August 1830, second son of William Swinnerton and Ann (née Font). He was not baptised until much later in life – on the 6th April 1851 at St. David's Welsh Church at Liverpool. Whether he had already been doing so I cannot say but in later life he called himself as Jesse.

Neither are we sure yet when he went to Australia but we were told by his grandson Edgar (see *Swinnerton Family History Vol.2 No.8 January 1977)* that he went first to Canada or America with another brother. He said the other brother stayed there but that John Jesse went on to Australia. We know he married Mary Hulbert in Melbourne on 13 September 1857 and lived at Ballarat from whence he went to New Zealand in 1866.

We remained in touch with that family until Edgar died in 1985 but the name has now died out in New Zealand as none of Edgar's generation had children.

* * *

One more emigrant was Fred Swinnerton sometimes Frederick or Frederick Percival, born 27 October 1882 at Coleshill, Warks, the son of Walter Swinnerton and Emma (née Cattell). He became a regular soldier and joined the 22nd Foot – the Cheshire Regiment. (They were always proud of their number and still use it even though regimental numbers were abolished in the 1881 re-organisation of the army).

When he married Hannah Lointon on the 22nd October 1904, he gave his rank as Corporal but shortly after his son was born on the 21st May 1905, he left and took ship to Australia. He is supposed to have met a lady named Rose Bowley on board ship and subsequently established a family in Australia all of whom were members of the society while they lived.

Curiously, in Australia he called himself Fred Pilkington Swinnerton and gave this name to his children. He served in the 1st World War with the Australian Army and died 30 March 1945.

(Note; The above is based on original research by myself with later contributions from Eileen and Doug Bolitho and Kerry Swinnerton)).

This picture was taken about 1906 – does anyone remember the shop?

SWYNNERTON HALL, Home of Lord Stafford

Margaret Wilson

Between the carving of the great stone figure of Christ in Swynnerton Church and the building of the Royal Ordnance Factory, which now dominates the neighbourhood, there stretch some thousand years of Staffordshire history. During those thousand years, two great families, the Swynnertons and the Fitzherberts, have ruled over this ancient manor. They have built and rebuilt the houses on or near the site where the stately Swynnerton Hall stands today. They have married with other notable families and so added to their estates and titles. They have fought and suffered and died in warfare both at home and abroad.

I do not know when the first Swynnertons settled here and gave their name to the manor. They may have been of Saxon origin. There is an effigy in Swynnerton Church, which probably represents Sir John de Swynnerton, who died in 1254, but beyond Sir John I cannot go. There are other Swynnerton memorials, however, scattered about Staffordshire, so they must have been an important family. They certainly once held the manor of Hilton near Wolverhampton. In the church of Shareshill, just outside Hilton Park, there used to be a Swynnerton chapel: two rather battered effigies remain, which are believed to be those of Humphrey Swynnerton and his wife Cassandra. There also are extant records of a Thomas de Swynnerton, who was a turbulent Staffordshire nobleman in the reign of Henry IV.

The recorded history of Swynnerton Hall, however, is not the story of the Swynnerton family, but of the Norman family of Fitzherbert, who intermarried with them and so succeeded to the manor. The Fitzherberts were established at Swynnerton in a Tudor mansion down by the pool in Charles I's reign. They were Royalists, and the head of the family fought for the King, while Mrs Fitzherbert was left to defend the manor. This she did most valiantly, just as Lady Stafford (a member of the Jerningham family) defended Stafford Castle a few miles away. But both ladies were defeated and both buildings destroyed by the Roundheads. Now the two old families are united, and young Lord Stafford owns both Swynnerton Hall and the modern Stafford Castle, which can be seen from its windows.

The Stafford title had many vicissitudes before it passes into the hands, first of the Jerninghams, and then of the Fitzherberts. Two famous Lords Stafford are commemorated among the portraits at Swynnerton. The first is Edward Bohun, Duke of Buckingham and Earl of Stafford, who quarrelled with Wolsey in Henry VIII's reign, and was condemned to death for treason. He is an outstanding figure in Shakespeare's "King Henry VIII" and his speeches before " the long divorce of steel" are some of the finest utterances in the play. There is a tradition at Swynnerton of how Buckingham fell foul of "this holy fox or wolf" Cardinal Wolsey. The story runs that one day, when Buckingham, as Lord High Constable, was kneeling before the King, to present him with a basin in which to wash his hands, Wolsey

arrogantly dipped his in first; in disgust Buckingham tipped up the basin in the Cardinal's face. Be this as it may, the portrait of this famous ancestor of the family hangs at Swynnerton Hall. Had Buckingham been willing to truckle to Wolsey, as so many nobles did, the title of Premier Earl of England might never have passed to the Shrewsburys.

The other famous Lord Stafford, who is commemorated here, was the victim of a wicked plot at Tixall Hall. A much-perjured villain, Dougdale, asserted that, from a hiding place behind an oak tree, he heard Lord Aston of Tixall and his guest, Lord Stafford, plotting against King Charles II. Though the evidence was a tissue of lies, it served in those dangerous days to bring the aged Lord Stafford to the block. In the portrait at Swynnerton, he is seen with Tixall gate-house in the background.

But we must return to Swynnerton at the time of the Civil War, many generations before the families of Jerningham and Fitzherbert were united. In spite of Mrs. Fitzherbert's courageous defence against Cromwell's troops in 1642, the old Hall was completely destroyed, and the family who owned it went into eclipse of 18 years. Then Charles II, on his restoration, gave the Fitzherberts money for the rebuilding of their ancient manor house. They did not, however, build again by the pool, but on higher ground close by. The new hall was built round a courtyard in the Italian fashion, and must have been very attractive. In 1725, however, this courtyard was roofed in, giving the main building much the same appearance as it has today. So it remained, a dignified Queen Anne house to outward appearances, for 145 years. The only important alteration during that period was internal: Thomas Fitzherbert, in 1810, enlarged the central reception room (which occupied the site of the original courtyard) by removing the rooms above it and raising the roof. A gallery along one side of this magnificent room shows the height of the original ceiling. The balustrade of this gallery served in the prosperous early days of this century a useful, if unforeseen, purpose; lying on their stomachs and peering through the bars, the young Fitzherberts used to watch the guests arriving at their parents' grand receptions.

Externally, however, the Hall was not altered till 1870, when large additions were made. This Victorian part of Swynnerton Hall is now attacked by dry rot, and much of it is being pulled down. How gratifying, but how unusual, for dry rot to damage the least interesting and least beautiful part of an old building. Swynnerton promises to look a lovelier house when restored more nearly to its Queen Anne proportions. A Victorian addition which will not be pulled down is the Chapel. The Fitzherberts belong to the old faith, and have their private chapel for Catholic worship.

Swynnerton is as attractive within as without. The most striking room is the great Reception Hall with its Regency furniture. Through the windows one looks out on the fine old trees of the Park, the Ordnance Factory being fortunately screened from view. There is a gleam of water from the pool, and far beyond stands Stafford Castle on its mound.

There are many beautiful pictures at Swynnerton, among them some priceless old Dutch portraits. Mary, Queen of Scots, and Mary

Tudor look down upon us from these Dutch canvasses. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when portrait painting reached its zenith, are well represented too. I particularly liked a portrait by Kneller of a girl in white satin; apparently she did not please her husband as well as she pleased me, for he cut her off in his will with one shilling and a chicken. There is also an attractive portrait by John Russell of the great Mrs. Fitzherbert, George IV's wife. Among more recent portraits is a pleasing one of Emily Charlotte Jerningham, who, by her marriage with Basil Fitzherbert brought the Stafford title into the family. The mother of this lady was the niece of George IV's Mrs. Fitzherbert, so she has a double connection with the family. With Emily Charlotte, the great-grandmother of the present Earl, we are coming closer to modern times. The most recent portrait of all, but one as charming as any, is that of the present Mrs. Fitzherbert.

The portrait of George IV's wife, Maria Fitzherbert, in the Swynnerton drawing room, takes our minds back to an old and famous scandal. Not that there was anything scandalous about Mrs. Fitzherbert herself. A beautiful girl of good family, she had the misfortune to be left twice widowed while still in her twenties. After the death of her second husband, Thomas Fitzherbert, she settled at Richmond and, while enjoying the London season, had the fortune, or misfortune, to attract the attention of the young Prince of Wales. He fell violently in love with her. Knowing that as heir to the throne he was debarred by law from marrying a Catholic, she did all she could to discourage him, even fleeing to France to avoid his attentions. Nothing, however, availed. After she had been told that the Prince had tried to commit suicide in his despair, Mrs Fitzherbert agreed to a clandestine marriage. This marriage was valid in the eyes of her church, though it was against the laws of England. For the Prince's sake she agreed to keep it secret, though it was an open secret and they lived together as man and wife. In spite of her strict sense of honour and morality, she endured for the Prince's sake the humiliation of having her marriage denied by Parliament. In her own eyes and, as she believed, in the eyes of God, she was the Prince's wife; if people chose to regard her as his mistress, she was prepared to suffer in silence. But worse was in store for her. Urged by the King to make a State marriage, and temporarily under the influence of Lady Jersey, the Prince broke off his connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert. He married Caroline of Brunswick, and Lady Jersey, who was prepared to share him with his royal consort (as Mrs. Fitzherbert would never have been), became his mistress. The marriage was a disastrous failure, the Prince's feelings for Lady Jersey soon cooled, and he turned once more to Maria Fitzherbert, whom he had never ceased to regard as his true wife. For a long time she refused to renew their union, but in the end, with the sanction of her church, she did so. Her fickle husband did not, however, remain faithful, and in 1811, under the influence of Lady Hertford, he separated from her for ever. Mrs. Fitzherbert had no part in the glories of the Regency, but she kept her place in society, and remained on intimate terms with many of the Royal family. After her separation from the Prince, she devoted herself to her adopted daughter, Mrs. Damer (Mary

Seymour), her niece, Maria Smythe (who married into the Jerningham family), and her large circle of friends. She was universally respected. When she died in 1837 (seven years after her royal husband), she was buried at Brighton, a town whose prosperity she and George IV had created between them. Her memory is held in honour at Swynnerton, and many of the magnificent jewels, which were given her by the "First Gentleman of Europe" are still in the possession of the family.

I have lingered too long over Maria Fitzherbert, and have little space left to write of Swynnerton village, or of the church with its fine Norman doorway. The interesting thing about the village is that it used to lie in front of the windows of the Hall. Thomas Fitzherbert, in the early nineteenth century, did not care to look out upon the village; so he removed it bodily to its present site. (An Earl of Lichfield did the same thing at Shugborough.) Recently, when ploughing the land in front of the Hall, some farm labourers unearthed the site of the old village. An aerial photograph would probably reveal its whole layout.

Much could be said about Swynnerton Church. Interesting as it is, it is not so interesting as the massive stone figure of Christ which it contains. The theory that this statue was brought here from Lichfield Cathedral has by now been disproved. It belongs to Swynnerton, and is by far its oldest inhabitant. For the figure of the Prince of Peace has outlived all the great war-lords, William the Conqueror, Cromwell and Hitler, whose activities have so profoundly influenced this seemingly peaceful spot.

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This article was written in 1951 and, of course, we do know when the first Swynnertons settled here. However, I thought it would be of interest as many of you have seen the Hall when you have been to Gatherings.