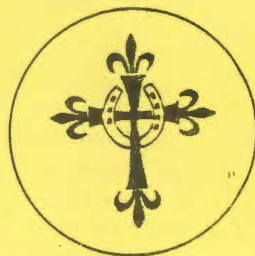


# SWINNERTON

## Family History



CHARLES FRANCIS MASSY SWYNNERTON CMG.FLS.FES.CMBOU.

THE JOURNAL OF THE SWINNERTON SOCIETY

VOLUME 9. No.4

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## The Swinnerton Society

was founded in 1973 as a non-profit making organisation devoted to the research and publication of Swinnerton family records and the welfare of St.Mary's Church, Swynnerton, Staffordshire. Research into the history of the Swinnerton Family had been started by the Reverend Charles Swynnerton FSA. in the 1870s and over the course of the years he wrote a number of articles and papers about the family and gathered together many Swinnertons from all over the world. Interest became dormant after his death in 1928 until the present archivist resumed research in 1952 and re-founded the society in 1973. Today it has a world-wide membership and holds a "Gathering" at Swynnerton every 3 years. It is registered as a charity in the United Kingdom No.518 184.

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## SWINNERTON FAMILY HISTORY

Volume 9 No.4

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*Editor - Iain Spencer Swinnerton*



## FOREWORD

### The Chairman

On Saturday May 1st, along with Iain Swinnerton and our Secretary David Brock, I had the pleasure of attending a gathering of representatives of One-Name Societies in the United Kingdom who specialise, as we do, in the research and study of their own particular family name. This was the first such meeting to be held since 1975 before the Guild of One-Name Studies was founded. At that meeting there were 8 present, at our meeting there were 23 Societies represented.

The meeting was initiated by Iain in response to requests by societies he had written to for information for a Directory of One-Name Societies he has compiled to help him answer questions when he is lecturing round the world in his capacity as President of the world-wide Federation of Family History Societies, to which we belong. Not all the people present were members of the Guild of One-Name Studies or the Federation - many prefer just to do their own thing.

He had carefully plotted the hometowns of the Secretaries and came up with the answer that the average central point from their homes was Swindon in Wiltshire. Thus, representatives of 23 Family Societies gathered at the County Primary School, Westlea, Swindon and brought along samples of the memorabilia and records which their individual Societies have assembled and produce - journals, trees, souvenirs, family heirlooms, and, of course, the inevitable computer. The families represented ranged from the oldest, the Dalton Society, formed in 1970 (our own Swinnerton Society being the second oldest having been founded in 1973) to the Lin(d)field Group established as recently as 1992.

Each family set up a display and we had the opportunity to examine the various ideas used by the societies in serving their members. A very useful discussion with an exchange of ideas took place and everyone departed from the meeting with the knowledge that they had learned

something which could be put to good use in the running of their own society.

During the two-hour journey home I had time to reflect on the day's proceedings and it struck me forcibly that we Swinnertons (Swynnertons, Swinartons or whatever "handle" with which we are labelled) are most fortunate to have had our family history presented to us virtually "on a plate". Most of the research into the distant past, from the time our original ancestor settled in the area of Swynnerton in Staffordshire was done for us by the Rev. Charles Swynnerton between 1875 until his death in 1928.

Research and recording of our family history lay dormant for almost 30 years until our present Historian and Genealogist, Iain Swinnerton, gathered the threads together and resumed the task some 40 years ago. Together with the Rev. Brian Swynnerton, John Walter Swinnerton and Ken Armitstead, he founded our Society in 1973 and has put in countless hours of concentrated research and study to bring the records up to date. Most of our members have had the record of their own particular branch of the family presented to them without having to spend hours in County Record Offices or at the Central Record Offices in London searching through files and viewing microfiche to reveal the details of their ancestry.

Several of the people with whom I conversed that day at Swindon had managed only to trace their family back into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and were stuck with little hope of getting much further. When they saw the Swinnerton trees and the other items of memorabilia, some were amazed and envious of our success in having such excellent records of our ancestors and with so much detail.

We must all be very mindful of the efforts and grateful to the late Rev. Charles and the modern day 20th century Swinnertons for their devoted attention in recording our family history.



Particular thanks must go to Iain who has been the instigator and had the task of assembling all the data received from many sources over the last 25 years. Much information has been sent to him by members of other family history societies, who, whilst researching their own ancestors, have spotted something mentioning the name Swinnerton (or the other variations). This, together with the help of our own members, has contributed to the knowledge we have of our family and ancestors.

My fear is, that being a member of such a well known family and Society as Swinnerton, with most of the research into our past already recorded, we are liable to become complacent, take it all for granted and forget the efforts of those who continue to strive to make the Society successful.

We must all continue to look out for any mention of the family name and ensure that all "hatches, matches and dispatches" which happen in our immediate family are sent to our historian to keep the records up to date. Above all - OUR INTEREST AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE FAMILY SOCIETY MUST BE MAINTAINED AND OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITIES. We owe it to those who have gone before and the present incumbents.

See you at the AGM. at the village of Swynnerton on June 19th.

J. E. (Joe) Swinnerton.

THERE ARE STILL A NUMBER OF SUBSCRIPTIONS OUTSTANDING -  
THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RENEWED HAVE NOT BEEN SENT THIS  
JOURNAL. IF A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY SAY THEY HAVEN'T  
RECEIVED IT POINT OUT WHY!

## JACK OF HILTON and the GOSPEL of the WITCHES

L.B.Jackson

*(From a February 1993 Newspaper extracted for us by David Brock)*

It was a chilly Autumn night around fourteen years ago and I was driving home through the quaint countryside between Cannock and Wolverhampton. A few leaves still clung to the trees, and a crescent moon could often be glimpsed between thin clouds as they scurried past on a high wind.

On my left was the 'mile wall' bounding the Hilton Park estate, a stone structure whose battered length had been one of the wonders of the world to my parents and their companions when they came this way on camping expeditions in the 1930's.

Traffic was sparse, and pedestrians even sparser, and my mind was, as usual in those days, on church business. Suddenly, a glowing white shape appeared on the right of the dark road and passed quickly across my headlights to a breach in the 'mile wall' before vanishing again.

After I had gone a short distance, I realised what I had actually seen; a young woman, with long, tangled raven hair, wearing a white robe held at the waist with a thin, dark cord. Her pale arms were bare, and more surprisingly so were her feet.

Of course, there's no accounting for female taste in dress, and this was a particularly zany period, but the girl's outfit was obviously of the type adopted by the more publicity-minded members of 'Wicca' the witchcult that everyone who is into the occult knows and loves.

The Hilton Park estate is hardly the place to knowingly pay host to witches, since it has been in the hands partly of the Coal Board and partly of St. Joseph's Rest Home, in the Hall itself, for many years. Yet this is an ancient site, as evidenced by an old moat quite near Hilton Hall.

The Vernon family, long-time owners, played host to one of the great curiosities of Staffordshire, Jack of Hilton, who probably needs no great dwelling upon. He was a hollow brass figure, a foot high or so, in the form of a kneeling man with one hand on his head while the other clutched his phallus, which was swathed in oak-leaves.

At New Year, the Lord of nearby Essington, would pay long-standing homage to the Hilton Hall family by bringing them a goose. Jack, who literally had a hole in his head, was filled with water and plugged with clay before being set on a big fire in the main hall. When he boiled, emitting steam from a small mouth-hole, the goose was marched around the fire before being sent to join its ancestors. After the bird was cooked, the Lord of Essington was given a large helping of its meat. Opinions differ as to whether this ritual happened on each New Year or only on request, but the Vernons are gone now, and Jack lives on someone's shelf in the same county as the even more enigmatic Stonehenge.



The Vernons are said to have gained Hilton Hall by marriage around 1562, which oddly enough is the date given for the death of SIR HUMPHREY SWYNNERTON, possibly the last head of the family who previously inhabited the residence.

Along with his wife, Cassandra, Sir Humphrey was entombed in St. Luke's church at nearby Shareshill. Their tomb has disappeared but their broken alabaster effigies still lie on windowsills in the church.

Jack is sometimes described as a medieval relic, but the consensus of opinion is that he is far older. In 1769, the legendary Josiah Wedgewood opened a new factory site near Hanley in the 'Potteries', and, anxious to give it the sort of name that would appeal to notions of classical beauty, he called it 'Etruria'. On reflection, this might seem odd, since this ancient land, now a province of Northern Italy, was not the best known area of the old world. Nevertheless, this was almost certainly where Jack of Hilton had its origins.

The Etruscans were a mystical race, much concerned with divination, which they executed by examining animal entrails, by observing the weather, and by watching the flight of birds. The Midlands-born author D.H. Lawrence was fascinated by the Etruscans and explored their tombs in 1926, writing excitedly about how they interested him. Perhaps he was drawn to them because they were reckoned to be sensuous people with no fear of death.

Nevertheless, they were overthrown by the Romans, and three hundred years later the forgers of the largest empire of ancient times had built Watling Street through the Midlands and had villas, farms, and forts at Stretton, Brewood and Penkridge.

At the most homely level of their religious beliefs the Romans revered their household gods and goddesses; these were generally known as 'lares' and took the form of small human figures in non-ferrous metal. It is tempting to suppose that Jack of Hilton perhaps confiscated from some Etruscan home or temple, had been adopted as one of these minor spirits. His oak-leaves garb would appeal to the Romans especially in their times, since they held the oak sacred, like the Britons whom they invaded.

I often wondered how Jack came to be used as a kind of glorified kettle, but this was possibly a mistake. The Etruscans made beautiful hollow metal figures, especially of the mythical 'chimaeras', with their triple animal heads, and they had open mouths.

Perhaps it is to be expected that a small pagan deity should survive so long in Staffordshire, when we consider it is the home of the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, which may essentially pre-date even farming, and remember that it was part of the last British kingdom to be ruled by a pagan king. King Penda took control of Mercia in 626 AD and ruled it for three decades, waging war against all-comers and often forming alliances with Celts to further his ends.

The spirit whom Jack represented might well have escaped into the local countryside, for a little way south-east of Hilton, by the Bloxwich Road, the Victorian ordnance survey map shows 'Mockbeggar Hall', now prosaically marked as Barns Farm. A mockbeggar was one of nearly 200 supernatural beings identified by folklorist Michael Aislabie Denham, and its job was to lead people astray and abandon

them with laughter when they got into trouble. 'Beggar' is here a variant of boggart or bogey, but just over in Pelsall was Goblin's Pit Wood and Goblin's Pit Farm, from which the mockbeggar in question may have emerged. At the other end of a lane from Mockbeggar was Hobble End, and 'hob' is an old name for the Devil, but we must not get too carried away; a 'hobblor' was a man who pulled a canal barge on his own, as the Tipton Slasher did in his declining years, and the Wyrley and Essington Canal, one of the oldest, is just across the fields.

I still think about the girl in the white gown, and I feel she had a slight connection with the archaic world from which Jack of Hilton came. In the 1880's, an explorer by the name of Charles Leland befriended an aged Italian witch who taught his beliefs pre-dating the Romans, including how the goddess Diana had a child by her brother Lucifer whose name was 'Aradia', sometimes known as Herodias. This daughter, born of such unearthly parents, was eventually sent to earth in ancient times to teach magic and witchcraft to the simple and oppressed people on the earth so that they could hit back at their rulers.

Leland wrote all the witch's words in a book which he named after the goddess, but which is often called 'the gospel of the witches'.

Even if the lady I saw that night did not have this 'gospel' under her arm, I should think she had some version of it in her heart.



Jack of Hilton as illustrated by Dr. Robert Plot LL.D in his 'Natural History of Staffordshire' published in 1686.



## KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR LOCAL ANTIQUE SHOP!

A couple of weeks ago I received a telephone call from a Mrs Margaret Best of Manchester who said she knew of me and my particular interest in the Swinnertons as she herself was a Family Historian and had heard me lecture. Apparently she had an antique shop and had been offered two small bibles and a photograph album connected with my family and would I be interested in having them? You can imagine what my answer was! She mentioned one or two names written in the bibles which I recognised instantly and she very kindly offered to negotiate with the owner on my behalf. This she did very successfully and I was able to buy them on behalf of the Society and I am sure the descendants will want to have these and will refund us. They are now in my possession and I have had a chance to examine them carefully.

The first is a small bible measuring 3" x 5½" x 1¾" thick, printed by J. Smith, printer to the University in Cambridge in 1820. It has split in two and the covers are detached but this can soon be put right by a good binder. The front cover bears the imprint of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. On the flyleaf is written:

*Rebekah Wilderspin  
her own Bible*

and underneath in a different hand

*Holy Bible book .....  
Precious treasure thou  
art mine*

Inside the back cover is written:-

*Esther Swinnerton Born August 13 1848*

*John Swinnerton Born July 3rd 1852*

*Esther Swinnerton Died on 18 Sept 1853 Age five years 1 Month*

*Richard Swinnerton Died August 18th 1852 Age 59 yeares Grand  
Farther (sic) of the Above*

The second bible is much larger measuring 5¼" x 8½" x 2½" thick. The front cover which is impressed with the stamp of the British Bible Society is detached and the title page is missing so I cannot date it but the inside cover has a record of family events commencing in 1823. However there is also a loose sheet which looks as though it was originally part of the bible and this contains records going back to 1789.

They are (the figs in brackets are indecipherable but I know them from our records):

*1789 Edward Swinnerton & Mary Perry married May 21st 178(9)*

*1791 John Swinnerton born March 10th 1.....*

*about two in the Morning - and what looks like 'a twin' but we have no record of this*

*1792 Edwd. Swinnerton born October the 9th 1792 about seven at night*

*1795 Richard Swinnerton born April the 10th 1795 between 11 & 12 at night.*

*1797 Tomas Swinnerton born the 3rd March 1797 (the year has been heavily written over as if the original was wrong) at one o'clock in the morning*

*Tomas Swinnerton died May 21 1799*

*1799 Willm. Swinnerton born January 18th 1799 at half past two*

*1800 Edwin Swinnerton born October 21 1800 about eight in the morning. Mary Swinnerton died in about two hours after.*

In a different hand in blue ink:

*in the Parish of Fillongley Warwickshire  
Grandfather came from Swinnerton Shrop Shr.*

On the inside front cover we get:

*Mary Hannah Swinnerton Born Sepr. 21 1823*

*10 minutes past eight o'clock at night*

*Edward Swinnerton born Aug 15 1825*

*10 minutes past 2 afternoon*

*Edward Swinnerton Died Nov 23rd 1827*



John Swinnerton Born ¼ past 8 Night Sept 2 1826  
 Esther Swinnerton Born Feby 26th 1829 20 minutes past 9 o'clock  
 Morning  
 1831 Died Feby 23rd ... before 11 o'clock morning  
 Luzear (sic - actually Louisa) Swinnerton Born March 2 1832 10  
 minutes 4 o'clock in morning  
 Ann Jane Swinnerton Born Augst. 21 1834 ½ past 9 in the morning

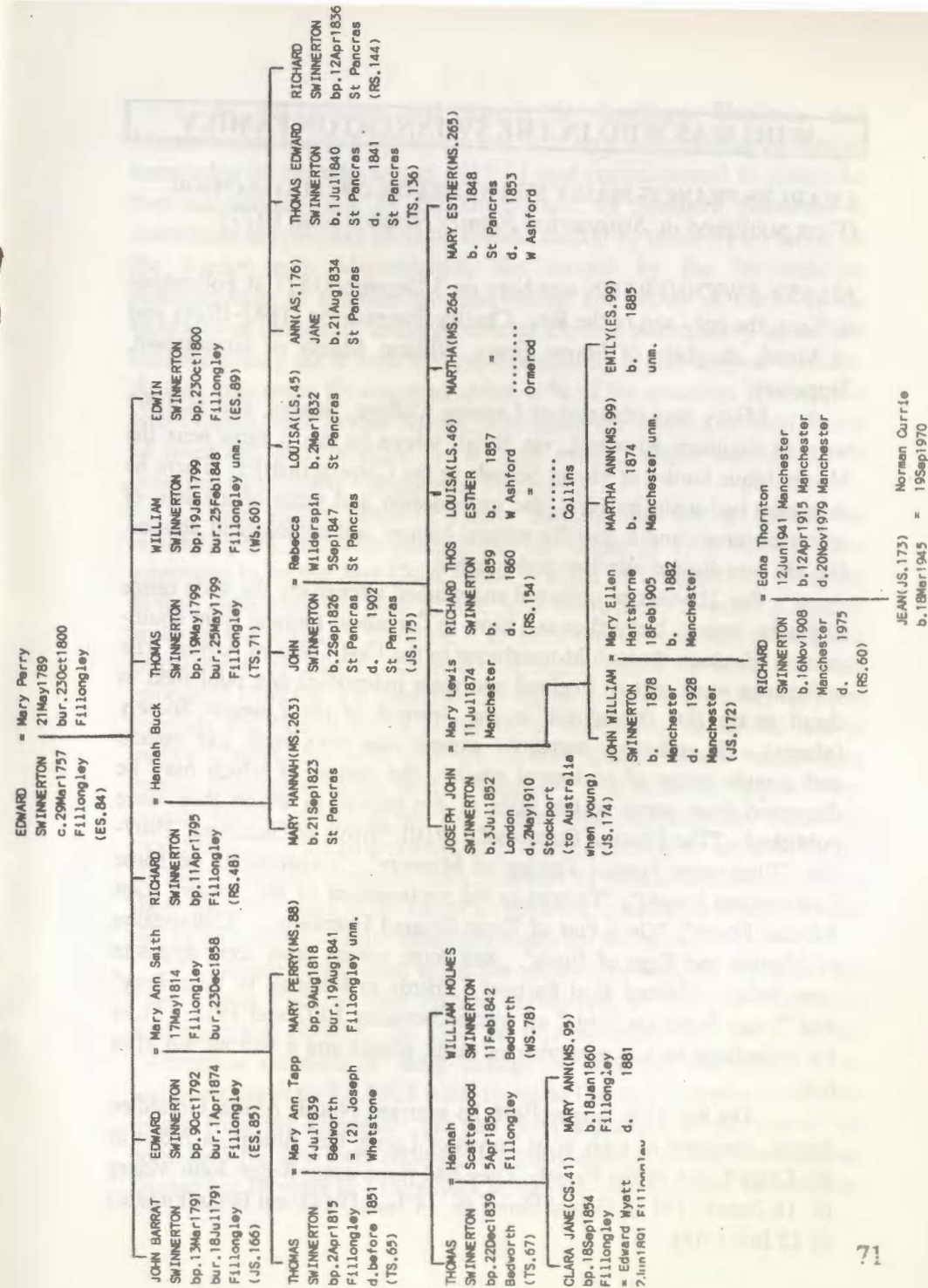
Mary Hannah Swinnerton & John & Luzear & Ann Jane Christened  
 Mary 15 1836

The photograph album measures 5' x 6½" x 2" thick with thick padded covers, both of which unfortunately are loose, fastened by a brass hinge and clasp. It contains 49 sepia photographs not one of which has a name or date on it! They are in good condition and, hopefully, we shall be able to match some of them at least to other photographs in the family.

All three are of inestimable value to us and we are so lucky to have recovered them.

Who were they - that's easy. They are a branch of the Warwickshire family who moved to London and were living in the St.Pancras area. They were cousins to our Chairman's family and the last direct descendant, Richard Swinnerton of Manchester who was born there in 1908 was a member of our society until he died in 1975. So was his daughter Jean (Currie) but she dropped out some years ago.

A tree showing the full family is on the opposite page





## WHO WAS WHO IN THE SWINNERTON FAMILY

**CHARLES FRANCIS MASSY SWYNNERTON** CMG, FLS, FES, C.M.B.O.U.  
(First published in *Swynnerton Family History* June 1977)

MASSY SWYNNERTON was born on 3. December 1877 at Folkestone in Kent, the only son of the Rev. Charles Swynnerton (1843-1928) and of Maud, daughter of Major Henry William Massy of Grantstown, Tipperary.

Massy was educated at Lancing College, Sussex, and in 1897 went to Southern Rhodesia, via Natal, where he ran a farm near the Mozambique border at Mount Selinda in the Chipping district. There he exhibited two main interests, the introduction and trials of a range of economic crops and a flair for natural history and ecological studies. His life was divided into two main phases

For 22 years he collected and studied intensively the wide range of plants, insects, butterflies and birds of Gazaland running from south-eastern Rhodesia through Mozambique to the East Coast of Africa. His collections were sent to England and were identified and published in detail in the *Ibis* (birds) and in the *Journal of the Linnean Society* (plants). He undertook numerous experiments with birds and insects and a wide range of ecological studies, the nature of which may be discerned from some of the titles of the papers in which they were published - "The Flora of Gazaland" (1910), "Birds of Gazaland" 1907-08, "Five years Special Testing of Mimicry", "Experiments on some Carnivorous Insects", "Factors in the replacement of the Ancient East African Forest", "On a Pair of Tame Ground Hornbills", "Colouration of Mouths and Eggs of Birds", and some whose titles seem apposite even today - "Mixed Bird Parties", "Birds in Relation to their Prey" and "Stray Notes on Birds" all written between 1907 and 1918. From his collections he had a number of birds, plants and a fish named after him.

On the 25th August 1908 he married Norah Aimee Geraldine Smyth, daughter of John Watt Smyth of Larne, Co. Antrim, a Judge of the Chief Court of the Punjab. They had three sons, Roger John Massy (b. 16 January 1911), Gerald Henry (b. 14 June 1914) and Brian Fitzalan (b. 12 July 1918).

In his studies and travels in Southern Rhodesia and Mozambique, Massy Swynnerton had built up a wide-ranging ecological knowledge of the area and in 1919 he was commissioned to undertake two assignments, one by the Government of Southern Rhodesia to investigate the problem of cattle disease caused by tsetse fly on farms on the border with Mozambique, the second by the Mozambique Administration to examine the distribution and habits of tsetse fly on their side of the border in the Mossurize District where heavy losses had occurred among cattle from the trypanosomiasis or the "nagana" disease. At that time tsetse fly occupied about 40% of the countries between the two Tropics, tight across Africa, precluding the keeping of most forms of livestock, and therefore to a large extent, human habitation. It occupied two-thirds of Tanganyika Territory.

The second phase of Massy Swynnerton's life in Africa, for which the first had been gearing him up, began in 1919 when he was appointed to be the first Chief Game Warden in Tanganyika, when the British Administration was set up, with instructions to make a special study of the tsetse fly problem. In 1928 the Government created the Department of Tsetse Research and Reclamation to which he was appointed Director. He established a highly scientific but practical team to study the natural habits of the fly in relation to its habitat and to evolve control measures over its several species, some transmitting human sleeping sickness, others "nagana". The measures applied were largely those formulated by Swynnerton for Mozambique, based on modifications to the environment to preclude breeding or advance by the fly and to reclaim occupied land, followed by human settlement. Since these were the years of the Great Depression, a battle on a second front had to be fought to secure necessary funds for the work.

Massy Swynnerton wrote the authoritative work on the tsetse fly, "The Tsetse Flies of East Africa", published in 1936 by the Royal Entomological Society. In 1937 he was awarded the C.M.G. in the Coronation Honours of King George VI but he was killed in an aeroplane crash on 8.6.1938 when flying to Dar es Salaam to receive the award from the Governor. He had been a pioneer of the use of the aeroplane for low-level ecological reconnaissance of the environment. During his 19 years in Tanganyika he had advised a number of countries

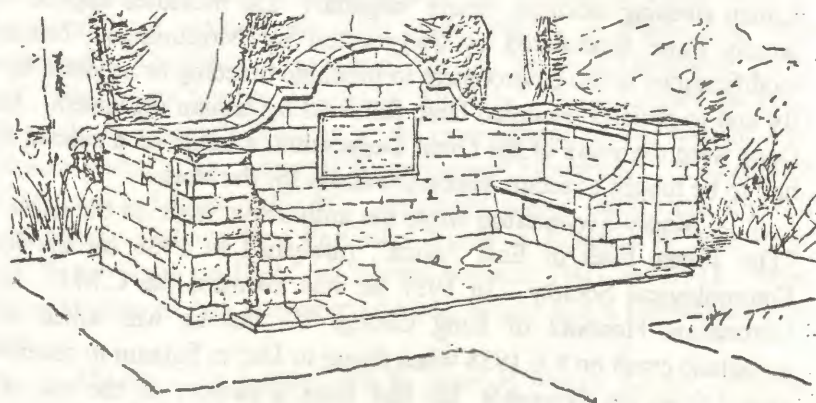


on game preservation and on the tsetse reclamation and it is generally considered that his methods and his programmes had a wide and lasting impact on the control of the tsetse fly in Africa.

Massy Swynnerton was buried alongside a large outcrop on Shinyanga Kopje which overlooks part of the vast area of Tanganyika in which he worked for nearly twenty years. The grave has a great natural headstone and a bronze plaque bears the words "Si Monumentum Requies Circumspice".

During 1940 the Council of the Rhodesia Scientific Association voted the sum of £25 for the erection of a memorial to the late C. F. M. Swynnerton. Members of the Association were invited to send in sketch designs and suggestions and the design submitted by R. G. B. Wilson was finally accepted as being the most suitable. Wilson prepared the working drawings and construction of the sandstone memorial was completed at the end of 1940 by masons from the Mount Selinda Mission. A suitably inscribed bronze plaque appears in a conspicuous position on the memorial.

The memorial still exists today in the heart of the magnificent forest where Massy Swynnerton spent so much of his time between 1900 and 1919 and which he loved so devotedly.



*Sketch of Swynnerton Memorial*

"EAST AFRICA'S"

## WHO'S WHO

160.—Mr. Charles Francis Massy Swynnerton, F.L.S., F.E.S.





## Extract from the History of The Church and Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury, London.

*Sir John Swinarton* came from an old Staffordshire stock of ancient lineage, but the earliest mention to be found in the parish books is the entry in the Register:-

"Gregory Swynarton baptised 1563."

and the next entry where the name occurs :-

"John Swynarton Junr. married Tomasyn Buckfold 1568."

After this last date we find two of the same name, father and son, mentioned at various times, and both in different ways becoming men of renown.

John Swinarton Senr., became Master of the Merchant Taylors' Company and it was during his year of office that King James I and his Queen were entertained by that Company to a banquet on a most lavish scale. A special poem was composed by Ben Jonson and special music was written by Dr. John Bull for this occasion. Full particulars are given in *"Memorials of the Merchant Taylors' Company"* by Clode. John Swinarton, Senr's, house in Aldermanbury, so far as can be ascertained, stood near to what is now George Avenue. He was living there in the year 1591. He died in 1608, and there is the following entry amongst the burials for that year:-

"Swynerton Mr. John the father of Sir John Swynerton Kt. and Alderman of London".

That he was much esteemed by the members of his Guild is proved by the elaborate preparations for his funeral made and carried out by the Merchant Taylors' Company, as recorded by Clode in his *"Memorials"*.

John Swynarton, Junr., son of the above, had already risen to eminence before his father's death, hence there has been some confusion in recording their deeds. He was elected Alderman and Sheriff in 1602,

was Knighted in 1603, and it was in his capacity as Alderman and Sheriff that he took the place of his colleague (Pemberton), "and lead out his fellow citizens on horseback to Stamford Hill, there to receive King James on his arrival in London." On his accession to office as Lord Mayor, in 1612, a grand pageant was arranged under the joint management of John Heminges and Thomas Dekker, the poet.

Sir John Swynarton's name appears among those who founded the East India Company. He was also one of those London citizens who founded the Irish Society, and, as Lord Mayor, he presided at the opening of the New River in 1613. He died in the year 1616, and was buried beside his father in the vault which he had purchased in the south east corner of the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury.

## THE DYER FAMILY

From the Swinarton family descended the Dyer family. One William Dyer, born in 1621, married, in 1650, Tomasyn, the only daughter and heiress of Thomas Swinarton, of Stanway Hall, Essex (who was third son and eventually heir of Alderman Sir John Swinarton, Lord Mayor of the City of London, and who succeeded to his estates, including his house property in Aldermanbury).

After the fire of London in 1666, these houses were rebuilt and formed what has been known since as Dyer's Court. The above mentioned William Dyer, who was a barrister-at-law, was created a Baronet in the year 1678, and from him is descended Sir John Swinnerton Dyer, the present holder of the Baronetcy. The two names Swinarton and Dyer are frequently mentioned in the parish books, and their names appear in the Registers, their family burial place being the vault in the chancel. Dyer's Court has since been demolished and incorporated with what is now Messrs. Bradbury, Greatorex & Co.'s Warehouse, 5/11, Aldermanbury.

## Dyer's Court and Swynnerton's Yard

A street plan published in 1677 shows that the thoroughfare of Aldermanbury ran from London Wall to Ladd Lane, and was one of the



main streets in the City of London. St. Mary's church is on the corner of Love Lane and immediately opposite Love Lane, between Nos. 14 and 15 is situated "Swynnerton's Yard", and a plot of land marked "Sir John Swynnerton". At the rear of building 8 to 12, is Dyer's Court and The Guildhall, which is still in existence on the same site in 1993, is about 100 metres to the rear. The entrance to Dyer's Court was at No. 11, Aldermanbury and may be said to have been erected on historic ground, for on the east, part of it would appear to occupy the site upon which formerly stood the "bury" or court house of the Ealdorman from the 12th to the beginning of the 15th century, when it was abandoned by the Mayor and Aldermen for their enlarged or newly erected Guildhall, which was begun in 1411.

At this time there was a mansion contiguous to the site which was in the possession of Sir William Estfield who was Lord Mayor of London in 1429 and again in 1437. In the middle of the 15th century, Aldermanbury was one of the few districts possessing a conduit for the supply of water to the inhabitants. This was financed by this public-spirited gentleman who was a great benefactor to the church and parish alike. It is said that "The fayre conduit was connected with the pipes conveying sweet water from Tyburn brook, and stood in the centre of the street at its widest part, the junction of Aldermanbury and Love Lane, almost opposite the entrance to Eastfield's mansion".

During the next 150 years this mansion was the residence of several London merchants and eventually came into the possession of Sir John Swynnerton who was Lord Mayor in 1612-13. Sir John Swynnerton was farmer of the impost on wines, an office from which he acquired considerable profits. (this means that he had the franchise to supply wines to the King's household and the city establishments). He was one of the founders of the East India Company, which became one of the most prosperous businesses of the time. During his mayoralty a pageant was performed at the opening of the New River; or, as it was called, "The running streame from Amwell Head into the cisterne neere Islington." The pageant was arranged under the joint management of John Heminge and Thomas Dekker, the poet. On the death of Sir John Swynnerton in December 1616, he was succeeded by his third son Thomas, then 16 years of age. The property he inherited consisted of

several houses in Aldermanbury, including the house his father had occupied. Thomas Swynnerton married Joanna Symonds, and, in 1650, their daughter and heiress, Thomasine Swynnerton, married William Dyer (Sheriff of Essex, 1677-8), bringing him a fortune of £30,000, as well as the Aldermanbury mansion and other houses.

The mansion, which measured 70 feet east to west and 55 feet north to south, was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, and rebuilt. Upon the sites of the houses adjoining the mansion on the south, and the parcel of land upon which stood the old chapel, Dyer erected, in 1668-9, a tolerably large square, consisting of six imposing houses, with an open entrance for coaches and carriages leading from Aldermanbury, which houses were subsequently occupied by persons of some standing.

William Dyer, who was created a Baronet in 1678, died in 1681. He was succeeded by his son, Sir John Swynnerton Dyer, and the family may have held the property during the early years of the following century, for we find one Sir John Swynnerton Dyer, shooting himself in a fit of insanity, and receiving burial in Aldermanbury in 1801.

Fifteen or sixteen houses which, in the nineteenth century stood on ground owned by Sir John Swynnerton, were subsequently pulled down and new premises erected. About 1824, they were converted into warehouse premises by Messrs. Bradbury Greatorex and Company, and, in 1845, they were, with other properties, destroyed by fire to the value of a quarter of a million pounds..



*The Armorial Bearings of Sir John Swynnerton*



## FAMILY NOTES

Congratulations to Major Tim and Mrs Paula Barrett on the birth of their son Charles Edward Swinnerton Barrett on St. George's Day, 1993. To celebrate they have moved house! Their new address is [redacted]

We welcome as new members Mr Joseph William Evanson of [redacted] and Mrs Carol Ann Pinker of [redacted] Mr Evanson and Mrs Pinker are brother and sister and are great-grand-children of Mary Ann Swinnerton who married Alfred Joynson. Mary Ann was the daughter of William Swinnerton and Hannah Rowley of the Betley Branch and as such, they have many cousins in the society including Mrs Hazel Jones, Dr Lelia Morey, the Reverend Brian Swynnerton, Alec Swinnerton, Mrs Valerie Dall and Donovan Swinnerton.

Curiously, although we had what we thought was a very full record of William and Hannah's family, we did not previously know of Mary Ann. She was, in fact, the eldest child, not Stephen as we had previously thought, and was born on the 8th of July 1854 at Madeley, Staffordshire.

Mr Evanson has proved to be a particularly valuable addition to the society as he is retired and has a computer! He responded to my appeal for help and has already done a lot of data entry for me which all helps me to sort out your families.

I get many letters such as Mr Evanson's original enquiry saying that the writer is descended from a Swinnerton and can I help them. In his case it was easy because William and Hannah are a well documented couple but I have acquired so much information about the family over the years that I can no longer hold it all in my head (the efficiency of my memory seems to decrease as my age increases!) and it can mean searching for several hours through our records for a particular name and, at the end, we may not have it as in the case of Mary Ann. Some of you will remember we did start a card index and many of you helped with it but it proved impossible to keep pace with the records I acquired.

The obvious answer is a master index to all Swinnertons on a computer and this is what I am now setting up. More about this in the next issue of the Journal.

## SWINNERTON SOCIETY PRODUCTIONS

**THE SOCIETY TIE.** Made in Woven Jacquard with a single Swinnerton Society Cross and Horseshoe badge. Available in Navy Blue, Maroon and Grey. Price £4.50 plus .50p postage. Set of 3 - one of each colour £12.50 plus .50p postage.

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Both the above are obtainable from the Secretary, David Brock (address inside front cover)

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE FAMILY OF SWYNNERTON.** A facimile copy of the original history of the family published in 1886 by the William Salt Archaeological Society, Stafford. Over 200 pages of the family history with trees of various branches of the family. £12 plus .50p postage. Every Swinnerton family should have a copy. Obtainable from Iain Swinnerton (address inside front cover).

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A general synopsis of the history of the village of Swynnerton and the original family who lived there. Plus - the history of one of the Warwickshire branches of the family and an article on the Family Heraldry by Iain Swinnerton. Researched and produced by our Chairman, Joe Swinnerton. The first part of the book can form the basis of the history of any branch of the family. Price £7.00 incl. postage.

**FIRE & FURY OVER ENGLAND - THE SECOND WORLD WAR - TEN LOST MONTHS.** The diary of our Chairman, Joe Swinnerton, of his service in the army during the Second World War. 120 pages with many illustrations. a very good "read". Price £7.00 incl. postage.

The above three books obtainable from J. E. Swinnerton, [redacted]  
*Prices quoted apply to orders from the UK. Overseas members please send a Sterling cheque or International Money Order in Sterling.*