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## The Swinnerton Society

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### From the Editor's desk

This is our 10th Anniversary Edition and so I have tried to make it a little different to mark the occasion We have come a long way since I sent out the first single-page newsletter in May 1974. I have reproduced this (half-size) on the next two pages so that you can compare it with our present journal. It was sent to about 30 members of the family - today I send out over 200.

That growth is typical of the increase of interest in Family History that has taken place in every walk of life over the last 10 years. All the other Family History Societies, be they County, National or One-Name, have experienced the same expansion.

Why is this, I wonder?

Is it because our life-styles have changed so much over the last decade? Higher living standards, better education and increased leisure have all contributed to the growth of hobbies and outside interests. The motor car has brought ease of movement to very many people who were previously tied to going everywhere by bus or train. It has enabled them to see parts of the country they could not easily have reached before and perhaps they preferred the look of the environment or schools or jobs to their own and so they moved there. As a result, many families are now living where they have no roots or affiliations and I believe this may have helped to spark off the interest in finding out about their ancestors.

Whatever your reason for joining our Society, we are most grateful to you for supporting our work both financially and by contributing your own personal details, to enable us to preserve and continue the history of a family which can be traced back to Alan, the Domesday Book tenant of Swynnerton - undoubtedly one of the oldest families in Staffordshire.

# SWINNERTON **FAMILY HISTORY**

HERALDIC AND GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

of the Swinnerton family

edited by

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VOLUME ONE

and

No. 1

MAY. 1974.

The first known complete history of the Swinnerton family was published in 1886 as Part II of Volume VII of the "Collections for a History of Staffordshire" edited by the William Salt Archaelogical Society (now the Staffordshire Record Society).

It was written by the Hon. & Rev. Canon G. T.O. Bridgman with additional chapters by the Rev. Charles Swynnerton. A limited number of copies of Part II were bound separately for the Rev. Charles who gave them to members of his family.

Only two copies are known to survive, one is in the possession of the writer - the other belonged to the late Major General C.R.A. Swynnerton, CB, DSO (CS/19) a nephew of the Rev. Charles and is now in the possession of his son, Colonel J. C. A. Swynnerton, OBE. (JS/130)

GEORGE THOMAS ORLANDO BRIDGMAN, MA, JP, (born 21.8.1823, died 25.11.1895) was the second son of the 2nd Earl of Bradford of Weston Park, Shifnal, Salop. The Bradfords took their title from Bradford in Salop, not from the better known Yorkshire town and had connections with the Midland Counties going back to the 13th century. He was Rector successively of Willey, Blymhill and Wigan and Rural Dean successively of Brewood and Wigan; an Honorary Canon in turn of Chester and Liverpool Cathedrals and Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Victoria.

A keen historian, he was a member of the Editorial Committee of the William Salt Society and was responsible for the early work on the Society's great history of the manor and parish of Weston under Lizard which was continued after his death by his sons, the Rev. E. R. O. Bridgman, MA, Rector of Blymhill, Staffs, and G. C. O. Bridgman, MA, Barrister-at-law of Lincoln's Inn.

THE REV. CHARLES SWYNNERTON, MA, FSA, (CS/13) was the second son of Charles Swynnerton (CS/14) of Douglas, I.O.M. and Mary Callister and a great grandson of WILLIAM SWINNERTON of Betley (WS/14: 1772-1839) from whom many of the present day Swinnertons are also descended. He graduated from the University College of London 1866, the University of Oxford 1870 and was made FSA in 1889. In 1879 he joined the William Salt Archaelogical Society and in addition to the chapters in Vol. VII mentioned above, he also wrote for the "Collections for a History of

Staffs": "The Swynnerton Family of Eccleshall & Chell" Vol. III N. S. 1900

"The First Two Generations of the Swynnerton Family" Vol. for 1912

"Two Early Staffordshire Deeds

Vol. for 1926

He was Headmaster of Ramsey Grammar School and Curate of St. Olave's, Lezayre, I.O.M. from 1868-73 but in 1877 joined the Army and was appointed a Chaplain on the Calcutta Establishment. From 1879-84 he served in Ceylon, then went back to India and served with the Afghanistan Black Mountain Expedition 1891 and the Waziristan Expedition 1894. In the Army List of 1889 he is given as Senior Chaplain, Sealkote, Bengal Ecclesiastical Establishment. Sometime at the start of this century he retired and went to live in Gloucestershire.

Having taken on the mantle of family historian he wrote prolifically on the subject from the 1870's until his death. He contributed to 'The Genealogist' and 'Notes & Queries'; wrote two major articles for 'The Ancestor' - 'Some Forgotten Swynnertons of the XIVth Century' (Vol. VII 1902) and 'The Angelo Family' - Louise Angelo was his sister-in-law - (Vol. VIII 1903) and a long series of articles for 'The Reliquary'. He also published a book 'Romantic Tales from the Punjab' and even found time to write some poetry.

Curiously, for a historian, he was very reticent about his own dates and the exact dates of his birth, marriage and death are not yet known.

A further 'potted' history of the family was published in 1971 under the title of "Swynnerton & the Swinnertons". It was originally written as a series of articles for the parish magazine of St. Mary's Church, Swynnerton by the then Curate, the Rev. B. T. Swinnerton (BS/19). Edited and put into book form by the author it had a very good sale, raising a considerable sum of money for the Church but very few copies are now left.

The foregoing are the principal printed works dealing with the overall history of the family. Miscellaneous references occur in other volumes of the 'Collections for a History of Staffs.'; in the Shropshire Archaelogical Society's Volumes - particularly Vol. VI 3rd series; in the publications of the North Staffs. Field Club and many other printed books. We hope to publish many of these in future issues.

THE NAME "SWINNERTON"

There appear to be divided opinions as to the origin and meaning of the name. The first reference to it is in Domesday Book :-

Folio 249

Isdem Robertus tenet II hides in Sulvertone & Aslen tenet de eo Broder tenuit & liber homo fruit. Terra est VIII carucis. In dominio est una & X villani & V bordarii cum VI carucis Ibi X aerae prati Silna I lania longa & I lata Valet XL solidos

Robert holds 2 hides in Swynnerton and Aslen holds them of him Broder held them & was a free man. There is land for 8 ploughs. One is in the demesne and 10 villeins and 5 Scottages with 6 ploughs. There are 10 acres of meadow. The wood is 1 mile long and 1 wide, It is worth 40 shillings

("STAFFORDSHIRE DOMESDAY" by H. Malcolm Frazer. 1936)

Duggan says that Domesday Book & earlier forms were unquestionably Anglo-Saxon - Seolfor (Middle English selfer, selver, sulver and svelfer) = silver and ton = silvertown. ("NOTES ON STAFFORDSHIRE PLACE NAMES" - W. H. DUGGAN. 1902)

Eilert Ekwall, however, gives a completely different version :-Swynnerton, Staffs. (Sulvertone D. B., Swinnerton 1242, fees, Swynaferton, Swynforton 1272 Ass.) O. E. Swinford - tun "Tun by the pig ford". (THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH PLACE NAMES, 4th EDN. -EILERT EKWALL) It is certainly quite possible that the Boar's Head borne as a crest by all mediaeval armigerous Swinnertons was a punning allusion to the name.

As well as the variations given by him it is also found spelt Selverton (1205), Soulverton (1206) Swineforton (15th century), Sonnerton and even Swinduna.

Even today, an examination of the Indexes to Births, Marriages & Deaths 1837-1920 reveals these variations :- Swinnerton, Swinnerton, Swinnington, Swinnington, Swinniton, Swiniton, Swineraton, Swinnorton, Swinarton, Swinervon, Swinaton, Swinneton, Swineston, Switherton, Swinnirton and even Swinentons.

The present day variation of 'Swynnerton' can be traced back to the Rev. Charles who in the middle of his genealogical career adopted the 'y' and persuaded one of his brothers to do likewise, the other brothers did not comply and their descendants still use the 'i'.

The commonest variation - Swinnington - is traced to a branch of the family who moved from Shropshire to the West Bromwich area in the middle 1800's and were thereafter always registered as Swinnington - probably a question of regional accents and dialect. This shows a failure - or an inability - to check the entries. I am glad to say that Registrars are much more strict today.

Note: The letters and number after a person's name indicate their identification number in the index to the whole family and on the family trees.

The following article is taken from 'THE ANTIQUARY' of June 1887, seven years after the first history of the family had appeared in the 'Historical Collections of Staffordshire'.

### The Staffordshire Family of Swynnerton.

IVING as we are in an age when doing in setting out on a journey

is to arm himself or his servant against possible attack, we can scarcely realize therisks and dangers which our more fortunate forefathers were called upon to anticipate and to encounter in the good old days of hard knocks. Men then travelled at their peril; no one stirred abroad unless armed with hauberk, breastplate, and sword if rich, and with stout bow and arrows if poor; then every isolated house was a castle, and the rapture of strife pervaded the whole land. Especially was this the case in the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the accession of the feeble-handed King, Edward II., was the signal for an outbreak of violence, rapine, and disorder in every county in England. As an illustration of this fact let us take the case of Staffordshire, a county which was never wanting in ardent turbulent spirits to defy both King and Council alike.

The Rev. the Hon. Canon Bridgeman, in his able and laborious History of the Family of Swynnerton,\* uncovers a picture of the condition of society as it existed in that county during the reign of the second Edward which is one of the most striking and graphic possible. His quotations, which are all from

\* Staffordshire Collections, William Salt (Stafford) Historical Society, vol. vii., part ii.

public documents, go to show that at that period Staffordshire was torn with faction, that all law was practically in abevance, and that its peaceable inhabitants were kept in a state of constant alarm and even terror, owing chiefly to the existence of a blood-feud between the two powerful families—the Swynnertons of Swynnerton and the Staffords of Sandonwho with arms and horses and men sought out their respective foes on all sides, robbing and slaving them utterly regardless of consequences. The origin of this feud, in which many partizans were engaged on either side. is now uncertain; but I imagine its bitterness was intensified, at least, by the judicial proceedings of Sir Roger de Swynnerton, who when Governor of the King's town of Stafford int2 Edward II., 1317,\* was entrusted with the superior custody of the peace throughout the county, to do and to exercise those things which should tend to the fullest preservation of the same peace, as well for the King's honour and advantage as for the tranquillity of the people of those parts. † In other words, the county appears to have been proclaimed, and as the Staffords at that time were in revolt against the King's authority, the extraordinary powers exercised by Sir Roger de Swynnerton must have been most obnoxious to them and their party.

The feud between the two families however, had then been laging for some years.

After the defeat of the Earl of Lancaster at Boroughbridge in 14 Edward II., 1322, special assizes were held all over the kingdom for the purpose of inquiring into the enormities which everywhere existed. In the county of Stafford, at an assize held in 17 Edward II., 1323-24, the Hundred of Offelow presented that James son of William de Stafford and John his brother, on the occasion of the contention of James de Stafford and the Swynnertons, had assembled a great number of armed men, both horse and foot, in the twelfth year of the present reign (1318-19), and had attacked and ill-treated Richard de Swynnerton at Eccleshall; that they were at Burton and Boroughbridge in arms assisting the Earl of Lancaster; and that William, Lord of Chetelton, Nicolas de Langford, Knight,

and John de Twyford. Knight, are common malefactors and disturbers of the peace, and that they were with arms and horses in the society of the said James and William de Stafford.\*

The King, at the intercession of Nicolas de Verdon, had subsequently (October 27, 1322) pardoned James and John de Stafford, the sons of William de Stafford, junior, for certain of these crimes, and especially for the death of Alexander de Swynnerton, by them slain, and also for the outlawry pronounced against them.†

The Hundred of Offelow further presented that on the occasion of the enmity existing between William de Stafford, Knight, and Roger de Swynnerton, Knight, Joan formerly Countess of Lincoln, now deceased, had sent her men with horses and arms, viz., Peter de Lymesi, Knight, Thomas Blauntfront, Knight, and many others, into the parks of Heley, Newcastle, Eccleshall, Swynnerton, and Stafford, in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of the present reign (1319-21), to the great terror of the people and against the King's peace. I

In another presentment Ralph de Bushbury is named as being a common malefactor and disturber of the King's peace in the society of the Swynnertons.

At the same time the Hundred of Pirehill presented that John de Swynnerton, Richard de Swynnerton, John de Wethales and others, had feloniously abducted Joan de Gresley, who had been formerly the wife, (and was then the widow) of Peter de Gresley from Drakelow in the fifth year of the present reign (1311-12), and that they had taken her to Swynnerton, and had detained her there for a long time.§ This lady is said by Erdeswick's editor to have been the daughter of Lord Stafford of Egginton, and we can easily

\* Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., p. 23. † Patent Rolls, Membrane 19, dated York, Oct. 27. \$ Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., pp. 23, 24. Regarding Joan, the second wife and widow of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, Canon Bridgeman informs us that King Edward II. granted her in marriage to Ralph de Monthermer; but that without his licence, or the King's, she married Nicholas de Audeley, a great Staffordshire baron, which accounts for her residence or interest in that s lbid., p. 25.

| Ibid., p. 25, note.

see that this outrage, if not the prime cause of the feud, must have deeply embittered the resentment already existing. At the same time, we are reminded that the forcible abduction of rich unmarried women was a common amusement among the gay bachelors of the good old times. Certain incidents in the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine, afterwards wife of Henry II., are evidences in point; and at a late period in the year 1393, the great heiress Maud de Swynnerton was thus carried off to the Castle of Ipstones, and there kept in durance vile until she had consented to marry the son of her captor, Sir William de Ipstones.\* In the case of Joan de Gresley, the reason of the rape appears to have been equally natural and simple, namely, that Richard de Swynnerton, desirous of a distinct establishment, intended to secure both a wife and an estate, his two elder brothers Roger and John having already suited themselves in that very important department of social duty.

This high-handed proceeding, however, was not only an insult, it was also a crime sufficiently grave. But the Hundred of Pirehill went on to present, further, that Richard de Swynnerton had feloniously killed Henry le Personnes of Pencrich (Penkridge) in the ninth year (1315-16), and, with Thomas Aston and others, had robbed Roger le Marchal, as he was returning from the fair at Newcastle, of stuffs, silver, jewels, and otner goods, at Harnegge;† and that Roger de Swynnerton had received his brother Richard and harboured him at Swynnerton after the perpetration of the aforenamed felonies.‡

With respect to this catalogue of crimes, we read that at Trinity Term, 17 Edward II., 1323, John de Swynnerton produced the King's pardon for himself and his brother Richard, and for his other confederates, for the rape of Joan who had been the wife of Peter de Gresley; and we find, further, that in 19 Edward II., 1325, on the 20th July, the King also pardoned Roger de Swynnerton for receiving Richard de Swynnerton after he had slain Henry le Persones, of Pencrich,

\* Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., p.

<sup>\*</sup> Patent Rolls, Membrane 17, dated Westminster, † Ibid., Westminster, Nov. 3.

<sup>†</sup> Shelton-under-Harley, by Swynnerton, sometimes appears in these old records as Shelton-under-Harnege. Richard de Swynnerton had a house there. (Deed i. at Swynnerton.)

<sup>\$</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

and for the depredations committed by him on Roger le Mareshal of Eccleshall, and for the reception of Stephen de Swynnerton after he had slain Thomas le Verney, and for the reception of John Grice after he had slain John de Mere-on account of all which things Roger de Swynnerton was indicted.\*

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The Hundred of Seisdon also made presentment, namely, that Richard de Swynnerton was a common malefactor and disturber of the King's peace, and that he had abused and ill-treated William de Whitewyk, the chaplain, at Penkridge, in the sixteenth year (1322-23), and had cut off his hand. †

Again, the Hundreds of Offeley, Pirehill, Seisdon, and others, presented simultaneously that Roger de Swynnerton, Knight, John de Swynnerton, Knight, Richard de Swynnerton, Nicholas de Swynnerton, the parson of Mucklestone (all brothers), John de Swynnerton de Uselwall (their uncle), Richard de Whethales, Richard de Chelle, Robert de Aston, and others named, rode with horses and arms about the county, and were common malefactors and disturbers of the King's peace; that they had killed Henry de Salt, of Stafford, in the first year of the reign (1305); that in the summer of 6 Edward II. (1312-13) they had broken into the court where Hugh de Croft, the sheriff, and William de Stafford were sitting in full court; and that in the eighth year (1314-15) Richard de Swynnerton had forcibly impeded Henry de Cressewell, the coroner, from performing his office and sitting on the body of Henry atte Persouns, who had been killed there by the said Richard de Swynnerton. ±

Of the officials here mentioned, William de Stafford and Henry de Cresswell were implacable foes of the whole Swynnerton family. and the interference of which they complained was probably a rude challenge characteristic of the age. The Staffords were subsequently outlawed, and so also were Henry de Cresswell and his son Thomas; and in the year 1334, whatever pertained to the King, of year,

\* Patent Kolls, Membrane 34, dated the Tower of London, July 20.

+ Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., p. 25. I cannot understand Richard's immunity from arrest, unless possibly, as his brother's bailiff in the conservation of the peace, he may have been acting, as a rule, in an official capacity.

‡ Ibid., pp. 25, 26.

day, and waste, for the lands and tenements of the Cresswells at Cresswell and Bardesford together with all their goods and chattels. were freely conferred by the King on his trusty and well-beloved "valettus," Thomas. the son of Roger de Swynnerton.\*

Once more, however, we read that in 19 Edward II., when the King sent a special commission into Staffordshire to inquire into the unlawful assemblies, homicides, burnings. etc., committed in the county, the following presentments were made before the King at Tamworth on the 12th and 13th March,

1326:1

The jury of Lichfield presented that Roger. son of Roger de Swynnerton, had feloniously killed William le Wolf, of Harlaston, the King's forester at Hopwas, in 18 Edward II. (1324-25); and that John de Boulewas and others unknown had killed John de Couleye, of the retinue of William de Ipstones; and that John, the brother of James de Stafford, and William de Stafford, also his brother, had wounded John de Picheford, who was with William de Ipstones, so that he died at Stafford six days afterwards. Roger, the son of Roger de Swynnerton, and others were ordered to be arrested. The said Roger, however, produced the King's pardon for the death of William le Wolf, in consideration of his services in Aquitaine; and he displayed the certificate of Ralph Basset of Drayton, showing that he had so served there until the return of John de Warren, the Earl of Surrey, and that the King had pardoned him in consequence.1

So much for the evidences of Canon Bridgeman, which furnish an exceedingly strong case against the Swynnertons for unbridled license and disorder. There are certain entries, however, which have been overlooked; and some of these, by furnishing us with more of the other side of the picture, will reveal to us under what great provocation the King's party contended, and at the same time serve to deepen our impression of the anarchy which everywhere prevailed.

It is not improbable that the feud between the Swynnertons and the Staffords existed so

\* Patent Rolls (1534-35), dated Newcastle-on-Tyne, Nov. 1, by writ of Privy Scal.

+ Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., + Ibid.

Swynnerton, the parson of the Church of Swynnerton, and clerk to the Earl of Lancaster.\* This Stephen (the elder) was one of Roger de Swynnerton's uncles. In any case the homicide of Henry de Salt, of Stafford, in the year following, a crime which was condoned by the King in 1325,† must have raised for the Swynnertons a host of enemies throughout the county; and it is not surprising, therefore, to find their position so insecure that, as the prevailing disorder increased more and more, Sir Roger de Swynnerton obtained the King's permission on the 6th October, 1315, to fortify and crenelate his manor-house at Swynnerton with a wail of stone and mortar, and to hold it so fortified and crenelated to himself and his heirs for ever.‡ This grant was conferred on him just after the murder of his uncle, John de Swynnerton, of Uselwall (Isewall); for in the same month of that very year (4th October, 1315) justices were appointed by the King to inquire who the malefactors were who had maliciously slain John de Swynnerton at Eccleshall.§ There was something peculiarly touching about the fate of John de Swynnerton, since only a few months before he had received a special mark of the royal favour, probably for services rendered. On the 8th of March the King had granted him the right of free warren in all his demesne lands at Sogenhall (Sugnall), "dated at Westminster by the King himself." In 13 Edward II., 1320, justices were

early as 33 Edward I. (1304), in which year

justices were appointed to inquire by jury in

county Stafford who the malefactors were

who had ill-treated and beaten Stephen de

appointed to hear and determine the complaint which Roger, the son of Roger de Swynnerton, made that Peter de Lymesey, Thomas Toch, Thomas de Greneway, Roger de Greneway, and other malefactors and disturbers of the peace, had attacked and wounded him, the said Roger, at the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and had carried off

his chattels.¶

\* Patent Rolls, Membrane 16, in dorso.

+ Ibid., Membrane 34-‡ Ibid., Membrane 20, dated at Walsyngham, Oct. 6. § Ibid., Membrane 20, in dorso, 1315-16.

Charter Rolls, 1315.

I Patent Rolls, Membrane 7, in dorso; dated at Langley, May 6.

The same justices were commissioned to hear and determine the complaint of Roger de Swynnerton that Peter de Lymesey, William de Chetelton, James de Stafford, John and William de Stafford, his brothers, Thomas de Greeneway, Peter de Rochesort, William Heley, and other malefactors, had entered his manor-house of Acton and stolen his goods to the value of £,60.\*

In 13 Edward II., 1320, the same justices were ordered to determine also the complaint of Roger de Swynnerton that Vivian de Standon, William de Chetelton, James de Stafford, John and William de Stafford, his brothers, Henry de Cressewell, and other malefactors, had attacked him at Ronton, and carried off his goods to the value

of £, 30.†

It will be observed that the partizans of the Staffords perpetrated these enormities at the very time that Roger de Swynnerton was exercising his duties on behalf of the King, as High Commissioner for the peace of the county, and it is satisfactory from this point of view to find that, as well as his accomplice. Henry de Cresswell, James de Stafford, the principal ring-leader, met his deserts, for in 15 Edward II., 1322, the King granted to John de Somery the Manor of Amelcote, in the county of Stafford, which had belonged to James de Stafford, the King's enemy and rebel, and which had come into the King's hands by the forfeiture of the said James, who had been outlawed.;

The next year we find Roger de Swynnerton lapsing from favour himself, for on the - 15th February the King issued a mandate, dated at Pontefract, to arrest Sir Roger de Swynnerton, Knight, and Richard de Whethale, and to seize their goods and chattels, wherever they could be found.§ This was the year in which the notorious Roger Mortimer escaped from the Tower, and as Roger de Swynnerton was then Constable of the Tower, I suppose the King's mandate indi-

\* Patent Kolls, Membrane 6, in dorso, dated at Langley, May 6.

# Ibid., 1321-22, Membrane 12, dated at York, May 19. § Ibid., Membrane 5.

Parliamentary Writs. He produced the Mortimers then in his custody before the Westminster judges in the preceding August. Staffordshire

cates that the Knight was suspected of connivance in that remarkable escape. However this may be, the cloud quickly blew over, because in the next year he was summoned to attend the Great Council at Westminster,\* and in the year 1325 he received a particular pardon for his share in the disturbances—the unlawful assemblies, homicides, rapes, murders, burnings, etc., which for so long a period had taxed the powers of the State, and desolated the land. †

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The deposition of Edward II., and the accession of his warlike son, did not immediately bring the blessings of peace, either to the Swynnertons or to the county. In 5 Edward III., 1332, we find justices were again appointed to determine the complaint of Roger de Swynnerton the younger, that certain malefactors had forcibly carried off his goods and chattels to the value of £,100, at Tylinton, near Stafford, and had made an assault on Roger Pygyn, his servant there, beating and ill-treating him, through which the same Roger de Swynnerton had lost his services for a long time, and that they had committed other enormities, to the grievous damage of the said Roger, and against the King's peace. I

Soon after this date (1332) Roger de Swynnerton the younger must have died, having doubtless pillaged and fought and suffered enough; and presently the measures adopted by the King were of so stringent a character, that from about this date the county gradually settled down to a condition of comparative quiet, while at the same time men's minds were so dazzled by the exploits them but little field in which to meditate conspiracy or to organize outrage at home. The following order bears traces of the strong hand of a ruler who was not to be denied:

"In 10 Edward III., 1336, Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, the elder, William de Clynton, James de Audleye, and Roger de Swynnerton, were appointed jointly and separately to arrest, take, and cause to be safely lodged in the Tower of London, notoriously

\* Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., p. 22. † Patent Kolls, 1325-26, dated at the Tower of London, July 20.

‡ Ibid., 1331-32, Membrane 38, in dorso, dated at Waltham, Jan. 28.

suspected felons in the counties of Salon. Stafford, Warwick, Leicester, and Derby, and in other ways to preserve the peace in the said counties.\*

This was a "large order," fully justified by the circumstances of the case, and well carried out, though not crowned with immediately complete success, since we find that in the year following, 11 Edward III., 1337, Roger de Swynnerton, William de Shareshull, and Roger Hillary were appointed justices, to hear and determine the complaint of John de Perton, that Hugh de Wrottesley, Chivaler, and Roger his brother, William, son of Hugh de Wrottesley, and other malefactors and disturbers of the peace, had attacked the said John at Totenhalehom, and had beaten and wounded him so that his life was despaired of. + And again in the next year, 1338, on the 20th of February, Roger de Swynnerton, William de Shareshull, William Trussel, Roger Hillary, Thomas de Halghton, and Richard de Peshall, were appointed justices to inquire by jury what malefactors and disturbers of the peace slew John de Perton at Totenhalehome, at whose procurement the crime was committed, and what persons harboured the malefactors—to hear and determine the said

In this year (1338) Roger de Swynnerton (the elder) died, having some months before received a writ of summons as a baron.§ The high favour in which he stood with Edward II., Oueen Isabel, and with Edward III., and the rewards which were showered on him, prove that throughout of English prowess, abroad, as to permit, these domestic troubles he was unwavering in his attachment to the throne. It is true that he sided with the Duke of Lancaster in his first rebellion, when Piers Gaveston came to grief (1312). His defection, however, was only momentary, and due perhaps to the fact that as Lord of Whitmore he was a

\* Patent Rolls, 1336-37, part ii., Membrane 34, in dorso, dated the town of St. John, Aug. 10.

tenant of the Duchy. During the second rebellion, which terminated on the fatal field of Boroughbridge (1322), though his brother, John de Swynnerton of Hilton, fought with the rebels, and was among the prisoners,\* Roger remained firm in his allegiance, being then in charge, as before remarked, of the Tower of London, a position of the highest trust and importance.

The last entry of Staffordshire delinquencies which we have to record looks like a simple modern case of vulgar poaching. It concerns Richard de Swynnerton, who, of all the brothers, appears to have been the most lawless and the least ambitious-about the "coolest hand," as we should say in familiar parlance, which these grim old records of a bygone age can well reveal to

In 7 Edward III., 1333, justices were appointed by the King to hear and determine the complaint of Henry, Earl of Lancaster, that Richard de Swynnerton, Hugh, Richard's servant, of Swynnerton, and other malefactors and disturbers of the peace, had been forcibly fishing in the fish-ponds of the said Earl at Penkhull, and had taken and carried away the fish thereof to the value of £,200, besides committing other enormities to the grievous damage of the said Earl, and against the King's peace. †

This complaint is extremely remarkable. but as it is scarcely likely that Richard de Swynnerton, with all his insolence, would have ventured to defy a potentate so powerful as a Prince of the Blood, the most probable explanation is that as a tenant of the Duchy he had neglected to perform his customary suit and service for the fish-ponds in questionthat he had omitted, in short, to render his pepper-corn, or red rose, or sore sparrowhawk, or whatever the yearly acknowledgment was, by which he enjoyed his right of angle at Penkhull. And as Penkhull is part of the royal Manor of Newcastle-under-Lyme, which latter was anciently a member of the Honour of Tutbury, under the Duchy of Lancaster, we cannot but suppose that the Earl, as over-lord, may have had some reason

to feel terribly disgusted.\* On the other hand, considering the period, we are not to forget the possibility that the vassal, if vassal he was, had been arbitrarily let and hindered in the exercise of his just rights. The history of those felicitous times, in which retaliation in some form was still a necessity of existence, is ever a history of manifold aggression and of constant self-vindication.

Here, then, we take leave of these various escapades in the history of certain of the men of North Staffordshire. What became of the Staffords of that generation, I know not. The Wrottesleys, a sturdy race, continued to thrive and prosper, Hugh de Wrottesley, for his prowess in France, becoming one of the original twenty-six knights of the Order of the Garter, on the institution of that famous Company in 1349. Of the Swynnertons, two, as we have seen, were slain, namely, John de Swynnerton, of Isewall and Sugnall in Eccleshall, and Alexander de Swynnerton, his nephew. Of Alexander's brothers, Roger, as already related, died in harness in 1338, his elder son, Roger, a true chip of the old block, having predeceased him;† John, of Hilton, who had married Anne, the wealthy heiress of the Montgomerys of Cannock Forest, 1 died in 1340, 8 having also seen much service in both France and Scotland. Indeed, after the slaughter at Boroughbridge his life was spared, probably at the request of his brother Roger, on that very conditionthat he would faithfully serve the King in his wars. || Nicholas de Swynnerton, who was a fighting parson, died in 1357, Rector of Mucklestone and Barrow, and Dean of the Royal Chapel of St. Mary, Stafford - a notable pluralist. I Stephen served in both the Scotch campaigns of 1323 and 1333, and in 1348 the King conferred on him the Manor of Morton, in Dumfriesshire, "for his good services in war."\*\* There remains only Richard the irrepressible, the ancestor

<sup>†</sup> Ibid., 1337-38, part iii., Membrane, 30, in dorso, dated at Westminster, Oct. 7, by the King and Council. ‡ Ibid., 1338-39, part i., Membrane 33, in dorso, dated at Westminster, Feb. 20, by writ of Privy

<sup>§</sup> Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii. p. 32. | Kymer's Fadera, vol. i., p. 231; also The Reliquary, vol. xx., p. 21.

<sup>\*</sup> Publications of Record Commissioners, vol. ii.,

<sup>+</sup> Patent Rolls, 1333-34, Membrane 27, in dorso, dated at Durham, Aug. 5.

<sup>\*</sup> The town of Newcastle-under-Lyme was quite independent of the duchy, enjoying its own chartered

<sup>†</sup> Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part iii., p. 33.

See The Reliquary, vol. xxi., p. 34.

<sup>§</sup> See his Inquisitio post mortem.

| Publications of Record Commissioners, vol. i.,

p. 647, at Stafford.

I Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., p. 28. \*\* Scotch Rolls, vol. i., p. 710, at Stafford.

of the Swynnertons of Butterton and Whitmore,\* and of him, who had certainly more sinew than wit, since he never achieved a reward or secured an honour, we hear directly only once or twice again. In the year 1334 justices were appointed to take the assize of Novel Disseizin, which Richard de Swynnerton had arraigned against Jordan, son of Hugh, and others, touching tenements in the town of Newcastle-under-Lyme.† And in the year 1350, when well advanced in life, Richard de Swynnerton, being of Chorlton, Whitmore, and Shelton, obtained the King's license to visit the city of Rome, with a retinue consisting of two chaplains, two valets, two grooms, and two horses. ‡ So travelled gentlemen of modest means in the days of the Plantagenets. But wherefore the journey? Doubtless it was a pilgrimage of reparation, and the words of the old monkish biographer of Rahere, the founder of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, in the reign of Henry I., may fairly be applied to Richard de Swynnerton: "He now decreed in himself to go to the Court of Rome, coveting so great a labour, to do the works of penance. There, at the shrines of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, he, weeping his deeds, prayed to our Lord for remission of them." In those days it was decidedly the fashion for great sinners to flock to "Magna Roma," whether on foot or on horseback. Numbers of every degree, both rich and poor, travelled in company with Richard de Swynnerton, as the old French Roll of that year in the Public Record Office fully declares; and all embarked on their arduous undertaking with the one object, which is plainly set forth in the royal license of the good London citizen, Adam Brabazoun-" pro absolutione animæ ibidem obtinenda"-to obtain there absolution of soul.

That Richard de Swynnerton surmounted every peril of sea and land, and that he re-

\* Staffordshire Collections, vol. vii., part ii., p. 147.
† Patent Keils, 1334-35, Membrane 18, in dorso.
An assize of Novel Disseizin lies where a tenant in fee simple is lately disseized of his lands or tenements.
‡ Close Kolls, 24 Ed. III., p. 2, Membrane 12, Record Office. Tested at Rotherhide, Sept. 8.

§ See MS. in the Cottonian Collection, British

|| See Brabazoun's License, Patent Rolls, 24 Ed. III., p. 2., March 25.

turned home to die among his own kindred, we know from a deed of his son Thomas, preserved in original at Swynnerton;\* and so among the beautiful Staffordshire hills, on his own land at Whitmore or Chorlton, close under the "mount vert" of Swynnerton, this wild survivor of a once famous band of brothers ended his strangely romantic career, having made his final peace with God and the world.

CHARLES SWYNNERTON. (Bengal Chaplain.)







THE REVEREND CHARLES SWYNNERTON

The man who started it all



CHARLES SWINNERTON OF DOUGLAS (Father of the Rev. Charles) and his sons



OUR PRESIDENT SIR ROGER SWYNNERTON

Great grandson of Charles above



THE REVEREND HENRY ULYATE SWINNERTON

An early American historian of the family and a frequent correspondent
of the Rev. Charles

# **GATHERINGS**



The first one — 1975
The Secretary and his family right foreground



1977 - Vice-President Roger Swynnerton proposing a vote of thanks



1981 — The audience enjoying Harold Swinnerton's talk
Front row I. to r. Sir Roger, Lady Swynnerton, Colin Swinnerton, the Secretary
Chairman John Swinnerton, Ray Swinnerton and Ken Armitstead



1983 - The overseas contingent on the Secretary's Sunday tour



Founder of the Canadian branch — Thomas Swinarton member of First Parliament of Ontario



Honorary member Bill Swinarton of Canada (extreme left) and family at the wedding of his eldest daughter. Bill is the great grandson of Thomas Swinarton (across)



Leslie Swinnerton

Council Members



Col. Jeremy Swynnerton



The Arms of Thomas Swinnerton of Butterton on the new signboard at the Swinnerton Arms — he originally owned the land on which the pub stands



Old Swynnerton Village circa 1900

I have often been asked what made me start a Family Society and how did it all begin? Over the years I have told bits of the story to a lot of people but I have now been persuaded that the 10th edition of the Journal would be the appropriate place to record the story for posterity. Somewhat reluctantly, I have agreed but on your heads be it!

I have always been fascinated by History from an early age and it is still my main source of relaxation. I love visiting places of historical interest, castles, churches, stately homes etc and then reading up the historical background and I suppose 90% of my reading is either straight history or historical novels.

I was very fortunate in that, at King Edward's, I had a History Master who could really make the subject come alive (so many seem to think that all they need to do is to make you learn dates and battles by rote) and he imparted to me his own enthusiasm for the subject and gave me a fascination for history which has stayed with me ever since.

Of Family History I knew nothing. I had virtually no family, my mother had died when I was only 3 and I never knew a single grandparent. Three had died before I was born and the fourth had emigrated to Australia. My sister had left home to make her own life while I was still at school, the only relatives with whom I had any contact were four cousins of my father who, however, as my grandfather was the second and their father the youngest of a large Victorian family, were nearer my age than his! Two of them, I am glad to say, are members of the Society today and to the eldest, Mrs Mary Papps, I owe a great deal. Her knowledge of our immediate family was a great help to me when I was just starting.

It was whilst on leave and visiting the two still at home, one day in 1953, that I met their father, my great-uncle. Although the head of the family, he was almost a stranger to me as I had only met him once or twice. I thought of him as a Victorian and to tell the truth I was somewhat in awe of him. However, on this occasion he made much of me and took me into his study for a chat. To my astonishment, having asked me about myself and my progress in the Army etc, he proceeded to talk about the family and my father later told me, when I recounted the interview to him, that he had told me things that he did not know and he would be the next head of the family!

I found it all very interesting and made notes of what he had told me, intending to proceed with some more enquiries, but my leave was short and, once back on duty, I had no time to take the matter any further.

Three months later I received a telegram to say that Great Uncle had died, quite suddenly and totally unexpectedly. I have often wondered since if he had had a premonition and thought he should pass on what he knew 'just in case'. Why he missed out a generation I shall never know but it was he who was responsible for originally arousing my interest for which I shall be forever grateful.

Soldiering, marriage and later a young family meant I had very little time over the next few years to pursue my enquiries very far until the early 60's when, back home and in the family firm with my father, I was able to discuss the family in more detail.

He had a marvellous memory for names and places is but not particularly for dates. He had, of course, worked with no less than three Uncles of his in the

firm and, unlike myself, had known all of his grandparents well. I decided the time had come to put
down on paper all the details we had accumulated
and drew up my very first proper family tree. I
was very familiar with trees and tables of descent
from all my historical reading, of course, and was
very proud of my first effort. Today I laugh at
it, it was the worst possible type - just names and
an occasional date (year only mostly!), no places,
occupations etc which make a tree come alive.

However, it was very professionally done on a drawing board with Uno stencils and Indian ink and I was very pleased with it!

Studying it again and again, it did not take long for me to realise how incomplete it was but, having exhausted the memories of my father, cousin and greataunt, I had no idea how to set about filling the gaps or taking it back any further. There were no evening classes on 'How to Trace Your Ancestors' in those days as there are now and no societies of like-minded enthusiasts. In fact, as I learned later, there was one society, The Society of Genealogists in London but I had never heard of it.

So I went along to my local library to see if they had anything on the subject. They had just one book (today there are dozens and I have even contributed to some myself) - 'Trace Your Ancestors' by L.G.Pine. It had been published in 1958 and was a gold mine of information for me, - just what I wanted. I still have a battered but treasured copy (I rushed out and bought my own) which, despite the many others now available, still makes very sound reading.

From its very first chapter 'How to Start', it took the reader through the various stages which have since become so familiar - Public Records, Church Records, Census Returns etc.etc.

This was exactly what I needed and, armed with this primer, off I went to London for my first examination of the Indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths and Census Records. This was the start of many visits to Record Repositories and Libraries and I quickly started to make progress. Fortunately, I realised fairly early on that there were comparitively few Swinnertons and so I started to note down all the references I found to the name - in fact, unknowingly, I became a 'One-Namer'. I had not at that stage, of course, realised that that not every member of the family agreed with my spelling of the name and there were Swynnertons, Swinertons and Swinningtons!

I obtained some certificates for my great-grandparents and Death certificates for my great-great-grandparents (their births and marriages took place before the start of General Registration in 1837) and entered these details on the tree.

Looking at the latest version, I realised that there must be other quite close members of the family about, descendants of great-grandfather's brothers. Back to my father for advice and - yes, he had known an Uncle George from the other side of the family when when he was young and there was a Cousin George who lived somewhere in Birmingham but with whom he had had no contact for over 30 years!

A search of the telephone directory revealed a G.A. Swinnerton in Olton. I tried the number and indeed it was the right one. I don't know who was the most surprised. That call was the event that really started the expansion of my network because it was followed a few days later by a letter from Cousin George (which I have before me now) not only giving me details of his side of the family but also mentioning a John Swinnerton, President of the Radio Society of Great Britain, who had written to him some years before on the subject of Swinnerton Family History.

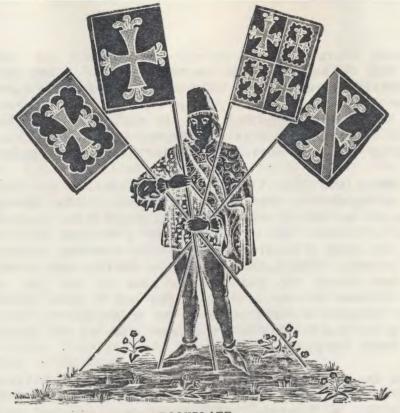
Because George had an out-of-date address for John it took me some time to contact him but I see that I finally did so in July 1970 and we met for the first time a few months later. The research that he and the College of Arms had done in connection with his Grant of Armorial Bearings proved most helpful and lead me into the modern history of the Betley Family.

At about the same time, I finally decided to apply for membership of the Society of Genealogists (having 'done my own thing' for 16 years although I had recently been introduced to the Birmingham & Midland Society for Genealogy & Heraldry). I was duly elected a member and shortly afterwards received a letter from a Mr. S.K.Armitstead who had seen my name in the list of new members in the Journal. Ken and I soon struck up a voluminous correspondence in an attempt to trace his great-grandfather and this gave rise to the present day large Warwichshire Branch.

About the same time, whilst researching in the William Salt Library, Stafford, the librarian mentioned that there was a Reverend Brian Swinnerton who had been doing some research on his family. Naturally, I contacted him to find he was not only of the Betley Branch but also had been Curate of Swynnerton! Our meeting lead to our collaboration on 'Swynnerton and the Swinnertons' which I published in 1971.

So there you have it. By 1971, I had gathered together the three men who, with myself, were to be the Founder Members of the Society. Through them, my circle of correspondents increased enormously and, because I found I was having to write the same thing over and over again to different people, I published the first Newsletter in May 1974 - in pure self-defence!

The Society followed very quickly and was officially founded on the 1st. January 1975.



BOOKPLATE

(or , more strictly, end-paper)

used by the Reverend Charles Swynnerton in his own books.

He had it printed white on black and it was taken from an illustration in 'Livres des Tournois' (circa 1440) of Rene of Anjou. The original showed a King of Arms wearing a tabard of the Duke of Brittany and holding the banners of four judges of a tournament. In this case, the tabard appears to be that of an English King of Arms and the banners are those of Swynnerton of Hilton, Swynnerton of Swynnerton, Sir John Swinnerton, Lord Mayor of London in 1612 and Swinnerton of Butterton and Eccleshall.

AVAINCE Z ET ARCHET RIEM

Bookplate of Charles Swinnerton of Douglas, father of the Rev. Charles showing the arms of Swinnerton of Butterton of which the Whitmore (Betley) Branch were an off-shoot.

Bookplate of the Rev.Henry Ulyate Swinnerton showing the same Arms but why he used these is not clear as it has not been established to which branch of the family his line belonged.





Thomas Swinnerton Shiniger!

Bookplate of Thomas Swinnerton of Butterton showthe quartered Arms of Swynnerton of Swynnerton with Abnet of Staffs. and Colclough of Staffs. the small shield in centre (in pretence) the Arms of Milborne, wife was the heiress of Charles Milborne. The main Arms are wrong, they should be Swinnerton Butterton quartering Colclough only (his mother) - Abnet was his grandmother's family.



Self explanatory - bookplate of the Secretary from which Arms, his Badge is derived and which the College of Arms allow the Society to also use as their badge. STAFFORDSHIRE is where the knots and pots come from, along with coal, bull terriers, Arnold Bennett, Sir Stanley Matthews, the original plans for the Spitfire, quite a lot of tyres, some of the finest-looking countryside in England – and widespread misconceptions.

I say this with all of the disinterested fairmindedness of a local lad. I was brought up in the Potteries and didn't mind a bit. I regularly potter back to visit a resident gran, still find plenty to admire, and am struck by the fact that it's only about five times a century that anyone puts in a good word for the area surrounding Stoke-on-Trent.

As with Wigan and Bootle, or sometimes Hull, the name is used as a sort of music-hall shorthand for all that's bleakest and most Dickensian about the industrially blighted North. It's written off as of interest only to those wanting to see where Wedgwood is made, or to nose around the last-remaining bottle ovens in the pottery industry's museum, to see provincial drama at its most muscular in the country's only permanent, professional theatre-in-the-round, or possibly to nip smartly over the border into Cheshire and pick up a new Rolls-Royce from the factory in Crewe.

Well, all right, I can scarcely imagine that Stoke itself, sandwiched between the boiler-house Midlands and brass-tacks North, is likely to top any visitor's short-list of the UK's scenic musts. Even before motorways sliced through the Five Towns, they were no architectural paradise even to the cognoscenti of Victorian excess. But I wasn't kidding about that glorious country.

Cannock Chase is a suitable instance. Once a hunting ground of Plantagenet kings – and they, it has to be supposed, could pick and choose their beauty spots – this is 26 square miles of protected moorland and forest on the doorstep of the Elack Country, yet for all the world like a remote Arcadia. At this time of year it is at its boskiest best – great long wooded walks, past some of the original great oaks, underneath the wheeling buzzards and chirpy meadow-pipits, to the highspots such as Castle Ring and Coppice Hill, riding high above the acres 'of outstanding natural beauty' extending towards the distant hills of Shropshire.

Or then again, for another instance, we can swing round to the other side of the Potteries, on a heading for Derbyshire's Peak District National Park, and in the valleys of the rivers Manifold and Dove there are more breathtaking wooded walks to villages like llam, ideal for fishing off picnics or a roll of Kodachrome. This is vintage hearty-walking and youth-hostelling country, criss-crossed by the stout-booted en route to Dovedale, clambering up Beeston Tor or the limestone country around the River.

And between these north-and-south extremities of Staffs lies not only the Potteries coalfield, but some of the lushest agricultural pasture you could wish for, handily broken up by canals with very walkable towpaths, dotted with more formalised country delights like Shugborough, where the photographer Earl of Lichfield hangs his rural hat, or the castellated shell at Alton Towers of what was once a vast Gothic mansion and still has its parklands; the Hawksmoor Nature Reserve near Cheadle, the enormous lake at Rudyard, the races at Uttoxeter, or the traditional Potteries playground of Trentham Gardens.

Rudyard, in particular, is a gorgeous spot. The lake is actually a reservoir, built originally to feed the Trent and Mersey canal, but boating and fishing are encouraged, and as well as the surrounding woods and gardens, there are some extraordinarily grotesque caver as and rock formations to explore. Yes, Kipling was named after the village where, in the 1860s, his parents got engaged.

Alton Towers is much more commercialised, with a miniature railway chugging round the park, but it's quite a spot for earnest gardeners, too, since in the early 19th century Charles Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, irrigated a once-barren hillside and then planted it with rare shrubs, trees and exotic flowers, adding such fancies as landscaped lakes with Italianate fountains, vast conservatories and a Chinese pagoda. The autumn colours are again spectacular and, if you'd prefer to soak them up in isolation, it's no distance to the Churnet Valley and the densest, most lonely of Staffordshire's woods. The old market town of Cheadle is a useful centre from which to explore the many nature trails.

Mow Cop is the place to be for a good view across the Cheshire plain. It looks like the

remnants of an ancient castle, half a tower and an arch atop an 1100-foot crag on the edge of Biddulph Moor, source of the Trent. In fact Mow Cop is a joke, an 18th-century folly which was never intended for anything but whimsical decoration, unless possibly to keep the rain off whilst taking in that astonishing view. Cheshire looks flat as a polder, punctuated only by the eerie outline of the Jodrell Bank observatory way to the north, near Altrincham - a great metal bowl for radio astronomers.

Of the small towns and villages I've so far left out. I'd recommend Stone, a nice old mellow sort of place with an absolutely smashing-looking railway station, if that sort of thing appeals, and Tutbury, on the banks of the Dove, a picturesque town, wellstocked with Tudor and Georgian houses. Little Moreton Hall, technically just into Cheshire, is the best-known Elizabethan house hereabouts and exceptionally finely

timbered. Swynnerton is the local supplier of thatched cottages, as well as Shallowford, where one example once housed Izaak Walton who wrote the classic Compleat Angler. Abbots Bromley is a delightful old town, as well as the place where once a year the locals go mad, dancing about the streets in motley with antlers and the accompaniment of an accordianist and triangle-player, according to an ancient barmy custom derived from an Anglo-Saxon Horn Dance.

So, if by now I've managed to talk you round a bit to the surroundings of Stoke, do at any rate risk half a day in the city centre to look round the Gladstone Museum - an award-winning reconstruction of potterymaking in bottle oven days. It's a fine exhibition of industrial craftsmanship and, after all, I wouldn't want to leave you with the impression that around the Potteries it is all rolling countryside and woods.

ONE MAN'S WORLD - David Taylor

Ex. John J. Swinarton





It comes to my home the Swinnerton tome. it drops on the mat on the floor. and each time it does, it worries me 'cos poor Ian has done it alone.

He must read and must write, from morning 'till night to send us a sequel each time. So to prove I am able I sat at the table to write him a verse with a rhyme

It tells of the plight of the girl not too bright and the first time she went into school. All around her distractions went on. "You must spell your name, we'll make it a game" said Teacher who laid down the rule.

"Each morning first thing, your name card you'll bring and pencil and paper as well." Its all very good for Smith, Hill and Wood . they're simple and easy to spell

All round the class they learnt names 'en masse' while our heroine continued to Is it one 'n' or two? . struggle. Oh what shall I do? I've got myself all in a 'muggle'.

With her dog-eared name card she tried and worked hard Then one happy day she jumped up to say I can do it! I've learnt SWINNERTON.

Vicki Leighton.

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