

THE FAMILY
OF
HENRY JOHN SYMONS
1834 - 1911

NEIL SYMONS

48 EPENARRA CLOSE

HAWKER ACT 2614

APRIL 1995

EXTRACT FROM THE FAMILY BIBLE

Births

Henry John Symons Born May 27th 1834

Mary Ann Symons Born November 23rd 1840

Married April 2nd 1861.

Henry William Born January 7th - 1862.

Alfred Born June 23rd 1863

John Rosemoir Born August 13th - 1865.

Mary Ann Born October 1st - 1846

William Born June 8th 1868

Walker Born March 11th - 1870

Fredrick Born July 7th 1871

Priscilla Born Oct-5th 1872

Tommy Born April 19th 1875

Arthur Born March 13th 1877

Valentine Born Feb. 14th 1881

Percy Born July 10th 1882

THE FAMILY OF HENRY JOHN SYMONS

I retired on my 65th Birthday, on 19th August 1980. To mark the occasion our family gave me a representation of the Symons family Arms, mounted on a shield which now adorns our study wall. I doubt if any of us were under the delusion that I had the right to adopt the Arms as my own, although the accompanying Motto was seen by some as having a certain relevance. "Cor nobyle cor immobile" was variously interpreted as meaning "Honourable and Resolute" or "Upright but pig-headed." or, more politely "Upright but tenacious." I thought that this last interpretation might well apply to my first cousin once removed Judith Robbins. We will encounter her very soon.

Promoters of commercial 'heraldry' find it necessary to relate a family name to impressively noble forebears, as a selling feature. In my case, the procurers of this particular emblem reported that the family is of great antiquity in the County of Cornwall, where one John Symons Esq. was M.P. for Helston in 1388. Later William Symons of Hatt near Saltash was High Sheriff of the County in 1735.

The reference to Cornwall did not surprise me. About the only family information I could recall gleaned from my father was that his forbears had moved from Cornwall to Devon many years ago. From some source, now forgotten, I had learned that Hatt, near Botus Fleming in Cornwall, was the ancestral home of the Symons family. A few months before my retirement Joyce and I, with our sister-in-law Muriel, had paid a visit to the area.

This had followed a visit to Sidbury where we had inspected the grave of John and Ann Symons. From Sidbury we had driven to Exeter to renew our acquaintance with the Loosemore Organ Case in the Cathedral. Then on the following morning we drove to Plymouth on the A38, which skirts the city to the north, and a short distance past the Royal Albert Bridge over the Tamar River, meets the A388. If you then follow the A388 you will very soon find Hatt and a sign which points to Botus Fleming. We followed the sign and for some reason ended up in a farmyard. We quickly retreated to Hatt where a nice Post Mistress was able to direct us to a stately manor house which, she said, was the seat of the Symons family, currently occupied by the widow of the most recent Symons incumbent. This lady had remarried and the Symons name was not at present in use.

It is a very presentable country seat which we felt we could adopt as the home of our forebears. Unfortunately we did not think that we had enough evidence of our relationship to warrant a visit and we went on our way without feeling that we should have left calling cards.

Later I read about Abbott Robert Symons, who ruled at Buckfast Abbey between 1358 and 1395. He had had dealings with the Bishop of Exeter 300 years before John Loosemore built his mighty organ there, replacing the organ which had been destroyed by the Puritans. Abbott Robert had been a stout defender of the rights of his house, as well as his own, and I would like to be able to think of him as the uncle of one of my forebears.

Later still I began to review such evidence as we had about our more recent ancestors. From my cousin Norman I received a brief account of the Ballarat activities of the family, including information extracted from my Grandfather's family Bible. Then my cousin Jess Scott mentioned Whimble as a possible alternative to Sidbury as the place of my Grandfather's birth. His Death Certificate, seemingly based on information provided to the undertaker by my Uncle Walter, gave his place of birth as Sidbury, Devonshire and the names of his parents as John and Elizabeth. How could this be reconciled with the Sidbury gravestone?

Perhaps my Grandfather's obituary notices would tell us more. Jess Scott again came to the rescue. The Death Notice in the Ballarat Courier of 3rd November 1911 - the same day as his death! - simply recorded? "Symons. On 3rd November at his residence Wendouree Parade Henry John Symons native of Sidbury Devonshire aged 77 years a Colonist of 56 years." But on 4th November a more extensive report referred to the passing of a veteran and highly respected resident of Ballarat... "The deceased carried on business as a butcher on the same site of Macarthur Street for 56 years and prior to that was employed by the late Mr Joshua Ware, from whom he purchased the business... He was a native of Whimble Devonshire

England and reached Melbourne in the Northumberland in 1856.....”

Someone had obviously supplied amending information and I liked to think that it was probably my father, who had known his father longer than anyone else. The original misinformation remained enshrined in the Death Certificate. (It seems that my father added to the misinformation. Northumberland did not come to Australia in 1856.)

I wished that we had known about Whimple when we visited Sidbury. It is a few miles North-West of Sidbury as the crow flies, and on the line of rail from Exeter to Salisbury.

It was at about this time in the course of my enquiries that Jess Scott reintroduced me to Judith Robbins, whom I had not seen since she was little Judith Symons, elder daughter of my cousin Harry Symons of Merbein. Judith had initiated searches in the Devon Record Office. These were to be the precursor of a range of enquiries which have produced most of the background history of the family which you will find in the pages which follow. We all owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude, which in my case is compounded with a strong sense of guilt. She is too polite to accuse me of stealing her thunder.

In the course of her enquiries Judith came across another example of the art of the commercial "heralds" operating from York Minster. The "ancient family Motto for this distinguished name" was said to be "Simplex Munditiis." The creator of the Motto borrowed from one of the Odes of Horace - Vol I v 1 - and you will find it translated in the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Quotations:

"Cui flavam religas comum,
"Simplex munditiis?"

The Editor says it means "For whose eyes dost thou trim those flaxen locks, so trim, so simple?"

I think that a fair translation of "simplex munditiis" would be "pure elegance" and it seems to have little relevance to the Symons family of Rockbeare.

This story of the Symons family is inextricably intermixed with a fragment of the story of the Loosemore family. We were to find that William Harris Symons had married Ann Horrell (or Horril) Loosemore and that Henry John Symons was their first born son. This served to explain a little mystery which had intrigued me for some years. I had been brought up to believe that my full name was Donald Neil Symons and it was not until many years after the death of my parents that I found that I had a third Christian name - in the Birth Register spelt as Losemore. Possibly without sufficient justification I incline to the opinion that my mother was never made aware of this name. My father registered my birth and I would not be surprised if he added this third name as a quiet attempt to ensure that my name would not be exclusively of Scottish Highland origin.

The spelling of the name Loosemore allows for considerable variation. Ann Horrell herself spelt it "Loosmore" and originally it may have been "Lowsmore". You will find that I have adopted no consistent spelling. Unfortunately it is not possible to achieve my ambition of taking our ancestry back to John Loosemore or his talented brothers Henry and George who were organists of note in the 17th Century but I cherish the thought that they and Ann Horrell may have shared a common ancestor at some much earlier time.

In the case of the Loosemores we can go back to 1525 when John Loosemore of Creacombe was mentioned in Subsidy Returns which recorded the earliest form of Income Tax. In the case of the Symonses we know that our branch of the family was well established in the Rockbeare area of Devon long before William Symons of Hatt near Saltash became High Sheriff of the County of Cornwall in 1735. They could well have been there when John Symons became M.P. for Helston in 1388.

One thing seems certain. The Motto "Cor Nobyle Cor Immobyle" would have been more apt than "Simplex munditiis" for there was not likely to be much in the way of elegance about the members of the Symons family. It is most unlikely, however, that any of them boasted Armorial Bearings. Victor Loosemore, one of the indefatigable researchers of the Loosemore family tree, has discovered that in 1808

John Loosemore, a forbear of Ann Horrell, paid tax of 6 shillings for windows, 5 shillings for a male servant, 2 pounds 8 shillings for 1 horse for personal use, 2 pounds 10 shillings for 4 working horses, 10 shillings for one dog and six pounds for Armorial Bearing Duty. (Unfortunately Victor has not yet been able to find a representation of the Loosemore Arms.) On surveying what little is known of the circumstances of our forebears, I cannot discern any evidence that any of them would have been willing to accept liability for a tax of this magnitude.

I have not attempted to record anything about the activities of the descendants of Henry John, except to the extent necessitated by the context. Each of his children would no doubt be entitled to a family history of his or her own. I emphasise the word "her" because I have no doubt that there is a good story in the life of Fanny. Throwing caution to the winds, I thought it might be nice to incorporate a list of all of Henry John's descendants - or such of them as I have been able to find out about - but confess that the task has almost proved too difficult. At the last count the total was over 200 and I was left with the feeling that the list was gaining on me! The various correspondents who have contributed to it have had various ideas about the data which I would need but I suppose that I will have to accept responsibility for its errors and deficiencies. I really should have known better than to try.

Well, here it is, such as it is. It would have been quite impossible to tell the story of Henry John Symons and his family without the assistance of Judith Robbins, Jessie Scott, Norman Symons, Violet Dart, Trevor Symons, George Symons and John Symons of the Tanners farm lineage, Victor Loosemore and the ladies of the Whimble Historical Society. If you think that there is anything of interest in the story probably you should thank them.

Neil Symons,
Canberra April 1995

HENRY JOHN SYMONS

1891

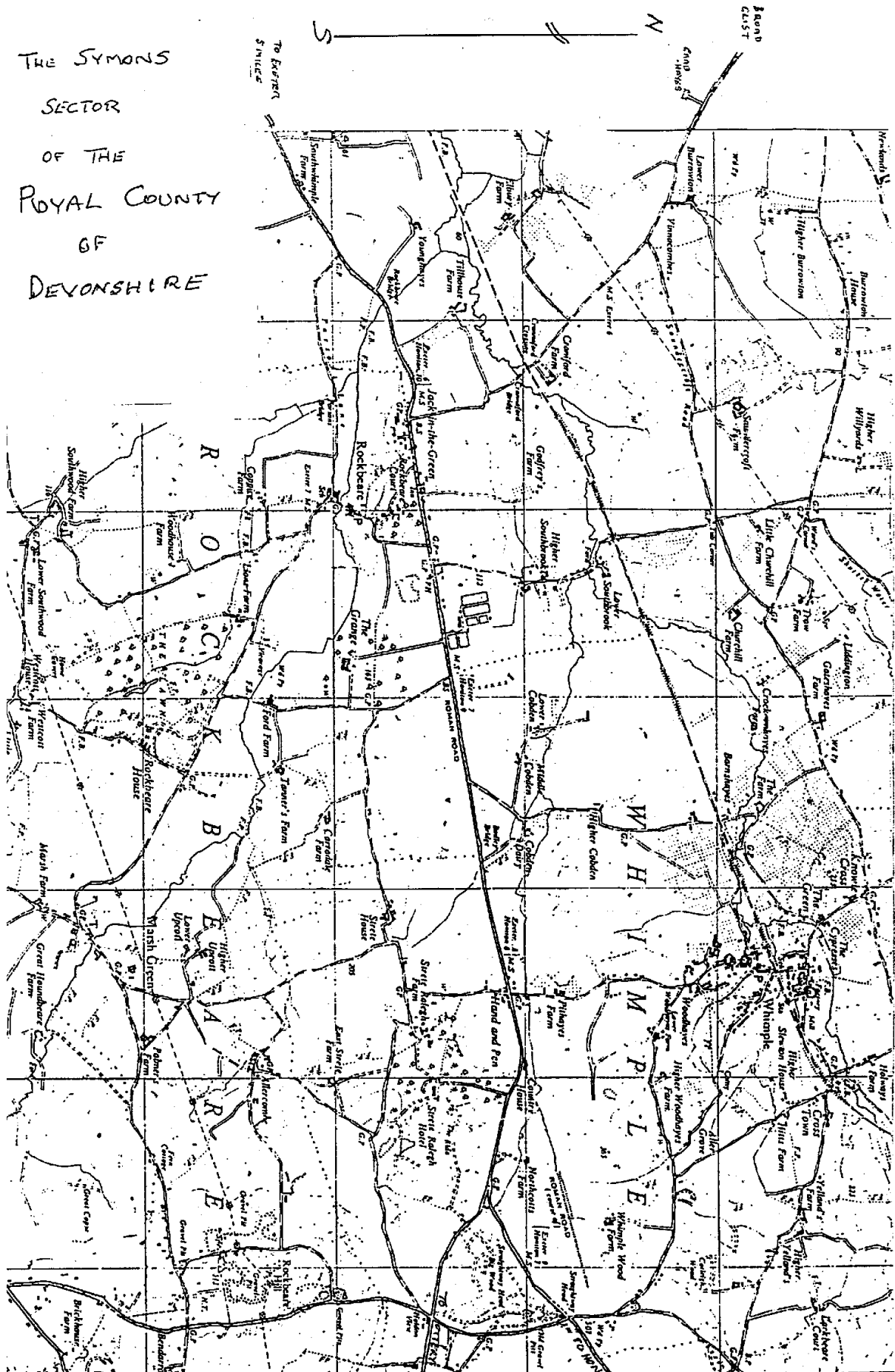
From a Portrait by
James Oldham



MARY ANN SYMONS

From Photographs by Bob Symons
of the originals in possession
of Jessie Scott M.B.E.

THE SYMONS
SECTOR
OF THE
ROYAL COUNTY
OF
DEVONSHIRE



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Extract from the Family Bible

[Illustration 2](#)

Henry John Symons, from a Portrait by James Oldham, and Mary Ann Symons. Photographed by Bob Symons from the originals, in the possession of Jessie Scott M.B.E.

[Illustration 3](#)

The Symons sector of the Royal County of Devonshire.

[Illustration 4](#)

Form of application for assisted passage such as would have been signed by William Symons in 1852

[Illustration 5](#)

The Loosemores. Ann Horrell Tripe with her grandson, John Loosemore Symons: Wedding Group on the occasion of the Marriage of Doris Symons and Arthur Lightfoot.

[Illustration 6](#)

Map of original Ballarat town land Allotments 1-28, which went on sale from 1852.

[Illustration 7](#)

The Wheatsheaf Hotel, erected on Lot 4 of Thomas Brown's subdivision. Delicensed circa 1917. Demolished by Henry William Symons in 1918 to make way for his new house.

[Illustration 8](#)

Henry John and Mary Ann photographed by Alfred Wren, Artist Photographer of 96 Elizabeth Street Melbourne, premises which he occupied in 1869-70. As Walter was born on March 11th 1870, it seems likely that these photographs were taken either early in 1869 or after March 1870. Henry John would have been about 35 and Mary Ann about 29 at the time.

The photograph thought to be that of Henry William Symons was taken by Bardwell & Beachamp who practised in Ballarat for several years in the 'eighties. Henry William was born in January 1862 and seems not likely to have been much more than 18 when the picture was taken.

[Illustration 9](#)

Henry John with the apple of his eye, little Fanny: Miss Fanny Symons as a smart young lady and Fanny, as Mrs Charles Capp, with Ella, in 1906 and again in 1962.

[Illustration 10](#)

Mary Ann's mother, Mrs Mary Browne, from a photograph by the Great Western Art Company of Bishop's Road Westborne Grove

Frederick Vincent Browne, from a carte-de-visite by Bardwell's, "opposite the Theatre, Ballarat"

Mrs Browne Senior in later life, from a carte-de-visite by T.W.Wright Photographer of 199 East India Road opposite Poplar Church.

“Mystery cottage”, from a photograph which may have been the product of an early Box Brownie camera. Could this be the cottage which Sarah Ann Browne, widow of Frederick Vincent Browne occupied? Her cottage is thought to have been on the East side of Lake Street and the bluestone building in the background presents a problem. Suggested solutions to this mystery would be welcomed.

[Illustration 11](#)

Henry John in Brisbane. The photographer was J.S.Wiley who practised at Queen Studios around the turn of the century. See page 51.

Mrs Charles Capp. This delightful picture of Fanny by the Richards Studio in Ballarat cannot be precisely dated but as she was apparently wearing a wedding ring it must have been taken early in her married life.

[Illustration 12](#)

An interesting study of the Macarthur Street streetscape, this photograph has lost something by being reduced in size to fit the page. On the original, the gable of the stable shows up a little more clearly above the skillion roof over the awning protecting the passage-way on the right hand side of the shop proper. The chimney of the boiler installation can be seen in the background above the letter Y in the name on the fascia board. Harry would very likely have been at the farm and thus would have escaped the trauma of having to reverse his Hupmobile into position. Perhaps Percy had gone to the Bank.

I am indebted to Norman Symons for this picture.

[Illustration 13](#)

Extract from the Family Bible.

[Illustration 14](#)

The ship NORTHUMBERLAND that Brought Henry John Symons to Australia in 1857.

Most of the other pictures have come from the annals of Jessie Scott, including an early photograph album which probably had been begun by Mary Ann Symons.

THE FAMILY OF HENRY JOHN SYMONS

CHAPTER ONE - ANCESTRAL HOME

The line of the old Roman road followed by the Legions on their route marches from Londinium to Isca Dumnoniorum, which was to become the city of Exeter, forms the boundary between the ancient villages of Whimble and Rockbeare. No doubt the Danes found it a useful route to follow in the siege of the city in 1001, as would William the Conqueror in yet another bitterly contested assault in 1068. Over the next 500 years the city sustained sieges or assaults on at least five different occasions and the old road would have been involved in all of them. ([n1_1](#))

Whimble is of particular relevance to this story as the birthplace of Henry John Symons, as we shall see, but Rockbeare could claim greater significance as the ancestral hone of our branch of the Symons family. The whole district was apparently once the property of Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester. During the reign of Edward III (1327-1377) Gilbert's youngest sister, Elizabeth Lady of Clare, ([n1_2](#)) who had succeeded to many of his estates on his death in 1295, gave the Manor of Rockbeare to Cannonleigh Abbey. No doubt it was "privatised" during the reign of Henry VIII. In more recent times it came into the ownership of the Sainthill family from whom it was purchased in the early 19th century by Thomas Porter Esq. of Nutwell House. ([n1_3](#))

The Village of Rockbeare, which is six miles E.N.E. of Exeter and five miles west of Ottery St. Mary, had an area of 2309 acres in 1850 and its slowly declining population comprised some 513 souls. ([n1_4](#)) Its common, about 200 acres, was enclosed in 1849, no doubt to the immediate advantage of the Lord of the Manor, who had recently rebuilt the old mansion of Rockbeare House, although apparently he did not live in it.

There were then several other estates in the village ([n1_5](#)) and many scattered farms. "The soil is generally fertile and the surface boldly undulated" ([n1_6](#)) the chief crops being wheat and oats, with considerable pasturage. ([n1_7](#)) Most of the inhabitants were engaged in rural occupations but the 1850 directory recorded a shopkeeper, a bricklayer, a tailor, a wheelwright, a blacksmith, brick and tile makers, a bricklayer and builder, a carpenter and a baker - but no butcher. Henry John's Uncle John is included in the list of farmers. ([n1_8](#))

The Parish Church of Saint Mary was described in 1850 as an antique fabric. It has a peal of five bells, the oldest of which goes back to 1613. The current register of Births, Marriages and Burials was begun in 1645, in the days of Oliver Cromwell, and it was not long before the names "Symons" began to appear in it. There were Symons baptisms in 1646, 1647 and 1649 - a Thomas and a couple of Georges - and in 1656 a Ralph, the second son of that name in the family of Ralph and Sarah, the first Ralph having died in 1654. The first marriage which can be clearly defined as being in our line of descent, that of John and Mary, may have taken place outside the parish. It produced at least eight children, Rebecca the eldest being born in 1672 but the second son, Ralph, baptised in April 1685, was our forebear. He was the first in a sequence of Ralps which was only broken in 1773, when Ralph, eldest son of Ralph, died at the age of 15 but, alas, too late for his father to replace him with another Ralph, for his father had already died.

In that generation the line of descent was taken over by John, who was to become Henry John's grandfather, and the name "Ralph" was to disappear from the annals of the family until it was included in the names of one of my cousins, Edward, third son of my Uncle William in far off Australia.

John Symons, Henry John's grandather, was a butcher living at Westcott, which was a small property near Westcott House to the south of the manor of Rockbeare House and a couple of miles south of Rockbeare village proper. ([n1_5](#)) This seems to have been the first occasion on which the register has disclosed the father's occupation and it seems not unlikely that John was not the first butcher in the family. Edmund Symons, a butcher at Marsh Green appears in the Register a few years later. He could well have been following in the footsteps of his father, another John.

John of Westcott had six children. He was born in January 1799 and seems to have married outside the Parish. In later baptisms, his wife is simply described as Ann but it seems not unlikely that her surname was Harris. John died in February 1817, leaving his widow to bring up their brood of six - Priscilla, born 1807, Eliza 1809, John 1811, the twins William Harris and Elizabeth Harris, born December 1813 and Henry, 1815. Thus the eldest was 10 years old at that time and Ann must be seen as having been of heroic stature to meet the challenge.

Working life began at an early age in those days and it seems likely that both John and William Harris were put to learning the family trade as soon as possible. They both went on to become butchers and we shall see more of them very soon.

It was common for widows with young families to remarry after a decent interval, generally to an older widower with children of his own who required care, but Ann's family may well have been too large to be attractive, if ever she was tempted to seek this solution to her problems. She ended her days in Rockbeare and her grave may be seen in the Churchyard of Saint Mary – “To the Memory of Ann Symons who departed this life March 6th 1863 aged 84 years”.

The stone is decrepit and the inscription not easy to read. There may be a doubt about her age, as she had appeared in the Census as living at London Road Rockbeare in 1851, aged 70, which suggests that her age at death would have been 82 or that she may have died in 1865.

The Census describes her as an Annuitant, a title which may simply serve to indicate that at the time she was not receiving relief from the Parish. Nothing is known of her means. Living with her was her son Henry, aged 35, who was described as a Pauper, a term which indicates that he was receiving Poor Law Relief, possibly because he was infirm and unable to work. Henry was her youngest child and we will find him in her company at a later stage of this story. Perhaps some researcher will unearth particulars of the estate of Ann's husband, John, and give us a better picture of the hardships which she may have suffered as a result of his untimely death - he would have been 38 at the time. He was not necessarily a poor man. His Uncle John, for example, who was husband of Elizabeth Chowne and a Blacksmith at Marsh Green, left an estate of some significance when he died in 1824. (See Chart II) His son Edmund was a butcher at Marsh Green and it could well be that he had a hand in the introduction to the trade of Ann's sons, John and William Harris.

We can have the advantage of studying the will of John Symons, the Blacksmith. It was made on 11th March 1824, three months before his death, and shows that he was then living in a newly erected dwelling which was separate from another dwelling, adjacent to which was the blacksmith's shop then occupied as tenant by his son William. There is no indication that this property was encumbered in any way. John devised it to his wife for life, or until her remarriage, after which it was to pass to John's son-in-law, William Pratt, husband of his daughter Sarah, subject to the payment of one hundred and twenty pounds, which was to be divided between five of his children, and of five pounds which was to go to the testator's grandchild, John Symons, "the son of my daughter Elizabeth wife of Henry Symons now of the Parish of Sidbury". ([n1_9](#))

The widow was to have a life interest, until remarriage, in the residue of the estate, which was then to go to six of the testator's children, the five mentioned above plus Charles, but if Charles had not by then returned from beyond the sea, his two daughters were to receive five pounds each. There was a provision which seems to suggest that the widow could make up her income out of the corpus of the residue, if necessary, to the sum of twenty pounds per annum. Sarah, it seemed, had to content herself with such benefits as might come her way from the devise to her husband, William Pratt. ([n1_10](#))

The will was engrossed on parchment and, by modern standards, might seem to be unnecessarily prolix. The actual size of the estate might also surprise modern readers. In an affidavit accompanying the will, the Executrix, the widow Elizabeth, who affixed her mark to the document, deposed that the value of the estate did not exceed two hundred pounds.

This abridged report on the will and estate of John Symons, the Blacksmith, might seem to have

occupied an inordinate amount of space in this family history but its contents are an indication that, although the economy of Devonshire at the time was extremely depressed, those of its inhabitants who had the advantage of following a trade might have the advantage, also, of leaving their dependants a little further from extreme poverty than their less fortunate neighbours.

Perhaps blacksmiths were a little better off than butchers because there could have been little in the way of prosperity in the butchery trade at the time. The average rural resident would have considered himself as being fortunate to be able to buy butcher's meat at any time.

However she did it, Ann seems to have been able to enjoy in her old age the satisfaction of having been able to bring up her family to adulthood, although the twins William Harris and Elizabeth Harris did not live to see a lot of it.

I like to think of Ann watching the world go by from her cottage on the London Road, the very same London Road of the early days. She would have been able to witness the results of the growth in popularity of the stagecoach in the 1830's which must have been reflected by a growth in traffic along the Exeter - Honiton sector of the road to London. There must have been at least nine long distance coaches passing her gate on the way from Exeter to London each day - perhaps a few less on Sundays - and an equal number travelling in the other direction.

The first coach for the day would have been the Telegraph, which left Exeter's New London Inn at 5 a.m. and was due in London 17 hours later. This must have meant that it travelled at an average speed of 10 miles per hour, a statistic which could only have been made possible by a general improvement in the road surface with the growing use of the Macadam method. Next would come the Pilot, which left the Old London Inn at 5.45 and then the Traveller (New London Inn at 6.30). The Prince George left the Old London Inn at 8 a.m. and the Subscription an hour later from the same place. Next would come the Old Royal Mail, perhaps the doyen of the fleet. It would have left Penzance at 1.30 p.m. the previous afternoon and travelled through the night, through Falmouth and Launceston. In its prime it covered the journey from Falmouth to London in 29 hours. ([n1 11](#))

The rival coach, the New Royal Mail, left Exeter at 11.30 followed by the Celerity at 2.30 p.m. and the Defiance at 5 p.m. Coaches from London bearing the same names ran in the other direction, the first to pass Ann's door being the Prince George, which had left the Angel at Honiton at 5 a.m. The sound of its horn would have brought the sluggards from their beds in Rockbeare and Whimble as it passed through a few minutes before 6 a.m. Those who were up in time might have seen the Prince George escape collision with the Telegraph, which could well be passing in the opposite direction - unless it had stopped at one of the Inns in the town, Jack-of-the Green near Rockbeare Court or The Hand and Pen, near the Whimble Road or The Rolling Pin and Chopping Board a little further to the East. ([n1 12](#))

The last coach from London, The Traveller, would have been due to leave Honiton at 7 p.m. and would have passed through Rockbeare before bedtime. Time keeping was generally very reliable and if the local residents could not set their clocks by the sound of the Guard's horn, they would at least have had the comfortable feeling that they were being kept in touch with the outside world at frequent intervals throughout the day. The Mail coaches would have been particularly important. The development of the Mail Service and the coaching network were inextricably intermixed and the introduction of the Penny Post in 1840 must have been part both of the cause and of the effect of this development.

Meanwhile, in 1825 the Stockton and Darlington railway had opened and the age of steam transport had dawned. Within 25 years it had become possible to catch a coach from Rockbeare to Exeter and thence to travel to London by train in relative comfort at less cost than the direct journey by coach and with a significant saving in time, despite the longer journey involved. It was not long before it was also possible to take a train in the other direction from Exeter to Plymouth.

Communications were further improved with the construction of the Southern Railway line, which reached Whimble in 1860 and which probably had the effect of weighting the population balance in favour of the area to the North of the old Roman Road.

Ann would have seen other great sociological changes during her widowhood. She would have celebrated the crowning of three new Monarchs, George IV, William IV and Victoria and, although she was not to become entitled to the vote, she no doubt had her own views about the Reform Bills, the Poor Laws and the repeal of the Corn Laws. She certainly would have understood the groundswell of support for the process of emigration to the Colonies, which seemed to offer the only hope for so many of the population in the face of grinding poverty and incessant unemployment. In time she would come to see two of her grandchildren setting out for the Great South Land but first she had to see to the settling down of her two sons - John and William. We will be concerned with the story of both of them.

I think that Ann was a forebear of whom we can be proud and it is comfortable to feel that we have something of her in our DNA. Perhaps “challenging” would be a more appropriate word than “comfortable”.

CHAPTER TWO - THE BROTHERS

John Symons, my great great grandfather, died in February 1817 and, as his burial is recorded in the annals of the Rockbeare Church, we may not unreasonably assume that he died in the Village of Rockbeare. I have already assumed that Westcott where he is recorded as having carried on business as a butcher, was part of the parish of Rockbeare. There were two other Westcotts in South Devon, however, either of which might plausibly have been his home. One of them is two or three miles north of Whimble on the road from Talaton to Clyst Hydon and might not have been looked on as foreign parts by the residents of Rockbeare. The other is a mile or two further North West on the road from Exeter to Cullompton.

This second alternative could have a degree of plausibility if John's widow remained there while her son William grew up because this Westcott is fairly directly connected with Broad Clyst, the home of Ann Horrell Loosmore who was to enter the Symons story later on, as we shall see. However, each of these villages was possessed of a church which could have provided a much more convenient last resting place for John than the graveyard at Rockbeare, so Westcott near Westcott House, Rockbeare, remains my preference. ([n2_1](#))

Ann would have had three brothers-in-law to offer advice in her troubles - Henry, married to his relative Betty Symons (the precise relationship defies me!) William, married to his Anna Maria and Joseph, who remained a bachelor. Both Henry and William were already blessed or encumbered with young children and could not have offered much more than advice and moral support. Betty Symons's young brother Edmund would have been 26 at the time and, although already established as a butcher at Marsh Green, would not have been of much help either. He and his wife Elizabeth would then have had two of the seven daughters with whom they were to be blessed and perhaps the only promise of help which they could offer would be an apprenticeship in the butchering trade for the boys when they were old enough.

Ann's only sister-in-law, Harriet, was unmarried, so far as is known, and one can imagine her living at home caring for her widowed father, Ralph, then 78 and approaching the end of his days. Perhaps Joseph, then 40 and no doubt well set in his ways, was also still at home. Possibly there was someone on Ann's side of the family who could offer help. One can only hope there was. The burden of accommodating, clothing and feeding an adult and six young children must have been considerable. (There may have been only five children by then. The records are silent about the fate of the older girls. Possibly Eliza died in infancy and William's twin, Elizabeth, was named in her memory.)

The fate of the family offers a tempting field for research which some future historian might well investigate.

It could be that Ann and her family were not quite as badly placed as the bare statistics might indicate. Most butchers in rural areas combined their butchering businesses with farming activities, which seems understandable given the relatively limited supply of potential customers and their even more limited degree of buying power. The “big house” in the immediate vicinity of John's establishment was Westcott House which in later years, and possibly at that time, was occupied by Rev. John Elliot, described in the 1851

census as a Clergyman not having the cure of souls, employing 7 labourers. In the 1851 census record Westcott comprised 68 acres and was occupied by Ann Cox, Widow who employed 2 labourers.

John in 1817 seems to have been a tenant of Westcott farm and the farming activities would probably have needed the assistance of a couple of labourers. Ann may have been able to carry on this arrangement with the encouragement and advice of her relatives. In later years her elder son John could well have taken her place in the management of the property, before he moved on to a larger farm, known as Tanners, which he and his descendants were to occupy for over a century.

John junior had been born in 1811. He did not waste much time before marrying, for his first recorded offspring, William, was born in September 1833, suggesting that he must have married no later than late 1832 at the age of 21. His wife, Elizabeth Pratt, was of about the same age. She was a daughter of William Pratt and his wife Sarah, second daughter of John and Elizabeth Symons of Marsh Green.

The name William would have been approved on both sides of the family, as he could be said to have been called after his father's uncle William Symons, a blacksmith at Marsh Green who had recently died, and after his own Uncle William and also after his maternal grandfather, William Pratt. Young William was followed in an orderly progression by eight brothers and sisters and we will come across several of them in this story.

Ann's second son, William Harris, was nearly three years younger than John and it must have been apparent that Westcott would not be able to provide a living for him as well as his elder brother. Like John he had somehow or other acquired sufficient proficiency in the trade to describe himself as a butcher and when he married in July 1833, some months before his 20th birthday, he was already a butcher at Whimple. This would not have been feasible if he had been apprenticed according to traditional practices as his obligations would have continued until he had attained the age of 21 - unless his master released him earlier. However, apprenticeship was no longer compulsory at that time ([n2 2](#)) even in the big cities and both boys may have learned their trade as improvers rather than under formal indentures.

Although their respective businesses were conducted a mile or two apart, they could have been closely associated in the never-ending search for suitable stock for slaughtering.

If the Pratts were not satisfied with John Symons as a suitable husband for their Elizabeth, they must have been hard to please. John and Elizabeth had over forty years of married life and nine children to show for them. John was 22 when his eldest, William, was born and as young William grew towards manhood it must have been apparent to him that he could have a long wait before being able to step into his father's shoes. Actually he was 40 when his father died at the not very ripe age of 62. John's next son, also John, was seven years younger than William and, as we shall see, he acquired a wife with family ties which were unlikely to encourage him to follow William into a new life in the antipodes.

Meanwhile, John Senior had decided to move to a larger property, no doubt in an attempt to improve his prospects of adequately providing for his growing family. At the time of the birth of his first five children his place of residence was simply recorded as Rockbeare and his occupation as butcher but at some time between 1842 and 1845 ([n2 3](#)) he re-established himself at the property known as Tanners Farm, comprising some 176 acres. At the time of the 1851 census he was employing 6 labourers. John died in 1873 and young John took over the farm. He is recorded in the 1881 census as the head of the house and was then unmarried. The area of Tanners had declined to 142 acres. His young brother, George Henry, was still in residence and he seems to have taken over as head of the household at some time before the 1891 census. Young John had married in the meantime, as we shall see, and had moved to Lower Southwood. George Henry died in 1893 and his widow, Amelia, took over the property and remained in charge of it for many years. ([n2 4](#)) Norman George, son of George Henry and Amelia, remained as head of the household until his death in 1953. Thus the Symons family were tenants of the farm for about 110 years.

Norman George left a widow, Winifred Emily, who died in 1973. It is not known whether she had remained at Tanners after her husband's death. There were two children, Monica and Henry. Monica married a farmer named Mortimer and lived at Kennford. Henry is believed to have worked in a bank. There, for us,

the story of the Symonses of Tanners must end, except of course for young William, to whom we will return in the next chapter.

If the Pratts may be expected to have been reasonably content with the match made by their daughter Elizabeth, the same could not confidently be expected of the members of the Loosmore family when it became known that Ann Horrell Loosmore was enamoured of William Harris Symons. I suspect that most of the Loosmores would have regarded themselves as being superior to the rather more earthy Symonses.

Ann was a daughter of James Loosmore of Crab Hayes, near Broadclist, whose wife Elizabeth Bowden had also been a Loosmore by birth. (n2_5) James was described as a gentleman, a title which was somewhat superior to that of yeoman and certainly superior to the common occupational titles of farmer or butcher. (n2_6) Ann's second name, Horrell, was taken from her paternal grandmother, Sarah Horrell who married Robert Loosmore, Ann's grandfather. Sarah is described in the massive family tree of the Loosmores (n2_7) as a daughter of William Horrell of Horrell, Gentleman. At first sight, one might assume that the Loosmores would expect young William Harris to make his advances at the tradesman's entrance but appearances may at times be deceptive. Ann's father had died in 1826 leaving his widow with six children to care for. James, the eldest, was then 15 and no doubt had an eye fixed on the family estates. Ann Horrell was next. She was 14. Then came Robert, 12, Elizabeth Jane Bowden, 10, John, 8, and little Sarah Horrell 3 years old.

It is not surprising that Ann's mother should be not unwilling to take a second husband. After about three years of widowhood, she married William Veysey on 14th April 1829 and presumably went to live with him. I suspect that he was a family friend (n2_8) and a bachelor. Ann would have been approaching the age of 17 and possibly not very enthusiastic to accept the acquisition of a new father. Nothing is known of her movements before she married William Harris Symons. The wedding took place at the venerable Church of St. Mary Major in Exeter and in the Certificate of her Marriage, dated 25th July 1833, she is described as being "of this Parish".

The Church of St. Mary Major was demolished in 1972. (It was then found to have been erected over the remains of some old Roman baths.) It used to stand in the Cathedral Close, just to the west of the Cathedral itself and it was one of several Parish Churches which stood in or near the Close. The location of these churches had no clear relationship with the Parishes which they served and the fact that Ann was described as being "of the Parish" gives no indication of her likely place of abode at the time.

Two days before the wedding William had appeared before Edward Chance, the Bishop's Surrogate, to make application for a Licence to marry Ann, who was stated to be a Spinster aged twenty-one years. In fact she may have been twenty years old at the time. I do not know the precise date of her birth. She was baptised on 9th December 1812 and it is of course technically possible that she had been born before 25th July although this seems unlikely. William stated himself to be a bachelor of the age of twenty years but the probabilities are that he did not reach that age until some months later. His mother consented to the marriage and signed the Marriage Certificate as a witness. There is nothing to indicate whether the Loosmore family was represented or whether the "Officiating Clerk" John E. Phillips delivered a sermon.

If he did, he may very well have done so from the pulpit from which Hugh Latimer, the future Protestant martyr, had preached to the laity of the Diocese - and such of the clergy as could bring themselves to hear him - in June 1534, announcing that Henry VIII had become the Head of the Church of England and proclaiming the reform of the Church. William's mind would hardly have been on such matters as he looked forward to a long and happy marriage and maybe an unpaid helper in the shop.

It could not have been long before the young couple were made aware that there would soon be another mouth to feed. Their first born duly arrived within ten months and they called him Henry John. He was born on 22nd May 1834 and Baptised at Whimble on May 30th. His first name could have been taken from a number of relatives. William had an Uncle Henry and a great Uncle Henry as well as a brother of that name. Ann had an Uncle Henry, a brother of her mother, and she had an Uncle John, brother to her mother and her Uncle Henry. William's father had been John and he had a brother John. There had been a John in every previous generation as far back as 1680, at least. We can safely assume that the names chosen would

have met with general family approval.

Two years later the young couple had a second son, John born in April 1836 and, alas, buried in May 1837. Ann by then was a widow for William had died in September 1836. He was buried at the Rockbeare Church on 18th September 1836 and the register describes his place of abode as Rockbeare village. It would seem that at some stage prior to his death, and presumably because of an illness, he had been obliged to move his family from Whimble to Rockbeare, perhaps into the care of his mother, Ann. She meanwhile would scarcely have given up mourning the loss of William's twin sister, Elizabeth Harris, who had died on 3rd August 1835.

William's grave is marked with a stone, now heavily eroded by weather, which seems to read "In Memory of William Symonds who died 12th September 1836 aged 23 years" followed by the sad note "Left his wife and children". Young John is buried in the same grave.

Ann Horrell was indeed left in a parlous plight and she must have been grateful for the presence of her mother-in-law, already skilled in surmounting the problems of young widows. There seems to be nothing on record to indicate how Ann junior managed at that time and for those of us who have since attempted to discover something about the childhood and young manhood of Henry John there seemed for years to be a complete silence about Henry John's relationship with his mother. We knew that she did not emigrate to Australia with him. In his will he had made a mysterious bequest of fifteen pounds to one Bessie Dandall of Torquay in recognition "of her kindness to my late Mother" which seemed to suggest that she had died before the date of his will, 19th February 1902, but perhaps not long before that, for it was rumoured that Henry John had made two trips to his homeland and it was understood that these were to see his mother.

Then there turned up amongst some old records taken over by my cousin, Jess Scott, a book bearing the inscription – "With Grandma's love to Henry W. Symons Torquay, August 3rd /92." ([n2_9](#)) This date seemed likely to have coincided with one of Henry John's trips home, Henry W. was of course my father, Torquay was associated with Bessie Dandall and it seemed logical to direct the search for Ann Horrell Symons to that area. In the course of this enquiry, Judith Robbins came into association with the Loosemore cousins, Victor and Ronald, the indefatigable researchers of the Loosemore family tree.

Armed only with the suspicion that Ann had lived in Torquay in the later part of the century, Ronald extracted from the records the particulars of no less than 22 Ann Symonses who had died - between the beginning of 1880 and the end of 1890 and nominated eight "possibles" based on their ages at birth compared with Ann's known birth date. Then he raised the possibility that she may have remarried. This theory had already been considered but had been discounted on the basis that there had been nothing in the family memory to suggest such a development.

We were wrong! Buried amongst the Loosemore data enshrined in the Loosemore computer was a note that Ann Horrell Loosemore had married one William Tripe of Sidbury. This information had been gleaned from the will of a widow named Jane Wilcocks, a member of the Rose Ash branch of the Loosemore family, who had bequeathed a legacy of one hundred pounds to her great niece Ann, wife of William Tripe of Sidbury. There was no mention of Ann's first marriage at that time in the Loosemore data. The Will had been made on 11th October 1839. We subsequently found that Ann's husband was not William but John Jarvis Tripe. Perhaps Jane Wilcocks had confused his Christian name with that of Ann's first husband.

Then a search of the Census Records for Torquay in 1891 revealed that at 4c Union Street there lived John Dendle, Grocer, born. at Barnstaple aged 44, his wife Elizabeth, born at Sidbury and aged 43, their daughter Bessie born at Torquay and aged 19 and "Anne Tripe, Mother-in-Law, Widow aged 78, farmer's wife born at Broadclyst." Ann had been discovered!

She had married John Jarvis Tripe at the Church of Heavitree Exeter on 23rd May 1838, one day after Henry John's fourth birthday. I like to think that Ann selected this date in order to avoid a conflict with an important event in Henry John's life. The marriage was by Licence and it would have been necessary to establish that the bride had been resident in the Parish for fifteen days at least but we have nothing to indicate that she had been a long established resident. Witnesses to the event as recorded in the marriage register

were Henry Symons and Ann Symons, no doubt Ann's brother-in-law and mother-in-law. The bridegroom was described as a Yeoman, residing at Sidbury and a son of Richard Tripe. He was 48 and Ann was then 25. One can imagine that Ann would have been disinclined to marry at Rockbeare or at the Parish Church of Saint Mary Major. Heavitree could have been a convenient compromise.

John Jarvis would have been no stranger to Rockbeare where his father, Richard, was a baker but at this time he seems to be well established at Brook Farm Sidbury and it is to that farm that he took his new bride, complete with her son Henry John who became a companion for John Jarvis's son James who was of much the same age. John Jarvis's first marriage had also produced a daughter, Sarah, who was born in 1832 and died in 1934! ([n2_10](#)) His new marriage was a fruitful one. Over the next few years Henry John acquired three new half-sisters - Ann in 1839, Jane Loosemore in 1846 and Elizabeth in 1848, and two half-brothers - George in 1843 and William in 1851.

With the exception of William, they were all born at Sidbury. William was born at Sidmouth and when Ann registered his birth she gave as her place of residence Sidmouth and Cobden, Whimble. William had been born on 24th May 1851 - an event which narrowly escaped the 13th anniversary of his parents' marriage, as keen observers no doubt pointed out - and the birth was registered on 16th June, which seems to suggest that the parents were not in a hurry to leave Sidmouth en route for Cobden.

Thus was created another intriguing mystery for latter-day investigators to attack. Cobden was a Manor lying south-West of Whimble and to the north of the Roman road. It seems to have comprised four properties - Lower Cobden, Middle Cobden, Cobden Dairy and Higher Cobden, the last named being to the North of the others and bounded by one of the roads leading to Whimble. On the date of the 1851 census - 30th March - the occupants of Higher Cobden were James Tripe, 17, "Farmer's son" born at Sidbury, William Prince, a male servant aged 18 and also born at Sidbury and Mary Battin a female servant aged 21, born at Sidmouth. Thus Henry John's half-brother James seems to have been in charge on the day but very properly to have recognised his subservient position.

This seems a convenient time to digress on the subject of the Tripe family. Richard, the baker at Rockbeare, hailed from Dawlish, where his sons John Jarvis and James had been born. Richard is listed in the 1850 Edition of William White's directory of Devon but is not mentioned in Billing's Directory for 1857. James is mentioned in both and is also mentioned in Harrod's directory for 1878. In the 1851 census he is listed as the occupier of Southwood, where he farmed 160 acres and employed two labourers. He was then 48, suggesting a birth date of 1803, and his wife, Anna, who had been born at Sidbury, was 39. Their daughter, Anna, was then 10. She also had been born at Sidbury. This suggests, for what it is worth, that James may have been farming at Sidbury in 1841. John Jarvis was then farming Brook Farm Sidbury. According to his marriage certificate which seems likely to be a more reliable source than the census, he was 45 at that time which indicates that he was born in 1793 and thus was 10 years older than James, allowing time for several other Tripe offspring to have been born in the intervening years, for all we know.

John Jarvis described himself as a yeoman, which may indicate that he was the owner of the freehold known as Brook Farm and that any members of the Loosemore family who may have been inclined to decry Ann's descent into trade in marrying a butcher would now be able to view with approval her step back up the social ladder. No doubt there were some who took pleasure in noting the appropriateness of a butcher's widow selecting someone named Tripe. The name may have been unusual but it was in fact a distinguished one. The Dictionary of British Surnames reports ([n2_11](#)) that it appears in the records of the Templars in England in the twelfth century - Herbert was a Knight Templar in 1185 and Robert in 1302 - so the derivation of the name as a seller of tripe must go back further than that. ([n2_12](#))

To return to the nineteenth century, 30th March 1851 found John Tripe, his wife Ann and children Sarah, George and Elizabeth, living in the home of Richard Blackmore and his wife Sarah at an indecipherable address in Sidmouth - it may be "Land Park". To look after this company was Elizabeth Sellick, a house servant aged 14. We know that John's eldest son, James, was already at Higher Cobden but the mystery of the whereabouts of Henry John and Ann and little Jane Loosemore remained unresolved. ([n2_13](#)). One can make an educated guess that Sarah Blackmore was Ann Horrell's youngest sister. Richard Blackmore is described as a retired farmer, aged 28 and born at Collumpton. This may have been a

misspelling of Cullompton, a village within courting distance of Broad Clyst, which provides a tinge of supporting evidence for the supposition. ([n2_14](#))

The census describes John Tripe as a farmer, farming 122 acres and employing two labourers. This might refer to the farm at Lower Cobden where young James was at that time residing.

It could well be that young William first saw the light of day at the home of the Blackmores. He was born on 25th May 1851 and one can imagine that by then the Blackmores were growing a little tired of the company of the Tripes and that they were happy to speed them on their way to Higher Cobden as soon as possible. How long the family stayed at Higher Cobden is not known. The next formal record of them which has come to light is the census of 1861 which shows the Tripe family established at The Parsonage, Chulmleigh, where John was farming 320 acres and employing 4 labourers and 4 boys. Everyone seems to have been there except Henry John who was by then on the other side of the world as we shall see. ([n2_15](#)). By 1871 the scene had changed again. John Jarvis and his wife and daughter, Jane L., then 24 and still unmarried, were living at East Street Chulmleigh. John was 78 and now a retired farmer. The Parsonage was then occupied by James Tripe, 37, his wife Jane and his sister Sarah and one Sarah Knowles, 73, a widow simply described as "Aunt" - possibly an aunt of Jane but possibly an as yet unknown sister of John Jarvis. James was described as a farmer of 320 acres employing three men - perhaps his farming methods differed from those of his father.

By 1881 John Jarvis and Ann were living at Myrtle Cottage. John was now 88, Ann 68 and Jane was still with them, now 34 and still unmarried - though not for long. A new name had joined the family group. He was John Dendle, son-in-law, unmarried, aged 34, a "Grocer, Master". We would have to take the reference to his marital status with more than a grain of salt, for John was by then well married to Elizabeth Tripe. They had married on 24th March 1870 at The Parish Church Chulmleigh. How John came all the way from Torquay, to woo Elizabeth is not known. Elizabeth's sister, Jane Loosmore Tripe was one of the witnesses, joining George Dendle, presumably the bridegroom's brother. On 7th January 1872 Elizabeth (Bessie) was born. Thus the connection has been established between the Dendles and the "Bessie Dandall" referred to in Henry John's will.

John Jarvis Tripe died on 30th March 1883, aged 90 years, and his remains were interred in the Chulmleigh Churchyard. He was joined by "Ann H. Tripe, wife of the above" who died on December 25th 1901 aged 89. "Her end was Peace" says the inscription. She died in Torquay, where her name is recorded in the 1891 census. No. 4c Union Street Torquay was then occupied by John Dendle, Grocer aged 44, a native of Barnstaple, his wife Elizabeth, 43 born at Sidbury, his daughter Bessie aged 19 born at Torquay and Anne Tripe "Mother-in-law, a widow aged 78, Farmer's wife, born at Broadclyst." ([n2_16](#)).

At this stage we can leave the saga of the brothers, John and William Harris Symons. The story of William Harris has largely become the story of his widow, Ann Horrell Loosemore and we will come across her again. If her mother-in-law, Ann, was a forebear of whom we can be proud, Ann Horrell must at least equal her in our hall of fame. Judith Robbins has been able to unearth a faded photograph of her. It must have been taken in her later years, perhaps in about 1886. Clad in her widow's weeds, she is nursing little John Loosemore Symons who was born on 3rd August 1885, elder son of John Symons of Tanners Farm, Rockbeare and his wife, formerly Jane Loosemore Tripe, daughter of John Jarvis Tripe and Ann Horrell Tripe. ([n2_17](#))

Jane had found time, between the 1881 census and August 1885 to wed John Symons of Tanners and produce an offspring, who might have been expected to continue the Tanners tradition. There must have been a bit of gossip at the time of the wedding. The bride was a half-sister of Henry John Symons of Ballarat, Australia and the groom was the fourth child of Henry John's uncle, John Symons (now deceased) and his wife Elizabeth Pratt Symons of Tanners. Could the happy couple be described as "Half-cousins"? John had been in charge of Tanners at the time of the 1881 census but by 1891 we find him, with his wife and two sons, John L. aged 5 and Louis T. aged 3, ([n2_18](#)) resident at Lower Southwood, while his younger brother George was head of the house at Tanners. Southwood had been Tripe territory for years. John Jarvis's brother James was listed as a farmer there in various earlier Rockbeare directories. In the 1851 census he was head of the household there, with his wife Anna and daughter, also Anna, then aged 10. The



Ann Horrell Tripe with John Loosemore Symons circa 1886



L to R: Mrs & Mr Lightfoot Snr, Arthur Lightfoot 'Groom, Evelyn Symons Bride
Doris Symons, Mrs & Mr John Loosemore Symons Parents of the Bride. Small boy unknown.

CHAPTER THREE - TWO COUSINS

William and Henry John were of much the same age - William was about 8 months older - but they could have had little opportunity to grow up together. On the day after his fourth birthday Henry John was on his way to Sidbury, which was a significant distance from Rockbeare as the horse and trap go: or perhaps it would have been the carrier's wagon as it made its leisurely way between Exeter and Sidmouth via Rockbeare.

By the time the Tripes returned to Cobden in 1851 it is very likely that William had already set his heart on migrating to Australia. One can readily imagine him contemplating future possibilities in Devonshire and counting the cost of establishing himself independently of his father before the time came to step into his shoes by inheritance. The golden prospects of life in Australia had been widely publicised throughout Great Britain by the 1850's and William might well have discovered that if he had been a pauper the Parish would have offered to help him on his way. As it was, he must have found that he could obtain an assisted passage as a farm labourer seeking employment in Australia on payment of a fee of two pounds.

It would have been necessary for him to establish his suitability as a migrant ([n3 1](#)) and to bind himself to compensate the authorities for the wastage of the costs of his passage if he failed to remain in the Colony for four years. This would involve the payment of three pounds for every year or part of a year by which he failed to discharge this obligation.

And yet, although obliged to stay in the Colony for four years, he would not be obliged to help relieve the shortage of labour which had been the ostensible reason for the Assisted Passage Scheme. It would be up to him to decide what to do on arrival but as he had no doubt heard reports of the discovery of gold in New South Wales and in what was to become the Ballarat goldfields by the time of his embarkation, he would have realised that on arrival his services would be likely to be able to be offered on a sellers' market.

In addition to his contribution to the cost of the voyage, he would have been advised that he needed to provide some spending money for use on arrival and to take with him an appropriate quantity of clothing. For males Her Majesty's Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners decreed that a sufficient stock of clothing comprised six shirts, six pairs of stockings, two ditto shoes, two complete suits of exterior clothing, "with sheets, towels and soap". It was pointed out that as the emigrants had always to pass through very hot and very cold weather during their voyage lasting about four months, they should be prepared for weather of both types, three serge shirts were strongly recommended. The quantity of baggage was limited to twenty cubic feet and mattresses and feather beds would not be taken.

William's enthusiasm would very likely have been whetted by advertisements such as that inserted in the publication "A Voyage to Australia" by John Skinner Prout earlier in 1852. In it, Thomas Dryland of 81 Bishopsgate Street Within, London, made the following offer:

IMPORTANT TO EMIGRANTS

Dryland's Miniature Kitchen

Occupies less than one cubic foot and contains:-

stove	2 dishes	Coffee pot
Gridiron	6 Plates	Sugar basin
Frying Pan	3 Knives & forks	3 cups & saucers
3 Gallon Boiler	2 tablespoons	3 Teaspoons
Fish Kettle	Tea kettle	Milk Pot
3 Saucepans & steamer	Tea Pot	Tea canister

Fitted for three persons - Forty shillings

He might have been a little early to have had the excitement of reading many of the varied descriptions

of life in the diggings which were coming on to the market, such as “Gold in Nuggets and Grains - The Gold Fever of Australia.. How he went.. How he fared.. How he made his fortune” published by Clarke Beeto & Co., 148 Fleet Street - or to have been inspired by the board games and jigsaw puzzles which were soon invented to encourage young imaginations.

No doubt he heard a lot about the inevitable rigours of the voyage and about the best course for his ship to take. As recently as 1847, the navigator John Thomas Towson had proposed the use of the Great Circle Route as a shorter alternative to the traditional course which had involved calls at Teneriffe or the Cape Verde Islands, for water, thence to Rio de Janeiro and on to Capetown before crossing the Indian Ocean. The Great Circle Route would involve no stops at all but ships would have to sail much further south and would save considerable time while running the risks of much more stormy weather and biting cold. The first ship to try the experiment was the Statesman in 1851, reaching Melbourne from Plymouth in the previously unheard of time of 78 days. ([n3 2](#)).

As an assisted migrant William would have had no say about the ship in which he was to sail or about the course which it was to take. He would have been given the alternative of boarding it in London or in Plymouth and it would be up to him to get himself to the place of embarkation at his own expense, unless he could persuade the Parish to help him, as it did on occasion in the case of sufficiently impoverished applicants.

William probably elected to join his ship at Plymouth. To do this, he could have taken a coach from Rockbeare, if he had the funds. The line of rail from Exeter to Plymouth would not by then have been completed. The Commissioners would have made arrangements for temporary accommodation at their Depot in Plymouth but if William was smart he would have arranged to avoid any unnecessary delay on shore in Plymouth, where unsanitary conditions still prevailed despite the efforts of the authorities to remove the unspeakable pollution which had developed in the harbour area. Once on board the risks of cholera would at least be reduced.

William could not have done better, if he had had a free choice of the ship in which he wished to travel. He was allocated a passage on the Dominion, which set sail from Plymouth on June 28th, 1852. Her voyage had begun from Gravesend a few days earlier. The passenger list available for inspection in the Victorian Records Office lists the passengers in alphabetical order in three sections. Altogether 257 passengers completed the journey to Portland. It seems likely that the first 188 on the list joined the ship at Gravesend. The alphabetical list reverts to the A's at that point and William takes his proper place in the second section as number 231. At number 239 the list returns to the A's, for no apparent reason. It seems likely that the list was not prepared until the end of the voyage, as it does not contain the name of the only passenger to die on the voyage. She was a two-year-old girl who died of diarrhoea and was, in fact, the only case of sickness recorded on the voyage. There were six births on board, all of healthy babes. This must surely have been a record.

Dominion was virtually a new vessel. She was a ship ([n3 3](#)) of 584 tons, which had been built in Sunderland in 1851, coppered and copper-fastened. ([n3 4](#)) She had received an A-1 rating for 13 years from Lloyds and her confident young Master, Captain Darke, held a first-class master's certificate.

After a week in Plymouth she set sail for Portland direct. Amazingly there was not a single occasion when the hatches had to be closed because of rough weather ([n3 5](#)) and she arrived at Portland Bay on October 9th after a voyage from Plymouth of 103 days. This suggests that a London - Melbourne voyage would have lasted over 110 days and therefore that she could not have taken the Southerly Great Circle route.

The passengers had to contain their impatience for a further two nights before they were allowed ashore. When finally the flag on the main masthead indicated that the passengers were open for offers of employment, small boats pushed off from the shore and soon the decks were crowded with prospective employers. Most immigrants were engaged at wages which were equal to or higher than usual and this was said to have made them a little choosy. One single man was said to have refused thirty five pounds a year with rations. We don't know whether it was William but he certainly was one of those who elected to set out on shore “on his own account”. So also was Number 232 on the Passenger list, one Thomas Tuttle (spelt

Tattle on the list) with whom William had struck up a friendship. This may suggest that they had been assigned neighbouring berths on the ship. In any event their friendship continued. ([n3_6](#))

William's movements after he disembarked are unknown but it is clear that he and Thomas Tuttle made their way to Ballarat. Tuttle had been a bricklayer by occupation and he would have found no difficulty in obtaining worth while employment in the burgeoning township. William is thought to have been engaged in carrying activities before setting himself up as a dairy-farmer somewhere west of the settlement. It seems not unlikely that while thus engaged he would have become aware of the activities of one Joshua Ware who had set himself up as a butcher at "the swamp" near what was to become the corner of Wendouree Parade and Macarthur Street. William had come from a butchering family and could have seen Ware's activities as being possibly of some interest to his cousin Henry John. ([n3_7](#))

There is a tradition in one branch of our family ([n3_8](#)) which has it that Henry John's decision to migrate to Australia was at least influenced by William's example. Certainly the two cousins came together in Ballarat and it seems unlikely that this would have been purely by chance. It is even conceivable that William met Henry John in Melbourne and transported him to Ballarat. It is known that he performed this service in August 1858 when Thomas Tuttle's sister arrived in the Cyclone. The consequences of this friendly gesture were to be lasting. Three years later William Symons and Ellen Tuttle were married and their union lasted until Ellen's death in 1900. William died at Lake Rowan on 31st October 1903.

Henry John did not follow William's example as an assisted migrant. He may not have been encouraged by the terms of the formal Application which he would have been required to sign. They included an acknowledgment "that the privilege of a Passage, if granted, will be allowed me in the faith that I really belong to the working class, am of good character and that I go to the colony intending to work there for wages." Subsequent events seem to indicate that, although he would have been well aware that wages in the Colony were likely to be much higher than those at home, he would not willingly contemplate the prospect of being a wage earner in the land of limitless opportunity.

As a fare-paying passenger, Henry John had the advantage of being able to select the ship in which he wished to travel. This was a matter which had received considerable publicity over the years - as for example in Sidney's Emigrants Journal in 1848, where intending travellers were counselled as follows: First - beware of runners; second - beware of dishonest passenger agents; third - chose a ship with good height between decks; fourth - choose a ship with high bulwarks; fifth - choose a ship with proper water closets; sixth - choose a ship with conveniences for cooking; seventh - see that the ship is properly loaded; eighth - see that the Captain and Mates have a good character.

Henry John avoided several of these pitfalls by selecting the Northumberland. On this particular voyage she seems to have carried only 23 passengers and one must assume that her owners found themselves able to fill the ship with a profitable payload in the form of cargo without having to rely on Government subsidised passengers in large numbers. Actually, on the basis of her registered tonnage - 811 - she would have been allowed to carry about 400 "statute adults".

The literature describes Northumberland as an East Indiaman, which was just about the highest compliment which could have been paid to her at the time of her launching in 1838. She was built of teak, in Rangoon according to one authority but more likely in nearby Moulmein, which was the hub of Burma's shipbuilding industry. Predominantly Chinese labour was employed there. Purists might argue that she was not really an East Indiaman as that company had ceased to trade some years earlier but her performance seems to have confirmed that she was capable of maintaining the traditions which had established the East Indiaman as the outstanding merchant vessel of the era.

By the time Henry John set sail, however, these broad round-bowed "tea wagons", capable of about ten knots in fair conditions, were being replaced in public esteem and in the record books by the American inspired clippers which were capable of up to twice the speed. The discovery of gold had led to a vast increase in the rate of migration and those involved in the rush to be rich were no doubt prepared to accept the discomforts of the clippers as a price worth paying for a speedier voyage. Northumberland came from a more leisurely tradition. She was a ship - that is to say that she was a three master and square rigged, built

much in the style of naval ships of the line, except that she did not have the tumbleback shape preferred by the Admiralty and was thus wider in her upper decks than her naval sisters.

She was sufficiently distinguished to have had her portrait painted by a noted naval painter, T. Luny, and she can be seen, depicted from two angles, in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. The portraits show the full poop, which enabled her to offer “very superior accommodation to Chief Cabin Passengers” if, to quote from an advertisement from another Green vessel, the Angelsey, whose “lofty ‘tween decks were fitted with spacious and well fitted cabins for second and third cabin passengers”. Fares quoted for Anglesey would very likely be similar to those charged for Northumberland - thirty guineas for second class passengers and twenty-two guineas for third class passengers.

We will never know whether it was the lure of gold which attracted Henry John. Perhaps he had seen a reproduction of the drawing by S.T.Gill entitled “A Butcher’s Shambles” dated 1852 and drawn at Adelaide Gully, Forest Creek. This would have made it clear to him that the establishment of a butchery on the diggings would not involve much in the way of capital expenditure for buildings and plant!

Whatever his motive, Henry John set sail on 1st May 1857 as a third class passenger, one of eleven. He was described in the ship’s manifest as a Trader but probably not much significance should be attributed to this description as all the other adult male passengers were described in this way, with the exception of the sole male First Class passenger, who had the more superior occupation of “Merchant”. These terms could well have been applied by the clerical staff of the ship’s agents as a device to distinguish unassisted passengers from the working class assisted migrants.

One of the advantages of paying his own way would have been the ability to avoid the inconvenience and discomforts endured by assisted emigrants as they waited in overcrowded depots until their ships were ready to receive them. Henry John would have had a ticket which quoted a firm date of departure and which acknowledged his right to compensation in the form of subsistence money at the rate of one shilling per day if the ship did not sail on the appointed day. (Compensation was not payable, however, if bed and board were available on the ship.) Thus he would have been able to plan his departure in an orderly way. The journey to London need not have been particularly arduous, at least between Exeter and London, and can visualise him arriving at Paddington with his baggage, in good time to take a growler to the Blackwall rail before proceeding by train to the docks ([n3_8](#)) all on the same day.

Having studied his ticket before departure, he would have felt confident that the ship would carry sufficient provisions to cater for the needs of her passengers for at least 140 days and that, in addition to any provisions which he carried himself (a subject on which he would have received a great deal of advice) he would be provided with specific weekly quantities of comestibles comprising Water 21 quarts, Biscuits 3½ lbs., Beef 1½ lb., pork 1 lb. (Second class passengers would receive 1½ lb.) Preserved meat ½ lb., flour 3 lbs., peas one Pint, Rice ½ lb., Butter 4 Ozs., Suet 4 ozs., Raisins 6 ozs., Tea 2 ozs., Sugar 1 lb., Preserved milk ½ pint, Pickles 1 Gill, Vinegar ½ Pint, Salt 2 ozs., Mustard ¼oz and Pepper ½ oz.

He would have had the satisfaction of knowing, also, that his ship was well acquainted with the route to Australia. This would be her seventh voyage, at least, and her fifth under the command of Captain Gill. He could not then have known that Northumberland was to make at least 24 return voyages to Australia, which must have been many more than the average for ships on this route. She was in good condition, having been felted and sheathed with yellow metal in 1852 ([n3_9](#)) and classified A1 for 12 years by Lloyds.

Northumberland arrived in Melbourne on 27th August, 119 days out from London. Clearly she had not followed the Great Circle route. Some of the time could have been taken up in a call at Plymouth for water, in preference to the dubious supplies available in London. ([n3_10](#))

It would be pleasant to be able to record that William was waiting to come aboard on arrival in Melbourne but the chances of this having happened are remote. He may have been expecting Henry John’s arrival and may have known the name of the ship but almost certainly he would have had to rely on shipping reports in the Ballarat Star to confirm its arrival.

CHAPTER FOUR - BALLARAT

Assistant Government Surveyor William S. Urquhart was working near Lake Burrumbeet on 3rd December 1851 when he received instructions to proceed immediately to the Ballarat goldfields and to define the site for a town. Eight days later he established his camp near Yuille's swamp and on the following day fixed the features of the country a few miles around Golden Point and decided where the township should be.

I like to think that his camp was pitched somewhere near what was to become the corner of Macarthur Street and Wendouree Parade and that the boundaries of the town were defined from that particular corner. He reserved an area of 1062 acres on a grassy plateau keeping well to the west of the Yarrowee River and the area already despoiled by the diggers.

He was no beginner at the art of laying out towns in new territory. Already in 1851 he had marked out the towns of Sunbury, Woodend, Karlsruhe and Malmsbury, adopting a general policy regarding widths of streets and their distance apart which he then applied to Ballarat. It was his decision, for instance, that ordained that the main street, Sturt Street, should be three chains wide and the other principal streets two chains wide. He also provided the names for the principal streets. Armstrong, Dana, Lydiard, Mair and Sturt were all government officials working in the goldfields. He also found a name for Yuille's Swamp which would be more suited to the lake as an important element in the ambience of the new town. "Wendouree" was an aboriginal name for the swamp. ("Balla-arat", incidentally meant "elbow place", a good place for a camp).

It seems by no means certain, however, that he selected the name for Macarthur Street, which seems to have been named after Colonel Macarthur, who commanded the local troops at the time of Eureka three years later but had probably not arrived at the diggings in 1851. Strangely enough, although Macarthur Street and Wendouree Parade provide the actual street frontages for Allotment 1 in Urquhart's plan, they are not mentioned in the description by metes and bounds which describes the allotment in the original Land Purchase Grant issued above the hand of the Lieutenant Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe Esquire on the fourteenth day of March 1854.

Urquhart had spent a fortnight working in the field and on 26th December 1851 proceeded to finalize his plan. By 17th January 1852 the map was finished and signed and Urquhart was ready to set out for new challenges at Castlemaine. The days were long at that time of the year, of course, and the eight hours day had not been invented but even so it seems to have been a prodigious undertaking. Perhaps one reason for the speed of the operation was that the area was subdivided on a fairly broad-brush basis, leaving room for a great deal of further subdivision as time went on and the optimum size required for individual occupancies was more clearly demonstrated by actual experience. Thus, for example, the entire distance along the Macarthur Street frontage as far as Drummond Street was divided into only three allotments, allowing room for subsequent developers to create no less than four subdivisional streets in the relatively wide open spaces covered by the allotments.

Urquhart very likely looked on this area as being remote from the probable centre of activities, which would be further east towards the famous "flat".

It took a few months for the authorities to get around to selling any land in their new town. Four town lots were sold in August 1852 and seven more in November but it was not until March 1854 that Allotments 1, 2 and 3 were put up for sale, together with other land in the vicinity. Allotment 1 and allotment 28 were purchased by Thomas Brown the Younger of St. Enoch's. ([n4_1](#)) Allotment 28 lay immediately to the south of Allotment 1 and was separated from it by a creek which had its source in the swamp.

Someone named the creek Gnarr Creek, a name which does not seem to have been commonly used. "Swamp creek", to use the name which appears in maps of much later vintage, was an overflow from the swamp which found its way to the Yarrowee River near the Eastern end of Sturt Street. In 1851 some works had been carried out, apparently in the form of a dam designed to raise the level of the outlet and thus the level of the lake. Further works were carried out in 1852 but if they involved any change in the actual line of the creek after the completion of Urquhart's survey, it may not have mattered as the survey does not seem to

have included a very precise definition of the actual line of its course.

Brown made a shrewd purchase. He paid one hundred and thirty one pounds twelve shillings and sixpence for allotment one, which contained six acres and two roods and two hundred and fifty pounds eight shillings for allotment 28, which contained five acres one rood and thirty-one perches. The arithmetic seems to suggest a price of twenty pounds per acre for allotment one and forty five pounds per acre for allotment 28, based on areas slightly different from those finally computed by the Lands Department. Brown proceeded to subdivide his holding by creating two private streets - Lake Street leading from Macarthur Street along the eastern boundary of Allotment one and Exeter Street leading easterly from Wendouree Parade on a line which allowed room for residential blocks to be created between its southern boundary and the southern extremity of Allotment 28.

The plan resulted in 28 individual lots being available for sale and the sequence of the completion of the individual sales can be determined from the dates of the conveyances to the individual purchasers. This does not necessarily establish the dates of the actual sale contracts, as they could have been on terms which provided that the actual conveyance would not be made until the full price had been paid.

The first block sold was probably Number 1, which was divided into two and sold to Messrs Lingham and Southerwood for twenty-five pounds each. The conveyance was dated 31st December 1855 in each case. Numbers 13 and 14 were conveyed about 6 months later to Joseph Holmes and Daniel Lees for one hundred pounds which seemed to set the price per lot for Wendouree Parade frontages north of the creek. Then at the end of the year lots 10, 11, 12 and 15 were conveyed to Joshua Ware for a total of two hundred pounds and on the same day, 1st December 1856, lots 3 and 4 went to Messrs Diggins and Gant. From then on it would be all profit. Four hundred and seventy five pounds had been received, to cover an initial outlay of Three hundred and eighty-two pounds and nine pence, plus, of course, the costs of the subdivision.

Lot 4 was to become the site of the Wheat Sheaf Hotel, about which more later. Lots 13 and 14 later became the site of a Malt House. Things do not seem to have gone well for Messrs Holmes and Lees. Thomas Bath, a famous Ballarat pioneer, acquired the interests of both of them, apparently under a County Court Order of Execution. The share of Lees was sold in March 1857 for one hundred and fifty pounds and the share of Holmes followed in June, for ninety-one pounds. (n4 2) This may not have been one of Bath's best investments. The next transaction on record relating to these lots was a conveyance from Bath to the corporation styled Ballarat Chemical and Distillery Co. in February 1868 for the sum of three hundred and twenty pounds. The corporation borrowed four thousand five hundred pounds from the Union Bank two years later, presumably to build the Malt House, and the Bank sold it up on 4th March 1878.

(I have resisted the temptation to look further into the chain of title of this land, as it seems to have no relevance to the rest of our story, but it is interesting to note that well known names in the liquor industry seem to have had fingers in the pie - including Henry Brind and John Joseph Goller - and a lady named Mary Ann Brown, whose name could easily have caused confusion for those interested in the wife of Henry John Symons, whom we will soon meet. Her name was Mary Ann Browne and the coincident similarity of the two names may have given rise to the rumour that my grandmother had had an interest in some of this land.)

Lots 16 and 17, at the Macarthur street corner, were the next to be conveyed, on 9th January 1857, to John Gibb Wildridge, by direction of Henry Bowyer Lane, who seems to have been the original purchaser. (n4 3) He paid fifty pounds and sold to Wildridge for the same price. This seems to have been a cheap price by comparison with earlier sales by Brown but Wildridge apparently did not regard it as a bargain as he sold both lots to Robert McNiece for fifty pounds within a matter of weeks, on 6th February 1857.

I suspect that Brown may now have found the rest of his land hard to sell for it was over a year, on 25th February 1858 before the next conveyance was made. Lot 28 in Exeter Street was sold to Stephen Lingham for forty-five pounds. Lot 27 was sold in June 1858 to Julius Landmann and then in August Alfred Ronalds came to the rescue. Ronalds (1802-1860) has been described as a gifted Englishman who migrated to Geelong in 1846. "Naturalist, angler, author, artist, engraver, printer, surveyor, he mined in Castlemaine and Daylesford before coming to Ballarat in 1853, where he 'surfaced' near the cemetery before purchasing land for his nursery.." (n4 4) This land was lots 5 - 9, and 20 - 23, a total of ten lots for which he paid four

hundred and eleven pounds

This, of course, was after Henry John Symons had come on to the scene. Initially he would have been interested in the four lots owned by Joshua Ware. I have no information about this shadowy figure. The name Ware was well known in the Western District of Victoria but, if Joshua was related to Jerry George of Koort Koortnong or Joseph of Minjah, the fact has not come down to us.

It seems not unlikely that when Joshua Ware purchased Lot 15, he would have liked additional adjacent land but had to settle for three lots to the South of lots 13 and 14. This would suggest that the original sale of lots 16 and 17 to Henry Bowyer Lane had anteceded the sale to Ware, although the land was not finally conveyed, by Lanes's direction, to Wildredge until 1858. Ware would have been looking for additional holding capacity for stock destined for slaughter in his business and it seems likely that the actual butchery was set up on Lot 15.

It has been conjectured that the selection of land near the swamp for the establishment of the business would have been made in the expectation that miners coming to the swamp for water would find it convenient to buy their meat at this location. No doubt the miners were a useful source of custom because water supplies at the flat were limited and polluted and, even though the swamp was over a mile away, it would be attractive to many of them. As a justification for the selection of the site, however, there may have been a degree of romanticising in retrospect. Henry John may not have been beyond adding his share of romance. Certainly he tended to put the date of his arrival in the Colony a little earlier than it really was - sometimes 1855, sometimes 1856. Thus in the Symons entry in *The Cyclopaedia of Victoria*, circa 1901, it was stated that he came out to Victoria at the end of 1856 "and made his way to Ballarat, where he found employment with Mr Joshua Ware, who at the time carried on a butchery business on the site of the present premises. In those days a bark hut constituted the establishment, and in two years time Mr Symons had become proprietor of the business, which he has carried on ever since." ([n4_5](#)).

But it would not be correct to envisage the Ballarat of the time as being exclusively a mining community. When Urquhart received his original instructions to lay out the site of the town in 1851 the population was about 2000, mainly if not exclusively diggers and those who served their immediate needs. The figure had doubled in 1852 and had grown to 20,000 in 1853. Such a dramatic rate of growth could not be expected to continue but in 1857 the official Census put the figure at 26,200, excluding the Chinese! At that time the miners represented 43% of the workforce but by 1861 this percentage had dropped to 29 and it had declined further to 27% by 1871.

Even in 1857, Ballarat had developed into a vigorous and diversified community, in which over one half of the working population was not directly engaged in the hunt for gold. The demands of a rapidly increasing population had generated an industrial and commercial infrastructure which seems to have established a state of relative self-sufficiency. Thus there were flour mills, breweries, foundries, brickworks, timber mills and even a gas works and the demand for provisions had encouraged rural industries over a fairly wide radius around the town. For example, there had been widespread settlement of rural areas to the north and the west. All the land in the Mount Rowan area, where H.J. was to become a fairly dominant influence, had been subdivided and sold by the Crown and Ballarat had become the focal point for the sale of sheep and cattle ranking only second to Melbourne. In fact for a time Ballarat outranked Melbourne as a market for the sale of sheep.

Thus the site of Ware's butchery had become much more central to the potential market which it was destined to serve. It was not far from the Creswick Road and even closer to the main track towards Learmonth and the lush areas out beyond the newly established common and to the more remote riches of the Clunes district.

Such was the demand for meat that it became profitable for graziers over a very wide radius to send their livestock to Ballarat for sale. Niel Black, for example, sent 950 head of cattle from Glenormiston in a single consignment. Admittedly this was not until March 1860 but it can be taken as evidence of a continuing demand. Joshua Ware would have had no difficulty in acquiring suitable supplies for his business if he had the cash to pay for them.

No doubt his original premises would have been rudimentary. Weston Bate, in his "Lucky City" shows at page 21 what he describes as a "Detail from a picture by W.Strutt" which depicts the Flat showing Bath's butchery and some new arrivals. The butchery is a tent open to the elements and the flies. Outside it is a rail on which eleven carcasses, presumably of sheep, are hanging without protection from the sun or the weather. Ware would very likely have erected something a little more permanent and its roof could very well have been made of bark. Hygiene would not have been a dominant consideration. After all Louis Pasteur was then only forming tentative conclusions about bacteria and the lack of sanitation was generally looked on as one of those unpleasant states of affairs which accompanied the spread of civilisation. In fact, it is very likely that Henry John observed nothing in Ballarat on his arrival which compared unfavourably with the generally unsanitary conditions which then applied in Exeter.

Communications at that time had developed to an extent which I for one had not realised until I recently looked more closely into this subject. By 1854 Cobb & Co coaches were carrying mail throughout the colony and by 1856 a regular monthly steamship service to the United Kingdom had been established. If Henry John had William's address in Ballarat he would have been able to advise him by letter of his planned departure date and William would have had good time in which to plan to keep an eye out for news of his arrival.

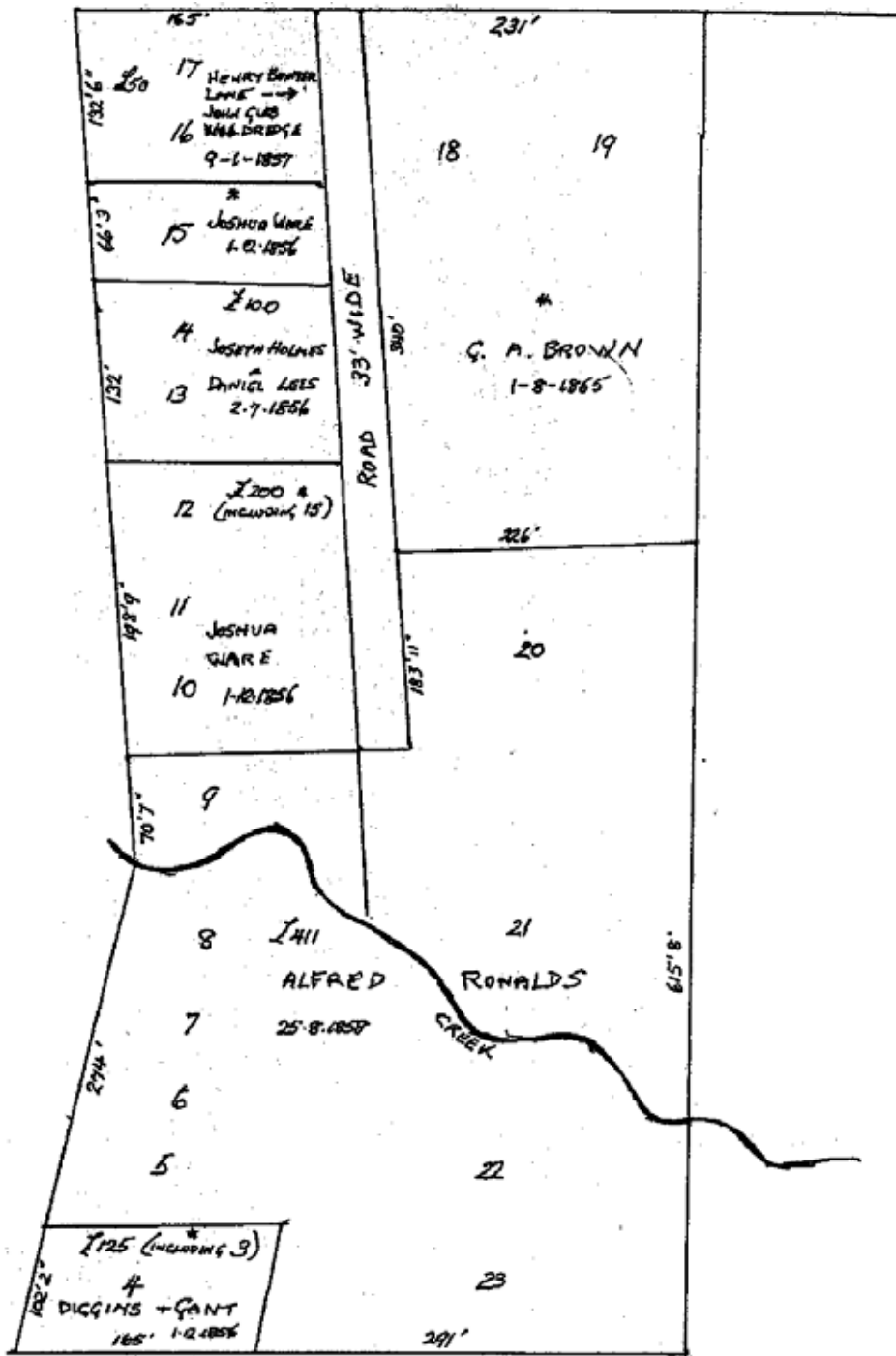
By 1855 there were daily coach services to Melbourne and Geelong. The service was so good that morning newspapers from Geelong arrived in Ballarat by midday and Melbourne papers were available in the evening. It would not take long for news of the arrival of the Northumberland to reach Ballarat. Then in June 1857, a rail service began between Greenwich in Melbourne, now Newport, and Geelong and a steamer was provided to take intending passengers to Greenwich from the city. Three trains per day ran in each direction and the third class fare for a single journey, including the steamer ride, was six shillings. Second class and first class fares were ten shillings and twelve shillings and sixpence respectively.

The coach fare from Geelong to Ballarat was four pounds so Henry John could have made the combined journey for four pounds six shillings and very likely in a single day if he felt he could afford it.

It would have been an exciting coach ride, particularly if "Cabbage-tree Ned Devine" had the reins. According to Weston Bate this "long legged, sharp featured, greasy hatted" identity, "... never neglected his cups in the fifteen stops they made to water and change horses, and who cleared a broad ditch at full gallop, to rush eventually down crowded Main Street on a summer evening and, still at full gallop, turn sharply with only inches to spare into the stable yard". I like to think that Henry John would have been able to contrast this performance with those of the lordly coachmen who guided their carriage's along the macadamised Roman Road at home in Rockbeare.

Meanwhile, what about Thomas Brown and his subdivision? He seems to have been stuck with the residue of his lots for some years. Then, on 1st August 1865, he conveyed the residue of his Macarthur Street frontage and almost all of his Exeter Street holding to one George Andrew Brown, probably a brother, for the princely sum of twelve hundred pounds. This left him only with Lot 2 in Exeter Street which was conveyed to Charles Salter in January 1868. Thomas Brown had thus received a total of two thousand two hundred and fifty six pounds for his original outlay of three hundred and eighty-two pounds and ninepence, which on the whole was not a bad return for his enterprise.

Later the subdivision was to be refined by the creation of Devon Street and the extension of Lake Street to meet it.



ROAD 50' WIDE

82'6"	82'6"	53'	66'	198'
*	130	145	145	* 1200 (INCLUDES 18, 19*)
3 DIGGINS + GANT 1-2-1856	2 CHAS. SALTER 23-1-1868	28 STEPHEN LINGHAM 23-2-1858	27 JULIUS LAMMANN 15-6-1858	26 25 24 G. A. BROWN 1-8-1865
25 STEPHEN LINGHAM 3-2-1860	25 STEPHEN LINGHAM 23-1-1868	99'	66'	198'
165' 165'	165'	165'	165'	181'

CHAPTER FIVE - LIFE AT THE SWAMP

I think that we may safely assume that Henry John met up with William, either in Melbourne or in Ballarat, shortly after his arrival in the colony. He would have arrived in Ballarat at the beginning of spring and the worst of the cold weather would have been over. It would have been a strange world for him, particularly as the Englishmen would not yet have had much time in which to try to Anglicize the Australian landscape.

It could well be that Joshua Ware was expecting him. He might have welcomed the opportunity to engage a reliable assistant at a time when reliable help was not necessarily easy to come by. William might also have been able to help Henry John to find some sort of board and lodging but maybe he was content to sleep under the counter, like a good shop assistant in Dickensian times.

Ware had owned his shop site for nearly two years when Henry John arrived. He had bought it from Thomas Brown in December 1856, presumably as bare land and it was not until July 1859 that he found himself in a position to use it as security for a loan. On 11th July 1859 he executed a Mortgage in favour of Theophilus Grimmett, a slaughterman of Ballarat to secure the repayment of a loan of three hundred and forty two pounds. The unimproved value of the land would not have been sufficient to support such a loan. It seems reasonable to assume either that substantial buildings had already been erected or that the proceeds of the loan were used to erect substantial buildings on the land.

If Grimmett was a prudent investor he would have been unwilling to advance more than sixty per cent of the total value of the finished product. This suggests that he assessed the security as being worth something approaching six hundred pounds.

If so, his caution would have proved to be justified because Ware fell on evil days within a short time and it seems likely that Grimmett had to protect his investment by buying Ware's equity of redemption from the Official Assignee of Ware's insolvent estate. (n5_1) This seems to have cost him five pounds ten shillings. If the property had been worth six hundred pounds at the time of the Mortgage, Grimmett might seem to have got himself a reasonable bargain for his total outlay would have been three hundred and forty-seven pounds ten shillings, plus some legal expenses, no doubt, and plus any interest which he might have had to forego but in the event he seems to have contented himself with getting his money back as soon as possible.

The conveyance from the Assignee in insolvency to Grimmett was dated 22nd February 1861. On 27th February 1862, Grimmett conveyed Lot 15 to Henry John Symons of Ballarat Butcher for the sum of One hundred and fifty pounds and on 21st January 1863 he conveyed lots ten, eleven and twelve for the sum of One hundred and ninety pounds. (In the meantime Grimmett's description had changed from Slaughterman to Gentleman! One could have expected Henry John to agree that the description was apt because it seems reasonable to assume that there had been some sort of gentleman's agreement between them that Henry John could buy the balance of the land twelve months after he bought the first piece. No doubt he paid rent for its use in the meantime.)

It must be a matter of guesswork, of course, but this train of events seems to suggest that Ware must have fallen insolvent at some time around 1860 and that Henry John must then have taken over the business, relying perhaps on Grimmett to arrange matters so that he could also take over the land as and when he could afford to do so. There have been reports that Ware and Henry John were in partnership but this seems doubtful as, as a partner, Henry John would have been jointly and severally liable for Ware's debts. Ware's difficulties need not necessarily have arisen from the butchery business, of course, and subsequent events seem to have demonstrated that the business could be a very profitable one.

Unless Henry John had brought some capital with him - perhaps from his mother - he seems to have done pretty well, for his mind could not have been occupied exclusively with the problems involved in taking over the business. On 2nd April 1861 he was married! He may have been aware of the old adage which had it that all a bridegroom needed was courage and the first week's rent but I suspect that his prospective brother-in-law, Frederick Browne, would have had to be satisfied that Henry John would be a good provider

before he reported to his parents in far away Poplar (n5 2) that they could properly consent to the marriage of their daughter, twenty year old Mary Ann Browne to this young butcher from Devon. Her father's consent was duly given.

Mr and Mrs Charles Codlin lived in Sturt Street. They were pastrycooks and confectioners and it seems not unlikely that they lived behind their shop, which was in Sturt Street, on the south side and a few doors west of Windermere Street. Here there was a little group of shops. A.C.Kerr, Ironmonger, was on the corner. Next came Edward Bradley, a Sharebroker (no doubt dealing on the local Mining Exchange), John Osborne, Bootmaker, Robert Rutland, Greengrocer and then came the Codlins. Next to them to the West was Mrs Davis, who was apparently without occupation. It was at the residence of the Codlins that Henry John Symons and Mary Browne were married, by Rev John Millard according to the rites of the Wesleyan Church.

Both parties had been baptised in the Church of England and the translation to Methodism is unexplained. They returned to the Anglican fold after the event.

The bride was 20 and the groom 28, according to the Marriage Register. (n5 3) The written consent of Richard Browne was given to the marriage and the ceremony was witnessed by Susannah Codlin and Frederick Browne. No doubt the happy couple and their guests were then treated to a lavish demonstration of the pastrycook's art.

Details of Mary Ann Browne's migration to Australia are shrouded in mystery. Her parents were Richard and Mary Browne. She had been Mary West. (n5 4) The Census for 1841 shows them as residents of 166 High Street Poplar, where Richard carried on business as a Hairdresser. Both had been born in the County of Middlesex. Their children were then Henry aged 3, Fred aged 2 and Mary Ann aged 6 months. Ten years later the family had grown with the addition of Fanny, aged 8, Emma aged 6, Alfred aged 4 and Louisa aged 2 but by then Mary was aged 33 and a hairdresser by occupation. It was now made clear that she had been born at Poplar. She was head of the household but it would be unsafe to infer that Richard was dead as we know that ten years later he was able to sign a consent to the wedding of his daughter!

Also in residence were Mary West, a widow aged 60 described as an annuitant, who had been born at Waltham in Essex, and a servant named John Westcott, aged 18 and described as a Hairdresser hailing from Deptford in Kent.

Many years later Mary Ann was to make a will in which she made a contingent bequest of twenty-five pounds to her sister Fanny Lovejoy "as a recognition of her kindness and attention to my mother". The will was dated 25th March 1892 and one may reasonably assume that Mary Ann's mother was still living at that date. Fanny had married Edward Lovejoy at the Parish Church in the Parish of Bromley St Leonard on 10th March 1868 and the Marriage Certificate records that the father of the bride, Richard Browne was then deceased. (Edward Lovejoy was of the new generation. He was an engine driver by occupation.)

Where then was Richard Browne in 1851? It is tempting to imagine that he had emigrated to the colonies, forced out of the household by the pressures of an ever increasing family. This would at least provide an explanation for the emigration of Frederick and Mary Ann at relatively early ages. Frederick died on 25th December 1898 and his Death Certificate records that he had been in the colony for 40 years, indicating that he arrived here in 1858. This information was probably provided by my father, whose signature appears on the Certificate as the Informant, Mary Ann died on 14th October 1899 and in her case the period of residence is stated to be 41 years. Subject to the caution that this information very likely came from the same source, it seems likely that brother and sister travelled to Australia together in 1858. A Certificate of Mary Ann's baptism had been issued from the Parish of St. Anne, Limehouse on 15th September 1858 and could very well have been obtained by Mary Ann before she left home, as some sort of proof of identity. (It records her date of birth as 23rd November 1840. She was baptised on January 17th 1841.)

It is not unlikely that Mary Ann celebrated her 18th birthday on board ship but the name of the ship and its destination are unknown. There does not appear to be any record of the arrival of either Frederick or

Mary Ann in Victoria. It has been conjectured that they may have travelled with members of the Flack family, with whom they were later associated, but this seems unlikely.

The Flack family travelled to Australia in the Flora which called at Adelaide en route to Melbourne, in 1851. The crew deserted in a body there and it is thought that the Flacks overlanded to Melbourne, which may explain the lack of any information about them as arrivals in Victoria. (n5_5) Mary Ann is unlikely to have travelled with them at such an early age. Another possibility was that she may have travelled with the Breese family, who arrived in the Bombay in November 1852. It is known that she was a close friend of Fanny Breese, who later married George Flack and was the mother of Violet, who married my Uncle William, of whom more later, and it is thought that they knew each other in Brunswick. (n5_6) According to my father, Fanny Breese was his nursemaid but this could simply have meant that she nursed him as an infant when visiting his mother.

Frederick Vincent Browne became a farmer in the Yendon area. He was born on 16th September 1839 and was baptised at the Parish Church of All Saints, Poplar, on December 29th 1839. On March 3rd 1869 he was married at Ballarat, by Rev C. Collins, to Sarah Anne Wells who had been born in the Parish of Bonnington County of Lincoln on April 27th 1836. They had no children. Sarah Anne survived her husband and lived at 10 Lake Street Ballarat until her death on 11th September 1916. According to her Death Certificate she had then been 50 years in Victoria which indicates that she had not arrived in the colony when Frederick witnessed his sister's wedding in 1861.

The environment of the butcher's shop would not necessarily have been entirely strange to Mary Ann. She had grown up close to a butcher's shop in Poplar, the premises of Charles Watkins at 167 High Street, but the differences would have been much greater than the similarities. Poplar in those days was at the peak of its activities as a throbbing, thriving centre of service to the shipping industry and Charles would have had to have his supplies brought in. Henry John, on the other hand, would have done his own slaughtering on the premises and of course he had the advantage of a holding paddock not far away.

Living behind the shop would have been a very different proposition from living above the hairdressers and Mary Ann for a time must have had to resign herself to the discomforts if, as seems likely, this is where she lived. My cousin Violet says that it was Mary Ann's job to look after the shop while her husband had his dinner - and no doubt on other occasions too - and that the children of the district knew when was a good time to beg for scraps for their pets. Even in those days Henry John had acquired a reputation for sternness. Mary Ann soon had other interests to claim her attention. On 7th January 1862, clearly without wasting any time in the process of dynasty creation, she presented Henry John with his first born son, whom they named Henry William. Henry would have been an obvious choice, as the new arrival had an uncle of that name on his mother's side to add to his father's claims to be thus recognised and William would have represented his grandfather and also his father's cousin William who was still in the area at that time.

Henry John was not exclusively occupied with the responsibilities of parenthood. He also had to deal with Mr Grimmett with whom he had an arrangement to complete his first purchase, that of lot 15, which was conveyed to him on 25th February 1862. On 21st January 1863 he completed the purchase of the balance of the land. There is no indication that he had to raise a loan to do it. Thus in less than two years he had been able to marry, found a family and save three hundred and forty pounds, as well as provide the working capital for his business. As he contemplated the impending arrival of his second son, he had every reason to feel a little complacent but I do not think that he indulged that emotion. The land at the Macarthur Street corner would have presented a challenge.

Lots 16 & 17 must have been an attractive target at which to aim. They belonged to Robert McNiece who had bought them for fifty pounds from John Gibb Wildredge (or Wildridge according to some versions) in 1857. I suspect that this land now had a house on it or some other building which would add to its value for when Henry John finally succeeded in buying it, in November 1864, it cost him three hundred pounds. Privately he would have admitted that it was worth every penny, for it gave him a frontage of one hundred and sixty five feet to Macarthur Street and frontages to Wendouree Parade and Lake street of one hundred and thirty-two feet six inches on either side. The fact that it adjoined the property which he already owned

gave it added value. McNiece, whose occupation was given as Gentleman, was beyond the seas at the time and the conveyance was signed by his Attorneys James Oddie, who was one of Ballarat's shakers and movers, and Michael Elliot.

The land was under the operation of the General Law and the conveyance did not require Henry John's signature. In fact, it is possible that he never saw it and that it was safely stored away in the custody of his Solicitors. Thus he had no opportunity to observe that his name was spelt as Henry Simmonds. It was probably not until 1869 that the mistake was discovered and I suspect that it may have come about in this way. For the first time ever, Henry John may have been seeking a loan from his bank, for which a security would be required. He should have had three sets of title deeds to produce for this purpose, two from Grimmett and the third from McNiece and none of them could be found. Grimmett may well have passed on by then but McNiece was still available and he kindly consented to execute a confirmatory conveyance in respect of the land which he had sold. This was executed on 13th May 1869 and, in the normal course of events, a Memorial of the Conveyance would have been registered in the Office of the Registrar General as soon as possible. "Murphy's La" continued to hold sway and the Solicitors failed to lodge it. Their error remained undetected for nearly 50 years. It was then noticed that the Conveyance had been in a form which, for some reason, required Henry John to sign it and he had not been asked to do so. By then he was of course long dead and his executors found it necessary to apply to the Supreme Court of Victoria for an order authorising them to sign it on his behalf! All of which goes to confirm that the mistakes of lawyers are inevitably found out sooner or later. [\(n5 7\)](#) The conveyance was finally registered on 2nd August 1928. [\(n5 8\)](#)

Mary Ann presented Henry John with his second son on 23rd June 1863 and they called him Alfred. This seems clearly to have been a victory for the Browne side of the family. He seems to have been named after Mary Ann's youngest brother who would by then have been 16 years old.

John Loosmore came next, born on 13th August 1865. Henry John's influence was of course paramount in the selection of these names. Alas, John Loosmore died on 8th May 1866, before he had reached nine months. It must have been a blow to Mary Ann who was already preparing for the arrival of her own little Mary Ann, who arrived on first October 1866 and as her mother's first daughter was no doubt the apple of her father's eye until she died at the age of nine, on 25th April 1876. Five more children were born during her short life, three sons, William, Walter and Frederick and two daughters, Priscilla and Frances (Fanny). The provenance of the names for William and Frederick are obvious but Walter was a newcomer to the family catalogue. Priscilla would have been named after Henry John's cousin and Frances no doubt was called after Mary Ann's sister.

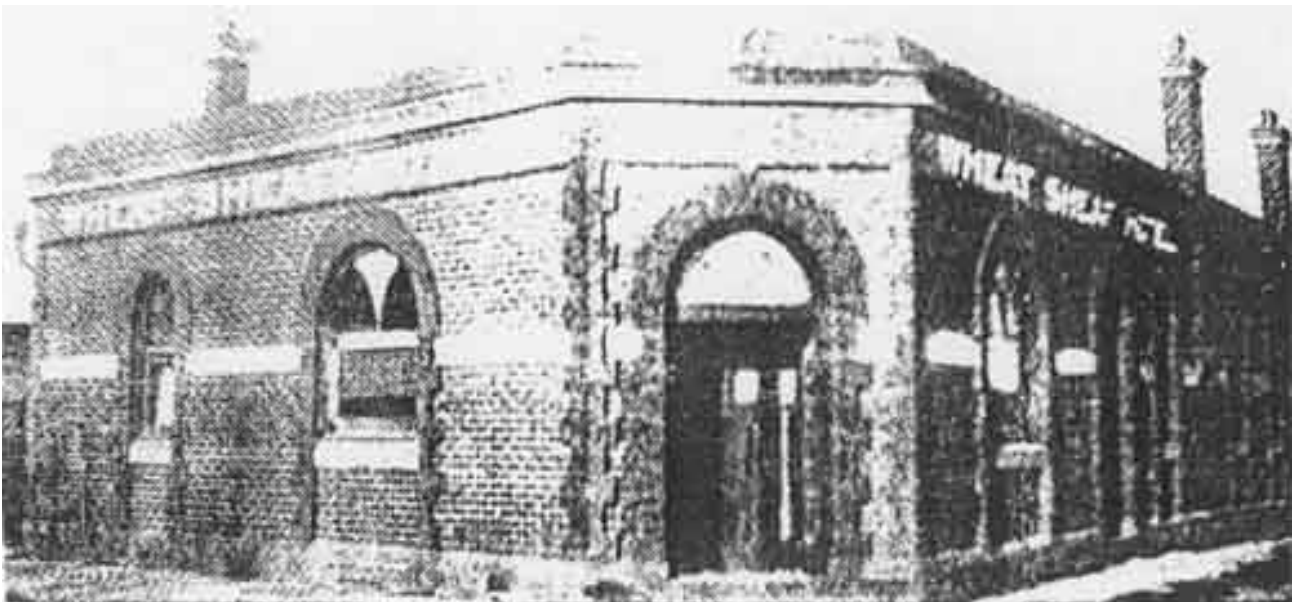
The family did not finish at that point. Arthur was born on 13th March 1877, introducing yet another new name to the family. Nearly four years elapsed before the next boy arrived, on St. Valentine's day 1881 and there is little doubt that his name was derived from the Saint. Percy came last, on 10th July 1882. Priscilla and Frederick had died in infancy but by the time of Percy's arrival there would have been nine children living at home, which may help to explain William's decision to run away from home at the age of 15, which would have been in 1883. While the date is uncertain, it seems reasonable to guess that before then Henry John would have relieved the accommodation problem by erecting the substantial weatherboard house at the corner of Wendouree Parade which became the family home for the rest of his life.

According to my cousin Norman, to whom I am indebted for much of the information about the family business which these notes will contain, this house was occupied by the diminishing residue of the family - those who remained unmarried - until 1922, when it was divided into two parts and transported to a site in the Creswick Road facing the Old Cemetery. As well as providing a home for the family, the house had an important use in the business. A commodious cellar had been created when the house was built. This had facilities for hanging a large quantity of meat and was intended to be used in extremely hot weather. Norman says that prior to 1890 all meat in stock was hung on rails in the shop and an impression of coolness was given by a fish pond in the middle of the shop, bedecked with ferns and a small fountain. In very hot weather the meat stocks were removed to the cellar. "This presented difficulties as, with a change of wind or weather conditions the meat might have to be shifted from shop to cellar at any time of the day or night."

I am uncertain whether the new house predated the new shop but unless family pressure had become so intolerable as to change his priorities, I would expect that Henry John built the new shop first. It had a frontage to Macarthur Street and was no doubt of state-of-the-art design. Behind the shop proper there was a building which housed the equipment necessary for the manufacture of the smallgoods which helped to make the Symons name famous in the district. The corner site provided comfortable space for the house and the shop with a carriage-way between them, which led to a yard which had been created out of Lot 16 and to the South of this, presumably in Lot 15, a two storeyed stable building was built running at right angles to Wendouree Parade and with appropriate entrances from a central courtyard, on the West side of which, backing on to Wendouree Parade, was a cart shed, with space for about seven carts side by side, backed in with shafts facing the courtyard.

All this must have taken time and my guess would be that the works were paid for out of earnings as they proceeded. As time went on Henry John also succeeded in purchasing all the land between Macarthur Street and Devon Street, which provided him with reasonably adequate accommodation for the horses which were required for the growing business. And as time went on the Swamp became Lake Wendouree and Wendouree Parade became the fashionable promenade which is depicted in the satirical drawing which appeared in *Ballarat Punch* on 7th September 1867. Entitled "Ye Manners and Customs of Ye Ballaraterians" it shows a series of smart carriages and horsemen parading in a cloud of dust in front of the Wheat Sheaf Hotel, as a background to a scene of activity on the waters of the lake and surely portends the inevitability that the economic life of the Symons horse paddock must be of limited duration.

Life at The Swamp had progressed to Life at the Lake and it seems timely to mark the change with a new Chapter. Before we do, however, we should mention William Symons. We last heard of him when he is thought to have introduced Henry John to Joshua Ware. William remained in the Ballarat area for some years after that. On 5th August 1861, perhaps encouraged by Henry John's example in April, he married his friend Thomas Tuttle's sister Ellen. Like Henry John and Mary Ann he avoided a church wedding. In what must have been a relatively rare ceremony at the time, they were married at the Ballarat Registry Office. Both were described as being of the Church of England, he was a farmer and she was a servant. They had two children, John who was born in June 1862 and George who was born on 26th December 1863. We shall hear more about them later.



The Wheat Sheaf.

The origin and date of this photograph are obscure. This reprint was produced from a photocopy supplied by the Ballarat and District Genealogical Society. See pages 26 and 48 for references to this Hotel.



Henry John Symons



Mary Ann Symons

c. 1870



This photograph by
Bardwell & Beachamp
of Ballarat is thought
to be of Henry William
Symons circa 1880.

CHAPTER SIX - LIVING NEAR THE LAKE

Let us engage in a flight of fancy. Picture, if you will, Henry John waiting to see the New Year in. It is the eve of 1879 and it is most unusual for him to be up so late, for the Symons family believed in the maxim "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." In his line of business, Henry John found early rising a necessity but perhaps he could bend the rule slightly on New Years Day.

As he watched the hands of his old Grandfather Clock ([n6_1](#)) move slowly towards the witching hour he might very well have looked back on his past years with not a little satisfaction. He would be 45 years old next May. He had a successful business and no debts worth mentioning. Despite the ups and downs of the economy he had managed to add progressively to his assets as well as to his family and he had taken the very satisfying step of becoming a farmer. The seventies had seen considerable progress in the cleaning up of Ballarat's unsanitary condition and considerable pressure on the noxious industries to reposition themselves beyond the city boundaries. He had seen the inevitability of the removal of the slaughtering activities and the wisdom of taking action before being forced to do so.

It seemed sensible to buy as many acres as he could afford in a convenient situation as close to the town as possible, which could accommodate a slaughterhouse and associated facilities and provide useful pasture in addition. One possibility was the acquisition of land set aside by the Crown for use under the Goldfields Residence and Cultivation Licence procedure which had been developed to provide accommodation for miners and their families. Henry John might seem to have been an unlikely candidate for this facility but the Parish plan shows that in 1873 he was the grantee of Licences for several allotments totalling in all about fifty acres in a subdivision on the Western side of Forest Street, Mount Rowan a little to the South of Olliers Road. This holding extended from Forest Street to Gillies Street, except for two lots which apparently were not released until 1909 when, according to the Plan, they were granted to H.W.Symons (my father.)

I have no recollection of any family interest in this land and my cousin Norman, whose association with this area would have been much closer than mine, is also unable to recall any my father having any part of it.

One of the conditions of the Licences was that "the Licensee is required to reside on the land during the continuance of this Licence or within a period of four months .. to enclose the same with a good and substantial fence, and cultivate at least one fifth portion thereof." Norman says that to his knowledge no buildings were ever erected on it and it seems likely that the obligation to cultivate was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. In fact, it seems strange that the Administrators of the system were prepared to issue more than one residential Licence to the same individual. The explanation probably is that the system remained in existence for much longer than the need for it. Shallow mining had long since given way to deep mining and the area was too remote from those who might have had need for accommodation.

Henry John concentrated his activities on the other side of Forest Street where he acquired allotments 19 and 24 comprising some 114 acres, on which he built a house and stockyards and a slaughterhouse. Later he was to extend his holdings in the Mount Rowan area until he had, altogether, over 1000 acres of first class arable land.

I visualise Henry John and Mary Ann keeping a lonely vigil to see the Old Year out, though perhaps Henry William was allowed to stay up with them. He was 16 years old by then and would be 17 in a week's time. Secretly his father must have been well satisfied with him as a likely future lieutenant in the business although it may not have been in his nature to say so very often. I see him sitting there placidly enjoying the thought that he had earned himself the reputation of being "a hard but fair task master, arrogant, proud and a stern father and husband." ([n6_2](#))

Young Alfred was then 15 and very likely mutinously determined to stay awake until the hour struck. Young William, then aged 10 and Walter, aged 8, might have had similar ambitions but little Fanny, the only remaining daughter, aged 3 and Arthur then about 19 months, were no doubt in the land of nod.

Perhaps it was at this time that Henry John made a New Year's resolution - 1879 would be the year in which he went Home, to see his mother and, no doubt, to demonstrate to all and sundry the outward and visible signs of his success in the Colony. It could be a good time to go. There were as yet no signs of any more children on the way, who would make it difficult for him to leave Mary Ann and she, of course, would readily understand that it was her bounden duty to remain at home and care for her children. He could also rely on her to keep a good eye on the business. Henry William would help her do this.

Would we be unfair to Mary Ann if we thought that, while she felt it to be proper to accept the proposal in a dutiful and submissive manner, she might secretly have enjoyed the prospect of the chance of a napkin-free interlude for some months ahead? If so, her wishes were fulfilled because young Valentine did not arrive on the scene for over two years!

No doubt Henry John prudently reviewed his testamentary affairs with his solicitor, Henry Cuthbert who would have advised him that it would be wise to execute Power of Attorney in favour of some responsible person, who would be able to act for him in his absence. He may well have mentioned that he had had considerable experience acting as an Attorney for other clients while they went "Home" and Henry John may well have accepted the hint with caution. On 12th March 1879 he - executed a Deed conferring Powers of Attorney on Henry Cuthbert and Mary Ann jointly, reciting "Whereas I am about to leave the .. colony for Europe" as the reason for so doing.

This project would entail an absence of several months. By then there were regular steamship services to the United Kingdom. The Orient line had established a schedule in 1877 which involved a route from England via the Cape and a return voyage via Suez and the P. & O. line offered similar facilities.

He would have no difficulty in arranging his passage with a shipping agent in Ballarat, unless he was seeking an excuse for a visit to Melbourne, which would still involve the indirect trip through Geelong at that time, and he would soon have a fairly firm arrival date in London to quote to his mother. She was by then probably living at Myrtle Cottage, Leigh Road, Chulmleigh and possibly finding John Jarvis Tripe a bit of a handful at 86 years of age. She still had Jane Loosemore at home to give her support.

Henry John would be able to make a fairly comfortable train journey from London, via Exeter and the branch line to Barnstaple, alighting at Eggesford Station. And from there, if he wanted to, he could take a train to Whimple via Exeter and visit his cousins at Tanners farm. They would be glad of an up to date report on the activities of William but there would be some difficulty about this as William and family had left the Ballarat district earlier in 1878 and by now would be settled in at Lake Rowan, in the Goulburn valley. Perhaps he would have time to slip up to Lake Rowan to see him but this would involve a coach trip from Benaalla. (Neil MacNeil, his railway contracting neighbour at Pine Lodge, Mount Rowan, did not begin construction of the branch line to Yarrowonga which would service the Lake Rowan area, until 1882.)

William and Henry John had kept in contact over the years, no doubt maintaining the traditional Symons family reserve in the process. When William decided to make a formal application for a Grant of Land at Lake Rowan he must already have set about uprooting his ties with Ballarat for he gave his address for correspondence relating to his application as being in the care of Henry J. Symons, Wendouree Parade Ballarat. His application' was successful and his branch of the Symons family has retained ownership of the property down to this day. Henry John would have had difficulty in believing that one of its uses in 1995 would be the farming of ostriches.

Henry John, in his reverie, may have enjoyed in anticipation the prospect of taking his mother some token of his association with Ballarat. A gold brooch made from Ballarat gold would be appropriate.

But what should he do about the Browne family? Mary Ann might have him in something of a 'no-win' situation on this subject. The fact that he was likely to be able to meet her family might rub salt in her wounds, as the one who was being left behind: on the other hand, if he did nothing about the Brownes she might have a heavy chip on her shoulder. Maybe the best thing to do was to promise to try to see them. Here my imagination fails because we have such a dearth of information about the Browne family. Richard was not in the picture at the time of the 1851 census. By the time of the 1861 census, the Brownes had

moved on from High Street to an address unknown.

We know from the 1851 census that Mary Ann had three sisters, Fanny, Emma and Louisa, all still at home. At some unidentified later date, when Frederick was living at Yendon, near Ballarat, he was a lay preacher associated with a Yendon Church (denomination unknown) and there were mentions in church records of the helpful activities of Mrs Symons and also of the misses Browne. Perhaps one or two of Frederick's sisters followed him to Australia. Fanny clearly did not, as she was married to Edward Lovejoy in 1868 (see page 31) and was presumably in the London area in 1892.

We can be reasonably certain, however, that at the end of 1878 Mary Ann knew where her mother was - and probably her father, also. My guess is that Henry John planned to meet with her and that he might well have taken her a brooch made from Ballarat gold.

He certainly carried out his resolve to give one to his mother. It is still in her family. It seems that she may have specifically bequeathed it to her grand-daughter, Bessie Dendle, and that, according to the folk lore of the Tripe descendants, after her death problems arose because her will was lost. In the winding up of her affairs the brooch went to her daughter Ann who in turn passed it on to Bessie Dendle. She in turn passed it on to her cousin Evelyn Lightfoot for her 21st birthday. She still has it together with the card from Bessie which had accompanied it and which is dated July 19, 1935. No doubt in due course it will pass to her daughter, Hilary. ([n6 3](#))

We do not know whether Henry John found his trip a broadening experience or whether he brought back with him any ideas which may have been of use in the business. It could well be that he found that English practices were not significantly in advance of those in Australia. Particularly he could have noticed that the problems of climate were much greater in Ballarat as extremes of heat were much more difficult to contend with in his trade than extremes of cold and he may have been able to feel a little smug about the advantages offered by the larger areas available around Mount Rowan over the restricted acreages available to the Devonshire farmers. He would have had a good opportunity to compare and contrast the farming practices of his step-brother, James Tripe farming 320 acres at the Parsonage farm, Chulmleigh, on which he employed three men. Henry John would probably have been there in Summer.

If he had time to visit his cousins at Rockbeare, he would have found his cousin John in charge at Tanners, now slightly reduced to about 142 acres. No doubt there would have been long and learned discussions about the merits of the various types of harvesting equipment which were then coming on to the scene both in England and in Australia and it would be interesting to know whether Henry John decided that the Ballarat products compared well with those at "Home".

Mechanical threshing was one of the developments which could have been discussed. Over the years many different types of hand or horse operated machines had been invented but by the time of Henry John's visit steam was being put to use. Henry John would have believed that his land was better suited to the practice of harvesting with a reaper and binder, stooking the sheaves and building haystacks when the sheaves had dried out sufficiently than to the use of header-harvesters and the like. Not so very long after his return to Ballarat, the Ballarat Courier was able to report that Mr H.J.Symons of Wendouree Pde. at his farm, Mt. Rowan, had threshed "this season 100 bushels of oates per acre. The farm is a model of scientific farming, manuring and good drainage." I wonder whether a cutting from this edition of the paper reached Chulmleigh or Rockbeare?

I have not attempted to research the process by which Henry John built us his estate at Mount Rowan. The larger proportion of it was situated on the West side of Gillies Street North of the Burrumbeet creek, comprising the 640 acres of Waldie's pre-emptive right, taken up in 1844 and known as Wyndholm. (Norman spells his name "Waldy" and he could well be right but the plan of the subdivision set aside for Goldfield Residence and Cultivation Licences which is mentioned above (see page 36) shows the Licensee of two blocks at the corner of Gillies Street and Olliers Road as T.Waldie, who took the Licences on 28th March 1873. Perhaps it is a coincidence but I doubt it.)

Wyndholm had been subdivided into four properties – Monteith's at the Southern end, comprising 229

acres, then Ferguson's, 158 acres and Connelly's 100 acres. Then to the North of a road running Westerly from Gillies street towards Miners Rest came Fisher's, 153 acres, of which we will hear more later. Fishers was bounded on the North by yet another road running Westerly from Gillies Street.

This land was used to fatten cattle and sheep for the shop and to breed and pasture horses for use in the business. It was also used for cropping - principally oats. There was a ready market for any hay grown which was surplus to the needs of the business. The horses bred at the farm were of the spirited Arab type and Norman says that the best and the fastest were reserved for the use of Henry John as buggy horses for his frequent trips to the farm. "On picnic race days at Burrumbeet, Dowling Forest or Lal Lal, he was always keen for competition with other drivers - his wife at his side in her long black dress and a gossamer tied over her hat."

On weekends and holidays, the delivery horses were taken to the horse paddock in Wendouree Parade for a rest but periodically they were exchanged with others from the farm for a longer spell. Horses being sent to the farm were simply turned loose to make their own way to Mount Rowan, which was home to them. They would trot round the margin of Lake Wendouree to Forest Street and on to the farm, about three miles away. Replacements were less willing! They had to be led in by farm hands.

A dramatic event is well entrenched in the folklore of several branches of the family. As Norman describes it "One Saturday night, a car broke down the horsepaddock fence and early next morning the horses escaped and made for the farm. The Forest Street railway gates were always closed at dusk but unfortunately a pedestrian gate was left open and allowed the horses to get on the line just as the Adelaide express was approaching. Four horses were killed and several others were injured."

In addition to the Arab horses there were always sufficient draft horses on hand to meet harvesting and ploughing requirements. Difficulties in handling the heavy crops of hay, particularly after storms had blown it down in the critical days before harvest, meant that drawing the reaper and binder was exhausting work for the horse team and reserve teams had to be kept ready to take over at fairly frequent intervals. Horses were also used to power the chaff-cutting whim which was needed to produce convenient horse fodder and of course they were much in use carting in the sheaves of hay to be stacked.

In 1890 a dramatic change was made in Macarthur Street. The decorative fountain was removed from the shop and two cool rooms were erected. These were built of brick, with cavity walls in which wood shavings were used for insulation. Above the ceiling of these rooms was an iron tank about three feet deep, designed to be filled with a brine solution, which was cooled by means of coils of pipes through which compressed ammonia was forced. Power was supplied by a single-cylinder "Tangie" mine engine and boiler. The brick chimney can now be seen at Sovereign Hill.

Steam power was now available for a mechanical mincing machine and for a chaffcutter and it was also possible to make and supply ice on a commercial basis for delivery throughout Ballarat.

This venture must have been very costly but we can be confident that Henry John had organised his finances in a responsible way. It was a time when many over-reached their resources and came to grief. Ballarat was perhaps not as badly hit as some other places in the great banking collapse of the early 'nineties and one may assume that Henry John's line of business was sufficiently basic to be able to weather economic storms. Henry John seems to have remained in charge for long enough to be able to be confident that the new equipment was run in and that the business could operate smoothly in its improved environment. Then it was time to go Home again.

I like to think of Henry John, one evening in early 1892 sitting on his favourite seat near the margin of Lake Wendouree and looking out across the lake towards the setting sun. He could have had much the same view from one of the twin bow windows of his house in Wendouree Parade but he preferred the cool breeze now coming across the water and the tranquillity of the scene, freed from the interruptions of his children.

As he watched the plumes of smoke rising from the steamers busily ferrying the crowds from the Gardens to the waiting horse trams near View Point, he was able to contemplate in peace the possibility of

planning his trip. It would be easy enough to arrange a passage. There would be a Mail Steamer leaving Port Melbourne every week - P. & O. and the Orient Line now operated fortnightly services on alternate weeks and he would be able to quote a relatively firm date of arrival when he wrote to his mother. These vessels sailed via the Suez Canal and travel time would be less than it was last time. He might even be able to plan to join the ship at Brindisi for the return journey, which would give him an opportunity to visit the Continent en route.

This time he would be heading for Torquay rather than Chulmleigh. His step-father had been dead for several years and his mother now lived with her daughter, Elizabeth Dendle. His half-sister Jane Loosemore Tripe who had lived at home with her parents probably for more years than she would have preferred, had at last felt free to marry when her father died. He was 90 when he died and could very well have been more than a handful for his wife, without Jane's assistance. And of all people, Jane had married John Symons of Tanners Farm, brother of William Symons, now establishing a dynasty of his own at Lake Rowan here in Australia! Jane would have been 38 when she married and she and John lost no time in producing a brace of offspring - John Loosemore Symons in 1885 and Lewis Tripe Symons in 1888. They were now established at Lower Southwood and he would be able to visit them there fairly conveniently from Torquay.

He would have a lot to tell his mother but she would have more questions than he could imagine. His eldest son, Henry William, now generally referred to as Harry, had just turned thirty and was still unmarried. Henry John doubted if there was a woman in the colony who would be good enough for him. The business could safely be left in Harry's care with Mary Ann looking over his shoulder. She, of course, could not expect to come with him. After all, there was the family to care for. Little Percy was not yet 10 and Val barely 17 months older. Arthur, now almost 15, would need a motherly eye kept on him.

And then there was Fanny. She was not yet 17 and was the beautiful apple of his eye. If there was no woman good enough for Harry, certainly there was no man likely to be good enough for Fanny when the time came - which was not yet. (It did not occur to him that she might be University material when she left school at 15 to busy herself with maidenly accomplishments, such as painting and needlework.) He would be able to tell his mother proudly that Fanny had been Dux of the Girls School at Ballarat College in 1890. [\(n6 4\)](#) She was indeed a daughter to be proud of, even though he said it himself but alas she was his only daughter. Little Mary Ann had died in 1876, aged 10, and Priscilla was only 7 months old when she died in 1873.

Amongst the boys there was a mixed bag. Next after Harry came Alfred. Henry John would find it difficult to report favourably about him, because he had left the nest and the wise parental guidance which was his entitlement. It may well be that he was not even sure where Alfred was. A report on William might also involve some difficulty. He had had the effrontery to run away from home at 15 and now, at 23, he was a mountain horseman, one of the famous riders in the rugged North East well known to readers of the Bulletin through the writing of men like Banjo Patterson. (The Man from Snowy River had not yet been written. It appeared in 1895.)

Walter came next after William and had settled well into the business. He was already full of ideas about how it could be expanded but the really good thing was that he and Harry seemed to get on well together despite the disparity in their ages. Walter was just on 22, eight years Harry's junior, and 7 years older than Arthur, who, by the way, was already showing aptitude for involvement in the new fangled steam engine and other engineering equipment now used in the business.

So the time had come for action. He had better see Henry Cuthbert about his will and, come to think of it, it was high time that Mary Ann had a will of her own, while he was still there to keep an eye on what she did in it. Perhaps the first thing for him to do would be to arrange a passage. Huddart Parker were agents for all the main shipping lines. Perhaps he could take advantage of the fact that the shop was now a considerable customer for the coal which they sold - he might even be able to get a special fare. What would be the wise thing to do? Would he buy his ticket first and then break it to Mary Ann or should he tell her first? Well, he would sleep on it.

We will never know the answer to that question but it is clear that before long he had made his

arrangements and in due course set sail for "Home". No doubt he returned with rich gifts for Mary Ann and the children. Various pictures of continental scenes remain in the records kept by his grand-daughter, Jessie Scott and she also recently unearthed a book entitled "Lorna Doone" by R.D.Blackmore which is inscribed
"With Grandma's love,
to Henry W. Symons
Torquay August 3rd/92."

No doubt Henry John brought it back with him.

Ann Horrell Tripe lived on at Torquay for nearly 10 years after that visit. She died on 25th December 1901 and her remains were laid to rest beside those of her second husband in the Churchyard at Chulmleigh.

CHAPTER SEVEN - END OF AN ERA

On 1st October 1893 the Corporation styled the President, Councillors and Ratepayers of the Shire of Ballarat formally executed an Agreement with Henry John Symons of Wendouree whereby Henry John Symons agreed to permit the shire to cut a drain through Allotments 14 and 15 in the Parish of Ballarat for the purpose of improving drainage of land to the North and West by means of the Burrumbeet Creek. This document would have been executed at the first meeting of the Council for the Municipal year beginning on that day and this meeting would have been the first meeting attended by a new Councillor, Henry William Symons who on that day began a term of office which was to continue for 21 years.

It must have brought Henry John up with a bit of a jolt to learn that his son had been invited to stand for election and, perhaps more particularly, that he had been elected unopposed. He could not have known that this would be the first of seven unopposed successive three year terms. To be eligible for election Harry would have had to be on the roll of ratepayers. Possibly he relied on his ownership of the Goldfields Residence and Cultivation Licence which I have already referred to. His father, of course, was a substantial ratepayer in the Shire but, as he was still technically a sole trader, his holding would not confer any entitlement on Harry although no doubt by then he was to all intents and purposes a joint occupier.

Harry was Shire President in 1898-99 and then again in 1904-5 and 1910-11. His mother died just after the completion of his first Presidential term of office and his father died during his third term.

Before her death Mary Ann had suffered at least two bereavements. Her son Alfred died on 9th August 1894, it is thought in Queensland and from a fever and at the age of 34. And then on 25th December 1898 her brother, Frederick Vincent Browne died at Yendon at the age of 59 as a result of a cerebral haemorrhage. He was buried at the Ballarat Old Cemetery on 27th December and the funeral arrangements seem to have been made by his Nephew Henry William Symons. According to his death certificate, Frederick Vincent had been 40 years in the colony at the time of his death. No doubt Mary Ann was instrumental in arranging for his widow to be established near her in Lake Street although they would not be neighbours for long, for Mary Ann died on 14th October 1899. (Sarah Ann Browne lived on in Lake Street, a mysterious figure in the eyes of her various great-nephews and nieces, who knew her as Auntie Browne, until she died on 9th September 1916 at the age of 80.)

It was perhaps as well that Mary Ann died when she did, although possibly her continuing presence would have had a mollifying effect on the reaction which Henry John was to suffer when told of the impending marriage of his daughter Fanny.

Mary Ann was 59 when she died and she had been far from well for a long time, which is not surprising when one considers the stresses of twelve pregnancies and the management of a household which must have been far from easy to control. The official causes of her death were broncho-pneumonia and cardiac failure and a mysterious complaint called Morbus Cordis. The attending doctor was unable to record the duration of her final illness which may suggest that he was not called in at its early stages. It seems reasonable to imagine that Fanny was called on to bear much of the brunt of the family dislocation caused by her mother's illness and death and to suspect that she must have had cause to contemplate her own likely

future in these melancholy circumstances. There they were, the old man and five of his sons all at home and no doubt reluctant to take any part in what they would have seen as woman's work.

By then she was 25 and, despite her talents, untrained for any other means of earning a living. She could reasonably contemplate the possibility of the boys marrying and leaving home as time went on. Walter was already showing signs of doing so, when he could afford it, following the example of William who came home for long enough to woo and win Violet Flack from Ballan, daughter of Fanny Breese that was, Mary Ann's old friend.

William and Violet were married on 11th September 1901 and went off to Gippsland to run the Cobungra Hotel. This was a venture which did not last long. When Fanny Flack went to visit her daughter and saw the conditions under which they were working and living she lost no time in commanding their return to Ballan. Meantime their first born had arrived, at Omeo on 9th April 1903. According to our cousin Violet, when Henry John heard that Violet was expecting he sent word to Violet that if the baby was a boy he should not be called George, as there had never been a satisfactory George Symons. There seems little evidence in the Symons family tree which would support this contention and it seems more likely that the old man was anxious that the child should not be named after old George Flack, for whom he did not have a high regard. He can not have been happy when the baby arrived and was duly Christened George.

Meanwhile Fanny had become the second Symons child to commit matrimony. She was married to Charles Capp on January 26th, 1902 and the old man was far from pleased about it. Not only was he losing a housekeeper but he was gaining a son-in-law of whom he declined to approve. From this distance in time it is difficult to be objective about the situation for nothing seems to be known of the bridegroom. The name is unusual and the only other reference to it which I have been able to find is in the Death Certificate information relating to Auntie Browne. One of the witnesses to her burial was Jas. Capp and his name appeared, also, as witness to the next burial in the Register, which seems to suggest that he may well have been associated with the Cemetery in some way.

By now Charlie Capp and his bride were over the seas and far away. Family lore had it that the old man, as a wedding present, gave them a one-way ticket to South Africa and two hundred pounds. This may not seem to have been a particularly munificent dowry but, in current terms, the cash component would have been the equivalent of considerably more than the basic wage for a year and thus worth several thousand dollars. The one-way ticket is suggestive of banishment but I for one would not be disposed to put this interpretation on what could well have been a very acceptable arrangement. After all, if they intended to make their future home in South Africa there would have been little point in giving them a return ticket. ([n7_1](#))

Fanny and Charles were married on January 26th 1902 and on 20th February of the same year Walter married Mary Ballantyne. Subsequent events led to the suspicion that Henry John was not happy about this wedding, either, but again I take leave to doubt, as we shall see.

Mary Ann had dutifully made her last will back in March 1892, as I suspect, on Henry John's suggestion before his second overseas trip. She left everything to her husband but if he should predecease her she left a legacy of twenty-five pounds to her sister, Fanny Lovejoy of Poplar "in recognition of her kindness and attention to my mother" and one hundred pounds each to her sons Alfred and William. The residue of the estate would have gone to her other children equally. Henry John was to be sole executor if he survived her but if he did not then the Trustees Executors and Agency Company Limited was to be the Executor. Whether this act of caution arose from her own suggestion or that of her husband or of Mr Morrow, her solicitor, we will never know but in the events which occurred, of course, Henry John got the lot! It is interesting to note that her real estate was sworn not to exceed in value the sum of nine hundred and forty pounds and her personal estate not to exceed forty-five pounds. Disregarding the costs of administration of the will and assuming there to be no significant liabilities, this would have meant that if Henry John had not survived her the value of the residuary estate would have been about seven hundred and sixty pounds, to be divided between six children so that each of them would have received not much more than each of the two specific legatees.



Henry John & Fanny 1876



Miss Fanny Symons



Ella and Fanny 1906



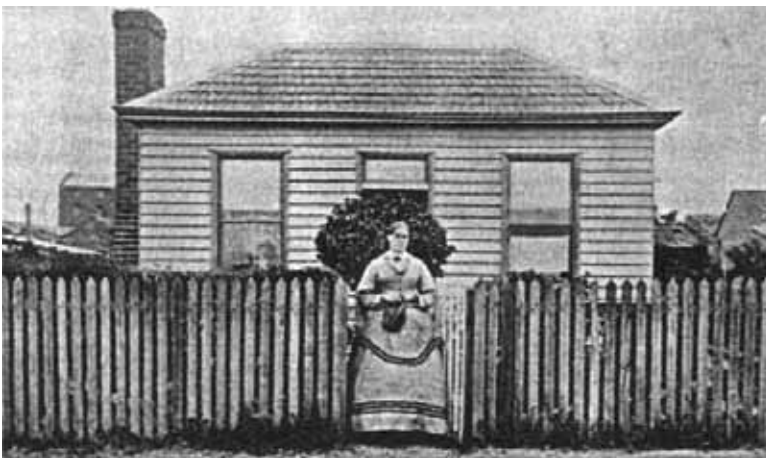
Ella and Fanny 1962



Greatgrandmother Mary Browne



Frederick Vincent Browne



Mystery cottage! Can this be Frederick's widow, Sarah Ann?



Mary Browne in later life

With the death of his wife, the marriage of his daughter and the impending marriage of a son, it was obviously high time that Henry John attended to his own testamentary affairs and on 19th February 1902, the day before Walter's wedding, he made a new will. By now all the boys except Percy were of full age and Percy was nearly 20. He decided to leave legacies of Three hundred pounds to William and Two hundred pounds to Fanny and he would also leave her all Mary Ann's jewellery trinkets and wearing apparel. (That William should get a legacy greater than Fanny seems entirely consistent with the ethos of the times. Sons needed more than daughters, or so it seemed; and the bequest of the jewellery is hardly consistent with the concept of banishment.)

He would leave his old family clock to Harry and his books to Walter and it would be nice to leave a small bequest to Bessie Dendle, say fifteen pounds, in recognition of her kindness to his mother. But not a word about his son, Alfred. ([n7_2](#))

He thought he should recognise the long adult years of effort which Harry and Walter had given to the development of the business, so he would leave them jointly the Northern end of the Wyndholm Estate, known as Fishers, but as they had been more favourably disposed towards Fanny's marriage than he would have liked, it would be only fair if this property were to be charged with the payment of an annuity of twenty-five pounds which he wished Fanny to have. (This I thought was a smartly subtle way of making a point.) He would take care to ensure that Fanny didn't have the right to dispose of the benefit of the annuity to anyone else.

The rest of the estate, including the business and all its assets, would go to the five boys who were working in it - Harry, Walter, Arthur, Val and Percy - in equal shares and Harry, Walter and Arthur would be suitable as the executors. Val was just on 21 and technically old enough to be an Executor but he was a bit young and three were sufficient.

Mr H.W.Morrow duly caused the will to be prepared and witnessed it. He included a direction that the firm of Sir Henry Cuthbert, Morrow and Must be Solicitors to the estate. I doubt if Henry John would have thought of this precaution and he would hardly have thought of the likelihood that, by witnessing a will in which he was thus given a pecuniary advantage, Mr Morrow may well have disintitiled himself from charging the estate for the firm's professional services in proving the will and administering the estate!

Something must have happened at some time within the next four years to move Henry John to decide that he would like to change his will. In a way which I find excessively crude, he made a codicil to it on 23rd October 1906 by which he revoked the devise of a half-interest in Fisher's to Walter and left the entire property to Harry. It would have been a more kindly act to make a new will embodying his changed intentions without highlighting his change of heart. By so doing, he might have saved Harry from the possible enmity of his brother Walter and he might have saved Walter the embarrassment of knowing that this change of heart would become a matter of public record. It is difficult to reach any other conclusion than that Henry John wished to achieve this result. ([n7_3](#))

The codicil was made more than four years after Walter's marriage and can hardly be the result of his initial disapproval of the match. By then it would have been clear to all that Mary was an inestimable wife and help meet but Henry John's action certainly lends a measure of credibility to the possibly apocryphal report of the young nursemaid about her encounter with Henry John when giving young Henry Officer Symons, Walter's first-born, an airing beside the lake one sunny afternoon. Henry John admired the infant and enquired who he might be. "Don't you know, Mr Symons" she bravely answered. "He is your grandson." In the lore of the Walter Symons family this story is accepted as evidence of the old man's aloofness.

By 1907 Walter was well on the way to the completion of his family. Marjorie arrived on 3rd October 1906 to join Harry and Jean, (Jessie did not arrive until 1909). Walter was the only Symons in the business not then living at home and thus not fitting the almost traditional pattern of being provided with board and lodging and therefore only needing nominal pocket money in return for his labours. Perhaps he had had a little difficulty in persuading his father that he had special needs not felt by his brothers and it was reaction to the process of successful persuasion which had led his father to change his will. His codicil was dated 23rd October 1906.

But by 1907 even the old man had reached the conclusion that it was time to make a change in the structure of the business. After all by then Harry was 45, Walter 38, Arthur 30, Val 26 and young Percy 25. They were all entitled, in a way, to feel that they should have a stake in the business. And so, towards the end of the year Henry John instructed his solicitors to prepare a partnership agreement.

In doing this he was very likely entitled to see himself as a leader of thought. In family businesses it was by no means uncommon for the founding father to hang on to ownership and control until death took them away. Particularly in rural areas this was a state of mind which was still well entrenched in the nineteen-forties when I practised the law and it was only the impact of war time taxation and the prospect of death duties which led to the acceptance of the virtues of income splitting and estate planning. There was no particular need for income splitting as a means of reducing taxation in 1907 and techniques of duty avoidance were rarely used.

Henry John would have been aware of the impact of Income tax. At that time it would have been Victorian State Tax only. The Commonwealth did not come into the field until the time of the Great War. The maximum rate of tax to which Henry John would have been subjected would have been at the rate of eight pence in the pound on his income in excess of Two thousand two hundred pounds. If his income had reached the colossal figure of Three thousand two hundred pounds, his tax bill would have been seventy-eight pounds. Income splitting for tax purposes probably did not even occur to him but he probably had enough hard common sense to realise that if he was to be able to keep the family shoulders willingly to the wheel he would have to give them a stake in the business.

Under the new arrangement he would keep a quarter share himself, Harry would also have a quarter and the remaining half would be divided equally between the other four boys. Thus Harry would have twice as much as any of them. He would recognise Walter's special needs. The "boys" who were living at home would each be entitled to draw in cash each week the sum of one pound ten shillings for personal expenses. For a partner who resided elsewhere the weekly amount would be Two pounds. Presumably these drawings would have to be brought into account when the annual profit was struck and divided.

The partnership would be entitled to use his land but he had no intention of giving the other partners a share in it at that time. There is also an indication of a reluctance to yield up control in the provision that all cheques on the partnership bank account had to be signed by Henry John and countersigned by any one of the other partners.

The formal agreement was typed for signature during November but for one reason or another it was not signed until 1st February 1909, on which date it came into effect.

In his 1902 will, Henry John had left the business to the brothers in equal shares. Apparently he did not think it necessary to change the will in consequence of the partnership agreement and it would be interesting to know what happened on his death in 1911. Presumably Harry could have argued that the effect of the will would be to leave him with his one-quarter share plus one-fifth of his father's quarter share - i.e. a total of twelve-fortieths, as again seven fortieths for each of the others. (How much easier it is to express the ratios in percentages! 30% for Harry and 17.5% for each of the others.) Of course the land would be equally owned, except for Fishers. My guess is that, Harry being a peaceable man, the partnership ended up as an equal one, with Harry perhaps receiving rent for the use of Fishers, but I could very well be wrong.

By 1911 the business had become a substantial one, even though it continued to be operated from one central site. Devon Street had been created and Lake Street extended to meet it and Arthur had been able to buy himself a building block in Devon Street more or less opposite the end of Lake Street and to build himself a very nice home on it. Perhaps the partnership agreement had given him the financial muscle to arrange for this to be done. Molly, his eldest, was born in August 1910. Valentine may well have beaten him to the altar as Harold, his elder son, was born in September 1909. So it was just as well that the business was a substantial one, with all those extra mouths to feed.

But the company in the old home in Wendouree Parade was progressively reducing in the process and

in April 1911 Harry had done the unthinkable. He also had committed matrimony and moved to a cottage in Lake Street at the ripe age of 49! The old man and Percy were left to rattle round in the old house, though not for long because Henry John died on 3rd November 1911. The cause of his death was pernicious anaemia, suffered for 10 months, according to his Death Certificate. In 1911 there was no known cure and, in fact, no effective palliative for this dread disease. It is a piquant thought that the first effective treatment would have been conveniently at hand, if it had only been known at the time, but it was not until 1926 that the effectiveness of copious quantities of raw liver was discovered.

Henry John was buried in the Old Cemetery, in the family grave which already held Mary Ann and little John Loosemore, Frederick, Priscilla and Mary Ann. The grave is surmounted by a memorial which was no doubt the subject of considerable family discussion. It has stood the test of time remarkably well and is a credit both to the monumental mason and to whoever was responsible for the design. ([n7_4](#)) Henry John's death was also duly recorded on the memorial tablet which still graces the walls of the Old Colonists Club in Lydiard Street. This records the passing of all the pioneer members of the Association. The family also donated the cost of a stone pulpit as a memorial to their parents in St. Peter's Church in Sturt Street.

Obituary notices duly appeared in the local press but I doubt if they did justice to their subject. The difficulty with which their authors would have had to contend was that Henry John was essentially a private man. He seems not to have taken much part in local affairs or to have been a political animal in a broader arena. On the other hand he was a generous host in circumstances in which he felt comfortable. (For instance, the Symons establishment was relatively convenient to the Show Grounds and many visitors to the Shows made use of his stabling amenities for their horses. By common understanding, those who did and, no doubt many others, also took advantage of the open house which he and Mary Ann maintained on such occasions. They must have made an interesting couple, he with his stern demeanour and his Devonshire brogue and she with her East End accent and her friendly East End manner. Note - she would have firmly denied that she was a cockney. True East Enders saw themselves as an entirely different race.) And he was recognised as an unassuming but generous supporter of many good causes.

Perhaps the real measure of the success of Henry John as an administrator and as the head of a family was the manner in which his affairs were conducted after his death. He would not have left any significant financial difficulties with which the Executors would have to contend. In current terms and on the basis of current values his Estate would have been a very substantial one, particularly having regard to his rural assets. The total must have run into the equivalent of several million modern dollars.

In her will, Mary Ann had described Henry John as a farmer and he used this description in his application for Probate. I think it would be fair to say that it was as a farmer that he achieved major success. The prosperity of the butchery must have been very largely due to the trading flexibility which the farm enabled him to enjoy. Whereas the average butcher would have had to rely on the week to week vagaries of the market for the cost and quality of his supplies, the firm of H.J.Symons could afford to buy ahead, fatten its own purchases, travel the countryside and buy appropriate quantities direct from the property of the producers and insulate itself from the pressures of market fluctuations, unless the state of the market indicated that it was a good time to buy at auction.

Henry John himself, and later Harry on his behalf, used to attend the stockmarkets at Flemington from time to time, not only to bid but also to observe the sources of good quality stock. These could be a pointer to the places which might be worth a personal buying visit. (The William Symons family still cherish the story of Henry John setting out for Melbourne market by train from Ballarat. He was in good time to catch it and decided to get some exercise by pacing the platform while awaiting the time of departure. He must have had something on his mind because he remained lost in thought until he observed the end of the train disappearing beyond the end of the platform. I suspect that distance lent enchantment and that the members of the family who had least to do with Henry John and his Ballarat relatives have retained more family folklore in their combined memory than have those who were more immediately involved.) ([n7_5](#))

Thus the next generation inherited a well established, well run business and they must soon have demonstrated that they would be able to carry it on successfully. They were virtually living in each others' pockets and it would be amazing if there were not occasions when "cabin fever" set in. After a time Harry

bought the delicensed shell of the Wheat Sheaf Hotel at the corner of Wendouree Parade and Exeter Street, demolished it and built himself a house there. Arthur built himself a new house in part of the "shop paddock" on Wendouree Parade, Percy built himself a new house at the corner of Wendouree Parade and Gnarr Street and, a little later on, Val built himself a new house at the Macarthur Street corner, on the site of the old family home. (n7_6) Walter was the odd man out in this exercise. He moved from Baird Street to a house in Windermere Street South, a move which must have caused him much more travelling time than his brothers had to expend. (He probably did not know that he was living just round the corner from the shop and residence of Mrs Codlin, in Sturt Street where the marriage took place which had begun it all.) They were all substantial houses, as befitted successful men of business.

They remained successful men of business throughout the war years and the booms and busts which followed them and the business was still very much unchanged in its modus operandi and stature when Harry and Walter retired in 1935. Harry was then 73 and Walter 65. The remaining brothers formed a company to take over the business and the corporate structure of H.J.Symons Pty Ltd no doubt proved handy as successively the places of deceased brothers were taken by their widows and the working members of the family came to include two grandsons, Arthur John, son of Arthur, and Norman Valentine, younger son of Valentine. They became the sole shareholders after the last of the widows died in 1970 but by then it had been decided to wind up the business and dispose of the assets.

After the company was formed the business was probably able to carry on in much the same way as before for several years although there would have been signs of change even before the social revolution brought on by World War II. The process of distribution by means of delivery carts, involving first a visit to obtain the customer's order and then a second visit the next day to deliver it, was no doubt becoming more costly and less necessary as the mobility of the community increased. This process was still operating, with deliveries every day except Sunday, when war was declared. It required about 10 horses to be stabled at the shop and a full-time groom to be employed. Henry John had employed his five sons, plus eight butchers, a groom, a slaughterman, a fell monger and five farmers and the total numbers were not significantly reduced after his death.

Under wartime conditions retail household deliveries were stopped and one would imagine that the counter trade would not have increased sufficiently to compensate for the consequent loss of business. After the war, the insidious process of replacement of the traditional retail butcher by the meat department in the supermarkets slowly gained momentum and it could not have been surprising to any informed observer that the days of the shop in Macarthur Street were numbered.

That building had a tale to tell! It had been frequented by latter day goldminers, it had viewed with suspicion the advent of the horse trams in 1887 as they rumbled down Macarthur Street to Lydiard Street, following the original route leading to the city centre - perhaps offering an easy ride to such of the Symons children as attended the Macarthur Street school - until they were replaced by the electric trams in 1905. They turned right at Drummond Street before proceeding to Sturt Street at the hospital corner. And it had enjoyed the benefits of the alternative services which had run from the Macarthur Street corner along Wendouree Parade past View Point and then via Ripon Street to Sturt Street. It had seen the advent of steam power and refrigeration and then, in 1929 or thereabouts, the first move towards motorised transport, other than the private cars of the proprietors. It was not until 1939 that motorised transport was used for the conveyance of meat from the abattoirs to the shop.

The firm's telephone number - 282 - indicates that it was one of the early subscribers to the telephone system. The telephone was normally presided over by Percy, who was in charge of the office and the paperwork generally. Although he was the youngest, he was also first of the butcher brothers to die - in September 1944. Arthur followed him in 1945, Harry and Valentine within days of each other in 1948 and Walter in 1949.

William had died in 1940. He was then living in Glenroy. When we last mentioned him he was living at Ballan, after his incursion into the hotel trade in 1901. (In Henry John's 1902 Will he described William as a Station Overseer of Gippsland.) Later, he farmed for some years in the Myrnyong area before moving to Moyhu in the North East where he remained until his retirement to Glenroy.



Henry John Symons in Brisbane Photograph J.S.Wiley



Mrs Fanny Capp
Circa 1902

Richards Photo Ballarat

MACARTHUR STREET - 1930



Bert Middleton

Ted Irwin

Jack Symons

George Rayworth

Norman Symons

Walter Symons

The Chevrolet Truck

Arthur Symons and his Dodge

Walter's Hupmobile

Valentine Symons and his Oakland

Absent: Henry William and his Hupmobile and Percy and his Fiat

Walter had been the last of the sons to die. Fanny lived on in South Africa at least until 1962, when either she or her daughter Ella sent a photograph to Australia showing mother and daughter together. Fanny maintained an occasional correspondence with her Australian relatives for many years after her emigration but I doubt if any of them could now furnish details of the date of her death. She would have been 87 in 1962.

By 1869 Jack and Norman had decided to wind up the business and dispose of the assets. I am indebted to Norman for this report on subsequent events.

"With such a diversity of assets, it was decided to auction the farm section and an auction was held at Craig's Hotel, Ballarat, on 4 December 1969 at 2.30 p.m. However, despite great interest no bids reached the reserve price, so it was agreed that a division of all assets of the company with the exception of 120 acres (Forest Street to Creswick Road) be arrived at by mutual agreement. It was agreed that Arthur John should receive Alfredton, Monteith's, Ferguson's and Connelly's, with Norman Valentine to receive the shop property, Fisher's, the home paddocks and all improvements thereon. The 120 acres in Creswick Road south of the Ring Road was to be taken over by a syndicate of both families, subdivided and sold.

"Although Arthur John died in 1982 the farm properties still remain in the possession of the two families but the shop and adjoining property was demolished by Norman Valentine in 1977 and replaced by six home units, the last of which was sold in 1978, thus ending 121 years of Symons ownership of the original area."

And this should also be the point at which our story should end. The original idea was to attempt to outline the early origins of Henry John. It has extended to include a sketchy outline of his activities in Ballarat and their direct consequences but I quail at the thought of trying to take the tale through the following generations. My attempts to acquire basic statistics about Henry John's grandchildren and great grandchildren have met with mixed success and I hesitate to include details about some of them, while not being able to say anything about others.

I am conscious of many loose ends which call out for attention. For instance, what happened to Alfred? It seems reasonable to conclude that in his father's eyes he was not worthy of mention in the Will. Amongst studio photographs of the old man unearthed by Jessie Scott is one taken in Brisbane by J.S.Wiley of Queen Studios. This supports the family lore that Henry John made at least one visit to Queensland in his later years possibly more. Could Alfred have been the focus of his visit?

The circumstances in which Henry John and Mary Ann met must have been ingrained in family lore at some stage. Will we ever resurrect them? Henry John should certainly have counted himself lucky to have wooed and won such a suitable bride at a time when the ratio of marriageable men to women in Ballarat was at least 18 to 1! The reasons for Mary Ann's migration to Australia and the manner in which she achieved it are also intriguingly impossible to discover.

It would be nice to be able to discover where and how Henry John learned his trade. Clues must be buried somewhere in the 1851 census if only we knew where to look.

It would be fascinating to know more about the relationship between Henry John and his cousin William and, in particular, the activities of William in Ballarat before he moved to Lake Rowan. William was in Ballarat for some years. You will find a brief family tree in the Charts which follow. His two sons were born in Ballarat. One of his great grandsons is engaged in the production of a family history which may well answer some of our queries and which will ensure that the two families will be at least more aware of the existence of each other than they seem to have been over the past hundred years.

There are various irons in the fire and there could be more to report before long. Thus this publication could be out of date before you see it. It is partly for this reason that it will be published in semi-loose leaf form. This will allow the addition of any useful information which may come to light and if any of my readers feels that he or she has a contribution which would add to the record it will be very welcome.

MISCELLANEA

Part I - THE SIDBURY MYTH

For several years a grave in the churchyard at Sidbury was believed to mark the place of burial of the parents of Henry John Symons. It is the grave of John Symons and his wife, Ann and their daughter Elizabeth Ann, wife of William James Avery.

John Symons was the son of Henry and Betty Symons. Henry was the fourth son of Ralph Symons and his wife Rebecca, nee Sanders, whose third son, John was the father of William Harris Symons, the father of Henry John Symons.

Thus John Symons, born in 1807, was a cousin of William Harris Symons, born in 1813. He was a blacksmith at Sidbury and married Ann Mitchell of Sidford. After John died, in 1847, Ann returned to Sidford to live with her sisters Susan and Martha Mitchel in Sidford. Ann is described in the 1851 census as Grocer and Draper. Her daughter, Elizabeth Ann, then four years of age, was at home with her. When, on 16th November 1872, she married William James Avery at the Sidbury Church one of the witnesses at the wedding was Mary Pratt Symons of Rockbeare, who would have been a third cousin.

Thus it has been established beyond possibility of doubt that this was not the grave of Henry John's parents. It is interesting to note that Ann was born in Broadclyst, perhaps indicating that John and Ann met in the Rockbeare-Broadclyst area.

There could have been other more remotely related members of the Symons family in the Sidbury area. One William Symons was a churchwarden in 1737 and 1738 and his name appears on a tablet in the Church.

For the record, the headstone reads as follows:

Sacred to the Memory of John Symons
who departed this life on October 28 1847
in the 41st year of his age.
“And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.”
Mark XIII Chapter 37V.
also Elizabeth Ann the dearly beloved wife of William James Avery daughter of the above named born
February 4 1847
Died June 9 1878
“Weep not for she is not dead but sleepeth”

Also Ann Symons wife of the above who fell asleep in Jesus
May 25th 1889.

The final paragraph of the Inscription had been covered up by an accumulation of earth over many years until 1982 when Joyce, Muriel and I borrowed a spade from the publican and revealed the startling news that John's wife was Ann and not the Elizabeth we had expected, from the misinformation in the Death Certificate of Henry John Symons.

Part II - THE LOOSEMORE WATCH

The watch was the property of Henry Loosemore of Molland, (Baptised 6th April 1766: Buried 2nd March 1838 ?) who was apparently unmarried. His parents were Robert Loosemore and Mary Oxenham, who were blessed with six sons - John (who died as a child) Robert, James William, Henry and John.

James married Elizabeth Bowden. Their daughter, Elizabeth Bowden Loosemore married twice. Her first husband was also a Loosemore, James, a son of Robert Loosemore and Sarah Horrell. James's father (Robert) and Elizabeth's father (James) were first cousins. Thus the bride and groom were second cousins.

James and Elizabeth Bowden Loosemore had six children, three sons and three daughters. The eldest daughter was Ann Horrell Loosemore who in turn married twice. Her first husband was William Harris Symons and their elder son was Henry John Symons, who was born on 22nd May 1834 and became, so far as is known, the only Henry in this branch of the Loosemore family in the generations following that of Henry, the owner of the watch.

It may be pertinent to mention that Elizabeth Bowden Loosemore's first husband died in 1826 and that on 14th April 1829 she took a second husband, William Veysey from whom she subsequently inherited a property known as "Little Champson." This union produced at least two children - Selina and Clara.

Henry Loosemore of Molland, Yeoman, made his last will on 24th April 1838. Probate was granted on 10th June 1839. These dates raise doubts about the accuracy of the information in the Loosemore family tree, which gives Henry's burial date as 2nd March 1838 - it should perhaps have been 1839.

Meanwhile William Harris Symons had died - on 18th September 1836 - leaving his widow with two young children. John, the younger, died at the age of thirteen months in May 1837 and on 23rd May 1838 Ann Horrell married John Jarvis Tripe. There were five children of this marriage and young Henry John grew up in their company, together with two children of John Jarvis's first marriage. The marriage took place on the day after young Henry John's fourth birthday and it seems to have been a nice thought on Ann Horrell's part that she should not have wanted to allow her nuptials to interfere with the excitements of that important occasion. It is also a pleasant fact that one of the witnesses to the wedding was Ann Symons, mother of Ann Horrell's first husband, who had also acted as witness on the occasion of the first wedding.

It is, of course, speculative that Henry John was really named after his mother's great uncle Henry. He might well have been named after his own Uncle Henry, his father's brother who was the second official witness at the Tripe wedding.

The specific terms of Henry's bequest were: "I bequeath to Henry Simons son of William Simons of Whimple my watch."

He did not forget young Henry's grandmother, Elizabeth Bowden Veysey, to whom he left a legacy of Nineteen pounds fifteen shillings. Her sister Sarah got a like amount.

The watch bears the engraved initials "H.L." on the outside and inside, in addition to the name of the supplier - "C.Cross. Watch and Clock Maker Paul Street Exeter" the inscription "Henry Loosemore 1809. Love W.V. 1812." We can only speculate as to whether the initials W.V. may stand for William Veysey.

Inside the case there is also a manuscript message which is difficult to decipher but which is thought to read:-

"J. W.

Here reader, sir..

In Youth, in Age A Prisoner

The speaking stops if*

standing time.

This wisdom marks the moment

as it flies

Think about a moment

To him who dies!

1812."

*The indecipherable words may be .. "never season."

The source of this quotation remains a mystery. The message may well have been written by William Veysey. But who was "J.W."?

The watch is in the possession of Jessie Scott, youngest daughter of Walter, son of Henry John Symons.

Part III - ENTRY in "THE CYCLOPEDIA OF VICTORIA"

Published Circa 1901-1903

Mr HENRY JOHN SYMONS, Butcher, Wendouree, was born in Devonshire, England, in the year 1834 and received his education in his native country. He came out to Victoria at the end of 1856 and made his way to Ballarat, where he found employment with Mr Joshua Ware, who at that time carried on a butchery business on the site of the present premises. In those days a bark hut constituted the establishment, and in two years' time Mr Symons had become proprietor of the business, which he has carried on ever since. As trade increased rapidly, he was compelled to erect more commodious premises, which were considerably added to in 1883, and since that date he has found it necessary to erect additional outbuildings. Mr Symons enjoys a large and extensive connection throughout the district of Ballarat. His farm supplies him with splendid pasture for cattle and sheep, which are specially paddocked for killing purposes, and his establishment is worthily famous for the prime quality of all his goods. He has always taken an active interest in the advancement and welfare of the district with which he has had such a lengthy and honorable association, and is held in much respect, both in a business and private capacity.

Part IV - THE FAMILY BIBLE

The Family Bible is in possession of Professor Bob Symons B.AgSc (Melb) FAA FRS, son of my cousin Harry, who was the son of my Uncle Walter. Henry John Symons bequeathed his books to his son Walter and it seems appropriate that the Bible should have reached Bob, following the rules of male oriented primogeniture.

The list of births seems to have been compiled after the birth of little Mary Ann in 1866. The same handwriting may have recorded the death of John Loosemore. The note relating to the death of Mary Ann Senior in 1899 was probably written by Henry William.

EXTRACT FROM THE FAMILY BIBLE DEATHS

The image shows a handwritten list of deaths from a family Bible. The entries are written in cursive and are as follows:

John Loosemore Symons	Died May 1 st 1846
Fredrick Symons	Died January 23 1872
Priscilla Symons	Died April 1 st 1873
Mary Anne Symons	Died April 25 1876
Alfred Symons	Died September August 9 1891
Mary Ann Symons	Died October 14 1899 Aged 59.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. Exeter was a walled city from the Roman days, which meant that it was capable of being defended against all but the most determined besiegers. The effects of a long siege could be expected to be felt over a wide radius outside the walls.

One such occasion was the siege of the town by the forces of Stephen in 1137 A.D. The town was held by forces supporting Matilda for three months before the lack of water forced a surrender. Then in 1467 the town held out successfully for King Edward IV against the Yorkists and again in 1497 for Henry VII against the supporters of Perkin Warbeck. In 1549 the town held out successfully against the men of Cornwall and Devon who had arisen in defence of the old religion and in 1643 the town declared for Parliament but was taken by the Royalists, who held it until 1646. On a less belligerent note it welcomed William of Orange in 1688.

2. Elizabeth Lady of Clare was better known as the founder of Clare College, Cambridge.

3. Thomas Porter seems to have been an absentee landlord, although not a distant one. Nutwell House was not far from Rockbeare in the Parish of Aylesbeare. Rockbeare House was occupied in 1850 by Hy.F. Bidgood Esq who seems to have been a descendant of Rev Charles Bidgood, who had left 12s. a year out of the Farm estate for a monthly distribution of bread to the poor. (White's Devon 1850). Other later directories tell us that Rockbeare House was occupied by Mrs Remington in 1857 (Billing's) W.H.Nation Esq in 1878 (Harrod's) and in 1930 by Lt. Col. Henry Spencer C.B.E., J.P. (Suffolk) (according to Kelly's Directory which describes the property as Rockbeare Manor and the Lt. Col. as Lord of the Manor). In the Census for 1851 the occupants of Rockbeare House were Benjamin Kemp, Bailiff and Mary Symons, a visitor, born at Faraway Devon and a dressmaker by occupation. Perhaps Mary was engaged to sew for the family but, if so, where were the family?

4. This information comes from White's Devon 1850.

5. "Westcott" House was the seat and property of Rev John Elliott. Mrs Ann Payne and Mr Edward Payne lived at "Ford House". This information is given by Kelly for 1850. In 1857 there is reference to Rockbeare Court, occupied by Walter Comyns Dunsford and William Henry Dunsford. There was an Inn called "The Bidgood Arms". The maps show another property, "The Grange" but this escaped the attention of the compilers of the directories.

6. White's Devon 1850.

7. Billing 1930-31.

8. Spelt by White as "Simmons."

9. I am indebted to my remote cousin, John Symons of Glen Waverley, whom we will meet later, for a copy of this will. It has helped to resolve the problems caused by the Sidbury Myth. See page 52.

10. Elizabeth, daughter of William Pratt and Sarah Symons, married John Symons and with him produced nine children whom you will find on Chart I.

11. This statistic came from the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Coach times generally are taken from a Directory of Devon – circa 1830. There does not seem to be much literature about coaches in Western England but there are excellent descriptions of activities in other localities in "Stagecoach to John o'Groats" by Leslie Gardner and "Essex Coaching Days" by J.Elsden Tuffs.

Here is a sample from Leslie Gardner:-

"Skill, courage and sagacity - the coachman, that mixture of 'greatcoats, gruffness and old boots', needed all these to keep his vehicle up to schedule during the eighteen-twenties and thirties, when the pace was hottest...

Pulling a crack coach, his team of four must canter the whole stage, a distance that might be four or twenty-four miles. At the end of it, they would be changed - here you saw a spectacular display of split-second timing, the operation taking 45 or 50 seconds - watered groomed and led away to await their turn for the next coach, perhaps an hour later.

At the London terminus, where the Edinburgh and Thurso Mail stood alongside the Falmouth and Penzance, both due to leave at the same time, it was the Guard who stopped you from getting in the wrong coach and being carried a thousand miles from your destination... On a quiet stretch between towns, when the trip grew tedious, it was he who put away his "yard of tin" and took out a key-bugle, to enliven your passage with a selection of favourite airs and set the whole coach singing.." p 17.

12. Leslie Gardner says that in 1722 the Court of the Lord Mayor of London found it necessary to do something about "disorderly leading and driving Cars, Carts, Coaches and other Carriages over London Bridge...Carts and Coaches and other carriages coming out of Southwark into the City do keep all along on the West side of the said Bridge..and all Carts and Coaches and other carriages going out of the city do keep all along on the East side of the said bridge."

This sensible rule accorded with the fact that keeping to the left had been for centuries an old tradition among drivers and riders. Horsemen veered to the left on encountering a stranger, as jousting knights did, to use their weapons to best advantage.

Continental practice .. followed a mediaeval Papal rule for segregating traffic across the congested access to St. Peter's in Rome." p56.

Thus Prince George and Telegraph would have escaped collision by a well regulated and time honoured technique.

CHAPTER TWO

1. The matter could very likely be resolved beyond all doubt by reference to the census of 1811. I have not checked its availability. The census system had begun in 1801.

2. Apprenticeships seem to have been generally dispensed with following an Act of Parliament of 1814 and as the boys were growing up the only apprenticeships likely to have been entered into in the Rockbeare area would have been in respect of children - I used the term advisedly - apprenticed out to farmers under the supposed supervision of overseers of the poor of the Parish to be taught the art of husbandry. My friend Bruce Kennedy, who died in May 1984, had found in his researches of the Kendall family in Devon that 10 young members of the family, aged from 7 years to 13 years had been apprenticed out to various masters between 1800 and 1840 under Indentures which bound them to their Masters until they reached the age of 21, without pay or reward other than the provision of food, accommodation and clothing.

3. My cousin John Symons of Glen Waverley has reported that he noted that in 1845 John had paid "Rent in lieu of Tithe" for Tanners farm, being listed as occupier.

4. Amelia was buried with her daughter Dorothea in Whimple churchyard. The gravestone records that Amelia was born in 1858 and died in 1945. Dorothea was born in 1887 and died in 1973.

5. Elizabeth Bowden Loosemore, baptised at Molland on 10th January 1783, was a daughter of James Loosemore, a yeoman of Little Champson and his wife Elizabeth Bowden who had been married at Molland on 31st January 1781. Her father was a son of Robert Loosemore of Molland, whose brother James had a son, Robert, whose son James married Elizabeth Bowden Loosemore! Thus the happy couple seem to have been second cousins. Perhaps as a result Ann Horrell inherited double strength Loosmore genes. See Chart V.

6. Class consciousness would have been at a peak in 1833. The long striving Reform Movement had led to the sweeping reforms introduced by the Reform Act of 1832, which has been said to have fostered the

growth of the Middle Class in England. There might not have been any immediately noticeable change in the community of Rockbeare as a result but the truth of the statement that "Jack is as good as his Master" would have been more frequently put to the test. The real meaning of the title "Gentleman" began to change. The Encyclopaedia Britannica in its 5th Edition (1815) said that "a Gentleman is one who, without any title, bears a coat of arms or whose ancestors have been freemen." By 1845 it had become "all above the rank of Yeomen". All along it was understood, of course, that a gentleman's manners would indicate a certain amount of refinement and intelligence. A yeoman does not seem to have required this distinction. It seems to have been generally accepted that yeomen were country-men, men of the district, who were owners of freehold land - an intermediate class between the gentry and the labourers and artisans. Thus Ann Horrell's paternal grandfather, Robert, came from a higher layer in the social scale than her maternal grandfather, James, but both were a cut above her husband's father, the late John Symons, butcher of Westcott.

7. The creators of the tree, Ronald and Victor Loosemore, have over 5000 names in their Loosemore data bank. Sarah Horrell was well known by repute for the size of the dowry which came with her marriage to "Mr Robert", as he was widely known. According to the Exeter Flying Post it amounted to three thousand two hundred pounds, a very large figure in 1782, but Victor Loosemore casts doubt upon this assertion which he thinks may have exaggerated the figure by one or more noughts! In any event, her reputation was seen to justify the adoption of her name in the selection of names for two of her grand-daughters, Ann and Sarah.

8. One of the possessions of Henry John Symons was a watch which had been bequeathed to him by his great-uncle, James Loosemore. See Page 52.

9. The book was entitled Lorna Doone by R.D.Blackmore. It was the Sixth Edition published in 1891 and is still in good condition. My father would have been 30 years old when he received it. He was Ann's first grandson.

10. Sarah Tripe was buried in Chulmleigh Churchyard. Her gravestone records that she was interred on her 102nd birthday. Nearby lie her brother James, who died on 8th August 1917 aged 84 and his wife Jane who had died on 6th May 1917, aged 85.

11. Dictionary of British Surnames - P.H.Reaney – Routledge and Kegan Paul.

12. While this may be evidence of the relative antiquity of the name it does not necessarily establish its gentility. The Knights Templars were one of three great military orders established in the 12th Century. They had at first no distinctive habit, wearing any old clothes which might be given to them. The community was not exclusive and they admitted what has been described as an unruly rabble of "rogues and impious men, robbers and committers of sacrilege, murderers, perjurers and adulterers" who streamed to the Holy Land in hope of plunder and salvation." I quote from my venerable edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

13. Further searches have located Ann. She was visiting her aunt Elizabeth Taverner at 149 Fore Street Exeter.

14. At 28, Richard Blackmore seems to have been rather young to have earned the right to call himself a retired farmer. I am reminded of my brother's boyhood career ambition - to be a retired Wimmera wheat farmer. Perhaps Richard was 'between farms' at the time.

15. Why did the Tripes move to Chulmleigh? Clearly it was to a much bigger farm. The title "Parsonage" does not necessarily imply that he had not purchased the freehold. He may have come to hear of it through the Loosemore connection. Chulmleigh was in the heart of Loosemore territory and it would surprise me if Ann did not find herself amongst friendly relations when she moved there.

16. In retrospect we should perhaps have made this discovery much earlier than we did, although I am inclined to think that the long process of trial and error had to be followed. Certainly the satisfaction of finding Ann's presence, so conclusively proved by supporting detail, was one of the high points of the search, perhaps only equalled by the satisfaction of finding Henry Symons listed amongst the Tripe family at Sidbury in the 1841 census.

17. The life story of John Loosemore Symons could be fleshed out by discussion with those of his descendants who are still living but it would not be likely to take our story any further. We know that he was a student at Hele's School, a well known establishment in Exeter. This is the only specific piece of information about the education of any member of the Symons family which our search has so far disclosed. In a biographical note about Henry John Symons in *The Cyclopaedia of Victoria*, circa 1901, it is reported that "Mr Symons ... received his education in his native country" - presumably this would have been in Sidbury.

18. Louis Symons - sometimes called Lewis, a name which appears in the Loosemore family tree in earlier generations - farmed a property called Westwood Farm at Whipton, now swallowed up by the city of Exeter. He died on 5th June 1953 and is buried in Whipton Churchyard, with his wife Ethel (Snow) who had died in 1940. They had three children, Joyce born in 1910, now deceased, Gordon born in 1919 who farms at Silverton and Gladys (1917) who lives in the family home. Beacon Heath, Exeter, is built on what was Westwood Farm. I am indebted for this information to the ladies of the Whimble History Society, who unfortunately did not tell me what Beacon Heath is!

CHAPTER THREE

1. "The Emigrants must be of those callings which from time to time are most in demand in the Colony. They must be sober, industrious, and of general good moral character; - of all of which certificates will be required. They must also be in good health, free from all bodily and mental defects; and the Adults must, in all respects, be capable of labour, and going out to work for wages... Single men cannot be taken except in a number not exceeding that of the Single women by the same ship." Evidence of good character was required in the form of certificates signed by two respectable householders; under no circumstances would certificates from a Publican or a Dealer in Beer or Spirits be accepted. The Physician's certificate was required to state that the Emigrant had had the small pox or had been vaccinated, as well as establishing his general good health and his capacity to labour in his calling.

(An interesting and informative report on the procedures and paper work involved in the Assisted Migration programme will be found in "The Somerset Years" by Florence Chuk and for an excellent description of the whole subject of migration to Australia "The Long Farewell" by Don Charlwood is strongly recommended.)

2. The unbeaten record was held by *Thermopylae* which made the journey in 60 days, in 1868. Sailing ships were already facing competition from steam when *William* set sail. In 1852 *Great Britain* demonstrated its potential by carrying 630 passengers and a crew of 130 from Liverpool and thereafter was on the Australian run until 1877, except for a period between 1855 and 1858 when she was engaged in carrying troops to the Crimea. The scope of the migrant traffic is hard for us to appreciate. For example, it was calculated that in February 1852 95 ships left London for Australia and 80 ships sailed from Liverpool. Deaths at sea were not uncommon. Probably *Triconderoga* held the record, losing 100 at sea and 80 in Quarantine at Portsea out of a total of 811 passengers.

3. A ship was one with three masts, square rigged.

4. The practice of sheathing hulls with copper came into general use in about 1846 after extensive trials by the navy. "Yellow metal" was normally an amalgam of 60% copper 40% zinc. According to contemporary literature its advantages were considered sufficient to overcome the disability that it would only withstand the wear and tear of two voyages to the antipodes.

5. An interesting description of the voyage of the *Dominion* will be found in Noel Wentworth's book "The Story of a Port." It quotes from the diary of one William Jennings, a passenger on this voyage and also from the *Portland "Guardian"* of 15th October 1852.

6. Thomas Tuttle was of about the same age as William Symons. The Tuttle's came from Great Bedwyn in

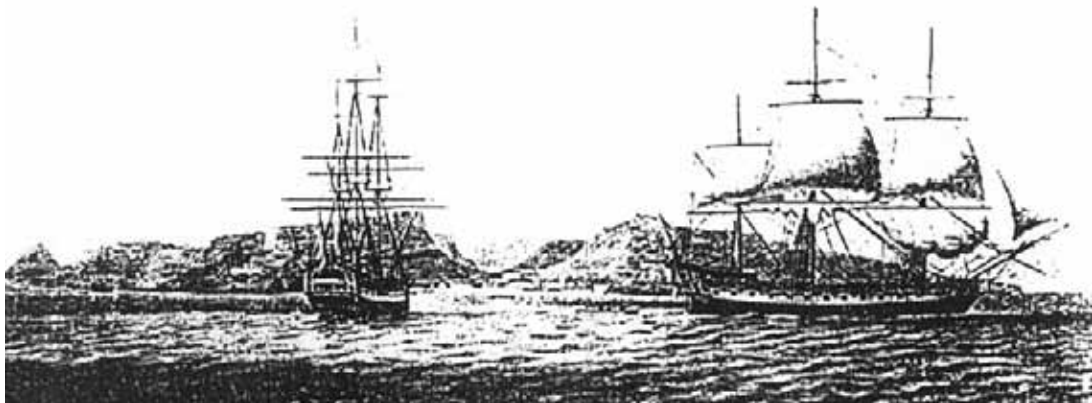
Wiltshire and embarked at Plymouth as I suspect, he could well have made the journey by coach passing along the Roman road between Rockbeare and Whimble in the process. Discussions on this subject could have helped while away the tedious hours at sea.

7. William is thought to have progressed from dairyfarming to retail milk delivery to a round of customers. From a dairy farm in Ballarat West it seems logical to expect that his round would concentrate on the north-western extremities of the growing residential area, which would also have provided a potential market for the butchering business of Joshua Ware.

8. It seems likely that, as the ship was to leave from Gravesend, Henry John would have travelled across London from Paddington to Charing Cross to catch a train to Gravesend. A diary kept by one John Peglar and in the possession of the Public Library in Melbourne records that on 1st July 1852 he had been able to leave his home in Southhampton and take the 6.45 a.m. train to London, arriving at 9.45 presumably at Waterloo. "Took a cab to the Blackwall rail, calling at Ball & Co for the embarkation order, and then by train to the E.I.Docks." He found that he would not be sailing until the following day and, after leaving his baggage at the ship, was able to return to the city for the rest of the day. The journey from Exeter would have been two or three hours longer for Henry John who might have missed out on a visit to the city.

9. The schedule of Northumberland's arrivals in Melbourne shows a gap before the 1857 voyage which might have been due in part to her being laid up for re-sheathing at this time.

10. Florence Chuk records (op.cit.) that on her voyage in 1852 Northumberland, then carrying 137 passengers and on her third visit to Melbourne, had gone on from Plymouth to Falmouth before setting sail for Melbourne. Possibly she watered at Falmouth because of doubts about the quality of Plymouth water at the time. Cholera had been rife for some years. However there is no record of Dominion, which had passed this way with William on board a few week earlier, taking similar precautions.



Northumberland

(National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London)

CHAPTER FOUR

In writing this Chapter I have relied on "Lucky City" by Weston Bate for much of the background information about early Ballarat and have not cluttered the notes with references to many items which this book has supplied.

1. Jessie Scott M.B.E., who describes herself as my Ballarat Private Eye, helped solve the mystery of Saint Enoch's. It was a station property a few miles north east of Skipton. There were three Brown Brothers - Andrew, John and Thomas, sons of Thomas Brown Senior, a Merchant of Hobart. Andrew arrived in Port Phillip in 1838 and was followed by his two brothers in 1839. They took up Gala, the first run to be taken up in the Lismore district. The Carrangewest chain of ponds became known as Brown's Waterholes. Later it was to become the site of the village of Lismore. John and Thomas had the run together until they sold it to John Aitken in May 1853. Thomas and John then took up Saint Enoch's which was a massive property comprising some 66,000 acres. Why Brown should have been interested in this land remains a mystery. Perhaps he bought it "off the plan".

2. Bath was an experienced dealer in property of all sorts. I can imagine that, having acquired a one-half share in this land he would have found himself in a strong position to bluff anyone who showed an interest in the other half. As a result he was able to obtain it at a reduced price. He was an interesting character. Having arrived in Ballarat from Geelong as one of the early prospectors, he quickly perceived the possibilities of making a good living out of providing needed services for the diggers. He was probably Ballarat's first butcher and later one of the settlement's first hoteliers. Bath's Hotel became the focus for a wide range of activities in which he participated. He had been one of the first bidders at the land sales, buying two lots on 24th November 1852. He managed to gain control of over 100 public houses and shanties and at one stage was outlaying one thousand five hundred pounds per week for transport of liquor to Ballarat. In 1854 he bought a farm of 600 acres near Lake Learmonth, which he developed into a model property. He named it "Cerea". In 1861 he sowed it down with English grasses. In 1871 he had 500 acres under irrigation "from Lake Learmonth" (whatever that may have meant) and by 1890 Ceres had become one of the popular bases for the activities of the Ballarat Hunt.

3. Henry Bowyer Lane was an assistant Colonial Engineer who was engaged, inter alia, in the design and construction of officers' accommodation and a Court House, in 1853. The latter was badly needed in Ballarat by then and the decision to build it in Buninyong remains one of those mysteries of the official mind. Lucky City p. 39.

4. "Surfacing" presumably describes shallow prospecting by contrast to the deeper digging which followed soon after. Ronalds died in 1860 but his family remained interested in the nursery for a time before selling it to one James Duncan in 1863. I have not followed the chain of title past 1869 when it was still in Duncan's hands. At some later stage Devon Street was created through this land and Lake Street was extended to meet it.

5. The entry about Henry John in the Cyclopaedia of Victoria (see Page 54) may not necessarily be evidence that the subject was held in high esteem but I think we have every reason to think that he was, although the Editor no doubt relied heavily on the material which the subject supplied.

6. The Ballarat Gas Company was the first corporation founded and formed in Ballarat, in 1857. It was officially "launched" on July 17th 1858 but there had been earlier enterprises which had provided gas generated from gum leaves for, inter alia, Bath's Hotel, the Charles Napier Hotel and Christ Church. See article by Peter Butters in The News, September 21st 1994 supplied to me by Jessie Scott.

7. Coach building was an important industry in Ballarat at the time. The first specialist coach builder, J.D.Morgan established works in Armstrong Street in 1857 beginning an association with Cobb & Co which resulted in the firm receiving orders worth sixty-four thousand pounds between 1857 and 1864. In 1863 the firm had been taken over by Cutter and Lever. Cutters later became motor-body builders. Cutter built a body for my father's Fiat in 1923.

8. Bate is quoting from a letter written by the seventeen-year-old son of a Liverpool merchant who had travelled in a Telegraph Line coach driven by Devine in 1858. Devine is also noted as the driver of The Leviathan, which Morgan built in 1859. It had been built as a speculation but fortunately Cobb & Co stepped in and operated it although it is doubtful if it was a profitable venture. It has been calculated that its maximum passenger load was 89 adults. It was drawn by eight horses, harnessed in pairs tandem.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. A smattering of the law can be a dangerous thing to rely on and it may be even more dangerous to rely on what might well be a misrecollection of a misunderstanding of the law as it used to be before I retired from active practice in 1958. I must say that I have been fascinated by the story which I seem to see behind the details of Ware's dealings with Grimmatt and the way in which Grimmatt resolved the difficulties arising from Ware's insolvency. When Ware defaulted under his mortgage, Grimmatt would have been entitled to become a mortgagee in possession and to recover the moneys due to him by selling the property. If he had

tried to do so, he would have been obliged to attempt to obtain the best possible price for it and to account to Ware, or to the assignee of his insolvent estate, for any profit which he might make on the deal. He may well have seen in Henry John Symons a willing purchaser at a price which would cover the principal outstanding, provided he was prepared to give him time to earn it.

Laing, the Assignee, would have had difficulty in selling to Grimmett direct because this might be seen as being suspiciously close to a foreclosure by Grimmett without going through all the complex steps which the law required of a Mortgagee exercising his powers of foreclosure to claim the land as his own. So Laing sold Ware's Equity of Redemption to a middleman who sold it on to Grimmett. Technically Laing seems to have been living dangerously in doing this but they were adventurous times.

2. I am here assuming that Richard Browne was then still in Poplar but I should record a doubt about this. More later!
3. Actually Henry John was 26 at the time. He turned 27 on 22nd May 1861.
4. In her death certificate, Mary Ann's maiden surname was stated to be Isaacs. This was an error.
5. If Melbourne was officially recorded as their destination, their landing in Adelaide would possibly have escaped the notice of the Authorities in South Australia.
6. It seems reasonable to assume that Mary Ann and Frederick travelled in the company of some older person. It is difficult to accept that their mother would have countenanced the venture on any other basis. Temporary accommodation could then have been obtained in Brunswick. According to my cousin Violet, "the Flack clan came to Melbourne on December 22nd 1851 and George Senior, being a tailor by trade, set up a ready made clothing store in Brunswick and did really well." With George Junior, he bought up land in the Ballan area and in 1861 they established a store and hotel there. The Breese family also lived in Brunswick. A street there is named after them. (I remember it well.) John Breese married Agnes Molland and their daughter, Fanny Molland Breese, married George Flack the Younger. Presumably he then took her to Ballan. It seems probable that Fanny Breese and Mary Ann Browne had met in Brunswick. As Mary Ann married Henry John in 1861 it seems improbable that they first met in Ballan. At that time there would have been no convenient access between Ballarat and Ballan. The Melbourne Ballarat direct line of rail was not completed until 1899. It seems more likely, on a balance of probabilities, that Henry John and Mary Ann first met in Ballarat.

It may be an interesting quirk of coincidence that Fanny Breese had a second Christian name - Molland which is also the name of a village in North-East Devon in the heart of Loosemore territory.

7. When the business finally closed in 1975, my cousin Norman, to use his own phrase, "took over the family Deed Box which contained several of the old legal documents.." These included the original conveyances to Henry John of the land acquired from Grimmett and from McNiece over 100 years earlier. These documents clearly could not be found at the time of an application to bring the corner site under the operation of the Transfer of Land Act in 1977 as they would have had to be surrendered to the Registrar of Titles at the time. Their absence was probably the cause of some special legal expense involved in persuading the Registrar of Titles to waive production.
8. The failure to register the Memorial earlier probably came to the notice of the lawyers at this time because they were then involved in preparing the documentation necessary to convey part of the corner site to Valentine, who bought it as a site for his new house. The land cost him two hundred and ten pounds!

CHAPTER SIX

1. The old clock was built by William Upjohn (1741 - 1787) of Exeter. Its provenance is otherwise unclear. The family tradition has it that it is intended to descend from the eldest son to the eldest son who is to be called Henry.. It seems that it was in this way that it passed to Henry William Symons, who in turn

bequeathed it to his elder son, Henry MacNeil Symons. It remains in the care of his family and no doubt will pass into the possession of his eldest son, Henry John Symons. He is currently childless and it seems not unlikely that the clock will in due course pass to the eldest son of his brother James, who is named Henry and currently lives with his parents in Berkeley, California and is no doubt classed as an American citizen.

If the tradition did not commence in the imagination of Henry John Symons, it would appear unlikely that the clock was acquired by him through the Symons family, as there is no indication of a Henry in his lineage who would fit the tradition. Nor does it seem likely that a clock of this calibre would have passed to him by direct descent from his father. On the Loosemore side, there were no close relatives named Henry unless one includes in this category his mother's great-uncle Henry he who bequeathed the watch to Henry John. His will gave no indication of the existence of the clock. He bequeathed his furniture to one Sarah Gardner servant to his brother James. On the available evidence I have to conclude that it was Henry John who began the "Henry tradition" but that in all probability the clock was passed on to him by his mother who may well have derived benefits from various members of the Loosemore family.

2. I have taken this description from some notes of my cousin Norman who worked for many years with his uncles and absorbed much from them.

3. Hilary deserves a mention. She was born in 1958. After leaving school she went to London and soon thereafter obtained a position with the Board of Trade. This led to her appointment to a secretarial position at No 10 Downing Street where she became one of the "garden room girls" and ultimately was a member of the staff of Harold Wilson, with whom she travelled extensively. She is now a farmer's wife. Her husband, Harry Alan Harris farms at Hummer Farm, Trent near Yeovil in Dorset. They have two children who attend schools in Sherborne. I wonder if she realises that her great-great grandmother, Ann, had been a Harris.

4. In her final year at Ballarat College Fanny gained first place in the Honors List in French, Mathematics and Science. In that same year in the Boys' School a lad named Symons was in the Honor List in Form II for Arithmetic, English, Geography, History and Scripture. Possibly this was Arthur.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Fanny retained sufficient goodwill for her homeland to name her home in Durban "Wendouree."

2. If Alfred had survived Henry John he probably would have had little chance of claiming a share in the estate.

3. Walter would have been less than human if he was not hurt by his father's action but there seems to be no room for the possibility that it soured his relations with Harry. From my observations, they were always the best of friends.

4. The inscription reads as follows:-

In Loving Memory
of
HENRY JOHN SYMONS
Died 2nd November 1911 aged 77 years
His beloved wife
MARY ANN
Died 11th Octr. 1899 aged 59 years
and their beloved children
JOHN L., FREDERICK, PRISCILLA
& MARY ANN
Died in infancy.

5. William's wife Violet probably heard much about Mary Ann from her mother, Fanny Breese and her

father no doubt came back from occasional visits to Ballarat with many tales about his brothers and the family business. Their daughter, Violet, in turn heard much from her mother. She recalls having heard that, as a widower, Henry John was thought to be showing signs of playing court to Fanny Flack, then a widow living at Ballan. She thinks that his approaches were not welcomed. He probably was a lonely man and looked on the outing to Ballan as a pleasant interlude.

Violet says that the old man tended to arouse terror in the hearts of the young brides of his sons by commenting on their cooking accomplishments. (Why do I tend to call him the old man? After all I am already a couple of years older than he was! Is there a message for me here, somewhere?)

6. Norman says that the old house was relocated in 1922 or thereabouts. It was divided into two parts and now stands as a pair of dwellings in Creswick Road opposite the Old cemetery. The original house had two bow windows. The southerly section of the building seems to have been repositioned to the north side of the other half. The existence of the bow windows makes it easy to identify the two houses.