

SWINNERTON

FAMILY HISTORY

Heraldic and Genealogical Studies

of the family

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VOLUME TWO

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With this issue we start our Second Volume. Our circulation has grown enormously since we began and, in particular, took a big jump after the 'Gathering' in July. We now send out 130 copies. Unfortunately, postal charges are again to be increased in the autumn so any stamps or odd coppers you can spare will be more than welcome to keep the Newsletter going. Do please continue to send in your 'snippets' - all references are welcome and you would be surprised how helpful and informative these can be.

THE WARWICKSHIRE SWINNERTONS

by S. K. ARMITSTEAD

In 1968 I decided to try and find out something about my mother's family - the SWINNERTONS. Having then recently joined the Society of Genealogists, I began by looking through the available sources of information there but found nothing that seemed to tie in with my mother's branch.

My mother was born in Holland where her father, a silversmith in Amsterdam, had married a Dutch wife and she knew nothing of her Swinnerton forebears although she had understood from her father that they came from Staffordshire. However, the family had returned to England at the turn of the century and lived in the Croydon area where her father died in 1918 aged 63. A visit to Somerset House produced a copy of his death certificate confirming this. The next step was to obtain his birth certificate but here I met with a blank - there was no birth of a J. H. Swinnerton in the year concerned.

There the matter rested for the next two years, until one day my aunt HERMINA SWINNERTON gave me some family papers which she thought might interest me. Among these was my grandparents' Dutch marriage certificate, giving his name as John rather than John Henry and his age as 34, which made him two years older than we thought.

I was now able to make a new search through the index of births, and this time I was successful - he had been born in 1854, in Watford, not Stafford, the son of JOHN SWINNERTON, carpenter, of Watford Railway Station, and his wife Sarah Mather.

As he had the same Christian name as his father it seemed likely that he was the oldest son, and so I started searching for his parents' marriage in the previous year and found it almost at once - at Wall, Lichfield in 1853. My grandfather had only missed being born in Staffordshire by a few months.

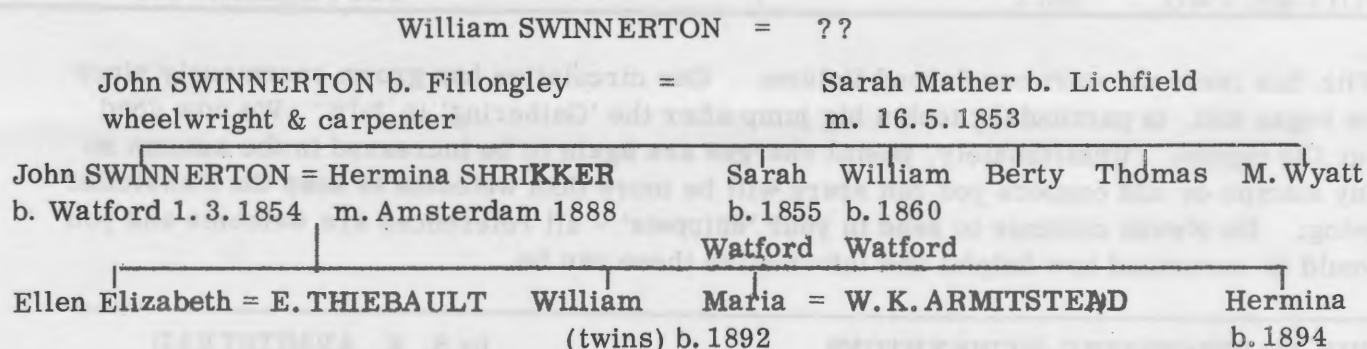
The marriage certificate showed his father's name as WILLIAM SWINNERTON, occupation - wheelwright. The next step would be to find William's birth, but this would have been before the beginning of national registration and I would have to look for it in the appropriate parish register. For this I visited the Public Record Office and had a look through the census returns for Lichfield in 1851. John was there, a 23 year old bachelor - wheelwright - living alone and his place of birth was given as Fillongley. I then took a chance and wrote to the Warwickshire County Archivist and asked if he held the registers for Fillongley. He did, but had no record of the birth of a William Swinnerton in 1829/30 and apologised for an unfruitful search. Once again I had come to a halt (in fact, as I found later, I had got my sums wrong and given him the wrong year).

Later that year I was discussing the matter with my aunt who was visiting me and she said the family were Baptists and therefore would not appear in the parish registers. This was a major setback (but later proved to be wrong)

cont'd

Here the matter might well have ended if I had not noticed the name of I. S. Swinnerton among the members of the Society of Genealogists in the December 1970 journal. I decided to write to him and had a prompt reply. He had been working on the history of the family for 10 years but had not come across my branch - his records were mainly of Staffordshire and Salop, and there was only one farming family in Warwickshire which did not fit. However, he was most interested to hear of my branch and said he would let me know if anything turned up.

I then consulted my mother and aunt about their aunts and uncles, and was able to put down my knowledge to date in a simple tree :-



Towards the end of 1971, Ian Swinnerton sent me a copy of the booklet on Swynnerton and the Swinnertons written by the Rev. B. T. Swinnerton. It referred to the various branches of the family still in existence, and I was most interested to see that one branch of the Whitmore line had settled extensively in the Betley area, as this was Armitstead country. I mentioned this to Ian and he said I would probably find my descent from this branch. The following April I was staying with my cousin Violet Royds in Sandbach who took me to visit two Swinnerton sisters in Barthomley, near Betley. They had known my cousin Ted Armitstead very well when he was rector there and gave me a very warm welcome, but I got no further with my investigations. Ian was able to show me his Somerset House references however, and these included the births of Sarah and William at Watford, but not Berty and Thomas - neither could I find these two in the 1871 census returns for Watford.

It occurred to me that on returning from Holland in 1899 my grandfather had settled in the Croydon area and that, too, was where his brother Willy lived when I was a child. I wondered whether their parents had moved there from Watford and asked Ian to check through his index again, whereupon he found Isaac Albert b. 1865 and Joseph Thomas George b. 1870 at Croydon. Clearly they had moved.

Glancing at the updated tree I suddenly realised that the christian names rang a bell and on looking back through Ian's correspondence, I found a reference to a will of JOHN SWINNERTON of Astley, farmer, with children John, Thomas, Isaac, William and daughter Sarah. These names were all borne by my grandfather's family, which could hardly be a coincidence. When I found on looking at an atlas that Astley was the next parish to Fillongley, this clinched it - here was my family.

Ian had mentioned in one of his letters an "Unclaimed Money" notice in the News of the World some years previously referring to a Swinnerton in Warwickshire. He sent me a copy of the notice and I wrote to the firm of solicitors in Coventry concerned. They sent me a copy of a family tree of the descendants of a THOMAS SWINNERTON and his wife Elizabeth who died in 1827 and 1847 respectively. Several of the names occurred again and it seemed to me that this must be a collateral branch of my family.

During my next leave I decided to do some field work and visited the Warwick record office which held the parish registers for Fillongley and Astley and also the Lichfield R. O. where I was able to see the Bishops' Transcripts. I came away armed with long lists of extracts which I proceeded to put together during my leisure evenings in the next few months. Various other neighbouring parishes - in particular Caldecote and Weddington near Nuneaton - were also involved and eventually I was able to compile a tree of the descendants of Thomas Swinnerton of Fillongley and his children by his two wives Mary (d. 1746/7) and Ann, born between 1734 and 1737. These and their descendants comprise the Warwickshire branch of the

Swinnertons as we know it today.

Subsequently, I found the death of my great-great-grandfather William at Wall, near Lichfield in 1850 - which explains why his son was shown as living alone in the 1851 census - and even found his grave under a cypress tree in the churchyard. I still have not found the record of his marriage so do not yet know his wife Elizabeth's maiden name.

Thomas (born circa 1710) is the first Swinnerton to appear in the Fillongley registers so my knowledge at present goes no further back than this. He obviously settled there as a newcomer and it will be necessary to make a patient search of the registers of parishes between Fillongley and Swynnerton, in the first place, in the hope that I may find something.

There are several branches of this Warwickshire family in existence today and I shall continue to search for the link between THOMAS and other branches of the original Swinnerton family.

STAFFORDSHIRE DIRECTORIES (4)

<u>WILLIAM WHITE'S DIRECTORY OF STAFFORDSHIRE</u>		<u>1851</u>
<u>ECCLESHALL</u>	Cotes Division, Slindon	
SWINNERTON - T	Blacksmith	(TS. 43)
<u>ADBASTON PARISH</u>	Knighton Village	
SWINNERTON - JAS.	Smith & Cowleech	(JS. 102)
<u>BETLEY</u>		
SWINNERTON - WM.	Gardener, etc.	(WS. 24)
" Mrs. Margaret		(WS. 14)
" W.	Shopkeeper	(WS. 22)
<u>HIGH OFFLEY</u>		
SWINNERTON - Francis	Blacksmith	(FS. 12)
" F. Jun.	Blacksmith (Shebden)	(FS.)
" Francis	Farmer	
<u>STANDON</u>		
SWINNERTON John	Gent.	
<u>SWYNNERTON</u>		
SWINNERTON - E.	Farmer	
<u>BEECH</u>		
SWINNERTON - Chas.	Blacksmith	(CS. 4)
<u>THORPE CONSTANTINE</u>		
SWINNERTON - Isaac	Farmer	(IS. 2)
<u>LICHFIELD</u>		
Wall.	(2m. S. of Lichfield intersected by Watling St.)	
SWINNERTON - John	Wheelwright	(JS. 138)
<u>STOKE ON TRENT</u>		
SWINNERTON - Joseph	Cratemaker. London Road	
" Jph.	Innkeeper Vine, London Road	
<u>YOXALL</u>		

The interest of £50 left by Thomas Spateman, Mrs. Swinnerton and Margaret B. is distributed in weekly doles of bread every Sunday.

MISCELLANEA

'SYNOPSIS OF THE PEERAGE'

Nicholas

"SWYNNERTON. Baron by writ 1337. ROGER de SWYNNERTON summoned to Parliament 23 April 11 Edward III but never afterward nor by any of his prosperity which continued in the male line for several generations."

(ex Mrs. D. R. Haszard)

STAFFORDSHIRE WORTHIES

"Captain William SWINNERTON BYRD LEVETT JP. DL. of Milford Hall. His grandfather the Rev. Richard Levett of Milford Hall married a niece of the 1st Lord Bagot."

(ANNE SWINNERTON the sister of THOMAS SWINNERTON of Butterton - the last direct heir-male of this branch of the family, married the Rev. Walter Bagot, brother of the 1st Lord Bagot.

Their son, William Bagot, married his first cousin MARTHA SWINNERTON, daughter and co-heiress of Thomas - hence the Swinnerton name given to Capt. Levett.)

THE GENEALOGIST

Vol. II 1878

Notes & queries p. 72

"SWINNERTON - in Harl. Mss 1570 Fol. 16b there is a long pedigree of the Parshall Family. It's introductory words and the first generation are as follows :-

"The first match was with the daughter of Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester.

Johannes SWINERTON miles dux manoris = . . . de Peshall 55 Henry III"

'Will someone kindly give me any information about this Johannes Swinerton' C. S.

(written by the Rev. Charles Swynnerton)

"PRIEST WAS THE TERROR OF STAFFORDSHIRE"

'Few North Staffordshire villages have had a more colourful family history than Swynnerton and students of local church lore will be interested in a new booklet which is now being sold there by the Rev. Duncan Leak, Rector, in aid of Church repairs.

The author himself is a member of the family, the Rev. Brian Swinnerton LCP. CF. and the booklet is described as "A short history of a North Staffordshire village and an English family having the same name".

The church itself was originally built by a Swynnerton as a thank-offering for his safe return from a Crusade and a miniature pageant of English history is unrolled in its pages.

There was the Swynnerton who rebelled against Henry IV, took Newcastle by storm and was, incredible as it may seem, pardoned by the King; the Swynnertons who lived at Barthomley at the time of the Civil War massacre when Royalist troops forced the villagers into the church tower; the turbulent parson of Mucklestone, Nicholas de Swynnerton who rode and raided the countryside at will and "terrorised His Majesty's liege subjects from one end of Staffordshire to the other"; the Reformation priest who fled to Holland and whose scholarship found him a place in the Dictionary of National Biography; a Lord Mayor of London; and many others.

Finally, there is a moving reference to the courageous wartime exploits of Flight Lieutenant W. W. Swinnerton DFC. who was killed in Sicily in August 1943 at the age of 23 and whose grave is inscribed "God's Gallant Young Knight".

(Staffordshire Evening Sentinel 11. 12. 1971)

MADELEY (Staffs) Court & Rent Rolls.

1621. Lady Day.	WILLIAM SWINNERTON.	Freeholder	3. 6
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(the same entry appears in 1642 and 1656)

1657. Michaelmas.	WILLIAM SWINNERTON.	Freeholder.	7. 0
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(ex J. Bulgin)

ANOTHER MYSTERY

During a recent radio broadcast of Elgar's Organ Sonata, the announcer said that it was dedicated to Charles SWINNERTON-HEAP. Who was he ?

(Ex F. C. Markwell)