

**A SUPPLEMENT TO THE STORY OF
THE FAMILY
OF
HENRY JOHN SYMONS**

OCTOBER 1996

Henry John's gift to his mother. Made from Ballarat Gold.



End of the Road for Two Cousins



EPILOGUE

There have been a few developments since these notes were first published and some additions can now be made to our story.

Norman and Muriel Grills have visited East Devon armed with a video camera and those of us who have had an opportunity to see the pictures which they have produced have been able to gain better insights into the Rockbeare scene. They succeeded in photographing all the graves which the ladies of the Whimple Historic Society had previously found for us and persuaded the Vicar to allow some interior shots of the Church to be taped. They were able to identify and visit Westcott Farm and to gain a distant view of Tanners, now alas in a state of disrepair. Perhaps of greatest importance was the atmosphere which they were able to capture of the fields and narrow lanes which may still be much as they were in Henry John's day.

The tape includes a visit to the home of the Lightfoots at Newton Poppleford, where Evelyn was able to display the brooch which Henry John had given his mother over a century ago.

Evelyn Lightfoot also received a visit, earlier this year, from Ken and Judith Robbins. Ken and Judith were able to spend more time in Devon than Norman and Muriel and to visit Chulmleigh and some of the descendants of John Jarvis and Ann Horrell Tripe. They found Myrtle Cottage, where John Jarvis ended his days in 1883 (page 18) and also Crabhayes farm where Ann Horrell had begun hers in 1812. (page 15). They also visited Hilary Harris, daughter of the Lightfoots and thus further strengthened our association with our English relations.

On the Australian scene we have been able to glean some further information about Henry John's cousin William and to find out what little there is to discover about Henry John's second son, Alfred.

And my distant cousin John Symons of Mount Waverley discovered a copy of the will of Henry John's grandfather, from which we have been able to find out a little more about the circumstances in which Henry John's grandmother Ann found herself after the untimely death of her husband. In the process we discovered the existence of two additional aunts for Henry John and found that Ann had been left with eight young children, not six. (page 11) You may remember that we had speculated about the family members who might have been able to help her in her time of trouble (page 13). Her husband might have resolved this decision for her by appointing his son Henry as a trustee, as we shall see below.

This discovery inspired Judith Robbins to search for the will of Henry John's father and thus to bring out a little more information about the circumstances in which Ann Horrell was left after William Harris's even more untimely death. Judith was also able to solve the mystery of the whereabouts of Henry John at the time of the 1851 census, when most of the Tripe family were living with the Blackmores at Sidmouth (page 18).

All these subjects will be addressed in the pages which follow. There is also a little to be added to the story about the formation of the family company in 1935. (Page 48) From my cousin Violet Dart I received an undated press cutting, apparently taken from the financial columns of a newspaper of 1935 vintage, which read as follows:

NEW REGISTRATIONS

Symons (H.J.) Pty. Ltd. wholesale and retail butchers. To acquire the business carried on under the style of H.J.Symons, Registered Office Macarthur Street, Ballarat. Capital 25,000 pounds. Subscribers:- Arthur John Symons 150 shares; Norman Valentine Symons 150 shares; Lindsay Hermann Miller, 200 shares; *Arthur Symons 2000 shares; *Percy Symons 2500 shares; Violet Symons 300 shares. Valentine Symons is also a director.

This was not the full story of the capitalisation of the company as 1296 shares were also allotted to the three brothers, presumably in equal proportions, in satisfaction of the company's purchase of the shop

property and further shares were no doubt allotted to them in respect of the farm properties. For me, however, the interesting item was the involvement of Lindsay Miller as a member of the company - the only shareholder outside the family.

I remember Lindsay Miller very well. He was the firm's slaughterman, working at the abattoirs from Mondays to Fridays and at the shop on Saturday mornings, which explains his absence from the group photograph on page 50. He always struck me as a thorough gentleman but he was of particular interest because he was a Christian Scientist and suffered from a duodenal ulcer, which seemed to me to be a contradiction in terms. Jessie Scott has reason to remember him very well. "...Every Saturday morning Marj and I had to take it in turns to get up and have his breakfast cooked and ready by 7.30 a.m. when he came down to Baird Street. It always seemed to be pork bones..." (Hardly the diet for an ulcer sufferer, one would think.)

Lindsay was not a shareholder for long. Norman reports that he died in 1938 and his shares were then purchased from his estate. By then his shareholding had increased to 245.

Recollections of her labours to feed Lindsay reminded Jessie of another chore which she and her sister were called upon to perform. "For years Marj and I were sent up to the Old Cemetery with flowers to put on Grandpa's grave every Sunday. They came from Selman's nursery in Gnarr Street." Jessie thinks that Selman's were probably paying off an old debt in this way. All the Symons brothers had green fingers and could probably have supplied better flowers themselves but this could have been a good way of ensuring that justice would be done and no doubt it was thought that the girls would have little better to do with their time. Thinking of old debts reminds me of another cutting sent to me by Violet Dart. It is undated.

Debt of honour met after 52 years.

A few days ago Messrs Symons Brothers Butchers of Ballarat received a letter inquiring if Mr H.J.Symons, butcher, was still alive and if not information was desired concerning any of his descendants. A reply was forwarded to the effect that Messrs Symons Brothers were sons of Mr H.J.Symons who died several years ago. By return of post came a letter enclosing a five pound note and an explanation that the money was in settlement of a debt of honour contracted 52 years ago. The writer added that he was 82 years of age.

Assuming that this news item was published in about 1913, the debt would seem to have been created in about 1861.

And from George Symons, a great grandson of Henry John's cousin William, came a report on a cutting which he had found in some old papers of his great grandfather. Unfortunately it is undated and the identity of the newspaper is unknown.

"Mr H.J.Symons, the well known butcher of Macarthur Street, who was successful in carrying off first prize at the Butchers and Bakers Demonstration last week gathered his carts and drivers together yesterday in Grenville Street near the gasworks, where Richards and Co. photographed them. The horses were gaily decorated with rosettes and fastened to the harnesses were the prize cards."

Unfortunately William did not preserve a copy of the photograph and we are unlikely to be able to find further evidence of this example of Henry John's essay into public relations.

George Symons recently visited Jessie Scott and she reports that he recalls hearing about his grandfather running in to Ballarat along the Creswick Road. This may suggest that cousin William's land in Ballarat was in the Mount Rowan area.

And now across to the other side of the world to Crabhayes, birthplace of Ann Horrell Loosemore. One of the results of Judith's visit has been the unearthing of some further information about this interesting old relic of our forebears. There could well be the germ of an idea for an historical novel here - more in the style of Thomas Hardy than the less earthy Jane Austin - and the temptation to look for more detail is hard to resist.

Structural evidence suggests that the buildings were erected in the eighteenth century but they probably replaced buildings which had already seen better days.

The Loosemore ownership was derived from the Horrells. Sarah, daughter of William Horrell, married Robert Loosemore of Rose Ash on 18th March 1782 bringing with her a dowry which, according to the Exeter Flying Post, amounted to 3,200 pounds. She inherited Crabhayes and by 1789 Robert Loosemore was recorded in the Land Tax Assessments as both owner and occupier. He died in 1803 and his widow replaced him in the records until her death in 1808.

Robert and Sarah had had two children, James, born in 1783 and Robert born in 1785, who died young. James married his cousin, Elizabeth Bowden Loosemore on 19th December 1809 at Nolland. They were both 26. The bride's parents were then still living but James was an orphan. He had already acquired Crabhayes on his mother's death and apparently his original intention was to be an absentee landlord for, within days of her death, the property was advertised to let in the Exeter Flying Post of 25th February 1808:

'a messuage or tenement called Crabhayes late in the possession of Mrs Sarah Loosemore, deceased, but now of James Loosemore, the proprietor - The premises consist of a dwelling house with convenient offices, garden & about 25 acres of excellent orchard, arable, meadow & pasture land with extensive rights of common.'

The advertisement does not seem to have been productive for the Land Tax assessments show James as owner and occupier from 1808 to at least 1824 and it seems that it was to Crabhayes that James took his bride in 1809 and that Crabhayes became the home of their six children.

However, although it seems that James was quick to assume the ownership of his mother's property, he was rather tardy in completing the formalities involved. Accounts filed in the Register in the Chancery Lane Record office in London on 12th May 1817, show that Sarah, who had died intestate 9 years earlier, was insolvent when she died. Apparently James had been able to satisfy the creditors and retain ownership of the family home for, as far as is known, he remained in residence until his death in 1826. During the last few years his income would have been supplemented by an annuity of fifty pounds left to him by his Uncle John of Rose Ash, who died a bachelor in 1818. There was a sting in the tail of this bequest.

"I declare the provision for my nephew James Loosmore is in full satisfaction of any claim in respect of the will of his late father, Robert Loosmore, or on me and if he object in any way then he shall lose any benefit from my will whatsoever."

(I am indebted to Victor Loosemore for this piece of information. Victor comments - "So from this we may assume that Mr John had little confidence in or liking for James, the father of Ann Horrell.")

Ann Horrell would have been - in her fourteenth year when her father died and her subsequent activities until her wedding day, are a closed book to us. In fact our hypothetical novelist would have to rely entirely on his own imagination when writing about the three years between James's death and Elizabeth's marriage to William Veysey on 14th February 1829. The ceremony took place in Holy Trinity Church, Exeter, which suggests that Elizabeth had spent the years of her widowhood in South Devon, and probably at Crabhayes.

A short history of the property in the possession of the present occupants, Mr & Mrs Reginald Heard, tells us that by 1832 Sir Thomas Dyke Acland was the proprietor and the occupant was William Veysey and that, from letters dated 1833 found inside an old lease dated 1771, it is apparent that while in Veysey's tenure the estate suffered some considerable neglect.

The history quotes from a letter written by one William Birmingham to Sir Thomas on January 12th 1833:

"According to your orders, I went to Crabhayes & Voysey (sic) was gone to Tiverton but in the evening I met him on his return & asked him if he had a letter from you last evening, he said he had & I

asked him if he was aware that it was a declaration of ejectment; he said he was perfectly aware of it & should be glad to give up the estate ... and that he was well aware in keeping the estate since that time he had not only been injuring the estate but himself also ... We can have 50 guineas a year from William Salter a responsible tenant & Veysey would give us possession for 40 pounds ... the dilapidations are wanted at about 60 pounds."

Our author would be able to paint a grim picture of the confrontation between Birmingham and Veysey, who had arrived saddle weary after a day's visit to Tiverton - over 20 miles each way in the depth of winter, no doubt brooding over the letter which he had received, only to find the agent of his landlord waiting melodramatically to reinforce the threat of ejectment delivered the night before. Worn out, as he might well have been, Veysey still had some fight in him. He would have to be paid to vacate. Very likely at that time his wife was expecting the second child of the union. Selina had been born in 1830 and Sarah probably arrived in the first half of 1832. Elizabeth would not have looked kindly on the prospect of being uprooted at that time and the prospect of having to find alternative accommodation for his wife and perhaps eight children would have been a daunting one.

Veysey came from Rose Ash and it is probable that he took his family back there when they left Crabhayes. Ann Horrell had certainly left home by then. She was married in July 1833 but Veysey was then still maintaining his rearguard action against Sir Thomas. On September 17th 1833 Sir Thomas's agent, John Carew wrote as follows:

"I hereby give you notice & warning that the messuage & tenements with the appurtenances commonly called Crabhayes is at this time ruinous & in decay & that you have committed or permitted waste in & upon the said premises to the value of 10/- & a much larger sum .. and I further give you notice that unless you repair & amend the same .. within three months from this day then ... Sir T.D.Acland will re-enter on the premises & turn you out of possession."

In due course and, I hope, in their own good time, the Veyseys vacated the premises and the next occupant was William Salter, who had been Birmingham's choice. The Salter family remained as tenants for about 100 years. They may have been better tenants than the Veyseys but there seems to be room for the suspicion that the allegations of waste and lack of care were somewhat exaggerated and that, at least to some extent Veysey was being called upon to answer for the sins of omission of his predecessor, James Loosemore. The old record contains an assessment of the dilapidations, made in July 1833 by one Robert Avis, which estimated the cost of making good the defects at 48 pounds 4 shillings and 3 pence. The items covered seem to have been more likely the result of age rather than of misuse. It may be that Veysey's mistake had been in biting off more than he could chew in attempting to look after Crabhayes in addition to his other holdings in the Rose Ash area.

We next found William Veysey in the 1851 census at Rose Ash where he was residing with his son-in-law and daughter John and Clara Adams. Initially he was described as a visitor but this description was amended to "Father-in-law", possibly indicating that his residency was of a more permanent nature than that of a visitor. Also in the household was Selina, aged 21, described as "sister". Clara was 19. John Adams was 34 and William Veysey 63. There was no sign of Elizabeth Veysey - "Betsie Veysey" as her father had called her in his will - a description which somehow makes her seem a warmer person. It seems likely that she had died before 1851.

Our author might decide to adopt a different scenario. It is possible on the currently available evidence that after the wedding in 1829 Veysey took his bride and some of her children to Rose Ash, becoming an absentee tenant of Crabhayes. This theory is supported by the fact that the 1851 Census shows both Clara and Selina as having been born at Rose Ash. It would also explain why Ann Horrell had apparently been parted from her family before her marriage to William Harris Symons. She would have been about 16 years and 3 months old when her mother remarried and could well have taken some form of service in Exeter at that time. This theory would give some meaning to the intriguing phrase in Birmingham's report of his conversation with "Voysey" on January 12th 1833 that "he was well aware that in keeping the estate since that time he had not only been injuring the estate but himself also.."

Our author might well decide that he would have Veysey, as the old family friend, coming to Betsey's aid on James's death, negotiating the sale to Sir Thomas as a means of restoring the family finances and offering to take a lease in his own name in order to provide a continuing home for the widow and children until a decent interval had passed and he could offer her his hand in marriage.

Whatever the true story may have been, it seems reasonably clear that over 160 years were to pass before Ann Horrell's Symons descendants would learn about the existence of Crabhayes and it is appropriate that Judith Robbins should have been the first of them to visit it.

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And finally, a note from my faithful spy in Wangaratta, Vi Dart, led me to an announcement in "Mufti", the Victorian publication of the R.S.L. that photographs of the graves of the only two Australian Airmen to be buried in the war cemetery in Guinea in West Africa were available. They had been taken by an Australian journalist visiting the Guinea for the V.E. Day anniversary commemoration in 1945. One of them was the grave of my cousin Bill. It seems proper to end this note with a copy of the photograph. Pilot Officer F.L.Symons was a member of the R.A.F. Squadron 204, which included aircrew from various Commonwealth countries and had been engaged in anti-submarine control on the South Atlantic since 1941. He was the only child of Uncle Percy and was Henry John's youngest grandson. He died on 21st July 1944 and his father died on 5th September of the same year.

Bill was Christened Frederick Lloyd. I have a dim recollection of attending his baptism..... But now it is time to take our story back a couple of hundred years.



GRANDFATHER JOHN AND HIS FAMILY

According to the records, Henry John's grandfather, John Symons came of age in January 1800. When I first became aware of this statistic I tried to imagine John being engaged in discussions in measured Devonshire tones around the fireside of an evening about whether this was the first month of the new century or the first month of the last year of the old one. It seems that I could not have been more wrong!

I knew that it was too early in the development of our democratic society for John to be obliged to conform to what was to become the traditional custom, on becoming an adult, by lodging an electoral claim form. Voting rights varied from place to place within the Kingdom but almost certainly only freeholders had a franchise at that time in the rural areas of the County of Devon and even amongst them there was a minimum property qualification. Probably John, like his father before him, failed to achieve the right to vote.

I knew that he had been baptised in the Church at Rockbeare in January 1779. He was the third son of Ralph Symons, Butcher, and his wife, Rebecca Sanders. His mother died when he was 14. He grew up in a period of change and turmoil both at home and abroad. He was 10 when the French Revolution began and his adolescent years were lived under the shadows of the Napoleonic Wars, which continued virtually for the whole of his adult life.

But by the year 1800 he was far from Rockbeare, at Topsham away to the South of Exeter and his twenty-first birthday came and went without him knowing about it. He was already a butcher by trade and it could well be that he had found it necessary to move to a more populous area than Rockbeare to gain experience. Fate was kind to him, however, for it seems to have been at Topsham that he came under the

spell of Ann Harris and the spring of 1800 saw them planning their wedding. Perhaps it was the vicar of Topsham who first raised the question of age. Ann was confident that she was 21 years old but John was far from certain about his age and no doubt the vicar advised him to obtain his father's consent to the union. On the day before the wedding he made the long journey to Rockbeare, armed with a form of consent which had been prepared perhaps in the vicar's copperplate handwriting and old Ralph grasped his quill and duly signed it.

And so, before the wedding John was able to certify on oath "that he hath obtained the consent of his father, Ralph Symons of Rockbeare in the County of Devon, Butcher, he the said John Symons being as far as he knows in his minority." If only his mother had still been living she would have been able to assure him that he was indeed of full age and perhaps she would have seen to it that his coming of age had been duly celebrated at the appropriate time.

The image shows a handwritten document, likely a consent form for a wedding. The text is written in cursive and is somewhat faded and difficult to read. It appears to be a statement from a vicar or official, mentioning the County of Devon and the names of the bride and groom. The date 'May 1800' is visible. There are two signatures at the bottom: 'John Symons' on the left and 'Ralph Symons' on the right.

The happy couple were married at Topsham on 14th May 1800. One of the witnesses was a John Symons whose identity is somewhat of a mystery. The bridegroom had a cousin named John, a son of John Symons and Betty Chowne (See Chart II) but as he was four years younger than the 'groom it seems unlikely that he would have been accepted by the vicar as an eligible witness and it seems more likely that the function was performed by his father, who was also a John.

By the time of the arrival of their first child, Mary Ann, the couple were apparently living in Woodbury. She was followed by Rebecca. By the arrival of their third daughter, Priscilla, the family had moved to Rockbeare and she was baptised in the Rockbeare Church in March 1807. Thereafter an addition to the family occurred on an orderly biennial basis until 1815, except for the special event in 1813 when the twins William Harris and Elizabeth Harris were born. (See Chart I)

Thus with the birth of Henry in September 1815 John would have found himself with a wife and eight children to provide for and it may by then have become apparent to him that he was not to be long for this world. At some time after Henry's birth he made his will. He died on 3rd December 1817 and a certified copy of his will was filed in the Stamps Office at Exeter on 19th February 1819. The will was undated, a fact which tends to confirm the suspicion that it had been made without professional assistance. The copy is written in a degraded form of copperplate which is difficult to decipher but the general tenor of the intentions of the testator seem clear enough.

John must have been proud of his new little son, Henry (or Hennery as he was called in this part of the will) for he appointed him as an executor! The other executor was to be John's wife, Ann. Henry was two

years and three months old when his father died and it would thus be eighteen years and nine months before he could formally participate in the administration of the estate. This would be in September 1836. By then there had been several, changes in the circumstances of the family. Mary Ann had married in 1820 and had produced at least two grandchildren for Ann. Not much is known about what happened to Rebecca, Priscilla and Eliza. They had all apparently left home by the time of the 1841 census. It seems not unlikely that Rebecca married a man named John Leat in the nearby parish of Honiton and a search for her subsequent records could be a worth while subject for some future historian. Priscilla does not seem to have married as her name is apparently recorded as a part owner of a property in the St Sidwell's parish in Exeter in the 1870's. She is described as a spinster. Her name did not appear in the 1881 census and possibly she had died before then.

We have found no trace of Eliza. John had married in 1832 and William Harris in 1833 and both boys had produced two children by 1836. William's twin, Elizabeth Harris, had died in 1835 and William himself died in the month in which Henry attained his majority.

Thus it seems likely that Ann's household may then have comprised herself, Henry and William's widow Ann Horrell with her two children, young Henry John (aged 2 years and 4 months) and baby John Loosemore (aged 5 months).

John's will had provided that his estate was to be under the control of the executors until Henry reached the age of 21. He seems to have expected them - in other words Ann - to carry on his business in the meantime and presumably to use it for the benefit of herself and her young family. He recognised the likelihood that as the children grew older they might wish to strike out for themselves or that the girls might be looking for something in the way of a dowry on marriage and he empowered his wife to give "to either or any of the children any sum of money cattle or any parts of the stock."

He paid his wife the doubtful compliment of envisaging the possibility of her remarrying by providing that if she did so the whole of the estate was thereupon to be divided amongst the children equally; but he seems not to have addressed his mind to the certainty that some of the children at least would still be infants in the eyes of the law. Fortunately Ann did not remarry so this deficiency did not prove a problem. There was a more serious deficiency, however, for he failed altogether to say what was to happen when Henry reached the age of 21. He had been careful to ensure that the estate would not be frittered away in the meantime. He appointed two Trustees, his brother Henry and John Payne Junior to keep an eye on things and to ensure that if his wife remarried the value of the estate would have been maintained at its original level for the benefit of the children.

It seems likely that, technically, when Henry reached the age of 21 he would have become entitled to join in the management of an intestacy with regard to the whole of the estate then remaining. The will does not seem to give support to an argument that Ann had a life interest in the income of the estate. I suspect that if she sought advice about her rights she might well have been told that, as there was an intestacy, the common law rules would apply and that she would be entitled to one third of the estate on Henry's 21st birthday. The remaining two thirds would be divided equally between all the children. The entitlement of any child would not be extinguished by his or her death before Henry's birthday and therefore Elizabeth's estate would be entitled to her share. (It would be immaterial whether William died before or after Henry's 21st birthday and his estate would be entitled to his share. Presumably Ann Horrell would have been sedulous in protecting Henry John's interests.)

When she applied for Probate back in November 1818, Ann had sworn that the value of the personal estate and effects of the deceased in the Archdeaconry of Exeter did not exceed one hundred pounds. As one of the purposes of her affidavit was to provide a basis for the possible assessment of Death Duties it may safely be assumed that her valuation was on the conservative side. There may not have been many assets to consider. Growing crops would not have been of much value in December and there would have been little plant in those labour intensive days.

If Ann succeeded in maintaining the value of the estate during Henry's minority, the assets available for distribution under the intestacy would theoretically have produced thirty three pounds for Ann and eight

pounds for each of the children. It seems likely that when her son John married he set up his own establishment on land adjacent to that occupied by his mother, possibly on part of the estate leasehold holding. The 1841 census shows the two households occupying adjacent properties. Ann had living with her son Henry, also described as a farmer, and three servants, Elizabeth Cherry, 15, John Pomeroy and Elizabeth Pomeroy, respectively 30 and 25. John, then 30, had the company of his wife, Elizabeth, also 30, and William, 7, Sarah, 6, Priscilla, 3, and John, 1. There were three servants - two males, aged respectively 35 and 15 and one female aged 15. (The photocopy of the census page is too faint to enable their names to be discerned.) Possibly the estate leasehold holding had been divided but additional land could have been taken up if leases became available. The 1841 census, which was the first detailed census made, did not include a report on the area occupied. This statistic was first introduced in 1851.

It seems not unlikely that John would have assisted in the conduct of his mother's farm and that his own operations would have been helped, at least at the outset by the acquisition of stock and plant from the family business. It could well be that the affairs of the estate of John Senior were never formally wound up and that some of the assets could have gone to William Harris when he established himself at Whimple.

It may be a matter for conjecture whether the girls all received their due shares. If they did not their loss would have accorded with the culture of the time.

By the time of the 1851 census John had moved on to Tanners (See page 14) and Ann was living with Henry in London Road, Rockbeare. Henry was then described as a pauper, presumably because he was living "on the parish", possibly because of some infirmity, and Ann was described as "an annuitant". This may have indicated that she was living on the income derived from an investment in Government issued Consolidated Securities, commonly known as Consols. At least she was self-reliant in the eyes of the Parish and no doubt she made good use of her vegetable garden and received occasional supplies of meat from her butcher son.

Old Ralph survived his son John. He lived for another 9 years. In making his will John's last thought had been for his father. He left him a suit of mourning, thus demonstrating that even in the pre-Victorian days of William IV outward appearances were seen to be of importance, no matter how straitened the family circumstances might have been.

Ann lived on until 1863. She was buried at Clyt St George on 12th March of that year. In the 1861 census she was recorded as living at the home of her daughter Mary Ann who was living with her husband, John Page, at Manor Cottage, Clyt St George. Ann could have been there for some years at that time. Henry was buried at St Thomas Union (workhouse) on 3rd December 1856 and would presumably have been at the workhouse for some appreciable time before his death.

The Page family had been established at Clist St George since at least the time of the 1851 census. At that time one of the occupants of their home was Henry Symons, described as a nephew aged 16, farm servant, born at Whimple. This entry solves for us the problem of Henry John's whereabouts in 1851 when his mother and some members of the Tripe family were living at Sidmouth, before moving on to Cobden. (See page 16) By an interesting coincidence John Page was a native of Sidbury and it seems likely that he was a member of the Page family which had been engaged in the butchering business there in earlier times. Thus, while Henry John is described as a farm servant, he could well have been gaining valuable experience which he was able to put to good use in his business in Ballarat. Thus it is understandable that Henry John should have named his first-born daughter Mary Ann.

I am tempted to add a sidenote, which serves to demonstrate the enriching experiences which come the way of historical researchers. Next door to the Page family in 1851 was the Clist Rectory, where Rev and Mrs Ellacombe had as lodgers two little boys, Henry and Edward Hart, respectively aged 7 and 6. Their place of birth is recorded as India and no doubt they were living at the Rectory until they were deemed old enough to go to boarding school while their parents continued to serve Queen and Country in the wilds of the Indian continent. Spare a belated thought for these little victims of imperial ambition.

WILLIAM HARRIS SYMONS

Although grandfather John's second son, William Harris, was baptised and buried in that name, he did not seem to make much use of his second Christian name. He was married simply as William and his will was also made in that name, which seems to indicate that his mother took no part in his testamentary activities! She would have insisted that her family surname not be ignored.

William made his will on 18th April 1836, apparently not long after the arrival of his second son, John Loosemore. Perhaps this event had inspired him with a suitable sense of responsibility but I suspect that he may by then have had some intimation of his own mortality, for he died five months later and in the meantime had closed his business in Whimble and returned with his little family to Rockbears, where he may well have gone to live with his mother because of his increasing infirmity. She would have been able to find room to accommodate them because by then Mary Ann and John were married and it is quite likely that Rebecca, Priscilla and Eliza had also left the nest.

William's twin; Elizabeth Harris, had died in 1835 and possibly her death had already raised in some minds the question of what was to happen to her share of the estate when matters came to a head on Henry's 21st birthday. William could well have decided that no similar problems could be allowed to arise in his case. He had been 3 years old when his father died and all his formative years would have been spent in a home atmosphere which was haunted by the absence of the principal breadwinner and now his own children seemed fated to contend with a similar condition. This was a situation which he was powerless to avoid but he could at least learn something from his father's mistakes. His father had died in 1817 and even now, in April 1836, Henry had not come of age, when he would be able to join his mother as an executor to participate in some sort of final settlement of the estate.

William did not live to see what was to happen for he died in the very month in which Henry reached the age of 21.

He might also have had some thoughts about the wisdom of his mother's appointment as, in effect, the sole executrix of his father's estate during the difficult years of Henry's minority. After all, Ann Horrell was still a young woman. She might marry again. Indeed it would be a good thing if she did so. She had enough common sense not to allow herself to make a foolish marriage but it would be as well to have a couple of independent executors to keep an eye on things. So he appointed his brother John and another reliable friend, Nicholas Book to be his sole executors, while at the same time ensuring that his wife would have a say in reserving "a few articles" for her own private use and in seeing to the upbringing and training of the children.

He decided that his wife should receive one third of the estate and that the remaining two-thirds should go to the boys in equal shares but that if either of the boys should die prematurely his share would go to the other one. The actual age at which the boys were to receive their share was to be determined by the trustees in consultation with Ann and could be at twenty-one or as late as twenty-four. (William was 22 when he made his will and apparently he was not confident that the boys would attain appropriate maturity as rapidly as he had!) But he was not concerned solely with their temporal affairs. He stressed that they should be carefully and religiously brought up and instructed in the necessary duties of children. It might have given him some satisfaction if he could have known that young Henry John was to have the advantage of attending the National School at Sidbury. Barbara Softly, in her excellent little book on life in Sidbury in the nineteenth century, "Tapping at the Garden Gate", records that "great emphasis was attached to a knowledge of the Prayer Book and not so much on the Bible. All the children were expected to learn the Catechism by heart, whether they understood it or not, and when they were tested on it by the School Inspector or the Vicar, those who did not know it tried to hide behind those who did. Punishment was usually a severe whack with the cane

William gave due thought to the administration of his estate. His was the earliest will which I have encountered which created, in effect, a trust for sale and conversion of his assets and the investment of the

proceeds to produce income for the beneficiaries. Such provisions were to become standard practice in later years. William's father had adopted a different plan. He had been able to envisage the continuation of his farming activities by his Executrix on behalf of the estate and had appointed independent trustees (perhaps auditors would have been a better word) to keep an eye on her affairs mainly to ensure that the capital value of the estate would be maintained. William not unreasonably decided that such a plan would not work in his case.

His executors were able to get his affairs into sufficient order to apply for Probate of his will with admirable despatch. He died on 12th September 1836 and the application for Probate was approved in the office of the Archdeaconry at Exeter on 18th November. The value of the estate was sworn not to exceed two hundred pounds. This was twice the value adopted by his mother for his father's estate back in 1819 but this fact does not necessarily indicate that Ann Horrell was in more comfortable circumstances than her mother-in-law had been.

Both valuations would have to be taken with the proverbial grain of salt as the executors would not have been inclined to adopt optimistic assessments but in the case of old John's estate no value would have been placed on the ability to carry on his farming business as a going concern and thus to provide income and a facility for the family to live off the land.

In his will, William had directed that his Book Debts be demanded and all accounts be forthwith settled but it could well be that he himself had had this matter well in hand in the period between the date of the will and his death. This would explain the speed with which the Executors were able to apply for Probate. They may well have found the task of valuing the assets relatively simple because they would be either in the form of cash or quantifiable book debts and the opportunity to make a conservative assessment would be limited. It would be most interesting to know whether the assets included William's interest in his father's estate but unfortunately no detailed inventory seems to be in the records.

The Executors would have had the task of investing the available funds until the final distribution could be made, which, in the events which occurred, would have been when Henry John attained his majority, unless they decided to postpone the event until his 24th birthday. Perhaps it was the proceeds of this distribution which enabled him to travel to Australia at his own expense and with some additional capital to establish him on his arrival. Theoretically he should have received two-thirds of the corpus of the estate and no doubt Ann saw to it that he received it.

It is not unlikely that the Executors would have found themselves virtually limited to Consols as a form of investment. These would have produced a return of 3% or, at best, 3½% but it is possible that the terms of issue might have enabled them to purchase bonds with a face value of three hundred pounds for an investment of two hundred. Thus they might have achieved an annual income of ten pounds ten shillings, which would represent about four shillings per week or half of the ruling wage for agricultural labourers at the time. (Admittedly the labourer might be lucky to be paid for every week of the year and at times he might have to accept payment in kind rather than in cash.)

If Ann Horrell had found it necessary to go "on the parish" at the time she would have received a weekly allowance of six shillings and six pence. She may have had other resources however and William may have been able to take some comfort from this. For example she would have known that on her 24th Birthday in December 1836 she would be entitled to receive the legacy of one hundred pounds which had been bequeathed to her by her kinswoman Mary Slader of Rose Ash who had died in 1824, aged 93. Perhaps it was Mary Slader's selection of the age of 24 which influenced William to adopt this as the maximum age for the vesting in possession of the interest to be received by his sons. In the event the Slader legacy could hardly have come at a more useful time for Ann, three months after her husband's death.

Neither Ann nor William need have known that she would also receive a legacy of one hundred pounds under the will of her great-aunt, Jane Willcocks. Jane died in her 88th year in 1848 having made her will in 1839, so this was to be well in the future. (It is to this will that we are indebted for the discovery of Ann Horrell's new married name of Tripe.) This legacy could have been a welcome addition to Ann Horrell's pin money in the early infancy of her daughter Elizabeth, who was to become the mother of Bessie

Dendle.

William and Ann Horrell might also have been aware of the possibility of benefits at some future time from Ann Horrell's mother, now Elizabeth Bowden Veysey. They would have had a long wait. In 1845 Elizabeth's father left "to my daughter Betsey Veysey my farm little Champson in Molland, my two houses at Rock in Molland and all my other property exclusive of her husband and after her death for her children in equal shares." Betsey seems to have had six Loosemore children (see Chart VI) plus at least two Veysey daughters and thus Ann Horrell seems to have been entitled to one eighth of these assets from her grandfather's estate.

On the whole I think that we may fairly assume that her acceptance of the offer of John Jarvis Tripe was not an act of desperation.

Perhaps some economic historian may be able to give us an idea of the present day value of one hundred pounds in the 1830's. My own three-quarter hearted researches on this subject have led to frustration. We know that the rental value of the Crabhayes estate at that time was considered to be fifty-two pounds ten shillings per annum (See page 5) but I have been unable to locate any statistic which could be related to modern cost-of-living assessments in any meaningful way. I can report, however, that at the time of William's death the London price for a four pound loaf of bread was 8 pence. (The price of an equivalent product at the time of his father's death had been ten pence. Perhaps the difference reflects the effect of the Corn Laws.) Thus in William's day one hundred pounds would buy 3000 4lb. loaves of bread. The modern 680gm loaf, the equivalent of slightly less than 1½lbs, might cost say \$1.50 and 3000 1½lb loaves would cost \$4,500. This crude arithmetic suggests that, in terms of four pound loaves, one hundred pounds in 1836 might be worth A\$12,000 in our day.

A more valid basis of comparison might well be the wage of agricultural labourers. The present average for Agricultural Labourers in the U.K. is said to be 236 pounds per annum*, which is 590 times the ruling wage of 8 shillings in 1836. This suggests that a legacy of one hundred pounds in 1836 would have an equivalent value of 59,000 pounds in 1996.

Perhaps a sensible answer to the question would be somewhere between those two extremes.

*My source of information is the British High Commission, Canberra. The actual statistic applied to 1994.

UNCLE ALFRED

For most of us Southerners the suburbs of Brisbane could probably be classified as Terra Incognita, with one possible exception. Those of us who have been frequent listeners to Ian Macnamara's Sunday morning programme "Australia All Over if on the A.B.C. will be well aware of the name of one important locality- Annerley Junction - made famous by Hugh Lunn in "Over the Top with Jim", which he described as a memoir of a well-spent boyhood.

Annerley Junction, located at the junction of Annerley Road and Ipswich Road is about three miles south of the City. Hugh Lunn describes the vibrant life of the community in the 1950's and I like to think that the essentials of life had not changed all that much in the previous 60 years, except of course for the influence of the motor car and the electric trams.

For members of the Symons family, Annerley Junction has a special significance for it was here, on Thursday, 9th August 1894, that Alfred Symons, second son of Henry John and Mary Ann Symons of Ballarat Victoria, died after a short illness.

He must have died early enough in the day for funeral arrangements to be made and an advertisement to be prepared for insertion in the Funeral Notices in the next morning's edition of the Brisbane Courier. It

read as follows:

FUNERAL - The Friends of Mr ALFRED SYMONS (butcher) deceased are respectfully invited to attend his funeral, to move from his late residence, Ipswich-road, Junction, THIS (Friday) AFTERNOON, at half-past 4 o'clock, for the South Brisbane Cemetery. SILLETT & BARRETT, Undertakers, Petrie's Bight¹; and Roma Street (opposite Railway Gates).

Presumably his friends would have known where his residence was. Alfred is not mentioned in the street directory current at the time, nor does he appear in the Electoral Roll or in the commercial Index of Butchers. The Directory for Ipswich Road possibly only contained the names of such residents as were prepared to pay for the privilege of a mention, as the number of names included seems very small for what must even then have been a fairly populous area. Possibly a system of street numbers had not yet been established at The Junction, which would explain the undertaker's difficulty in stating a more specific address. Unfortunately it also has frustrated latterday researchers trying to locate his place of abode.

Just about everything which we now know about Alfred is encapsulated in his Death Certificate and we owe the existence of one vital ingredient to the fact that Federation was then still seven years away. The practice still continued of recording how long the deceased had lived in the various Australian Colonies and we can read that Alfred had spent 20 years in Victoria and 11 years in Queensland. As he was described as a butcher by occupation at the time of his death it seems reasonable to assume that he had learned his trade before leaving Ballarat. It seems not unlikely that, when he first left home, it was to seek his fortune in a warmer climate.

He seems to have left Ballarat in 1883 - he was born on 23rd June 1863 - which suggests an interesting coincidence because his young brother William very likely set forth at about the same time. William, who was born on June 6th 1868, is reputed to have left home at the age of 15, i.e. after June 1883. Perhaps he had been encouraged by Alfred's example.

It might be suggested that I am here relying rather too much on the accuracy of the information in the Death Certificate. This doubt raises yet another more dramatic coincidence, for the Certificate records that it is based on information certified in writing by "J.W.Hetherington, Main Street, Kangaroo Point" which is a suburb to the north of Annerley Junction, "and by Henry John Symons, Father, Ballarat, Victoria".

Was Henry John there at the time? Perhaps we will never know. The funeral took place on Friday, 10th August but the burial was not officially registered until Wednesday, 15th August. According to the Death Certificate Dr Macnamara certified that the cause of Alfred's death was double pneumonia and the duration of his last illness was four days. It seems improbable that Henry John could have made a dramatic journey from Ballarat to Brisbane in four days, less the time taken for news of his son's acute illness to reach him, presumably by the electric telegraph. It had become possible by 1894 to travel by train from Ballarat to Brisbane and a traveller with the tenacity and stamina of a Phileas Fogg might even have been lucky enough to make the necessary connections - in Melbourne, Albury, Sydney and Wallangarra, on the Queensland border - and to arrive at the Roma Street station in time for the funeral but it seems more likely that the event coincided with one of Henry John's trips north to escape the Ballarat winter. It is even conceivable that he arrived after the event.

He seems to have been back in Ballarat in time to insert a Death Notice in the Ballarat Courier of 21st August:

SYMONS on the 10th of August 1894 at Ipswich Road Brisbane after two days illness of congestion of the lungs, Alfred, second son of H.J. & M.A.Symons of Wendouree - deeply regretted.

Henry John probably made at least one more trip to Brisbane as the picture opposite page 50 is thought to have been taken at about the turn of the century. If he did it is most unlikely that he visited his son's grave. Dutton Park Cemetery, which is referred to in the Death Certificate as the South Brisbane Cemetery,

¹ Petrie's Bight is the bend in the Brisbane River crossed by the Story Bridge on the Bradfield Highway.

comprises some 27 acres. It is a monumental cemetery and the caretakers try to keep the grass mown in places where formal memorials have not been erected.

Portion A, where Alfred lies, is not reserved for any particular denomination. (Alfred's funeral service was conducted by Rev A. McWatt Allen of the Presbyterian Church). The cemetery staff report that it has a pleasant aspect on the slope of a hill. Lot 157 is unmarked but those who may be concerned about such matters may take comfort from the fact that the area set aside for paupers is lower down the slope near a gully.

Footnote: Alfred was not the only Symons butcher in Brisbane at the time. William Symons was carrying on business in Wool Street, Toowong. As the crow flies, Toowong seems to be about 5 miles West of Annerley Junction but it is on the Western side of the Brisbane River and a journey by land would probably be much longer. Still it would be nice to think that the two butchers were able to meet and discuss the possibilities of a common heritage. Like us, they might have noted the frequency with which the name cropped up in the trade.

COUSIN WILLIAM

We last heard of Henry John's cousin William at Page 37. He was then at Lake Rowan, where he had taken up land in 1878. You will not find any sign of a lake on most maps of the district. Very often you would not find it if you visited the area without a guide but it has been said that it will be very easy to find after a good downpour of rain - say three inches in fifteen hours - which will create 'lake' about three miles long and half a mile wide.

What remains of the township is located due north of Benalla, on a fairly direct line between Benalla and Yarrawonga and about 30 kilometres from the former. There was already a post office there when William first inspected the area in June 1878 and the mail service had been upgraded in that year from a once weekly delivery by horseback to Benalla and Yarrawonga to a delivery three times per week in both directions.

William had ridden across to Benalla from Ballarat on horseback - a journey of over 300 kilometres by the most direct route - and then on to Lake Rowan after visiting the Lands Office to find out the details of the lots available for selection. He would have found that the available land was to be offered on the basis of a Licence for three years at an annual fee of 2/- per acre payable half-yearly in advance and that after three years a Crown Grant would be offered for a fee of 14/- per acre, provided that the obligations of the Licence had been carried out. These included fencing the land within 2 years, cultivating at least one acre out of ten, occupying the area and erecting improvements to the value of one pound per acre. The maximum area available to each individual was 320 acres.

It may well have become quickly apparent to William that 320 acres would not be sufficient for an establishment adequate for the needs of his family. John was then 16 and George a year younger. He determined to obtain two lots, taking out the second lot in the name of his son John and very likely concealing the fact that John was still under the minimum age of 18.

The boundaries of the land had then to be established by using stones or other marking material to define the corners of the lots, after which William set out on the long return ride to Ballarat. He took sufficient time before making the final move to Lake Rowan to enable John to complete his apprenticeship to a machinery manufacturer and George to complete his basic schooling and then in early 1879 the family travelled by train from Ballarat to Benalla and thence to Lake Rowan by horsedrawn transport.

On arrival at the selection they first lived in tents, until basic bark huts could be erected. William would not have been entirely without financial resources to cover the cost of the journey and the living expenses to be incurred during the first unproductive years. When he left Ballarat he seems to have left unsold behind him 100 acres of land, perhaps as a form of security against hard times, and these may have

generated a little income.

William would have needed all the revenue he could get because the product of the first few years of labour on the property would have gone towards added value rather than disposable income. There must have been times when he wondered about the wisdom of his decision to move to the area. By late 1893 he may well have felt that he had turned the corner. On his lot, he had 172 acres cleared of timber and the whole of the area had been ringbarked. He had three dams, 100 chains of fencing, a dwelling house comprising seven rooms, a man's hut and a standing crop of 84 acres of wheat.

The property had been named "Savernake", a name no doubt chosen by his wife, Ellen, who would have had happy memories of the forest of that name near her birthplace, Great Bedwyn, in Wiltshire.

And then, in December 1883 disaster struck. A bushfire which had started on a property nearby spread to engulf the district. William and John were the greatest sufferers and it was only by good fortune that the homestead was saved from destruction.

In February 1886 John's holding was formally transferred to William, possibly to enable John to concentrate on his ambition to establish an agricultural implement manufacturing business but on 26th December 1886 John died as the result of typhoid fever at the age of 24, leaving his younger brother George to carry on the family tradition.

Here we will leave the story of cousin William and his family, except to record the sad circumstances of his death.

On 6th November 1903 the "Tungamah and Lake Rowan Express and St. James Gazette" reported that on 30th October 1903 William Symons, an old and highly esteemed resident of Lake Rowan had met his death by drowning in an underground tank. William was then a widower, aged 70 and crippled with arthritis. He had apparently overbalanced and fallen into the tank when attempting to lift a pail of water. The tank was nine feet deep.

The newspaper report concludes; "The remains were interred in the Lake Rowan Cemetery on Sunday and were followed by a large number of people by whom the deceased was held in high esteem as a thoroughly straitforward man and an excellent neighbour.."

Later the family erected a memorial over the grave. It stands as an excellent example of the pitfalls which can beset historical researchers. The inscription is set out below. Beside it I have set out what I think the inscription should have said!

The Inscription	Edited version
Erected by WILLIAM SYMONS in memory of his dear wife ELLEN who died 11th April 1900 aged 69 years also their son JOHN who died 26th Decr.1886 aged 25 years and their grandson JOHN SYMONS who died 12th Feby. 1899 aged 11 years also WILLIAM SYMONS beloved husband of the late	Erected by WILLIAM SYMONS in memory of his dear wife ELLEN who died 11th April 1900 aged 69 years also their son JOHN who died 26th Decr. 1886 aged 25 years and their grandson JOHN SYMONS who died 16th Feby. 1899 aged 11 years also WILLIAM SYMONS beloved husband of the late

ELLEN SYMONS
who died 31st Oct. 1893
aged 70 years

* GEORGE SYMONS
Beloved son of
GEORGE & SUSAN SYMONS
who died 12th April 1898 aged
19 years and 4 months.

ELLEN SYMONS
who died 30th Oct. 1903
aged 70 years

* GEORGE SYMONS
Beloved son of
GEORGE & SUSAN SYMONS
who died 12th April 1908 aged
19 years and 4 months.

Footnote: The extended family of William Symons and his descendants appears to have remained much more cohesive than the family of Henry John. Family reunions at the original property are held from time to time but the locale for this tradition is likely to change hands soon. George Symons plans to retire and sell the property, which has been in Symons hands since William first selected it.

FAMILY HISTORY TOUR OF DEVON

By Judith and Ken Robbins
April 1996

On Friday, 19th April Ken and I began our journey in Devon. Our first destination was Bournemouth, a 2½ hour coach ride from London.

We were met by Victor Loosemore who took us to his home at 2 Ferncroft Gardens where his wife, Sylvia, had prepared a delicious 3 course lunch. There was much chatter about the Loosemore Trees (see page 9) and to my surprise Victor gave me a copy of the will of John Jarvis Tripe. I had not realized that John Jarvis and Ann had six children, not five. John Loosemore Tripe was their second born child. Victor also gave me the latest copy of the chart of the Rose Ash Branch of the Loosemores, to which we belong.

We journeyed via Sidmouth to Newton Poppleford. Brook Cottage is situated back fifty yards from the main road. At the rear of the cottage is a small stream and a bridge leading to the house where Arthur Lightfoot's parents lived. (Arthur died in March this year.) How wonderful to meet Evelyn Lightfoot, the first Loosemore Tripe cousin I had found. We spent an enjoyable two hours there, seeing photographs and admiring the gold brooch which Henry John Symons had given his mother. Then Evelyn's sister Ada and her husband, Fred Tucker, arrived in time for afternoon tea. They were interested to know about Australia as we were to know about farming in Devon.

Our next visit was to Little Stone at the entrance to Stone Barton farm - home of the Webbers. Richard and Pam live at Little Stone, Chawleigh, near Chulmleigh. We drove through Broadclyst, Silverton, Crediton, Lapford to Chawleigh. The Webbers made us most welcome and it was not long before we were viewing photos of Ann Webber (nee Tripe) who was Richard's grandmother and Ann Horrell's first born daughter, and of Jane Loosemore Tripe and Bessie Dendell. We also saw "Granny Tripe's" prayer book and an obituary of Ann Webber. She and her husband Richard had lived over the Saddler's shop. They had eight sons, six of whom emigrated to America. Thus Ann Horrell must have had six American grandsons with whom to begin an American dynasty.

After lunch we toured the Chulmleigh area. From a distance we saw Parsonage Farm (page 18) and the house on a hillside where Bessie (nee Dendell) and Bert Copley lived. The Copley family owned Bealy farm. It was a good one but it was well known that "more went out of the farm than was put into it."

Then back to the town, stopping to take photos of Myrtle Cottage (page 18), the saddler's shop and the church, where I tried to visualize Ann and John Tripe worshipping, perhaps with Ann and Richard Webber and their eight sons and John Tripe's daughter Sarah. (Richard remembers visiting Sarah who lived to be 102.)

And so our journey continues - to Whimble where we stayed three nights at the "Down House" overlooking the town. After making a phone call to the Heards at "Crabhayes" (page 15) we visited the birthplace of Ann Horrell Loosemore. How exciting to be sitting having a cuppa in the kitchen, then exploring the house - built of sandstone, with two staircases and five bedrooms upstairs. The building is a classified one and any renovations must be done under supervision. The Heards have details of the ownership dating back to Ann's parents.

"Crabhayes" means Crab from the crabapple tree opposite the lane and "hayes" means land near a church. The apple orchards have long gone. It is now a dairy farm milking 52 cows. Soon another 70 acres will be added to the area. Apple cider was once produced here and the cellars were full of cider barrels. The workmen were paid with cider, bread and cheese. The cider factory at Whimble has been demolished and local people now go to Exeter for work.

The stables, dairy and cellars at "Crabhayes" form a quadrangle and some of the stables must remain in their original state because of the National Trust rating.

Sadly we said goodbye to Broadclyst and set out for Rockbeare. The Whimble girls had photographed some of the tombstones there and I felt we were entering familiar territory, especially after seeing Norman and Muriel's video. The Rector's wife kindly opened the church and let me take photos of the font, lectern etc and the kneeling cushions that feature "Rook House", which is the meaning of Rockbeare.

We found the graves of Ann Symons, William's mother, and of William and John Loosemore Symons. I wish that I could have read the inscription above John's name.

And then on to the bakery where John Tripe's father was the baker. Unfortunately the shop closed for the last time last year.

We drove to Westcott House and Westcott Farm. I regret that I did not take any photos. I feel that Westcott farm was where John Symons was a butcher.

Anzac day and as we had a few hours to spare we decided to revisit Sidbury - perhaps we might discover something as it was four years since our visit to the grave that started the "Family History Trail". After lunch at the clock house, where I purchased the Sidbury book for Neil, we crossed the road to St. Giles. I found the entry in the visitors book which I made four years ago and it was with satisfaction that I signed the book again. Ken discovered in the list of churchwardens a John Tripe 1838 - 1849. We had found the name Symons in the list on our last visit.

Perhaps one explanation re the Sidbury grave that was passed down through our families (until we disproved it) was that the John and Ann were really John and Ann Tripe of Sidbury!

The tiny town of Whimble consists of a Post Office, a General Store, a Dolls' museum, a Veterinary Practice and the Church, surrounding an oblong square. We had meals at a small pub situated on a small side street.

Ken and I visited the church to take photos and decide where we would sit for the evening service. We arrived at 7 p.m. and sat on the left hand side a few rows from the front. It is a beautiful building. The altar is made of sandstone and the yellow and white flowers on the altar added to its beauty.

The service commemorating the 150th anniversary of the rededication of St. Mary's was conducted by the local minister in the presence of the Bishop of Exeter. A combined district choir filled the choir stalls and a small orchestra of teenage girls assisted the organist.

Whimble was mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. The present church is dated from the 15th century and because of disrepair was rebuilt in 1846. Some parts were carefully dismantled and replaced. The chancel was extended by 7 feet. The cost of rebuilding was 2000 pounds.

After the service a savoury supper was served, with glasses of white wine. People remained in the pews as the food was brought in on auto-trays. It was during supper that we finally had the opportunity to meet the Whimble girls - Daphne Rastnall, Margaret Burrough and Frances Harris. Jill Wood was unable to attend but I spoke to her on the phone. I thanked them for their wonderful help but they said how grateful they were that I put the Advertisement in the Family Tree Magazine - "Symons - Loosemore" - because it has really given them the incentive to concentrate on the history of Whimble. We met Mr John Shepherd, their President. I asked him about the butcher's shop. He said there were several businesses carried on in William Symons's time in Whimble and his could have been on a farm.

Our final meeting on our Devon Journey was to visit Evelyn Lightfoot's daughter, Hilary Harris (page 38) at Hummer Farm at Trent near Yeovil. Hilary and her husband Harry grow crops but had some cattle during the winter. They live in a 14th or 15th century house listed as a "special home". The house is built on mud and has no other foundations and they can tell when it is going to rain because the stones in the hallway become damp. The house has a Norman archway and stone mullion windows. Hilary has in her possession three spoons with the initials J.L.T. on the handles, the J.L.T. being for Jane Loosemore Tripe. We enjoyed our time at Hummer Farm but unfortunately Harry could only meet us for a few minutes as he was very involved in the British Beef Crisis.

And so concludes our journey. How often have Neil and I said "If only one Symons had told another Symons or asked another Symons what was known about Henry John's family in England!" We might have been saved a lot of hard work but we might have missed a lot of pleasure.

Since I wrote these notes there have been two interesting developments. First, the Heards sent me some excerpts from the history of Crabhayes. I passed these on to Neil who has made use of them in his notes about Ann Horrell's birthplace.

Then the Webbers sent me some family photographs and copies of press reports about the funerals of several members of the family and copies of some old family records which they had inherited. Neil is reproducing a couple of the photographs in his supplement and you will be able to see some of Ann Horrell Tripe's children and their families. One of the items which I found of particular interest is a handwritten note, the writer of which is as yet unknown, which records that Henry John Symons was born at Whimble on May 22 1834 10 minutes after 11 o'clock in the forenoon on a Thursday. Dr Cross of Clist Honiton attended and Nurse Williams was also present. John Loosemore Symons, second son of William and Ann Horrell Symons was born April 2nd 1836 by ½ past 9 O'clock in the evening. Dr Gilles Ashford of Broadclist attended.

Although our search began as an attempt to discover the forebears of Henry John Symons, it has established, I think, that Ann Horrell Loosemore was at least equally important in the formation of our branch of the Symons family and it is good that we have been able at least to touch the fringe of her continuing influence as the matriarch of six members of the Tripe family, a family which was quite unknown to us until our researches led us to it.

We are grateful to the Heards and the Webbers for their help and interest.

Judith Robbins



Ken Robbins at Crabhayes

Some of the Tripe family in the late 'ninties.

Front row: Elizabeth Dendle, Jane Symons, Ann Webber

Rear row: Ven Webber, Bessie & John Dendle, Minna, John & Mary Tripe, John Symons, Charlie Webber



Outside 4c Union Street Torquay about 1901
Ann Webber, John Dendle, Bessie Dendle, Charlie Webber, Ven Webber, Elizabeth Dendle
Front centre: Ann Horrell Tripe



An element of guesswork has been involved in attributing some names to the members of the Tripe family shown in the photographs on the previous page. This applies in particular to the trio named as Minna, John and Mary Tripe.

John Loosemore Tripe was Ann Horrell's eldest son by her second marriage - and incidentally the second John Loosemore to whom she had given birth. She had two other sons by her second marriage, George and William and the Tripe family also included John Jarvis's son James from his first marriage. William had predeceased his father. We have not come across any information about George, except that under his father's will he was to receive William's share in addition to his own.

John Loosemore Tripe was an hotelkeeper in the 'eighties. The 1881 census has him as licensee of the Rock & Pier Hotel at Clevedon in North Devon. (His surname is spelt as Trippe in the census.) Also present were his wife, Mary and their two children, Benjamin, 4, and Mary, 2. This suggests that young Mary was born in 1879 and she would have been about 20 when the photograph is thought to have been taken. I have called her Minna because on the death of Ann Webber in 1914 a floral tribute was received marked "To our dear sister and auntie from J S and P Trippe and Minna". In the press report an L could easily be converted to S but the P presents something of a problem. Ann Webber's son Richard died in 1937 aged 96. His funeral was attended by many members of the Tripe and Symons families and at least one Loosemore. A Mr & Mrs Hayter were listed among the official mourners as being unavoidably absent but a floral tribute was received from L.H.Hayter and Mima. Should this have been "Minna" or should "Minna" have been "Mima" in the 1914 report? We may never know!

I have assumed that the lower picture was taken outside the Dendle home at Torquay, largely because the homburgs worn by Ven and Charlie seem to be suitable for visitors, whereas the homely cap worn by John Dendle would not have been considered suitable attire to be worn abroad on a social occasion. Ann Horrell must have been near to the end of her days at this time.

Ven Webber is one of the six sons of Richard and Ann Webber who emigrated to America. He seems to have returned to the U.K. on more than one occasion as his name appears as one of the mourners at the funeral of Ann Webber in 1914. His address at that time was given as Torrington. His Christian name seems to have been an abbreviation of Sylvanus.