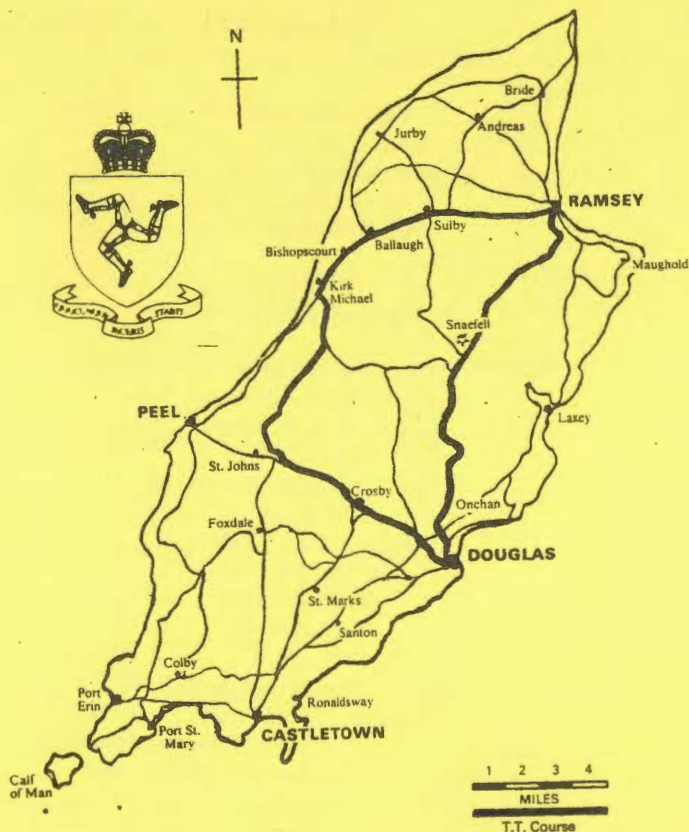


SWINNERTON

Family History



THE ISLE OF MAN



THE JOURNAL OF THE SWINNERTON SOCIETY

VOLUME 9 No.9

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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 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. 518184.

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SWINNERTON FAMILY HISTORY

Volume 9 No.9

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OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Margery Augusta Angelo Thomas (née Swynnerton) was born in Simla, the summer capital of British India, on the 15th of August 1894. Her father, Frederick Swynnerton, was a professional artist who had come to India to make his fortune painting rajahs. Her uncle, Joseph Swynnerton was a well-known sculptor of his day and the husband of Annie Swynnerton, the first woman ever to be elected an associate of the Royal Academy. Her mother, Louise Angelo, came from a famous military family in India and was herself an accomplished artist.

Mrs Thomas decided at an early age that she wanted to be a nurse. As she was too young to enter a training hospital, she worked for a time in a cottage hospital and then a nursing home in Mussoorie, the Indian hill station. In April 1916 she joined the Indian Army as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) and saw active service in India and Mesopotamia. She left the Indian Army in April 1919 when her father died and her family moved to England. She then decided to train properly as a nurse and spent the next three years at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. This was followed by 3 years at King Edward VII Hospital in Windsor.

In 1926 Mrs Thomas was accepted into the Colonial Nursing Service and was posted to the Gold Coast (the present-day Ghana) where she was to meet her future husband, Hugh Thomas, whom she married in December 1929. Following the birth of her son (also Hugh) she alternated between England and the Gold Coast because in those days West Africa was considered too dangerous a place for small children. The war years found her stuck in England, rather against her will, working part-time as a nurse with the De Havilland aircraft factory at Welwyn Garden City, where Mosquito bombers were made.

After the war, Mrs Thomas resumed commuting between England and the Gold Coast, on one occasion travelling overland across the Sahara Desert by bus. When her husband finally retired in 1959, she returned permanently to England. On his death the following year, she moved to Kensington where she has lived ever since.

She is the mother of the historian Hugh Thomas, best known for his books "The Spanish Civil War" and "An Unfinished History of the World". He was made Baron Thomas of Swynnerton in 1981.

IN SEARCH OF THE PRESIDENT'S GRANDFATHER!

A good few years ago, our former member Annabel Swinnerton, who was at the time living on the Isle of Man with her parents, sent me a copy of the 1977/8 Winter issue of *The Manxman*. In it was an article by Peter Kelly, with whom I had corresponded, entitled "A Master Carver".

I found the article quite fascinating; it revealed much about Charles Swinnerton that I had not previously known and inspired me to visit the island and see for myself all the places mentioned. It has taken me many years to achieve that ambition but, at last, I have done it. From the 2nd to the 4th of September, I attended the half-yearly conference of the Federation of Family History Societies, of which our society is a member. It was held in the Isle of Man and hosted by the Isle of Man Family History Society. The actual venue was King William's College, Castletown, the Island's public school. It proved to be a most enjoyable weekend, conferences do vary enormously but this one was extremely friendly and we were given a very warm welcome indeed. It was smaller than usual because of the distance, but still some 75 delegates from the mainland (or that other island off the coast as the Manx prefer to call it) made the effort and either flew into Douglas or travelled over on the ferry. The food was, without doubt, the best I have ever had at a conference and the wine was both generous and excellent. As I said when speaking after dinner, it was never like that at my school! Some 20 of us seized the opportunity to stay on for a few days after the conference to explore the island and how glad we are now that we did..

During the conference I discovered a great deal about the Island and the Manx people which I had not previously known. I did know that it is a Crown Dependency with its own parliament, The Tynwald, which is older than our own, but I did not know that it had its own National Anthem: that Manx, its national language, is still spoken and that the Queen's correct title there is the Lord of Mann. I had the pleasure of talking to Sir Charles Kerruish, President of the Tynwald and a former speaker of the House of Keys (the equivalent to our House of Commons) and I learned many, very interesting facts about the island's history.

Speaking at the Banquet after dinner, I was able to say that I was speaking in the very building that had been the reason for the first

Swinberton to come to the island. A stonemason, Charles Swinberton came to work at dressing the stone of which the college was built between 1830 and 1833.

He met, fell in love with, and married a Manx girl, Mary Collister, and they had a family of 9 children of whom 2 died in infancy but the youngest of those surviving was our new President's father who was born at Douglas in 1858. I was also able to say that it had only taken me 4¼ hours to get there on the ferry whereas it had taken Charles 2 weeks by sailing ship!

After the conference, we moved into Douglas as this was more central for touring although nowhere in the island is more than about 30 minutes drive. However, before I tell you of my peregrinations, let me quote from Mr Kelly's article which was the inspiration for my visit.

"In June 1977, a Victorian Exhibition was held at Balcony House, Castletown, and featured the work of three Manx Artists of international repute: Knox, Nicholson and Swinberton. Joseph Swinberton was a legend in his own time, a self-taught sculptor, but his fame and following had virtually disappeared until this exhibition was staged. His brothers also succeeded in their chosen careers, professions or callings, but it is their father, Charles Swinberton, who deserves a lot more credit for the talents he possessed".

Mr Kelly then goes on to give details of Charles's birth, ancestry and career which are much the same as those in the biography of him I published in the September 1990 (Volume 8, No.3) issue of this journal. He describes Charles as 'a man short of stature and spare of body' which is typical of the men of Staffordshire of the period. He does say that Charles and Mary were married in St. Mary's, Castletown, whereas his son Charles (my predecessor as family historian) in his notes, says it was at Mallev where Mary had been baptised.

In addition to describing all the more famous pieces of carving which we know about, Mr Kelly gives us the additional information that:-

"... in 1845 he prepared a plan for the layout of Derby Square and Derby Road, together with designing the recommended elevations for the two areas to which developers of the individual plots had to adhere."

And again:-

"By the time of the 1851 Census he had moved to a house at the junction of Fort Street and St. Barnabas Square. By then he ran two yards, one opposite his house and the other in Stanley Mount, off Prospect Hill, employing two

other stone cutters and five labourers. His fourth son, Joseph, joined him as an apprentice towards the end of 1862 and spent six years learning from his father's skills. His last work before embarking on his academic career at Edinburgh and Rome was the plaque over the Widow's House in Mucklesgate.

..... His (Charles's) Last Judgement scene on a headstone in St. George's graveyard shows in great detail the construction of contemporary altar tombs. The engraving on that headstone contains inscriptions in English, Manx, Latin and Greek. His obelisk in Kirk Maughold churchyard not only has a realistic rope carving but also a carving of the deceased's own fishing smack. In complete contrast was the stern end of a Royal Navy Ship on a headstone in Braddan Cemetery. The design included the combination of a sail hanging from an anchor, but unfortunately the inscription is now obliterated by the effects of time."

With all that information to hand, is it any wonder I was so keen to go and explore? However, I was also keen to see the ordinary attractions of the island. I could see it was going to require a careful balancing act to do both and also spend time with my friends. They were mostly genealogists, but obviously would not have the same interest in dragging around graveyards to see Swinberton items that I had.

So, to start, on the Sunday afternoon, those of us who were free went to visit Rushen Castle in Castletown. This is one of several sections of the Manx Museum scattered around the island which, in total, won the 'Museum of the Year Award' last year. The castle had been the headquarters of the island for centuries, as Castletown was then the capital and was the main centre of administration. In its latter days, it was even the island's prison. It was an excellent exhibition of Manx history including some very fine heraldry of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby who were Kings of Mann and the Isles, and rulers of the island for most of the period from 1405 to 1736.

On Monday, we rode the open 'toast-rack' electric train to Laxey and then transferred to a closed electric railcar for the ascent to the summit of Snaefell. From there we could see Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Cumberland. A very slow crawl up but we came down considerably more quickly. We stopped off at Laxey on the way back for lunch and to see the famous 'Laxey Wheel', one of the largest water wheels ever built.

After lunch we rode back to Douglas on the train, picked up the car and started my hunt for Charles using the information given by Mr Kelly in his article in *The Manxman*.

First a visit to Onchan Churchyard where Charles and his wife are buried. Although we found the classical urn, which he had carved, on the top of Captain Bank's tomb, which was the first thing that really brought him to the islander's notice as being more than just an ordinary stonemason, we were unable to find his gravestone. Back to Douglas to see St. Thomas's Church where Charles had carved the reredos and St. Mathew's on the quayside to see the memorial window, erected by another of his sons, the Reverend Charles Swynnerton. Sadly, however, as is so prevalent today because of vandalism and theft, both were locked so we were unable to see inside either. We did see the school attached to St. Thomas's which he designed.

From there we drove to Braddan Kirk Churchyard to find some more of Charles's work. We found the obelisk to Captain Quayle, the first captain of the Isle of Man Steam Packet which Charles had carved and on the ledge of which he had carved a small representation of the paddle steamer. This was very high up, and, knowing my tendency for mishaps, required some very careful balancing, but I did manage to get a photograph of it.

Inside the little church we found the rare wall font mentioned but we could not find the other tombstone with the representation of the Royal Navy ship. We later found that we were in the wrong place and that it was in Braddan Cemetery not the churchyard.

Next morning we tried to find the Widow's House in Mucklesgate mentioned in the article which had the carving by his son Joseph over the door, but could not find it on the map. It was suggested, therefore, that I went to the Tourist Information Office for help and they promptly telephoned Mr Kelly! I was delighted to be able to speak to him on the telephone, we had last communicated by correspondence nearly 20 years ago! He said that Mucklesgate had been demolished but that the carving was in the museum and immediately arranged for us to go and see it. He also kindly arranged to meet me later to show me the gravestone we could not find.

Arriving at the museum, on the hill above Douglas, we were met by a member of the staff, Mr Geoffrey Mitchell, who took us down into

one of the basement storerooms. He lead us to what at first appeared to be just a large pile of junk, but having removed some old tools, a full size door and a tarpaulin from the pile, there it was - a huge carved stone panel of an angel holding a scroll on which were the details of the Widows' Charity. Marvellous. We were allowed to climb all over it to take photographs which I hope will reproduce sufficiently well for you to see it in the photographic record of the journey which I hope to display at our next Gathering. The curious thing is that it was engraved G. Swinnerton on the plinth.

All that was thirsty work so we adjourned upstairs to the Bay Tree Restaurant for coffee. This I described in the December 1993 issue of this journal and it was a great thrill to sit there surrounded by all these sculptures by Charles's son, Joseph. Peter Kelly later told me that one of the other sculptures, which I illustrate here and which it describes in the catalogue as unidentified, is also by Joseph Swynnerton.

Back to Onchan to keep my appointment with Mr Kelly who very kindly took time out from his work to walk across to the churchyard with us to show us the gravestone we had been unable to find. At first he could not find it either, but then discovered it completely covered with ivy, which at least had preserved it, as it was in very good condition. He explained that Charles was particularly renowned for the smallness and neatness of the lettering he carved. He also took us to the library and showed us the local collection with a reference to another Swinnerton family on the island, of whom more anon. Mr Kelly is obviously an authority on the history of the island and writes a regular column for the newspaper. We were very lucky that he

became so interested in our family all those years ago and grateful to him for documenting Charles's life so comprehensively. He has also collected ephemera about the family including a piece of one of



Charles's stone reredoses and a World War I plaque for Joseph William Swinnerton of the other family.

Our next stop was Kirk Maughold to see the famous obelisk to Captain Vaux on which Charles had carved the incredibly lifelike rope and anchor. There was also a tremendous collection of Celtic Crosses here in which he had been very interested but whether any were those he had rescued, I cannot say.

Next to Ramsey to see the old Grammar School where his son, Charles, was headmaster before he joined the army as a Chaplain and went off to Ceylon and India. It is now a youth club and was being redecorated so I was able to go inside and have a look around. Basically, it was just one large room and it was not difficult to imagine a rather stern clergyman sitting there keeping order amongst the unruly boys. We failed to find St. Olave's, Lazayre where Charles was curate, the old church had been rebuilt after he left and the list of clergy in the 'new' church made no mention of him.

Finally, we drove over to Peel to see the cathedral, a relatively undistinguished building which replaced the old cathedral in the castle, the ruins of which can still be seen. By now, for the only time during our visit, the weather had deteriorated so we didn't stay long but drove back down the island to see the Tynwald, the famous open-air meeting place of the Manx Parliament of old, and where they still hold an official opening ceremony each year. A most impressive setting with a long ceremonial avenue leading directly to the church. There was also an excellent exhibition of the history of parliament in the church hall next door.

On the way home, we stopped at an excellent craft centre for a much needed cup of tea only to bump into the other half of the party who were staying at Port Erin.

That evening I abandoned the rest of the party and returned to Laxey to visit our member Frank Swinnerton and his wife Helen - the parents of Annabel who had started it all off. I had not seen them since our Domesday Gathering in 1986 so we had a lot of catching up to do. I was dined right royally, and we had a splendid evening bringing each other up to date with all the family news and putting the world to rights generally!

During my absence on Tuesday evening, an appointment had been very kindly made for me to see the stained glass memorial window next morning, immediately after morning service. On Wednesday, then, our party's last day, we started off by going to St. Matthew's where we met the Vicar, the Reverend Whitworth, who was most interested in my pilgrimage and allowed us to photograph the window.

A quick dash to the station and I was just in time to join two of our group on the steam train across the island to Port Erin. A lovely ride with the countryside looking absolutely delightful in the bright sunshine. At the other end we met the others for coffee - they had driven down in the cars. A visit to the little railway museum and then we were off again to find the house that Charles built for himself to retire to, at Gansey Beach. This was called 'The Studio' and was so distinctive that it was very easy to find. He had carved the Swinnerton of Whitmore Coat of Arms over the door and, as the door was open so obviously someone was at home, I rang the bell, told my story and asked if I could photograph it. The owner, Mr Collier, promptly invited us in and showed us around. The original first-floor studio is now the sitting room and has the most wonderful views over the bay. It was a truly lovely house, full of character and I could retire there very happily!

Then on to Mallew to see the church in which Charles and Mary married, a very typical Manx church - low and whitewashed, very plain interior with original box pews and, like most Manx churches we saw, it had a huge graveyard.

Castletown was very near so we potted into there and had a browse around, including a visit to the lovely little church of St. Mary on the Harbour, converted from an old warehouse. Out next to the Calf of Man, a bird sanctuary off the point, to join some of the others for a cream tea and then back into Port Erin for a look around and to join the other half of the stay-behind party for dinner.

Time, unfortunately, did not allow of a visit to the north of the island or to find some of the rest of Charles's work such as the Last Judgment scene on the headstone in St. George's. That will have to wait for another visit which I do hope to make as I, like all the rest of the party, quite fell in love with the island.



Smiling at a hundred: Margery Thomas Picture: ALEX LENTATI

Proud century for daughter of Bart's

by GERAINT SMITH

IT WAS three summers before the end of the 19th century and the Indian Colonial Government had, as usual, moved from the heat of the plains to the summer capital of Simla. There was a fancy dress ball in the residence of the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and as the orchestra played, he was dancing with a little girl called Margery dressed as a mermaid on his shoulders.

This week, Margery Thomas, now the mother of the historian Lord Thomas of Swynnerton, celebrated her 100th birthday in the Great Hall at St Bartholomew's Hospital, with nearly 100 relatives and friends and recalled the glittering days of the Raj.

She had been born into a society family in Simla, the hill capital of the Raj. Her mother was from one of the longest-established English families in India, her father a portrait painter.

"I am a very ordinary woman," she says. "I have never done anything public or special." But as a child she lived among the elite of British India, going to their parties, and sharing their way of life with the servants, the ayahs or native nannies for the children, the tradesmen who materialised to attend to such things as one's clothes.

She remembers Queen Victoria's death in 1901 quite clearly, and the impact it had. Whites and Indians alike were in tears, she recalls. "Growing up in India was very nice," she says. Her



Man with a message: American President Bill Clinton sent Margery Thomas a letter to congratulate her on reaching her 100th birthday

childhood was one of those that encouraged complete self-confidence, so on the outbreak of the First World War, she had no doubts about joining to serve as a nurse, despite a lack of training, nor, when she was sent, about serving in Mesopotamia.

"There was a frightful shortage of nurses there," she says. "Well, there was a shortage of everything. I remember one wounded man asking for a blanket, and I couldn't give him one because there weren't any. They were very rough days indeed."

After the war she worked at St Bart's. "We lived in the houses that weren't good enough for the Bluecoat boys, and we weren't allowed to talk to the students," she says. "Some used to get

round it and visit, and they used to squeeze our hands under the table occasionally, but no conversation was allowed."

"The Queen Mary held a ball and that was the end of that. She would have been horrified if we hadn't spoken to them there, and afterwards, well, we could hardly stop talking to them then, could we?"

An attack of itchy feet, though, sent her to the Gold Coast, where she met her husband and to and from which she shuttled after her son's birth.

"Is it her secret that a cousin of hers was the strongest man in the Indian army?" asked Lord Thomas of the guests. "Or am I being obtuse in not recognising that the secret of survival is just one more lesson learned at Bart's in the golden days of this great hospital where we are so pleased and proud to be today, even if philistine bureaucrats menace its, until recently taken-for-granted, immortality?"

Apart from the cake and the party, and a saxophone quartet from the Royal Staffordshire Regiment, she had a special surprise: a letter signed by Bill Clinton, postmarked The White House: "Hillary and I send our warmest congratulations to you on this special day," it said. "We wish you every happiness as you celebrate this wonderful milestone."

Said Mrs Thomas, confidentially: "One of my cousins is an American Congressman. They are a little bit doty, you know."

CHARLES SWINNERTON'S FAMILY.

CHARLES SWINNERTON = Mary Callister or Collister
 b.19 Oct 1813 Liverpool 30 Aug 1834, Mallev, IOM
 Stonemason (Known in the family as
 Moved to live in the IOM 'The short Manx Woman')
 about 1830 to work on King Teacher later Staymaker
 William's College, Douglas Died 1st January 1874
 Died 22 April 1907 aged 94 Buried at Onchan.
 Buried at Onchan.

They had 9 children:-

1. Hannah baptised 1835, Castletown. Died in infancy
2. Catherine born 1837, Douglas
3. MARK born 1840, Douglas. Emigrated to America.
4. CHARLES born 1843, Douglas. Headmaster of Ramsey Grammar School Later Chaplain in the Indian Army. First historian of the Swinnerton family. Later spelled his name Swynnerton
5. ROBERT baptised 1845, Douglas. Clockmaker & Jeweller. In business in Douglas, then emigrated to America.
6. JOSEPH WILLIAM born 1848, Douglas. Sculptor. Later also changed spelling to Swynnerton.
7. GODFREY LLOYD baptised 1858, Douglas. Merchant Navy Captain.
8. FREDERICK born 1858, Douglas. Portrait painter. Went to live in India. Later changed spelling to Swynnerton. Father of our President.
9. Esther died in infancy.

MISCELLANEOUS REFERENCES TO THE SWINNERTON FAMILY IN THE ISLE OF MAN

1. IN THE MANX NOTEBOOK

1885. Letter read by Mr F.Swinnerton on 'Flints found at Port St Mary, 1884'
1886. Reference to an unfinished bronze of Mrs H.Bashington by J.W.Swinnerton which was exhibited in Manchester.
 Reference to an oil painting by Frederick Swinnerton entitled 'A Street Scene in Segui, Italy' exhibited in the Simla Exhibition 1886
 p.85 and facing. Two annotations on drawings by FS.
 " *in one of the tumuli on the mill walls FS."
 "Kjokken A. FS."
 p.91 Notes & Queries
- 1906 Poem by Frederick Swynnerton (illustrated) -
 'The Legend of Peel Castle or The Moddy Dhu'

2. IN THE MANX MUSEUM LIBRARY

Photo of Joseph Swinnerton and details of his education and training.

3. IN BOOKLET ON THE OLD KIRK, BRADDAN

Mention of Charles Swinnerton re-setting the font for which he was paid £1.6.0d. 1854.

4. ON THE WAR MEMORIAL AT DOUGLAS

Private 33766 Frederick William Swinnerton
 13th. Battalion Cheshire Regiment.
 Enlisted at Douglas, IOM.
 Born Dewsbury, Yorks.
 Parents given as Joseph & Mary
 Swinnerton of Falcon's Nest Hotel,
 Port Erin.
 Said to be a native of Crosley, IOM.
 Killed in Action 7 June 1917 aged 19. No known grave.

ANOTHER ISLE OF MAN FAMILY

I said earlier that there was another Swinnerton family on the Isle of Man of whom I only had sketchy details. They centre mainly around Private Frederick William Swinnerton who, as you will see on page 162, was killed in action in 1917 and is commemorated on the War Memorial on the promenade at Douglas. He was only 19 when he was killed so he was obviously not a pre-war regular soldier but had just volunteered or been conscripted, it is not possible now to tell which. Certainly he was in the 13th Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment which was a wartime unit, the Isle of Man had only a Territorial Regiment which was an Artillery Unit.

Over 20 years ago, in 1973, I had some correspondence with a Miss F.M. Swinnerton of Port Erin, Isle of Man. Mrs Thomas had asked me to send her a copy of *Swynnerton & the Swinnertons* which I had just published for the Reverend Brian Swinnerton. I sent her a family questionnaire to fill in as well, but all she said in her reply was that "I have only one sister and myself left of our family and she is 86 and I am 80. Our only brother was killed in France in 1916 (sic) when he was 19". She also mentioned that she had sent the book on to her sister, Mrs Thompson, in Nottingham. She had sent it on to her youngest son, who had visited Swynnerton Church when he and his wife were motoring in Staffordshire. They had been very complimentary about the church and said how beautifully it was kept. Mr Thompson was assistant-secretary of the Society of Antiquaries.

Later that year, Mr Thompson himself wrote to me having completed a questionnaire he had received from the Reverend Brian Swinnerton who, he said, had written to him on another matter. The answers he gave to the questionnaire were most interesting. He said his mother was Victoria Mary Swinnerton, born in Douglas on the 8th February, 1887, and that she was married there, on the 5th October 1912, at Kirk Marowe (sic) to John Augustus Thompson, his father. He said that his grandfather was Joseph Swinnerton, who was born in the Isle of Man in 1855, and who had married Mary Hannah Bowling at Douglas, on the 9th June 1885.

He also said that his great-grandfather was a Banker from Douglas named John Swinnerton. However, all this did not add up with

the fact that Frederick William is quite clearly listed in army records as having been born in Dewsbury.

Further confusion was caused when, in a letter to someone called 'Jo', Miss F.M. (Frances May) Swinnerton says that she had lived on the island since she was four years old. As she was 80 at the time this means that she was born about 1893 and came to the Isle of Man in about 1901. A check of the Indexes to Births in the General Register Office, then at Somerset House in London, confirmed that her birth was indeed registered in England - in the Dewsbury Registration District of Yorkshire in the December Quarter of 1893. The index also confirmed that her brother, as we have seen, was registered as having been born in the Tadcaster Registration of Yorkshire in the March Quarter of 1898. So it looks as though the family left the island between 1887 and 1893.

She also says "The only Swynnerton I ever knew was the Rev. Charles Swynnerton: he stayed with us for a while on his retirement from Bengal when I was a small girl and we called him Cousin Charles. I even remember him taking me for walks and telling me stories, & he taught my mother to make very hot curries, which I have loved ever since".

There the matter rested, as I did not seem to be able to make any more progress, and it was put aside until I could go over to visit the island myself.

Now, of course, it has all started up again, and I have made the contacts which will allow us to have some searches made on the island which I did not have before.

The interesting thing is that the Reverend Charles Swynnerton, in the chapter he contributed to the history of the family in Volume VII of 'Collections for a History of Staffordshire', says that his father Charles, the original emigrant to the Isle of Man, had 4 brothers. We have, in fact, discovered a fifth but have only accounted for descendants of 3 of them. Of John, who Charles says was born in Newcastle in 1804, he only says that he died in Liverpool *leaving issue* and the same of Joseph who was born in London in 1802.

Were either of these the ancestor of this other Swinnerton family on the island and, if so, why were they in Yorkshire? Was this why they called him 'Cousin Charles'? Time will tell.

In another letter to the same 'Jo', Miss Swinnerton gave a most interesting account of her career.

"During the first world war I worked as a bank clerk: could not join any of the Services as I can only see with one eye & as my only brother was in the army (he was killed when he was nineteen) I had to stay at home and look after mother: my father died just after the war & to make a home for my mother, I got the post of Manageress at the Falcons Nest Hotel in Port Erin in 1924 & there I stayed until I retired at 62 & was lucky enough to be able to rent this house. During the second world war Port Erin was turned into a camp for internees with barbed wire all round & I had ninety women at the Falcon!!! German, Austrian, Italian & all sorts: it is really surprising what one can do if one has to. Every hotel and boarding house in Port Erin was full of women and there was a Commandant from Scotland Yard in charge of the lot, & we could go to him if in trouble, but once I'd got things organised I was alright."

There is obviously a lot of work to be done on this family but it could provide the answer to quite a few loose ends that have puzzled me for years. I hope to have the next saga ready for the December Journal.

Manx work in London church

READING in the *Isle of Man Examiner* about the wedding of Camilla Harper and sculptor Charles Hadcock, historian Peter Kelly thought it a coincidence that a Manx sculptor had a fine example of his work in Farm Street Church, London, where the wedding took place last month.

Half-way down the aisle on the left stands a statue of St Frances of Rome. It was carved by Joseph Swynnerton in Rome in 1908, imprinted on the base.

Joseph was born in Douglas and his father Charles carved some of the best headstones in the Isle of Man. Charles spelled his surname

with an 'i' rather than 'y'.

Charles had first come to the Island to work as a stone-cutter at King William's College, which was then being completed.

He set up in business on his own account after marrying a girl from Malew. His sons Joseph and Frederick, later reverting to the old spelling of Swynnerton, lived for a time at the family home in Fort Street, then Joseph moved to Italy for health reasons. But he stayed at The Studio, Gansey, from time to time, which his father built later.

It was Swynnerton who carved the famous 'Mona' statue now reclining in the Bay Room restaurant at the Manx Museum.

From The Isle of Man Examiner - 22nd March 1994

SWINNERTON MEMORIALS - The Rev. Brian Swynnerton

A record or catalogue of the family memorials is something that I wish I'd kept over the years. I have come across them in the most unexpected places. However, I hope, occasionally, the editor might find room in the journal for notes about them so that a record will develop. If each family member sent in details of just one memorial, giving its location, type of structure and inscription, it will rapidly build up into a wonderful collection of information about the family.

I would like to start off with the memorial to Samuel Swinnerton, the surgeon of Betley. I know that many church councils plan to (or already have) removed memorials. Others quickly get hidden by grass, ivy etc. The grave of my parents and memorial stone frequently has a dustbin and all the overflow of graveyard rubbish placed on it. Victorian and earlier memorials are constantly under threat nowadays from planners and vandals!

However, I have always wished I knew more about Dr Sam and Sue, his wife. He achieved such a great deal in his brief life and helped so many folk. He established the first hospital in Market Drayton and after his untimely death, his wife dedicated herself to the task of getting wealthy and influential people to support her scheme to establish a cottage hospital.

Today, the Market Drayton Cottage Hospital has been closed after a century of invaluable service to the community. Closed, quite unnecessarily too, by distant bureaucrats who have ignored all the sacrifices made by local people to establish and maintain it.

Samuel bought two houses in 1840 to create a small convalescent home for his post-operative patients. He trained staff and had a very extensive practice. He had been appointed the first surgeon for the Railway Company at the new model town of Crewe in Cheshire from 1837.

The inscription on his tomb is almost obliterated now and yet I feel it is worth preserving. I do hope we might hear about other memorials to "Swinns" across the world especially in the USA, Canada, India and 'down-under'.



SWINNERTON MEMORIALS

Following on Brian Swynnerton's article, I can tell you that we do have quite a large collection of inscriptions from Swinnerton gravestones. These are technically called Monumental Inscriptions (MIs) and in quite a few cases we have photographs to accompany them. The problem there is that nobody takes black and white pictures any more and colour photographs are hard to reproduce. A sketch like Brian's is perfectly acceptable and very valuable.

There has been a nation-wide project going on since 1975 to record all the inscriptions on headstones throughout the country. This was launched by the Federation of Family History Societies and is being carried out by all its member societies, who at various times have been helped by other organisations such as the Manpower Services Commission, Scouts and Guides etc. A few years ago, the WI had a national competition for the best recorded graveyard, they included the flora and wildlife as well and I was asked to judge several of the county competitions. The project was originally launched as a five-year plan but it is still going, it is a truly marathon task.

There is also the National Index of War Memorials organised by the Imperial War Museum and in which, again, the Federation and its member societies are playing their part alongside the Royal British Legion and the Western Front Association amongst others. This includes all those in schools, libraries, factories and public buildings as well as the more usual town and village memorials.

Please do send me details of any you know of (and, yes, colour photos are fine for our archives) - here are a couple to start off with.

ISLEHAM, Cambridgeshire.

A Brass to ELLEN SWYNERTON, daughter and heiress of Sir John Mallory 1451.

BANGOR CATHEDRAL, Caernarvonshire

GEORGE SWINNERTON/Bookbinder/and for several years Verger/of this Cathedral./Died 28 March 1841./Aged 41 years.

FAMILY NOTES

We welcome as a new member Mrs May Brock of

[REDACTED] Mrs Brock, who is, of course, the mother of our secretary, has been coming to our meetings with David for many years and has at last been persuaded to become a member in her own right. She is a member of the Warwickshire Branch and, before marriage, was May Wykes, the daughter of John Wykes and Ada Sallie Swinnerton.

Belated congratulations to a lady who has appeared in the pages of this Journal many times - Jane Swinnerton our renowned hockey player. She was married on the 21st of August 1993 at Coven, near Wolverhampton to John Ions which just happened to be her father's birthday. Her mother, Betty, tells me that she has decided not to sacrifice her maiden name and is now known as Jane Swinnerton-Ions. We can only approve of that!

WHAT'S IT WORTH TODAY?

A book by Peter Wilsher called 'The Pound in Your Pocket 1870-1970' published in 1970 gives the following figures.

£1 in	1870 was equivalent to	£5.10s in 1970
	1886	£8.10s
	1896	£7.6s
	1909	£6.10s
	1925	£3.10s
	1949	£2.4s
	1957	£1.10s
	1970	£1.00

Would anybody like to hazard a guess what £1 in 1970 is worth today? Not very much, I suspect. Perhaps W.R.Mandale had it right when he wrote in the 19th Century:

Up and down the City Road/In and out the Eagle
That's the way the money goes/Pop Goes the Weasel

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.

BINDERS FOR JOURNALS. Red with the "Swinnerton Family History" embossed in gold on the spine and the Society's badge in gold on the front cover. Each has 11 strings to hold 10 issues (one complete volume) and the index. £2.50 each plus .50p postage.

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).

THE BOER WAR DIARY OF EDWARD ALBERT SWINNERTON
A vivid and personal account of a soldier during the campaign fought in South Africa almost one hundred years ago. Price £4.00 plus 50p postage.

A HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF SWYNNERTON AND THE SWINNERTONS OF WARWICKSHIRE.
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.