

SWINNERTON
Family History



Margery Augusta Angela Thomas 1894-2000

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APRIL 2000

The Swinnerton Society

A non-profit making organisation devoted to the welfare of Swynnerton Church and the research and publication of Swynnerton Family Records

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Editor - Iain Spencer Swynnerton

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Foreword

The Chairman

I am sorry to say that the new century has started very badly for the family - we have lost four members since Christmas. More details are given under *Family Notes* later in the Journal but, most notably, they included our President, Mrs Margery Thomas. Let us hope that the year will improve.

This year we are going to move the venue for our Annual General Meeting. We have done this once before when we held it in London, this time we are going to Llandudno to give our members in North Wales and the North West a chance to have one nearer home and other members to perhaps combine it with a mini-holiday. It will be held on Saturday the 10th of June in a hotel in the town. The members of Council will be making a weekend of it and we would be delighted if any other members would join us, there is plenty of accommodation in the area and, if you are a camper or caravanner, good sites around.

You may be able to spot some famous faces - it is the weekend of the Conservative Party Congress!

Work continues steadily on the Millennium Project which is to get all our records typed up onto computer by the end of the year. Roy Talbot now has most of the trees completed and we hope soon to be able to produce a master index.

I have started sorting many years of papers and correspondence into some sort of order so that they can be filed in a logical sequence. This is a task that is going to take many months - just three former members John Swinnerton, Ken Armitstead and Jack Swinnerton conducted a voluminous correspondence with me as a result of their prolific researches which include copies of all my letters to them. As I have my own copies of course, all have to be read through and the duplicates weeded out before archiving.

Unfortunately Spring seems to have arrived which means it is time to launch "Jemima Too" so I can see me spending the long evenings sorting papers on board. I must remember to leave the television set at home!

I look forward to seeing some of you in June.

Gain Swinnerton

THE SQUIRE WHO MOVED A VILLAGE

The two churches of Swynnerton stand, shoulder to shoulder, twin guardians of the souls of the few hundred villagers. Their presence so near to each other is testimony of an age, now happily gone, of a religious strife which in today's atmosphere of tolerance is difficult to imagine.

Separated by a few yards in distance but seven centuries in time, both buildings are dedicated to Mary, the Mother of Christ. In the twelfth century church of Saint Mary, the Virgin lie the remains of successive generations of the Fitzherbert family. This family later built the Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and are now its chief patrons. In the Catholic church is a plaque transferred from the room in Swynnerton Hall that was used as a private chapel for those worshippers who, during the religious strife refused to attend the so-called reformed church. Yet it is the reformed church which guards and displays in its Lady Chapel the huge stone image of Christ the King which was discovered buried a few feet from where it now stands.

Tradition tells that it had been hidden there after being brought from Lichfield Cathedral to protect it from over zealous reformers during the destruction of Popish images and idols. Such were the strange effects of sixteenth and seventeenth century religious intolerance in Britain. But Sir John de Swynnerton, Knight and Crusader, who died in 1254 and was buried in the only church then in the village, would know nothing of this, when, for a few brief moments, six hundred years after his death, he reappeared exactly as he was at death. Two startled observers, Mr Thomas Fitzherbert, of Swynnerton Hall, and Rev. W. Taylor, Rector of Saint Mary's Church, had unwittingly disturbed his body during restoration work at the church in 1856. The awful scriptural exhortation to man to remember that he is dust and to dust will return was to be dramatically proven to them. Sir John had been buried wrapped in lead which fitted closely to his form and which had preserved his body until its accidental exposure to the atmosphere which caused it to crumble, late but inevitably to the promised dust. But before doing so, the two spectators had seen a young knight, ruddy complexioned and with auburn hair and bearded and with two of his front teeth missing.

The burial chamber and masonry were restored and now the remains lie under a timeworn effigy of a Crusader, armoured and with crossed legs resting on a lion Couchant. On his left arm hangs his Norman shield. Nor would Sir John have known that during his time in the tomb, the village, his village, would have been moved a mile or so nearer to where he was lying. He might have turned in his grave and itched to reach for his sword at the thought of Cromwell's despoliation of the Manor House in February, 1644 after the Roundheads had tramped over Swynnerton Common and down the hill. But he

would certainly have approved of the work of Thomas Fitzherbert, eighteenth century squire, who after remodelling the replacement house built after the Restoration, but on a different site, decided that the old village spoiled the view over Shropshire to the Welsh Hills, so he moved it, lock, stock and barrel. He bought out the freeholders, re-housed the tenants a mile or so away and enclosed the common.

Now both churches stand with their entrances overlooking what is now left of the common and on which is built the village war memorial. Names on the memorial are of former villagers, worshippers of both churches, who have joined Sir John in the dust of time.

From *Murders, Myths and Mysteries of North Staffordshire* by W.M.Jamieson extracted by Ron Swinnerton.

* * * * *

Earthquake in Taiwan

Roger and Elizabeth Swynnerton received many enquiries from friends concerning their son Michael and his wife Chiu-Hua who live in Taiwan, after hearing of the recent earthquake on the news.

Michael's wife, Chiu-Hua, was in Europe on business when the earthquake occurred, but Michael was in his twelfth floor flat in Taipei, when the earthquake struck at 2am. The building shook, and books fell to the floor, but, apart from the terrible fright, Michael was unhurt, and the building was undamaged. Taipei, the capital, escaped comparatively lightly, as most damage occurred at the epicentre, about one hundred miles south of Taipei. Roger and Elizabeth spent three weeks in Taiwan with Michael and Chiu-Hua in April, and visited the attractive mountainous area where the epicentre of the earthquake was. There have been many after-shocks since, but business is back to normal in Taiwan.

* * * * *

Palatinate of Chester. Recognizance Rolls II Henry V - Henry VII.

1484, 14 December. Edward Duncalf, Humphry Swynarton, John Worth son and heir of Thomas Worthe, Thomas Shrygley, and Thomas Falowes, to the King, recognizance for 200 marks that the said Edward keep the peace towards Thomas Mascy. (1 & 2 Ric.3. m.5.(2)).

The Swynertons of Eyam

Roger Swynnerton

I was recently entering Parish Records on my computer for the Society when I came across a family of husband, wife and daughter who were all buried within 10 days of one another. What tragedy had befallen them? The answer was not difficult to find. Abraham Swynerton, his wife Margaret and their young daughter Anne all lived in the Parish of Eyam in Derbyshire, and were all buried between August 4th and August 14th 1666. They all died from the Plague. Eyam is famous for the events of the years 1665 and 1666, and the way the inhabitants dealt with the dreadful disease that attacked them. I visited the Church of St. Lawrence there many years ago, and still have the excellent guide which I bought in the church, and from which I quote in this article.

In 1665 a parcel of cloth was brought by carrier from London and set down at the door of the local tailor, a man called George Viccars, who lived at a cottage still standing just west of the Churchyard. Unfortunately, the cloth had become infected with the Plague germs before being despatched, and the tailor soon became the Plague's first victim in Eyam. At this stage it would have been easy for the remainder of the inhabitants to seek safety in flight. Had they done so, they might have been responsible for spreading the Plague over a large part of the North of England, and it is to their eternal credit that, under the leadership of two men, William Mompesson, rector of Eyam and Thomas Stanley, his predecessor - now a Non-conformist, the inhabitants voluntarily cut themselves off from contact with the outside world. In this way, the pestilence should not spread elsewhere. During the 15 months that the Plague did its dread work, 250 persons, including our three Swynertons, perished out of a presumed total population of 350. You can still see tombstones in the fields around Eyam, erected over victims who were buried near the places where they died. If you visit Eyam, please have a look for the tombstone of the Swynertons, though time may have erased their name. Outside the church is a fine Celtic Cross. A little to the east of the Cross is the fine table tomb of Catherine, wife of William Mompesson, who died of the Plague on August 15th 1666, the day after Margaret Swynnerton was buried.

THEY TURN UP EVERYWHERE!

My friends in the genealogical world are always pulling my leg about the many and various places they find references to the family. Of course, the real reason is that because our name is fairly unusual and so stands out it is easily noticed – I am sure there are far more Bakers and Butchers, Smiths and Joneses in the same records but no-one gives them a second look.

Here is the latest batch of miscellaneous entries culled from a wide variety of sources which have either been spotted by myself or sent in by fellow genealogists.

Quaker Monthly Meeting Ledger Bury St. Edmunds.

Ref. FK6 501/4/1 Burials

To Thomas Swinnerton, Grave Maker 10th July 1838

Make a grave on or before next fifth day in Friends Burial Ground at Stoke upon Trent in the County of Stafford and therein lay the body of James Wright of Sudbury in the County of Suffolk, Grocer aged about 63 years who died the sixth day of the seventh month One thousand and Thirty Eight.

John Pettilner

The above body was buried the twelvethday (*sic*) of the second month One thousand and Thirty Eight.

Witness Thomas Swinnerton (he signed). Grave Maker.

Ex Pamela Palgrave who says the form was pasted into the ledger together with the Coroner's document for the release of the body for burial. Hanley, Stoke on Trent. Quakers never referred to the months by the names we use because they are all named after heathen gods. One has to wonder what condition the body was in after the long delay.

Mormon Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Joanna Swinnerton b. St. Andrew's Undershaft, London 1590.

Submitted by Leona Catlow, PO Box 2354, Peoria, Arizona 85380-2354.

I have not yet been able to check this out but if this is correct it may be the mysterious Joanna who became the third wife of Isaac Allerton, one of the principal leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers who has been mentioned before in this journal.

Parish Registers

Over, Cheshire

12 June 1862 Buried Martha Swinnerton. Over Lane 5 days.

Manchester Cathedral

10 August 1873 Ruth, dau of James and Martha Swinnerton of Salford, baptised (born 8 February 1873).

Christ Church Salford

5 July 1891. George Garkell, 23, Bach, Cutter of 34 Hope St. Father Thomas Garkell, Clicker and Ruth Swinnerton, 19, Sp. Winder 34 Hope St. Father Samson Swinnerton (deceased) Labourer. Married. Both signed. Witnesses Edward Watts and Hannah Bates.

All the above from Keith and Elizabeth Livesey. Note the same address for bride and groom to avoid having to pay for two lots of Banns.

Aghalee, Co. Down Ireland

21 June 1841 Married Hugh Fulton and Ann Swinerton of Alee

Bicknoller, Somerset

1685 Henry son of Hen. Swinnerton and Margery _his wife was buried ye 4th September.

1723 Margery Swinnerton of Bicknoller buried March 23rd.

1729 George Swinnerton buried March ye 1st

1730 Mary Swinnerton buried October 5th.

Ex Mrs Ann Leigh who thinks there are more. These, I think, have to be connected in some way to our Gloucestershire family who are the only Swinnertons in the south outside London in this period.

Holy Trinity Church, Hull.

9 December 1779 William Carter and Jane Esser(ery)

Witnesses: Thos Swinnerton & Jane Swinerton (*sic*).

Ex Penny Pattinson

Llangefni, Holyhead, Anglesey

1790 Oct 26 Married Thomas Swinnerton and Elizabeth Bragg.

Both of Holyhead by Banns.

Other SourcesMeerut Cantonment Cemetery, India

21 April 1902. Walter Alfred Swinnerton died aged 39½ years.

Brewer's Derbyshire Directory 1823-24

Stephen Swinnerton, Builder and Stonemason,
St. Mary's Bridge, Derby

Both the above ex Pauline Saul

Musters of the Staffordshire Militia 1781-82

WO13/1943 Public Record Office, Kew.

Swinerton (aka Swineton) Benjamin. Private. Captain Mountford's
Company.

Discharged 19 May 1782

Ex Stuart Tamblin

LNER. Return of Staff employed 31 October 1939.

Rail 397/1

Walter Swinnerton a porter Class Two at Cefnybedd Station.

Weekly wage of £2.5.0d.

Born 22 February 1900

Entered service 19 March 1923

Married and living in a company house.

There was a total of seven staff at the station.

Ex Richard Moore.

Newspaper Cuttings

Our custodian of the cuttings file says they seem to have dried up and perhaps the Swinnertons aren't doing anything noteworthy any more! Will you all please keep your eyes open when you are reading your national paper (don't assume someone else has sent it in!) and your local papers and send me any references you come across.

Ann Bagot's Diary (continued)

October 21st 1820 A Visit to the Corbets of Adderley

Left Keel having enjoyed the days I had spent there. A note from Patty to say they should go to Oakeley and beg I wd be at the top of Whitmore Hill at half past eleven and they wd meet me and so they did. We went together to the Loggerheads where I found Sir Corbet Corbet's carriage waiting for me, the Swinnertons and I parted and I proceeded to Adderley where I met with a very friendly reception.

22nd Continued rain but the time was spent pleasantly indoors and Lady Corbet told me many anecdotes of Dr. Johnson who she had seen so much of in her youth. She visited him a little before he died and found him forlorn and deserted complaining that nobody called upon him. He wished to have lived at Adderley and when Lady C. told him what was quite true that the house was actually pulled down, he resented it as if they had done it for the express purpose of keeping him out. She did not think him quite sane but that he was always conscious of what he did. They were going, Mrs. Thrale being with them, to dine with a neighbour for whose dinner they knew they were late. Johnson got first out of the coach unluckily with a Horace in his hand which he began to read on the step, forgetting everything else stood there, moving his head backwards and forwards for ten minutes reading it, none of the party daring to press him. He told Lady Corbet when she married "she must look after her household affairs that she ought to make her husband's shirts but that she should only take the frills and ruffles with her when she went out."

22nd A farmer of the name of Hunt who lived near Adderley had one son of seven or eight years old by a first wife, his second wife one day wished the boy to go to school to which the farmer from superstitious fear, I know not what, strongly objected. The farmer went to work in his field and after his departure the wife sent the child to school who passing the place where the farmer worked called out "Goodbye father" - the man, rather struck by the speech ran after him and said "it does not signify - you shall not go to school - go to play with your cousins." In an hour afterwards the poor man was told the ice had broken with his child and he was dead!

Visits to Tixall - Tedderley and Pillarton

28th. Came to Milford. The Corbets sent me to Drayton the Levetts met me at Stafford.

Such torrents of rain Lou and I could not go to Church.

November

1st I chased Mrs. Lyttleton through a great deal of mud in her pony chaise to the old house at Pillarton and we came back through Penkridge.

Anne Visits the Moncktons at Somerford

3rd The Chetwynds went. Emma Monckton, some of the Russels and myself went to see Molly Shaney quite refreshing it is to see in these times a real honest and attached servant such as she was for many years to us. Went to Church at Brewood. We set out with the intention of seeing George

5th Monckton at his farm but unluckily when we had gone about 2 miles Mrs. Claud Russell had a fall from her horse. She was taken into a Cottage and the rest of the party went home to send a closed carriage for her, an apothecary soon came who blooded her - I had never before beheld anyone

7th doing that operation Mrs. Gifford, Mr. Gifford and 3 of her daughters came to dinner. We were in All a party of 15

8th Left my Kind friends at Somerford and returned home - brought the girls' schoolmistress with me who happened to be in distress to get to Lichfield.

11th The Act: of the Queen's triumph arrived for which strange to say the Bells were rung, bonfires and heaps of boys in white cockades. I hear but did not see it that Lord Anson had been through the town with his servants bedizened in the same way. It puts me in mind of a preacher who some

12th years ago called Barabbas "an acquitted felon". Went to the Cathedral.

A round of Country House visits

30th Went in the evening to Miss Levitt, met Mr. and Mrs. T. Levett and had a pleasant sociable evening. Mrs. Floyer brought me home at night.

December

1st Very busy in the morning both with visitors and carpenters. At 2 o'clock the Gisborne carriage came for me; called at King's Bromley. Mrs. Lane not well enough to see me - spent a few minutes with Newton and Mr. Lane came on to Yoxall Lodge where I found Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne and the Greatrex - spent a very satisfactory evening and had a great deal of good talk.

3rd Went to Church at Barton, a singularly good one. Hy. VII was once there, and hearing a poor woman was brought to bed of three boys he promised to provide for one who was made a priest and afterwards returning to his native village built this church and the Red Rose of Lancaster's head and three children's heads are put on arms all about it.

8th Mrs. Gisborne took me to Byrkley Lodge where we found Mrs. and Miss Sneyd - We then proceeded to Holly Bush and Hoar Cross but found nobody at either place. We were to have gone to Sudbury but were prevented. I went to King's Bromley where I found Mr. and Mrs. Lane, Newton, Miss Dolloway and my old friend Mr. Parkinson with his black thick eyebrows got nearly white but still the same kind-hearted sensible man.

13th Edward Levett came from Wirley very good naturedly to see me. It is a long time since we met.

18th I bought a little gold pencil case as a cadeau for Martha and then went to Milford where I found Levett, Lou, Baby, William and Martha and most thankful do I feel for the blessing of possessing such relations of witnessing such blessings - in that of those I love shall I not find my own?

A dinner-party at Shugborough

19th Mary Bagot's friend, Mrs. Borough's and her little boy called I was glad to be introduced to them. Lady Anson also came very goodnaturedly - Louisa had declined an invitation to Shugborough including me and she came to say that if the others could not come she thought there was no reason I should not, accordingly Levett and I went, found a very hospitable reception, a magnificent dinner and 27 people to eat it amongst them Lord and Lady Uxbridge, Lady Augusta and Mr. Chichester, the ladies very magnificent, whether they were very pleasant neither myself or anybody else cd. judge as they kept together and much aloof. Lady Jane Peele I was introduced to and liked.

20th A very sociable pleasant day at home.

21st Levett went to fetch Dick and Walter Sneyd came to fetch his son.

22nd The Sneyds went. William also went to meet the Howards at Elford which he had promised to do and kept his word.

23rd Martha and Mary Swinnerton returned to Butterton what a difference a short time has made in our positions viz à viz each other. I trust now we shall never again be separated. Levett, Lou and myself went to dine at Shugborough - we had a family reception and a party of 14.

24th Went to Baswich Church in the morning.

Christmas Day - Here at Milford with Lou, Levett, Dick and Baby. God bless them All!

Wm. Bagot marries Martha Swinnerton at Trentham

26th Frederick, Anne, Freddy and little Tom came, then the Edward Levetts and Walt: the whole family assembled for the first time for some years - With the friends of ones youth its so pleasant to mingle.

- 28th Levett and Lou set out early to go to Wm.'s wedding - they went to Lord Stafford's¹ where a room was prepared for them, there they found Mrs. Sneyd her 2 daughters, Wm. soon after. Martha and Mary Swinnerton arrived, the two Miss Swinnertons of Sugnall, Aunt Betty Mr. and Mrs. Barton, he acting as Father and Mrs. Hill to marry them. The whole ceremony performed, they returned to Trentham where they separated for their different homes. How very like what my father did, to go to Butterton took Miss Swinnerton to Trentham Church and married with Miss Sneyd for her bridesmaid! The Levetts returned quite early to Milford. Anne Anson and I went to Shugborough where we found Lady Anson very poorly.
- 30th The Ansons returned home but F. so unwell Walt. was with them to do the duty on Sunday Ralph came from Stafford looking well and handsome.
- 31st Did not go to Church for fear of the cold. Another year is gone and much, very much have I to be thankful for.

1821

January

- 1st At Milford with Levett, Louisa, Dick and baby, Walt, Ed. and his wife - God bless this family for the uniform kindness I have experienced from it.
- 4th Louisa and I went to Shugborough. Did not get out of the carriage as they were on the point of going to Tom's christening at Sudbury. Went on to Tixall where we were let in; only saw Sir T. and Lady Clifford.
- 14th The horses sick, did not go to church.
- 17th Louisa went to Keele. Brother Ralph went. He has been here some time and made himself very pleasant. What a pity it is he often lets his indolence get the better of his talents.
- 18th Levett, Dick and I walked to Great Haywood by the canal and
- 19th back by Shugborough. Left Milford.
- 20th Martha went for the first time to their own house². The Hortons sent for me to Catton, the Howard's intending to go to Blithfield the next day shortened my visit. Found the Sneyds, Bess and Ht at Catton., Mr Horton and Mr Parish. Met with a very civil reception.

¹ George Granville 2nd Marquess of Stafford. He married Elizabeth Countess of Sutherland in her own right and was himself created Duke of Sutherland in 1833.

² Their house is now the convent at Colwich

- I do like to meet with a little of the old school, good breeding and hospitality which Mr Horton certainly possesses.
- 26th Miss Stilwell came.
- 27th Came home in Mr Horton's carriage
- 28th Went twice to the Cathedral
- February
- 16th Went to Armitage Park, where I found besides the Lister family, Dr., Mrs. and Miss Oldershawe. Mr. Lister told me that he had, from the best authority a story of Dr. Johnson who when he was at Mrs. Thrales, a great deal of fruit was missed, in consequence of which Mr. T. ordered his gardener to lock the doors - the guest, still worse the plunderer, not guessed at, when one day the gardener brought to Mrs. Thrale Johnson's wig which he had found in a Holly bush through which he had contrived to get into the garden. Mr. T. immediately ordered the doors to be left open and never mentioned the circumstance to Dr. Johnson.
- p117
- March
- 12th Left Lichfield a little before 8 - Breakfasted at Pipe, picked up Caroline at Worston, got to Rodborough to sleep at nine - Came to Miss Hay's in Gay Street Bath about 3 o'clock. Caroline and I went by the subscription coach to Exeter, we left Bath at 8 o'clock and arrived at our journey's end by 7. Sir Edward Synge and Mrs. Hall were our two companions. We found Mrs. Bagot, Charlotte, Jane, Agnes and Elizabeth all very glad to see us and All very well. I was very glad to see them.
- 21st Mrs. Bagot had a Quadrille Ball of about 60 people, nicer looking, or mannered girls than the 6 in this house could not well be. The whole went off very pleasantly and with spirit. They had no music than their own and that of another young lady. I was introduced to a Mr. Banks who I thought pleasant and found a good many people I knew.
- 25th Mrs. Bagot and I went to the Deanery to dinner, on my part to fulfill an engagement of 3 years' standing! All the six girls came in the evening - Agnes of the party, though not yet come out - she sang a little, to comply with an especial request and was very much admired.

FAMILY NOTES

We are very sorry to have to record the following deaths since our last Journal:

Mrs Mary Swinnerton of Liverpool mother of our members Brian and James on the 25th December 1999 aged 81.

Peter Swinnerton of Quernmore House, Quernmore, Lancaster on the 3rd January 2000 aged 71.

Leonard Swinnerton of Handbridge, Cheshire on the 11th January 2000 aged 90.

Mrs Margery Augusta Angelo Thomas, our President, of London aged 105 on the 30th January 2000.

Our sincere sympathy goes to all their families.

* * * * *

We welcome the following new members:

Mrs Val Bieleski née Harvey of 176 Redoubt Road, Manukan City, New Zealand. Val is the granddaughter of Mary Swinnerton who was born in Devonport, New Zealand in 1870. Mary was the aunt of our former member and the last male representative of the family in New Zealand, William Edgar Swinnerton who died in 1985.

Change of address.

Mrs Elizabeth May to Flat 11, Childwick House, Howard-de-Walden Way, Newmarket, Cambs CB8 0QZ

Mr A.E.Swinnerton - change of post code only to CH60 1YE.

New e-mail address

Brian Swinnerton - brian@swinno.freereserve.co.uk

Nigel Watts - Nigel.watts@virgin.net

Nigel has also set up an Armitstead website to publish all the work that his uncle, our former chairman, Ken Armitstead did on his father's family.

Our President

Our joint secretaries, Roger and Elizabeth Swynnerton, Colonel Jeremy Swinnerton, Timothy Swynnerton and myself represented the society at the funeral at Christ's Church, Victoria Road, London on Saturday 5th February. The President's son, our Vice-President Lord Thomas of Swynnerton and her grand-daughter Isabella Thomas gave the readings and Colonel Jeremy Swynnerton gave the following address:

We have come together to do honour to Margery Thomas.

Margery was born in Simla, in India in August 1894. Both her parents were artists and this must surely be where her own artistic talent came from. Margery was the only daughter and the second of four children. They were brought up "in the wild," one might say. In those days life was pretty rough. There were lots of servants, but there was no electricity, and radio and television had not been invented. Nor was there any proper running water and the 'smallest room' was a shed down the garden with a 'thunderbox'. The wooden houses were badly built and leaked in the rainy monsoon weather.

Margery's father's house, perched on a steep hillside, went by the rather pretentious name of 'Oakwood Place.' In fact it was similar to all the others and was just as draughty. All the children seem to have led a very happy and exciting childhood.

When the Great War broke out Margery joined and trained with a local VAD unit and eventually went with them to join a Field Ambulance in Mesopotamia - now called Iraq - where she served in action for about two years, treating wounded soldiers of all races including, surprisingly, Nigerians.

After the war she returned to India just in time to become a casualty of the great World Flu Epidemic.

Leaving India in 1919 she started proper nursing training at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. It will be recalled that it was here that she celebrated her one hundredth birthday in the Banqueting Hall. After qualifying as a State Registered Nurse, she decided to join the Colonial Nursing Service in the Gold Coast - now Ghana - and it was whilst on the ship, on the voyage out, that she met her future husband. That was in 1929, and Hugh was born a couple of years later.

In 1935-6 Margery was in England to look after Hugh and see him into school - and doubtless to instil a bit of discipline. She was living in Welwyn Garden

City all through the Second World War, when she worked as a nurse in the de Havilland factory nearby.

After the war she rejoined her husband in the Gold Coast. Being an artist she had always loved the colours of the desert, purples, reds, yellows and orange, and so it was that in the 1950's she decided to cross the Sahara. She took a bus from Algiers to Kano, in Nigeria. She was the only woman travelling, and the only European male was a Belgian. Just imagine what this bus was probably like: bashed, dented and thoroughly ramshackle and probably tied up with string and elastic. Suffice to say that it broke down several times on the way; and when she eventually arrived in Accra her husband said she was mad.

Her husband by then had retired in 1959 and sadly died the following year, without the opportunity to enjoy his retirement. It was then – some 40 years ago – that Margery came to live in Cornwall Gardens.

Margery was a great character, with a warm, very attractive, personality and very amusing company. As she told a BBC interviewer a few years ago, she attributed her longevity to always having a glass of wine with her supper – and another glass! She certainly enjoyed being taken by Eurostar to Paris for lunch on her 102nd birthday.

On two occasions when she was over a hundred she came to stay with me in the Cotswolds where she was delighted to be invited to a drinks party. Declining the offer of a chair, without knowing anyone there, this centenarian stood for an hour, in the centre of the room, and kept everyone enthralled with her charm, vibrant personality and good humour.

We are mourning the loss of a very remarkable old lady and friend. She told me on several occasions that she wanted to live to be 100. When this was achieved the target became 105, and finally it was to have lived in three centuries. She achieved all three – and with a good margin.

One begins to feel that people like Margery are immortal – they have always been there – certainly throughout all our lifetimes and it is a sad shock when they finally depart.

It was Margery's courageous spirit, determination and zest for life which kept her going for so long. We should be thankful for her long life and pray that she will now rest in peace.

Leonard Swinerton

Leonard, who as reported elsewhere, died on the 11th of January was the second son of Albert Swinerton (1879-1937) and Emily Maud Tebbutt and was a descendant of Ralph Swinerton, the third son of William of Betley. He was born in Stepney on the 26th July 1909. He was one of the very first members of the Society when it was founded in 1974 and was a loyal supporter and regular attender at our Annual General Meetings and Gatherings and we shall miss him at our future meetings. He will always be remembered for standing up at an AGM when the question of subscriptions for older members was being discussed and saying strongly that pensioners should pay the same as everyone else! I can think of no better way to record his passing than to reprint this article, *Parish Personality* which appeared in the magazine of St.Mary's-without-the-Walls Church, Handbridge, Chester in 1986 compiled from a conversation with Beryl Walter.

Mr Leonard Swinerton provided an absolute mine of anecdotes and childhood memories that I find it hard to know where to start. His eyes sparkled and his face lit up as he recalled each one. It is hard to imagine "our" Mr Swinerton running barefoot through the streets of London in order to save his boots for school. He feels that that exercise provided him with very healthy feet, enabling him to enjoy plenty of walking even now! I heard of escapades with Police of "scrumped" apples. Efforts to earn an honest penny or two. In fact he was quite a lad.

Leonard was born in Stepney Green, London moving soon to Tower Bridge Road – which afforded him a first class view of the threatening Zeppelins of the First World War. These proved to be very nerve-racking for Len's mother, so with father away in the army, the family moved in with grandmother in Shotton until finding their own accommodation in Chester.

In 1936, Len married a Boughton girl, Elsie. They had a son Colin, now married to Pat with two sons Neil and Paul, and a daughter Jean married to Graham with daughters Heather and Jennifer. The family were originally all involved in St.Mary's Church: Elsie in the Mother's Union and Fellowship, Len and son in the choir and Jean as a Sunday School Teacher.

Len has been involved with St.Mary's for about 50 years. In the early days that involved walking from Boughton Heath on a Sunday. He belonged to the church choir for 37 years and proudly showed me his Certificate and Medal present by our present Rector on his retirement from the choir in 1983. Len now serves as a sidesman. Singing is Len's great love and hobby and it has opened many gateways to interesting events and people including

appearing on television in "Songs of Praise" from the Cathedral. He was a participant in Chester Male Voice Choir and the Chester Grosvenor Singers and continues to be active in the Chester Glee Club.

He worked at Brookhurst, an electrical switchgear firm for 35 years. He was considered to be in a reserved occupation during the Second World War much to his disappointment as he wanted to join the Navy. However, he had to make do with night-time fire duty in the A.F.S. instead. When the factory moved its workforce to Bedford, Len joined the County Licensing Department eventually taking late retirement to enjoy his outside interests. Elsie did not live to enjoy his retirement with him having died, suddenly, in 1971.

Whilst talking about the family, Len producing some fascinating material for me to see, a wealth of information, magazines and charts including the Swinnerton Family Tree. In September of this year the reunion of the Swinnerton Association, a society formed for the furthering of friendship and the promotion and welfare of St. Mary's Church, Swynnerton, Staffs. Several replacements and restorations have been undertaken. Reunions take place alternate years but this year was the 900th Anniversary of the family name first appearing in Domesday Book in 1086. 220 people, all members of the Swinnerton family, attended the service travelling from all parts of the world.

The Right Honourable Lord Stafford of Swynnerton Park is the Patron of the Society, Sir Roger Swynnerton is the President and Colonel Swinnerton is the Chief Genealogist and responsible for much of the research. The Reverend Edward Swinnerton from Blackpool led the service, his daughter being the organist. Colonel J.C.A. Swynnerton OBE read the lesson. The Bishop of Stafford, John Waller - not a Swinnerton - was there to dedicate a Memorial Tablet in commemoration of the Swinnertons who died in the war.

The service was preceded by lunch, a very warm and friendly affair with lots of news exchanged between distant families. After the service, a cup of tea and biscuits. Colonel Ian Swinnerton gave a talk on "Domesday and the Family: from then 'til now". As well as Swinnerton ties being worn by all the male members of the family, there is a bi-monthly issue of the magazine, which apart from updating news and whereabouts of family members, or additions, contains articles of interest on such topics as Heraldry, Coats of Arms etc.

We ended by talking about the value of family life. Len feels particularly blessed by his relationship with his children, who are very caring and keep in close contact. His four grandchildren are, obviously, a great joy to him. He wishes more families could stay close, not separated by distance or pressure of life. Just as I was leaving, he remembered a tape that he had recorded for the Archaeological Society about life in Chester in the 1920s and 30s for use in schools and it is full of fun and childhood experiences. My family and I have enjoyed it tremendously - it is well worth hearing.

Annie Swynnerton A.R.A.

Oil Paint and Grease - the autobiography of Dame Laura Knight. 1941.

We women who have the good fortune to be born later than Mrs Swynnerton profit by her accomplishments. Any woman reaching the heights in the fine arts had been almost unknown until Mrs Swynnerton came and broke down the barriers of prejudice, a prejudice natural enough for women's life is set in another direction, there have been few who have been able to devote their life to the arts.

Women and the Arts by Anna Sproule 1989.

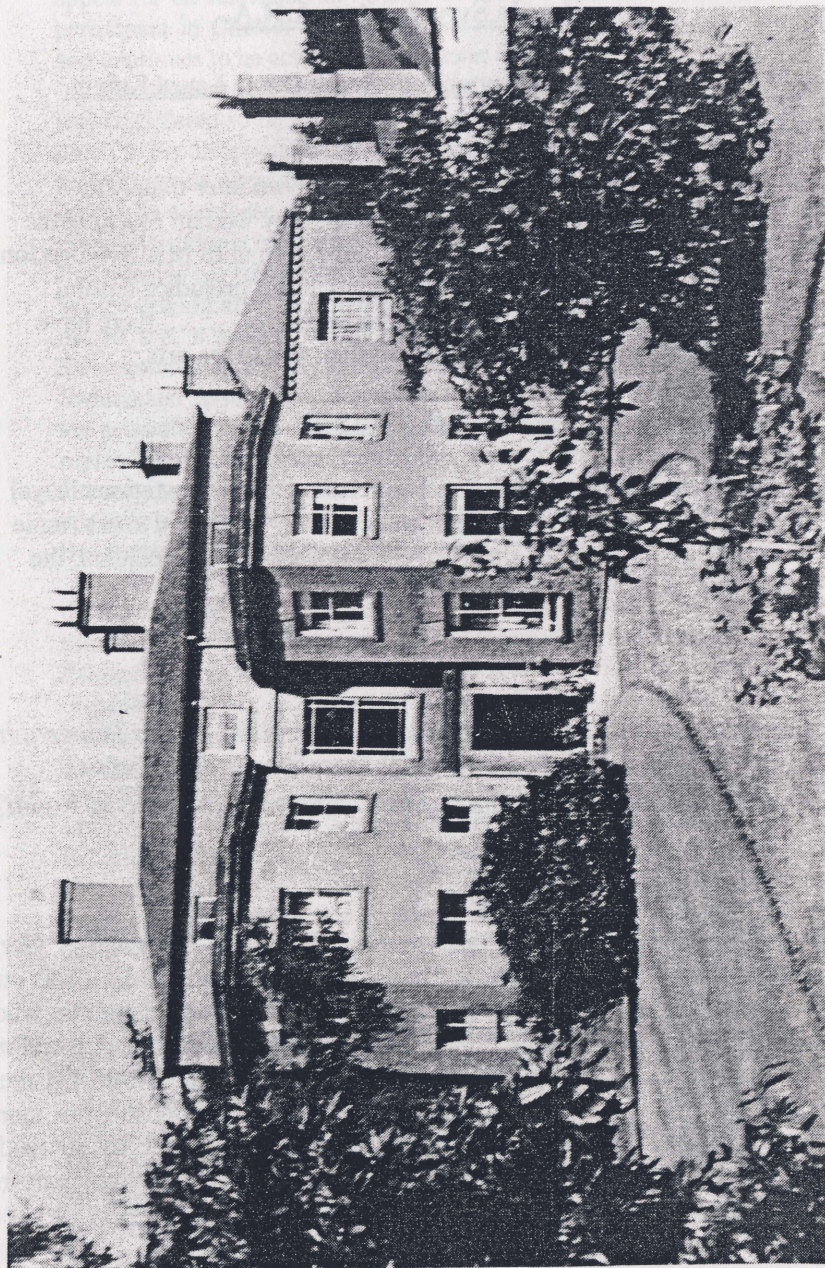
Women artists, however, were still not elected to the prestigious Royal Academy in 1922: a breakthrough came when 78 year old artist Annie Swynnerton was awarded the title Associate Royal Academician, the first A.R.A in two hundred years.

* * * * *

Adam Swinnerton recently wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* about the effect of the lack of Cricket on the French national psyche. It sparked off quite a series of letters but whoo is Adam?

* * * * *

One of my Christmas Cards this year said that it was *Designed by Mary Swinnerton*. Naturally I was curious and discovered that Mary was our member Roy Swinnerton's seventeen year old grand-daughter who, with her father and mother, Mark and Veronica, cycled across Israel on a sponsored ride visiting the Holy Places and raising £4500 between them for Alton Castle, a young people's centre opposite the more famous Alton Towers. Veronica works there. The party of 80 made over £100,000 and cash is still coming in. The cards were part of Mary's effort and she sold out (over 5000 cards) in two weeks. What a wonderful effort. More about this in the next Journal.



78. OVER WHITACRE HOUSE (c. 1950). Originally a traditional farm house, this building was much enlarged in the late 19th century. By 1904, it was owned by Edward Weston and by 1916, by 'Squire' Joseph Swinnerton-Weston.

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