

# *The Swinnerton Saga*



*A Bishop, two monks and a comely wench at the Swynnerton Medieval Fair 2006  
(The Bishop of Stafford, the Rector of Swynnerton, the Revd. Brian and Margaret Swinnerton)*

**THE JOURNAL OF SWINNERTON FAMILY HISTORY**

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The Young Mother



No details are known of this painting

(I omitted the title of the picture in the September *Saga* – it is a portrait of Count Zouboff – a descendant of one of the many lovers of Catherine the Great of Russia.)

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## From the Editor

As I write this snow is falling steadily but we have got off fairly lightly here in Dorset as we have only had about three inches. I feel very sorry for those of you who live in the North and East and hope you are coping.

People are saying that our winter is coming early due to global warming. Sorry, I cannot agree. When we lived in Shropshire in the 80s and 90s, we regularly had a couple of falls of snow before Christmas and any visitors were used to having to stay overnight. Admittedly, we were 1000ft up on the slopes of Brown Clee Hill in a little hamlet of 18 people and 2500 sheep (a nice proportion!) but we managed.

On one occasion when I was there on my own we had a really big fall and then everything froze. The weight of the frozen snow brought down a hedge which never fully recovered. I had icicles on my workshop 2 feet long. I tried to get out into the lane but it came up to my chest and I was just over 6 feet tall then. The electricity failed so there was no power to pump the very sluggish Calor Gas down the hill from the tank and I was reduced to a little 'Squirrel' stove which, fortunately, had a lid which lifted off and could be replaced by a kettle or saucepan.

Imagine my surprise the next morning when one of our local farmer's sons appeared, almost white all over, having struggled a mile up the hill to bring our little group of cottages some fresh milk straight from the cow in case we had run out. That's living in the country for you.

We have now definitely fixed the date for a meeting in the Spring – it will be on Saturday the 26th March and will be held at All Saint's Church Hall, Foley Road East, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire which is, of course, the parish of the Reverend Rachel Livesey. We know that there is a good cluster of members in the Midlands and there is very easy access off the motorway for those travelling from further afield.

There is a space on the membership renewal form enclosed for you to say whether you think you will be able to come so that we can estimate the number of attenders. Fuller details will be sent in the New Year to those who have expressed an intention to attend.

We shall have a very brief business meeting as we did at Liverpool so that we can put the society on a proper basis and show you some accounts. We have made a slight surplus this year despite having produced four full Sagas so we have funds to start off 2011.

Please renew your membership promptly so that we don't have to keep sending out reminders which is expensive.

I hope to see many of you at the Spring meeting.

*Iain Swinnerton*

## EBENEZER SWINERTON HOUSE

The house at 115 Centre Street, Danvers now owned by Jacob B. Pitman, was built by Ebenezer Swinerton. It appears on a map of Danvers for 1852.

Moses Prince, in his records, says that the houses of Josiah Mudge and E. Swinerton were built on land that had belonged to Bartholomew Smith, that they owned the old house together and pulled it down when Swinerton built his. B. Smith was married in 1771, and if the "old house" was built about that time it might well have been called old in 1852. It stood to the rear of the present house.

Ebenezer Swinerton was the son of John Swinerton Jr. and Elizabeth Upton, born April 1, 1809. He died Dec. 5, 1857. He married Hannah P. Cross, June 15, 1837. She was born May 16, 1809, the daughter of Peter, Jr. and his second wife, Hannah Preston. She died Oct. 31, 1868.

Mr. Swinerton and his wife were in charge of the Alms House at Malden for several years before they built their house at Danvers.

Mr. Swinerton was a charter member of the Sunday School of the First Church, which was organized in 1818.

The Swinerton property was left in trust to their adopted daughter Adaline, in such a way that it could not be sold in her lifetime, and it was then to be divided among the heirs.

She died about 1925 or 1926, and there were 29 heirs. For nearly 75 years this house remained in the immediate family.

After the death of her parents Miss Swinerton always rented the house.

This one and a half story house was built with four fireplaces; it is also one of the houses of many doors, having nine in the kitchen, and it also has ceiling ventilators described in the Amos Prince house.

In 1856 house, barn and land were taxed for \$1,000, with 14 acres at another \$1,000.

In 1929 the house alone was taxed for \$1,500.

\* \* \* \* \*

This extract from the records of Danvers was found among Bill Swinerton's computer records which I copied with the help of our member Kevin Bowers and brought back to England after Bill died. He was assiduous in collecting records of Swinnertons in America and Canada and spent many, many hours emailing fellow Canadians and Americans and surfing the net when this was in its infancy. He accumulated a vast amount of records, at times almost overwhelming me with the frequency of his emails and I am still searching through them when I have time! We shall always be very grateful to him for all his work. Sadly, we have no picture of this wonderful old house.

## **Swinnerton entries in some miscellaneous directories**

### **Pigot's London and Provincial New Commercial Directory (1822/3 & 1828)**

*Macclesfield*

SWINNERTON James. Market Place. Booksellers & Printers

### **Derbyshire**

#### **Brewer's 1823-24**

Stephen Swinnerton      Builder & Stonemason      St Mary's Bridge, Derby

### **Pigot & Co's Commercial Directory, 1835**

#### **Derby**

SWINNERTON Stephen. St. Mary's Bridge Wharf.

Stone & Marble Mason. Quarry Owner. Scythe & Sickle Maker.

### **Gloucestershire**

#### **Kelly's Directory 1879**

Cinderford

SWINNERTON Revd. Frederick George. Wesleyan Minister.

Tetbury 1895

SWINNERTON Henry. Grocer

### **Isle of Man**

#### **From Gazetter in "Woods Atlas" 1867**

SWINNERTON Douglas. Pt. Ballaquayle

Conchan/Onchan parish. No. 162 on plan. 4¼ Perches.

### **Shropshire**

#### **Post Office 1870 & Shropshire 1870**

Catherine Swinnerton (Mrs) Reindeer 21 Northgate, Bridgnorth

### **Warwickshire**

#### **Rosson's Directory of 1839**

Nuneaton

SWINNERTON William. Abbey Street. Grocer & Tea Dealer.

### **Yorkshire**

#### **York 1846 & 1851**

John Swinnerton Gardener      Hewarth Road

*These, and many other directory entries, extracted by me some 40 years ago were typed up by Peter Swinnerton.*

## **Flight Sgt Henry Swinnerton RAFVR**

The City of Glasgow Roll of Honour lists Henry Swinnerton, Flight Sergeant RAF of 97 Parliamentary Road, Glasgow. His date of death is given as 28<sup>th</sup> March 1945 by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. and there is an intimation of his death in the Glasgow Evening Times of April 5<sup>th</sup> 1945.

Further investigations by Brian Swinnerton of Liverpool and myself reveal that Henry was a Sgt Air Gunner in the RAF Reserve and was serving with 320 (Dutch) Squadron at the time. Information about this squadron is very sketchy and the only printed histories are written in Dutch. However, we have established that his number was 182780 and that his death took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1945. He is buried in a Commonwealth grave in Brussels Town Cemetery - grave reference no X.20.4

320 (Dutch) Squadron were operating Mitchell aircraft at the time and was part of 139 Wing of the 2nd Tactical Air Force. His actual aircraft was North American Mitchell MkIII HD392 which took off at 15:40hrs on that day. The aircraft was hit by flak at Engekekirchen, whilst on a bombing mission and Henry was killed. .

The other members of the crew were A C Heers (Pilot), E M Verhulsel (Observer), A Slater (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) who all survived. Henry's Service number 1827820 is from a batch 1820001 - 1830000 which was allocated to RAF enrolments in Edinburgh from November 1943

All post-1920 service records are still confidential but they are available to the next of kin. Henry's actual service record is therefore, still retained by the Ministry of Defence and is held: RAF Disclosures Section, Room 221b, Trenchard Hall, RAF Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincs NG34 8HB at A Certificate of Kinship form needs to be completed.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) *Debt of Honour* web site has no family details though it is believed that there may be plans to release copies of the original correspondence files relating to casualties in the future.

Brian contacted the Glasgow library who gave Henry's address and also sent a copy of the notice which appeared in the paper.

All this confirms that he is the son of John Swinnerton (JS 241) and Maggie Ann. Further confirmation is that this address also appeared on the death certificate of Henry's father John. And also allowed us to add his sisters to the family tree and confirm that his mother had married Joseph Eastwood after John's death.



**SWINNERTON.....** Killed on air operations in March 1945. Sgt, Henry Swinnerton, RAF., aged 23 years, dearly beloved only son of Mrs Eastwood.

We will always remember you smiling,  
- Inserted by Mother, Joe, and sisters Joan and Margaret,  
97 Parliamentary Road.

With tender love and deep regret,  
I, who loved him, will never forget.

\_ Inserted by girl friend Nan, 90 Killearn Street,  
Possilpark



## American Family Immigration History Center

From 1892 to 1924, more than 22 million immigrants, passengers, and crew members came through Ellis Island and the Port of New York. The ship companies that transported these passengers kept detailed passenger lists, called "ship manifests." Now, thanks to the generous efforts of volunteers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, these manifests have been transcribed into a vast electronic archive, which you can easily search to find an individual passenger.

<u>Name of Passenger</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Arrived</u>	<u>Age</u>
1. Annie Swinnerton	Bury, England	1914	22
2. B. John Swinnerton	Stone, Eng.	1905	36
3. B. J. Swinnerton		1895	27
4. Benj. J. Swinnerton		1892	24
5. Bert J Swinnerton		1896	28
6. Bertram J. Swinnerton		1897	28
7. Bertram John Swinnerton		1904	36
8. Bertrand J. Swinnerton		1896	28
9. C. K. Swinnerton		1912	32
10. C. L. Swinnerton		1905	25
11. Carl P. Swinnerton	Swampscott, Mass.	1924	27
12. Catherine Swinnerton		1905	29
13. Charles Swinnerton	Liverpool, England	1920	31
14. Charles Swinnerton	Liverpool, England	1920	31
15. Charles Swinnerton	Liverpool, England	1920	31
16. Charles Swinnerton	Liverpool, England	1920	31
17. Charles Swinnerton	Liverpool, England	1920	31
18. Charles Swinnerton	Liverpool, England	1920	31
19. Chester Swinnerton	New York	1922	27
20. Chester Swinnerton	Cambridge, Mass.	1915	21
21. Chester Swinnerton	NYC	1923	28
22. Chester Tapley Swinnerton		1918	24
23. Cornelia Swinnerton	New York, N. Y.	1924	50
24. Dorothy Swinnerton	Amsbury, Mass.	1924	29
25. Dorothy Swinnerton	Amesbury, Mass.	1923	27
26. Elizabeth C. Swinnerton	Stoke-on-Trent, Eng.	1912	38
27. F. Swinnerton		1893	24
28. F. Swinnerton		1904	
29. Francis Swinnerton	Monmouth	1904	28
30. Frank Swinnerton	Crawley, England	1923	39
31. George Russell Swinnerton	Tiffin, Ohio	1924	22
32. Isaac Swinnerton		1923	37
33. James Swinnerton		1922	37
34. John Swinnerton		1922	37
35. John Swinnerton	Bury, England	1914	21
36. Joseph M. Swinnerton	New York, N. Y.	1922	39
37. Lizzie Swinnerton	Newcastle Staffs, Eng.	1913	51
38. Martha Swinnerton	Dublin, Ireland	1920	40
39. Mary Swinnerton		1895	64
40. Matilda Swinnerton		1907	46
41. Mr. B. J. Swinnerton	Harley	1894	26
42. Nancy Winnifred Swinnerton	Boston, Ma.	1923	29

43.Olivia Swinnerton		1904	58
44.R. J. Swinnerton		1893	25
45.Radcliffe Swinnerton	New York City	1924	32
46.Richard Swinnerton		1923	29
47.Richard Swinnerton		1923	29
48.Richd. Swinnerton		1923	29
49.Robt. J. Swinnerton	Stone Staff, Eng.	1904	35
50.Susan E. Swinnerton		1910	29
51.T. Swinnerton		1920	38
52.T. Swinnerton		1895	29
53.Thomas Swinnerton		1921	
54.Thomas Swinnerton		1922	37
55.Thomas Swinnerton		1921	34
56.Thomas Swinnerton		1922	37
57.Thomas Swinnertons		1921	37
58.Thomas Swinnerton		1924	37
59.Thomas Swinnerton		1923	37
60.Thomas Swinnerton		1921	35
61.Thomas Swinnerton		1924	36
62.Thomas Swinnerton		1923	37
63.Thomas Swinnerton		1922	37
64.Thos Swinnerton		1922	35
65.Thos Swinnerton		1922	37
66.Thos Swinnerton		1921	35
67.Thos. Swinnerton		1923	37
68.Thos. Swinnerton		1923	36
69.Thos. Swinnerton		1923	57
70.Thos. Swinnerton		1923	36

#### Alternate Spelling Matches SWINERTON, SWYNNERTON (7)

1.Edwin Swinerton	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1912
2.Joseph Swinerton		1924
3.Matilda Ann Swinerton	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1912
4.Thomas Swinerton		1921
5.Thomas Swinerton		1921
6.Thos. Swinerton		1923
7.Francis Swynnerton		1893

Perhaps you can identify some of your family. It is quite surprising how many times some people crossed the Atlantic. Bertram is easily explained – he was selling china before he set up his own firm of Swinnertons of Hanley. Richard we have seen in a recent article – he was a physical training instructor on the ships before he settled in America, Analysis of the Thomases shows that there must have been two, both merchant seaman, and their voyages arriving at different times of the year explains the difference of a year in age in several cases.

This is another gem from Bill's records – he was years ahead of his time. Ship's passenger lists from all over the world. are now freely available on the internet The passages of Miss A. Sellers (now Mrs Angela Swinnerton – my wife since 1958) to and from South Africa on the old Union Castle Line in the 1950s are well recorded.

## Mark's Journey (continued)

*Continuing the story of Mark Swinnerton's epic wanderings .As before, it is a facsimile – I have not altered the spelling, punctuation or grammar so, for instance, 'mountaneous is not a typo by me!*

We turned off the trail and went to a place called Raines Valley, a cattle station located in the most picturesque spot I think I have ever seen. We remained with the owner over night whom we found a thorough gentleman, and next day we arrived at Musslebrook which we found quite a town. It is a central place. A kind of distributing depot for that portion of New South Wales and New England. We remained here two days to look around. Whilst here, Tom wanted to go direct to Armidale. I wanted to go first to Maitland and then go to Armidale by the Port Stephens Route. Of course mine was fully two hundred miles the longest. Not being about to agree we tossed up a penny and I won. How boyish tricks will occur to us sometimes.

We left Musslebrook late in the afternoon but after walking about three miles the weather looked so threatening that we retraced our steps and remained in the town 'till next morning which opened fine and clear. When we turned our face towards Singleton a distance of 30 miles. The country between these two places was mountanaeous on the top of which the trail ran and appeared to be principally of granitic formation with the continual forest. When about to descent from the mountain we could perceive Singleton lying nestled in the center of the valley which I think must have been 20 miles in diameter. It looked so inviting that we made vigorous strides and reached it that night. Here we remained two days.

The weather was beautiful, the fruit in season, and there was every inducement to stop and rest, so we stowed our swags away and dressed ourselves in our best. (A clean collar and blacked boots.) We gave ourselves up to two days enjoyment I would like to have remained here if I could have got employment at my trade.

Failing, next morning we were again under way for Maitland 30 miles We were making ever since we left Musslebrook for the sea coast, for Maitland is situated on the Hunter River which empties into the ocean at New Castle. Nothing of importance transpired and the distance only being 30 miles we were doing our best to get there that day. Consequently not taking much note of anything. We remained in Maitland two days. The city is divided into two parts East and West Maitland and a very nice place. From here we determined to go up the Port Stephens Line - to do so, we proceeded to Raymond Terrace, a Distance of 12 miles. In going there we crossed the Hunter River a fine noble river.

Raymond Terrace at that time was not a place of much consequence. We remained here over night and next morning we took trail for Stroud, 33 miles. The weather all the day was very lowering and towards evening it began to rain. That evening we came to a house and inquired for Stroud. The



lady told us we were in Stroud. On further inquiry we ascertained that there was a Public House a little way along the road, that little way was at the least three quarters of a mile. Without a single habitation between, yet it was all Stroud. It is in this section of country that you have to cross three rivers. In the aggregate twenty-four times in twenty-three miles after which you have to ascent a steep mountain called Hungry Hill. Enquiring at the Public House about the accommodations farther on for travellers we found out that after crossing two or three, there was a sheepstation. Accordingly we set off for the sheepstation. By this time: we were thoroughly saturated with rain and paid no attention to the rivers but walked through them without removing any clothing. At length we got there.

After changing our clothing and getting a good supper we were all right, although our 'damper' was spoiled which would necessitate a draw on the supplies in the hut before starting again.

Next morning we found the rivers greatly swollen, owing to the heavy rains during the night. We were in no great hurry to start as there was a splendid garden attached to the house with all kinds of fruit to which Tom and I did ample justice that day. The next day after baking a good large damper drying our clothing and laying in a fresh supply of tea and sugar and fruit, we rolled all our clothes up in a bundle and started for the water trip naked as nature intended. It was no use putting clothes on for owing to the rivers being so close together we would have to take them off every few minutes if we wanted to keep them dry. That would have involved a good deal of trouble and we were not looking for any of that. Since we were not likely to meet a living soul in that section of country we decided to try how our forefathers felt when nature unadorned was adorned the most. We did not find it very agreeable by the time we got through for walking through the water and then coming into the scorching sun we got sort of parboiled. However we got along very well until we came to the next to the last.

Sometimes we would have to travel considerable distance up or down the rivers looking for a deep place to cross. Because of the swiftness of the current it was easier to cross in deep water than in shallow. This one was considered the most dangerous. On the bank was the grave of a young man (surrounded by logs built two or three feet high to prevent the native dogs from digging him up). It appears he was travelling this route and had crossed this stream the day before. Durling the night the cattle swam back to some good grass. Next morning missing them he crossed over and drove them back and in attempting to recross he was swept down with the current and drowned. His body was found a few days after (when the river fell) caught in the boughs of a tree that overhung the river and buried. However being two pretty good swimmers we were not much afraid. Tom started in first, I following immediately after. Tom had arrived to within about eight feet of the opposite bank when he came. Distance of 12 miles. In going there we crossed the Hunter River a fine noble river.

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that then he was in the full force of the current and he did not dare to move a foot or he would lose his manly attitude.

However it was no use standing there so after a good deal of palaver, he resolved to jump and endeavour to lay hold of the brush that grew along the bank. He did jump, It was the queerest jump I ever saw. The first thing I knew he was standing on his head in the river. As soon as he made the jump the current caught his feet and threw them with such force that it sent them into the air, his head down. Presently his head appeared again but it was only for an instant and the last thing I saw of Tom for sometime was two feet in the air as he swung around a bend in the river. The whole affair appeared so ridiculous that it was a cause of merriment to me then and to us for long after. However it was not long before Tom made his appearance running along the bank through the long grass naked as a robin with a long pole on his shoulder and his body had the appearance of having undergone considerable manipulation for he was bleeding in several places. Arriving opposite to where I stood he rested a moment to gain breath for I had not moved from the spot on which he so unceremoniously left me). He then reached out the pole to get my clothes and blankets, placing them on the end of it he tipped the pole up and slipped them towards him. Of course I expected he would hand me the end of the pole to assist me landing but no, he said he hated to monopolise all the pleasure of the trip. I soon found I could not walk to the bank and jump. So I let myself go gradually and very soon I was floating race horse speed down the river. I no sooner turned the corner of bend in the river than I was shot with lightening rapidity into a lot of briars and brambles. It took me sometime, to extricate myself and I was badly scratched in many places. When I got back I found Tom with my extra suit of clothes on, having lost his in the river. Although after a great deal of travelling and searching we found his blankets where they had caught in some bushes, his clothes done up in a separate bundle, we never found, my clothes fit him splendidly seeing that he was several inches taller than me and altogether a bigger man. We could talk about that adventure weeks after and enjoy it as well as ever except the scratches.

Soon we commenced to ascend Hungry Hill a very steep and high hill situated between New South Wales and New England. Arriving on the top we found a very large tree in the but of which was a hole large enough to admit of a man's head and shoulders and coming up from the roots of which was a spring of beautiful clear water. We refreshed ourselves and scratched our names on the bark with a piece of stone having lost our knives during the mornings adventure.

We resumed our journey, towards evening we began to look around for a camping ground and for a considerable time could not find a suitable place. At last we found a portion of an old wagon lid, spreading our one blanket under us and the corners on top. We were not long in falling into Murphy's arms.

## Swinnerton by Martin Litton

Jimmy Swinnerton's grandfather didn't believe in giving advice to children. Still, at the age of eight Jimmy seemed to be enough of a man to make good use of some serious guidance by elders. So during one of the man-to-man talks in which they exchanged confidences, the old man promised that this first "don't" to the boy would also be the last:

"Never trust a Piute!"

The elder Swinnerton was a Forty-Niner who found gold at Dutch Flat, California, and then went east to fetch the family. The mining property in the Sierra was eventually exchanged for Santa Clara Valley land so that his sons, James, Silas, and William, could attend the College of the Pacific.

While he went on to gain fame in the Valley with his pioneering in the prune-growing industry, the three sons wasted no time getting their careers under way, two of them as newspapermen. William was editor of a Santa Clara newspaper when he was eighteen years old, and James, at nineteen, went to Eureka and founded the *Humboldt Star*.

It was at Eureka, on November 13, 1875, that Jimmy was born. A few months later his mother died. His father went on to succeed as a lawyer, and become a judge of the superior court in Stockton. Most of Jimmy's rearing was left to his grandparents.

Jimmy grew up sharing his grandfather's enthusiasms and glorying in endless tales of the Mother Lode and the redskin-ridden plains to the east of the Sierras. Together they would inspect ore samples saved from the old Grass Valley claim, and secretly plot escape from unsympathetic Grandma to the magic mountains where untold bonanzas awaited them.

After the death of his grandmother, Jimmy went back to his father, who had remarried. Unable to get along with his stepmother, he ran away from home at the age of fourteen and went to San Francisco to make his own way. He became an apprentice harness-racing driver at the old Lucky Baldwin stables.

His worried father finally found him at the Bay District Track, and took him aside for a long and serious conference on his future. Judge Swinnerton, guided by his own experience, advised his son not to go to college, not to become a lawyer, and, above all, not to be a newspaperman.

Of three likely careers they considered – art, music, and writing – Jimmy chose art right then and there. His father put him in the California Art School in San Francisco.

In his classes, where Maynard Dixon was a fellow student, Jimmy took to caricaturing his instructors. Unpopular as his cartoons were with their subjects, they were regarded with an appreciative eye by young William Randolph Hearst, who was just starting the San Francisco *Examiner*. Hearst hired Swinnerton as a caricaturist and cartoonist at a time when a two-column cut was something extraordinary. That was fifty-nine years ago, and Jimmy has been with Hearst's King Features Syndicate ever since.



Swinnerton's sport and news cartoons became so popular that more and more space was devoted to them. His little comic bears, in daily pantomime of the weather forecast, were the darlings of San Francisco – so much so, in fact, that in 1892 their daily capers were expanded into the first honest-to-goodness comic strip to appear in any newspaper.

Hearst took Swinnerton east to help with the first Sunday supplement. It was in the new section of the growing chain of newspapers that the *Katzenjammer Kids*, Dick Outcault's *Yellow Kid*, and Swinnerton's *Little Tigers* and *Little Jimmy* first appeared.

A little boy approached the mail slot in a hallway of the Gould Hotel in Lakewood, New Jersey, with two or three letters to post. The clicking of balls and cues in the pool room across the way attracted his attention. He approached the doorway timidly. Fascinated, he stared wide-eyed at the goings-on in the smoky gloom, twisting and crumpling the now forgotten letters in his grimy hands. That was the inspiration for *Little Jimmy*, the boy who was always being sent on errands by his parents, and who always got sidetracked, never accomplishing his mission.

Changing times have brought changes in this theme, but in the Hearst papers published east of the Mississippi, *Little Jimmy* is still going strong – the oldest comic page in existence that is still drawn by its originator.

It was tuberculosis that changed the course of Swinnerton's life. Three doctors gave him a month to live, but he outlived them all, and, at 75, is more active than many men half his age.

He went to Palm Springs in 1903, when the resort was a cluster of tents and its white population totaled eleven. It was easy for him to love the desert that gave him life and health; his cartooning continued, but the serious artist in him was increasingly aware of the beauty of his new environment. He painted it.

His canvasses were called phony in the east because he dared to show green things in the despised wastes that were supposed to contain only sand and thorns.

Gradually his excursions took him farther east, into Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Utah. He found his most compelling subjects in the northern Arizona scenery.

The Grand Canyon was a favorite headquarters (indeed, as an artist's subject it was later "willed" to Swinnerton by Thomas Moran at a banquet at El Tovar), and it provided the substance for the series that has brought him more acclaim than anything else – *Canyon Kiddies*.

Swinnerton was concerned over the horror with which the society of the time regarded life in the outdoors, especially in the western deserts. *Canyon* (not *Kanyon*, thank heaven!) *Kiddies* was created to dispel the bogeys usually associated with the shunned country that he had found so friendly. The little Indians were the ideal illustrations of children's natural kinship in Nature, for from birth they are taught that the creatures of the wild are their brothers, and are not to be feared. Thus it was wholly logical for the *Kiddies* to meet and play with every kind of bird and beast that lived in their homeland, and to

carry on their absorbing activities oblivious to the heat, cold, drought, and awful storms that their white cousins were conditioned to dread. Without preaching, Swinnerton caught up the enviable, enriching fatalism of the Hopis and, little by little, injected it into the lives of millions of readers. *Canyon Kiddies* brought the happiness of the children of Nature into a world that took itself too seriously. The Swinnerton influence is strong in such recent animated cartoons as Walt Disney's production of *Bambi*.

It was at the Grand Canyon that Swinnerton first knew the Navajos. He recalls how they used to pass through Big Jim Canyon, near the South Rim, when taking hides to Supai for tanning. While waiting for the work to be done, they lived off the Havasupais, then paid for the tanning and promptly started gambling to win their pay back again. The Supais never seemed to realize that they were working for nothing.

It was dangerous for white men to travel to the Navajo country when Swinnerton first went there in 1907. The Indians under Hoskanini had covered up their silver mines to keep the whites away, and were hostile towards strangers, some of whom were killed. Several parties disappeared without trace.

Swinnerton went on all kinds of expeditions with John Wetherill, discoverer of Mesa Verde and Betatakin, whom he regards as the greatest man in the known history of the region. Wetherill, who shared his discoveries of ruins and other prehistoric remains with Swinnerton, on several occasions saved the lives of armed groups that found themselves at the mercy of unfriendly Navajos. He did so just by talking. Swinnerton traveled with him for four years before discovering that he did not carry a gun. In explanation, Wetherill said that he thought any white man who could not out-talk an Indian deserved to be killed.

Swinnerton's recollections of his early days on the Navajo reservation are full of humorous incidents that reflect the character and background of The People. There was the time, for example, when he and Wetherill sat opposite Betatakin ruin with old Wind Singer, a tribal herb doctor. The Indian, using Navajo, English, and gestures, was doing the talking.

He pointed at the ground. "Under us lie many peoples," he said. "They all gone."

A wave of his arm took in the sweep of the great cave and the cliff dwellings across the canyon. "They go."

He sat for a while, saying nothing.

"I go," he went on. Another long pause.

"Then you go."

In ten words he had summed up the histories of all the world's civilizations, throwing in some safe prophecy for good measure. The three sat in silence for a while; then Wetherill spoke.

"Talk more," he said.

"No," Wind Singer replied, "No talk more. Not cold enough yet." He waited for this to sink in, no doubt amused at his companion's bewilderment.

"Little birds, bugs, and snakes still out. They listen. They say, 'Old Wind Singer talk too damn much'."

Jimmy Swinnerton was a familiar figure at the early Flagstaff Pow Wow celebrations, having taken part in organizing the first one in which the Navajos and Hopis participated. Previously the Indians had avoided Flagstaff, taking their trade to Holbrook and Winslow because of rough treatment given one of them by a white man at a Flagstaff horse race.

On this occasion, old timers Al Doyle and Rube sent out word that there would be meals served to all who would join in the festival. One thousand five hundred Indians showed up, creating a situation that threatened to put Flagstaff on the black list again by making it nearly impossible for the town to fulfill the promise. But local merchants pitched in with more food, and the Pow Wow was a big success. To avoid the possibility of unpleasant incidents, whites, Navajos, and Hopis performed in separate events. At first the Navajo men were reluctant to take part in a parade, but the women liked the idea, so parade they did, in the first Navajo procession that was not part of their own ceremonials. Swinnerton remembers how they smiled back and waved as they left town in their wagons; that was something Flagstaff had not seen before.

Swinnerton's enchanted descriptions of the country and its people, along with the eloquent sunshine-filled paintings he sent east, aroused the interest of his contemporaries. They came to northern Arizona, to see its wonders with Swinnerton as their guide. Among his guests were Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, Will Rogers and his sons, Lady Ravensdale, daughter of Lord Curzon, and Sir Alma Baker, Australian governor-general of the Malay peninsula, and his wife and daughter. Swinnerton remembers the daughter in particular for her prowess with the Australian bull whip she carried.

Irving S. Cobb came, because Swinnerton wanted him to write about the country, but his enthusiasm for it got the best of him; he just couldn't see enough. He wanted to go everywhere, to miss nothing – and didn't want to be bothered with writing.\*

At Keet Seel, Cobb blossomed out in a fancy purple robe.

Swinnerton warned that such a get-up would bring out the terrible *Yei*—a Navajo evil spirit. Whether because this devil went into action or because the horse was frightened by the humorist's flapping green slicker, the next morning Cobb was bucked off his mount. Dazed but apparently rational, he was helped back into the saddle. Afterward he could remember nothing of the incident, so the party concluded that he had remained unconscious for some time after the fall, even while moving about.

Painting the Grand Canyon is, to Swinnerton, the toughest assignment of all. He has been at it for forty years, and is still far from finished with it as a subject. But one of his Canyon paintings brought him a cherished compliment.

At Gump's in San Francisco, where some of his works were on exhibit, he overheard a woman catch her breath and say, "Oh, I don't think I like that one!" He approached her and asked why.

"Because I'd be afraid I might fall down there."

"Madam," the artist beamed, "I'm too old to kiss you, but I'd like to shake your hand." A casual appraisal of the painting had given the observer the same sensation that he had felt as he stood on the brink of the chasm. As far as Swinnerton was concerned, that canvas had made the grade. It was art.

Not that he pretends to know what art is; he won't try to define it, but he believes it can be measured by the interest reflected out of a work – not the artificial interest accorded a curiosity, or the dutiful homage paid to mastery of "accepted" technique, but the immediate and natural response of even the untrained eye.

He has remained purely in the realm of landscape, and his ideas on painting are concerned with landscapes. He does not put human forms, either white or Indian, in his scenes, although sometimes he does include man-made things like hogans, campfires, cliff dwellings. His subject is Nature; he makes no attempt to improve on it; it is all he needs and wants on his canvases. Nature, where man has not interfered, is always sublime, man's interference always crass and ugly. The ruins that appear in some of his work have been subject to Nature's softening and overgrowing for hundreds of years, and are once again almost a part of it.

Every minute spent painting strengthens his conviction that everything in Nature is in harmony and balance, even though we are not always artistically developed to the point where we are conscious of it.

His painting is done to record not only a place, but also conditions of light, weather, season, temperature, and cloud and plant arrangement that can never be exactly duplicated. To him, the ideas of beginning a canvas one day and returning later to finish it on the site is unthinkable. He makes a quick sketch in oils, and sometimes a black-and-white photograph for foreground detail (to save pencil work); then, relying on these aids and his memory, does the final painting in his workshop.

He believes that art or painting "rules" are childish. He has advised youngsters in painting to paint what they see, adding nothing, leaving nothing out, and judge the success of each piece by the elusive and intangible "feeling" without which their work would be, to them, just artisanship.

Nature's perfect symphony of tones and arrangement – still often beyond our comprehension – is wasted on those painters who must over-simplify, he contends; they lose most of the fun of painting. In Swinnerton's opinion, detail is charming and useful, and Nature takes care of the balance between delicate and bright colors. He regards as nervy and conceited the practice of setting a palette the night before starting to work and then trying to fit Nature to the palette.

He is a man who might be expected to dismiss "movements" in art with a laugh, but he thinks all of them have made worthwhile contributions that are likely to remain long after the school or movement itself is forgotten. With some relief, he observes that movements have never succeeded in revolutionizing art, and that many of them have ended up where they belonged in the first place – in furniture and industrial design, and in architecture.



Growing public consciousness of color and its influence is something that their choice of color schemes. Let youngsters have freedom with color, he counsels; their interest will result in good work and bad, but the net outcome will be good. Only in the past few years, he thinks, has there been any widespread serious thought about education for the eyes.

He is enthusiastic over Indian art trends in the Southwest, glad they have a distinct Indian flavor and that they adapt the white man's tools without copying his styles. One of his Indian pupils was Roan Horse.

Jimmy Swinnerton, the hard-drinking consumptive who should have died fifty years ago, is today a hearty, husky, temperate man whose twinkling eyes and quick wit belie his age. Companion of men of a bygone generation, he has every right to dwell on the past, and in it, but he looks to the future instead. He is a *raconteur nonpareil*; nothing escapes him, and he is absolutely unaffected by the usual infirmities that come with the allotted threescore years and ten. He paints more deftly and more prolifically than ever, planning the next landscape before finishing the one before him. With his wife Gretchen, who also paints, and sometimes with artist friends, he probes the deserts for subjects, ever turning up new discoveries in the land he has traveled for half a century and knows better than any man alive. His biggest worry is keeping straight in his mind a record of the countless gifts he has received from his Navajo and Hopi friends. When in their company, he is careful to wear prominently the articles given him by anyone present, so that no person will be hurt.

Once, long ago, when he was camped with John Wetherill by the great spire of Agathla, they were none-too-willing hosts to Cosey and Posey, a pair of renegade Piutes. "We'd better not both sleep as long as these fellows are around," cautioned Wetherill, and Swinnerton took his turn at watch. This irony: he was following the advice his grandfather had given him when he was eight – counsel that had seemed utterly irrelevant at the time and had been long forgotten. But his father's advice had gone for naught; although he does sell his landscapes, his paintings are done principally for his own satisfaction even if they are being added to numerous collections of nature loving purchasers.

What is he then? That drawing board by the window – *Little Jimmy* beginning next week's adventures there beside the inkwell and pencils – gives you the answer: a newspaperman.

\* Some of his enthusiasm for Navajoland did get into print in later years, however. See ARIZONA HIGHWAYS for July, 1940.

(Extracted from *Arizona Highways* – January 1951. Found by Diana Cunningham and typed up by Roy Talbot)

### Jimmy--His Future Looks Dark.



Two examples of Jimmy Swinnerton's work. pleases Swinnerton, something to which he has looked forward for a long time. He is convinced that businesses have actually failed or prospered because of





James Guilford Swinnerton (born 13 Nov 1875, died 8 Sep 1974). He was born in Eureka, California, the son of Judge James Guilford Swinnerton. He was a direct descendant of Job Swinerton who emigrated to America about 1628, the first of the family to do so.

He was known as Jimmy to some and Swinny (as many of the family were) to others. He signed some of his early cartoons Swin, and on one comic strip he used Guilford as his signature. The Guilford name goes back to his great-great-grandfather, also James, who married Eleanor Guilford on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1780 in Dittsfield, Massachusetts.

## Records of World War I Soldiers

The service records of World War I Soldiers (other ranks, not officers) whose service ended between 1914 and 1920 have now been transferred from the custody of the Ministry of Defence to The National Archives, Kew but the actual documents remain with the MOD. The records were originally kept so that the War Office (as it then was) could answer queries about pensions, medals and allowances for disablement.

Sadly, during WW2, about 70% of them were destroyed in the bombing of 1940. Most of those that survived were badly damaged either by fire or from the water that was used to put out the flames. They have become known as the *Burnt Collection* and contain the service records of roughly 25-30% of the estimated 5 million men who served in the British Army in the Great War. They are stored in a staggering 33,000 boxes on nearly 2 miles of shelving but are in such a fragile condition that they will never be open to public inspection.

These were supplemented by another collection of records known as the *Unburnt Collection* compiled from duplicate records held by the Ministry of Pensions and other government departments, comprising the records of another 8-10% of the soldiers. They include service records not only for regular soldiers (which can date back to the 1880s) but also for members of the Territorial Force (now named the Territorial Army) and Special Reserve (formerly the Militia) who had enlisted pre-war and for members of the Royal Flying Corps.

All these surviving records have now been digitised and are available on the internet at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com). This is a pay-per-view site or you can take out a subscription for various periods.

If you cannot get access to the internet then, for a fee of £30, the Ministry of Defence will search the records for you. Write to Historical Disclosures, MP 555, Army Personnel Centre, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX.

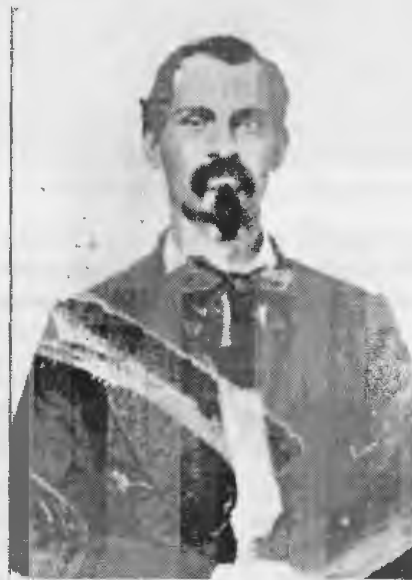
The service records of WWI officers have now also been transferred to The National Archives and are available for public viewing but these are mainly correspondence files as they were heavily weeded in the 1920s.

What have survived are the Medal Rolls. Every man or woman *who served in a Theatre of War* (there was no equivalent to the WW2 Defence Medal for Home Service) was awarded at least one of three medals - famously known as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred - the arrangement of these is rather complex but I will tell you how to find these in the next issue.



## Some wonderful examples of early American photographs

Richard Granville Swinerton (1837-1914) when young



Richard in later life



Richard's wife Augusta Whitehouse when young



Richard when a Whaler



Augusta in later life

## Family Notes - James Swinnerton.



We are very sorry to have to tell you that Jim died on the 9<sup>th</sup> October just two weeks short of his 94th birthday. He had been a member of the society since 1981 and had always been a loyal supporter attending many Gatherings including the one at Liverpool in April this year. He was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1916 at Toxteth Liverpool and

was one of the three surviving children of Hugh and Margaret Swinnerton.

Jim lost his father at a very early age and therefore, like many others of his generation, suffered great hardship and difficulties in his upbringing. He spent many of his early years, along with his siblings, in numerous children's homes.

In 1937, aged 21, he joined the Merchant Navy and served throughout WW2 in which, like many others, he suffered greatly at sea. He survived the sinking of two ships that he was serving on but lost many friends.

Jim married Mary Ager in 1942 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Toxteth. They had three children James, Brian and Rosemarie, 8 Grandchildren and 11 Great-grandchildren.

Brian said he went the way that he would have wanted to - up on his feet out doing his own thing,, he was a tough old fella.

He was a very independent, reserved and resilient person, who will be greatly missed by his family and all that knew him, especially those at Christopher Taylor House, Maghull where he spent his last years.

Brian, James and Rosemaria are all members of the society and we send our very sincere sympathy to them and their families.

\* \* \* \* \*



Finally, thank you all for your support this year and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year in these difficult times.



*Our vice-presidents for Canada and America (now, sadly no longer with us) cutting the 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday cake in 1995*



*Yes, Angela (on the right) and I do talk to each other but not much at Gatherings - there are too many others to talk to!*





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⦿ This award-winning converted 1890 water tower is partially hidden by woodland. Yet if you wander into any of its rooms, you can enjoy panoramic views. It was originally owned by the Potteries Water Board, until it was sold in a dilapidated state in the Eighties. The owners have created a kitchen and breakfast room on the ground floor, and used the original stone staircase to access a drawing room and four bedrooms on the first and second floors.

Our late chairman Joe Swinnerton wanted me to buy this when it was first de-commissioned as a water tower, live there and establish a Swinnerton family archive centre! The asking price then, from memory, was about a fifth of this price! Needless to say, I did not succumb to his blandishments!

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