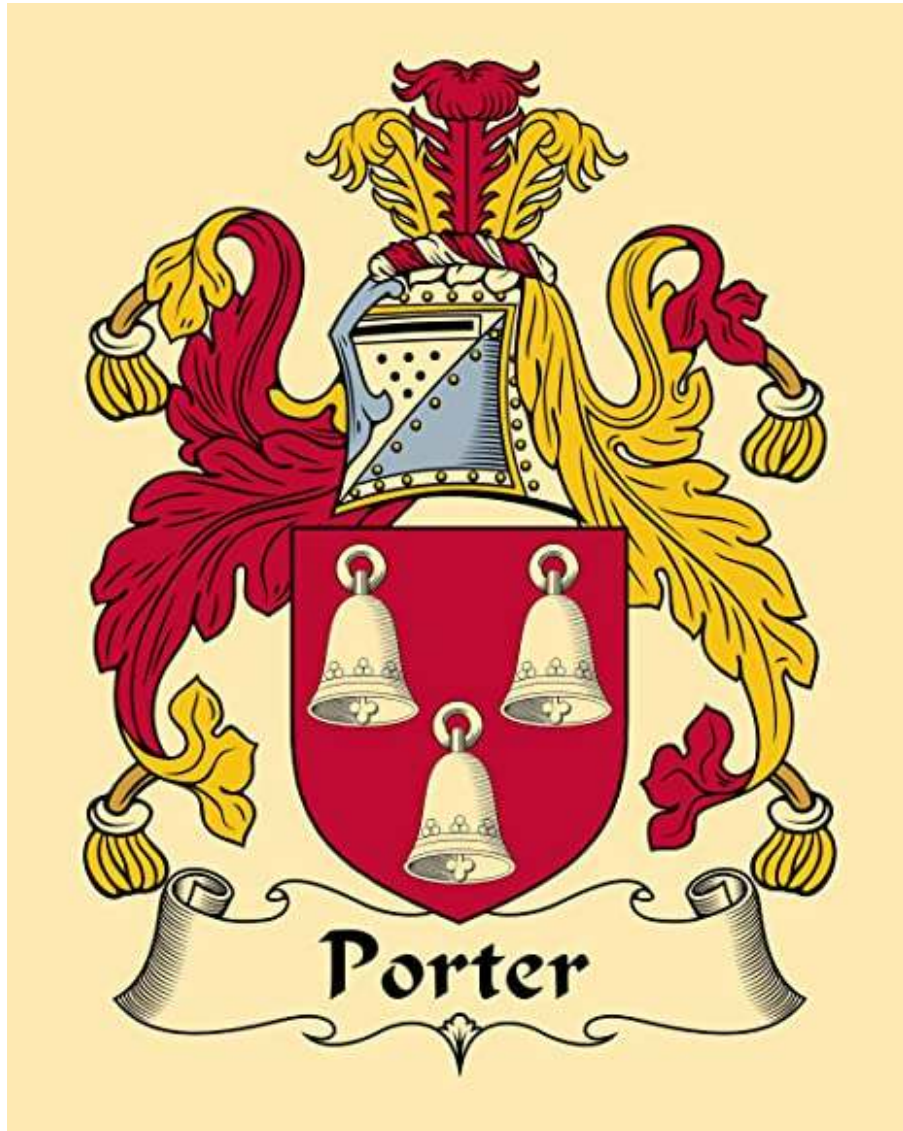


The PORTER FAMILY - FARMERS & WEAVERS

County of Staffordshire, England



Researched by: JOHN GRAHAM WARD

FIRST EDITION PUBLISHED APRIL 2022

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I NTRODUCTION

By John Graham Ward (born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, England in 1936.)

- The EARLIEST ANCESTORS of the PORTER Family we have identified so far is JOHN PORTER (1521-1573) and his wife, ELLEN PORTER (died in 1576). They were probably born in or near Stallington in Staffordshire near Stoke-on-Trent, but further research is necessary to confirm that supposition.
- The senior members of the PORTER Family were probably Farmers and the younger men would have been Agricultural Labourers learning their trade, while working on local farms. William Porter and his son William of Foleshill, Warwickshire farmed 50-105 acres and employed several men in the 1830s and 1840s.
- Stallington Hall was a farming operation in the 1500s and produced a popular “smoked cheese” and fresh milk for local consumption. Their first dairy herd would be one of many the Porter Farmers would create in England, Australia and Canada.

(As I write this in 2022 in Qualicum Beach, Vancouver Island, British Columbia there is a local PORTER DAIRY FARM only an hour away to the South in Chemainus to where Don Porter’s family migrated from Southern England in 1883...!)

- However, the economy was erratic and they often had to turn their hand to other trades like carting, silk & cotton weaving, brewing and shop-owning.

STALLINGTON is located in the County of Staffordshire, West Midlands, four miles north-east of the town of Stone, six miles south-east of the major city of Stoke-on-Trent, 112 miles north-east of Cardiff, and 129 miles north-west of London. Stallington falls within the district council of Stafford, under the County Council of Staffordshire.

SAVERLEY GREEN is a hamlet in the County of Staffordshire, situated northeast of Townend, and northeast of Fulford.

Note: The many DATES quoted in the book should be viewed with caution as to their accuracy since the data are often the “best guess” of well-intentioned researchers who are faced with unverified sources.

- The SILK WEAVING & COTTON FABRIC industry flourished in England in 1685 AD when thousands of French & Flemish refugees from religious persecution flooded into the Midlands of England and brought with them skills in weaving exotic fabrics. These skills were passed on to English workers and soon this was the wealth-making industry that lifted thousands of English families out of poverty for the first time.

Political and economic pressures caused the SILK WEAVING & COTTON INDUSTRY in England to collapse in the 1800s and these workers had to find alternate work; many of them, including the PORTERS, turned to the lure of a better life in AUSTRALIA or CANADA and ventured across the oceans in large crowded sailing ships with bitter results, but started their new lives in the new Commonwealth that was emerging from the old BRITISH EMPIRE. Then there was WORLD WAR I... followed by WORLD WAR II!

O rigin of the Family Name "PORTER"

This interesting surname is of OLD FRENCH origin, and has two possible sources; firstly, it may be an occupational name for the GATEKEEPER of a Town, or a doorkeeper of a large house, deriving from the Middle English "*porter*", a development of the Old French "*portier*". The office often came with accommodation, lands, and other privileges for the bearer, and in some cases was hereditary, especially in the case of a Royal Castle.

Secondly, it may be an OCCUPATIONAL NAME for a man who carried loads for a living, especially one who used his own muscle power rather than a beast of burden or a wheeled vehicle, from the Old French "*porteo(u)*" to carry, or convey.

The surname is distinguished by being first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 and early recordings include WILLIAM LE PORTIER (1190), in the Pipe Rolls of Berkshire, and NICHOLAS LE PORTUR (1263), in "Middle English Occupational Terms" of Surrey.

LONDON CHURCH RECORDS list the christening of Edward, son of Thomas PORTER, on September 14th 1546, at St. Matthew's, Friday Street, and the christening of John, son of Edward PORTER, on June 24th 1599, at St. Stephen's, Coleman Street. A Coat of Arms granted to a Porter family in Allerby, Cumberland, is a red shield, on a gold fess, three blue church bells, a silver border engrailed.

The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of MILO PORTARIUS, porter at Winchester Castle, which was dated 1086, in the "Domesday Book of Hampshire", during the reign of KING WILLIAM I, known as "The Conqueror", 1066 - 1087. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as POLL TAX.

Throughout the Centuries, surnames in every country have continued to "develop" often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling. Where is EDUCATION when you need it? King Alfred the Great said, "We need GRAMMAR SCHOOLS...!" Alfred believed that all free born English boys should receive an education and he set up a school at his court to educate his sons, as well as those of the nobles and others of lesser birth.

And so it was... QUOD ERAT DEMONSTRANDUM ... now, where did I put that OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY?

P ORTER FAMILY PATRIARCH SUCCESSION TREE

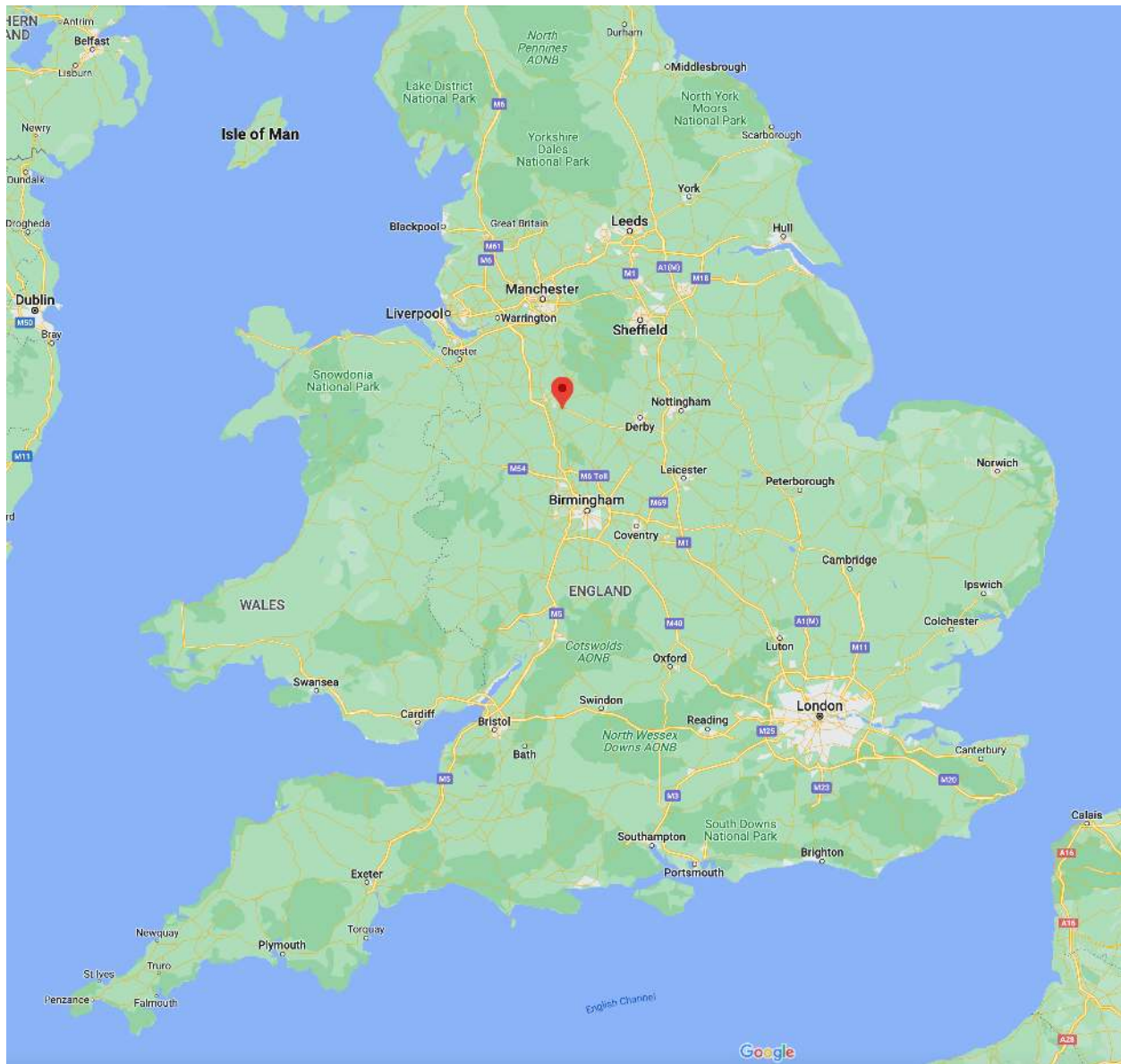
Using MyHeritage's new "Relationship Tool" we can identify 16-Generations, Father-to-Son who form the Porter Family Patriarch Succession Tree in England:

1. John PORTER (1544-1573) born in Stallington (?), Staffordshire; **The Patriarch;**
2. Thomas I PORTER De Stallington (1540-xxxx) born in Staffordshire; **Dairy Farmer & Cheese Maker;**
3. Robert PORTER (1562-1629) born in Staffordshire; **Dairy Farmer & Cheese Maker;**
4. Ralph PORTER De Stallington (1584-1663) born in Staffordshire; **Dairy Farmer & Cheese Maker;**
5. Thomas II PORTER De Saverley Green (1619-1668) born in Staffordshire; **Farm Labourer on Local Farms;**
6. Thomas III PORTER (1633-1680) born in Staffordshire; **Silk & Cotton Worker;**
7. Thomas IV PORTER (1659-xxxx) born in Staffordshire; **Farm Labourer**
8. Thomas V PORTER (1685-xxxx) born in Staffordshire; **Farm Labourer**
9. Thomas VI PORTER (1727-1763) born in Staffordshire; **Farm Labourer**
10. Thomas VII PORTER (1753-1837) born in Staffordshire; **Farm Labourer**
11. William PORTER (1785-1869) born in Staffordshire; **Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver;**
12. William Henry PORTER (1812-1886) born in Staffordshire; **Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver;**
13. William Henry PORTER (1838-1887) born in Staffordshire; **Silk & Cotton Worker; Whole Family (10) Emigrated to Australia;**
14. George PORTER (1851-1931) born in Staffordshire; **Iron Moulder;**
15. William George PORTER (1875-1951) born in Staffordshire; **Shop Assistant Provisions (Groceries);**
16. John Spencer PORTER (1903-1977) born in Staffordshire;

Since the Norman conquest of England in the 11th Century, it was presumed that Kings would simply pass the power to rule to their first-born son. This line of succession, known as PRIMOGENITURE, was also used to determine non-royal heirs to property and wealth.

FAMILY SEAT OF THE PORTERS

- The Village of **STALLINGTON**, Fulford, Staffordshire, England was the home of the early **PORTER** Family in the 1500s from which the descendants of **JOHN & ELLEN PORTER** spread to other locations in Southern England and Australia.



Stallington located at **Red Tag**. (ZOOM to Enlarge)

TIMELINE of the PORTER FAMILY in Southern England

(Circa 1500 - 1950)

- 1521-1573: JOHN & ELLEN PORTER living in Stallington Grange, Fulford, Staffordshire, England.

Stallington Grange was built in the 1500s for the Porter family. Stallington Hall Farm was built in the 1500s and produced "Stallington Smoked Cheese". There would also have been a Dairy Herd and milking facilities on site.

- 1540-xxxx: THOMAS I PORTER & MARY WHITEHALL BROWNE PORTER living at Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire, England.

Dairy Farming & Cheese production continues. Farming activity extended to produce vegetables for local consumption.

- 1562-1629: ROBERT PORTER & ELIZABETH BOLD PORTER living at Lichfield, Staffordshire, England.

Farm Buildings are extended to accommodate more Farm Labourers and house staff. Stallington Hall Farm is sold to the Earl of Sutherland Estate, one of the largest landowners in Britain.

- 1583-1663: RALPH PORTER & ANN BENNET PORTER living at Saverley Green, Fulford, Staffordshire, England.

The Porter Family now, in the 1600s, lived in Saverley Green, a hamlet north-east of nearby Fulford. They would now be "day-workers" on other local farms.

- 1610-1680: THOMAS II PORTER & FRANCES MORETON PORTER living at Saverley Green, Fulford, Staffordshire, England. Farm Labourers on local Farms.

- 1635-1680: THOMAS III PORTER & ANNE GODFREY PORTER living at Gedling, Nottinghamshire, England. Probably employed in SILK WEAVING, COTTON HOSIERY and FRAMEWORK KNITTING.

GEDLING was a place of great importance prior to the 19th Century, and various industries were followed in the Village. There were workers in SILK and COTTON HOSIERY, FRAME-WORK KNITTERS, LACEMAKERS, and many BASKET MAKERS.

Frame-work shops are still to be found in the Village. The Rector in his annual address to his Parishioners, printed in the Parish Magazine for JANUARY 1881, remarked:

"There used to be both in Gedling and Carlton a vast number of frame-work knitters, now Gedling does not boast of a single frame, and those in Carlton will have to give way before the revolution-making power of steam. The iron horse will be master everywhere."

- 1659-xxxx: THOMAS IV PORTER & MARY OLIVER living at Binsted, Hampshire, England. **Farm Labourer on Local Farms;**
 BINSTED is a Village and large Civil Parish in East Hampshire, England. It is about 4.1 miles east of Alton, its nearest town. The Parish is one of the largest in northern Hampshire and covers almost 7,000 acres. It contains two villages, Bucks Horn Oak and Holt Pound, as well as two hamlets, Wyck and Wheatley.
- 1685-xxxx: THOMAS V PORTER & MAGDALENE MARKEY living at Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England. **Farm Labourer on Local Farms;**
- 1727-1763: THOMAS VI PORTER & SARAH BERKELEY living at Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.
The original Stallington Farm building is converted into 3-individual Cottages.
- 1753-1837: THOMAS PORTER VII & ELIZABETH JONES living in Much Dewhurst, Herefordshire, England. **Farm Labourer & HAND LOOM RIBBON WEAVER;**
- 1785-1870: WILLIAM PORTER & SARAH WAGSTAFF living at Foleshill, Coventry, Warwickshire, England. **Farmer of 105 Acres & HAND LOOM RIBBON WEAVER;**
- 1805-1886: WILLIAM HENRY PORTER & SARAH MARRIOT living at Foleshill, Warwickshire, England. **Farmer; 1851 in Coventry was HAND LOOM RIBBON WEAVER;**
- 1838-1920: WILLIAM PORTER & MARY SLATER living at Bilston St. , Sedgeley, Staffordshire; **SILK & COTTON Worker; Emigrated to Queensland, Australia.**
- March 4, 1863: **WILLIAM PORTER (Silk & Cotton Worker) & MARY SLATER with 3-Children sail from London to Brisbane, Queensland, Australia (1-year old Thomas Henry Porter died & buried at sea).**
- 1879-1947: **WILLIAM PORTER born & died in Queensland, Australia.**

Another PORTER Dairy Farmer Emigrates to Canada in 1883:

"Dairy farming has changed so much since my family first started farming in England, but what remains is a deep love and appreciation of the land and what it's provided for us," says Don Porter.

"Our family is proud to produce high quality milk for the people of Vancouver Island and Canada." Don's ancestors immigrated to CHEMAINUS, Vancouver Island, BC, from England in 1883 to take up work at the local sawmill. They soon bought some land, built a barn and grew a small milking herd.

In 1938, Don's father Charlie began bottling and selling milk door-to-door, helping him grow his herd to 55 cows and becoming a well-loved member of the Vancouver Island community because of his milk truck. Today, Don and his wife Karen, along with their son Ian and his wife Brianne, run PORTER'S DAIRY Ltd. and milk 250 cows on 400 acres of cleared land.

"By feeding the country in a sustainable way, Canadian dairy farmers have withstood the test of time, from even before Confederation, to produce Canadian quality milk," said Wally Smith, DFC's President. "I am honoured to introduce the PORTER FAMILY, whose story shows a great love for dairy farming, and a deep sense of community."



SILK-WEAVING IN ENGLAND FROM 1685 AD

By [BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE](#)

The origin of this important industry as located in Spitalfields dates from the revocation of the **EDICT OF NANTES** by Louis XIV in 1685, when the **FRENCH PROTESTANTS**, driven by religious persecution from their own country, took refuge in England in large numbers. Long before this, however, silk-weavers from abroad had settled in England, and during the reign of **Henry VIII** a considerable number of silkworkers, principally from **Rouen**, made their homes in this country.

During the earlier reign of **Queen Elizabeth I**, French and Flemish refugees had crowded into England, and by 1685 had occupied a large district of **Spitalfields**, including large portions of **Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, Whitechapel, and Mile End New Town**. The great majority brought with them very little possessions, beyond the knowledge of their occupations. However, England needed their weaving skills, and money for their immediate relief was procured to a large amount by means of the **King's Briefs**, otherwise known as **Orders In Council**.

On 16 April 1687 an Order in Council prescribed a fresh general collection in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The amount thus obtained was about **£200,000**, which formed a fund known as the **Royal Bounty**. A lay French Committee composed of the **Chiefs of the Immigration** was entrusted with the annual distribution of a sum of **£16,000** amongst the poor refugees and their descendants. A second Committee composed of ecclesiastics under the direction of the **Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Lord Chancellor**, was formed for dividing amongst the distressed Pastors and their Churches an annual sum of **£1,718** drawn from the **Public Treasury**.

From the first report of the **French Committee**, dated **December 1687** and published in the following year, it appears that **13,050 French refugees** were settled in London, the greater part of whom were probably located in Spitalfields. The editor of Stow's *Survey of London* pays a high tribute to the character and industry of the refugees.

Speaking of Spitalfields he writes: '**Here they have found quiet and security, and settled themselves in their several trades and occupations; weavers especially. Whereby God's blessing surely is not only brought upon the Parish by receiving poor strangers, but also a great advantage hath accrued to the whole Nation by the rich manufactures of weaving silks and stuffs and camlets, which art they brought along with them. And this benefit also to the neighbourhood, that these "strangers" may serve for patterns of thrift, honesty, industry, and sobriety as well.**'



The principal source of information as to the Spitalfields weavers themselves is contained in the registers of the various **Huguenot Churches** to which they belonged. A cluster of eleven of these congregations existed from the latter part of the 17th Century to the beginning of the 19th, in **Spitalfields, Shoreditch, Petticoat Lane, and Wapping.**

A great preponderance of **weavers** over those engaged in other trades is found in the settlements of foreign refugees; and the editor, Mr. William Minet, suggests in explanation that the new religion may have spread specially among the men of this trade.

The “strangers” were skilled weavers from **Lyons** and **Tours**, who set up their looms in Spitalfields and there manufactured in large quantities **lustrings, velvets, brocades, satins, very strong silks known as paduasoy, watered silks, black and coloured mantuas, ducapes, watered tabies, and stuffs of mingled silk and cotton-all of the highest excellence,** which previously could only be procured from the famous looms of France.



**Queen Elizabeth I
wearing the new
silk fabrics**

The refugees soon taught the people of Spitalfields to produce these and other goods of the finest quality for themselves, and their pupils soon equalled and even excelled their teachers. Weiss says that the figured silks which proceeded from the London manufactories were due almost exclusively to the skill and industry of three refugees, **Lauson, Mariscot, and Monceaux**. The artist who supplied the designs was another refugee named **Beaudoin**.

A common workman named **Mongearge** brought them the secret recently discovered at Lyons, of giving lustre to **silk taffeta**: this enabled Spitalfields to obtain a large share of the trade for which Lyons had long been famous. Up to that time large quantities of **black lustrings** specially made for English use, and known as **English taffetas**, had been annually imported from France.

The manufacture of **lustrings and a-la-mode silks**, then articles in general use, was rapidly brought by the Spitalfield weavers to a state of great excellence, and the persons engaged in this industry were, in 1692, incorporated by Charter under the name of the **Royal Lustring Company**. The company then procured the passing of an **Act** prohibiting the importation of foreign lustrings and a-la-modes, alleging as a ground for passing such a restriction in their favour that the manufacture of these articles in England had now reached a greater degree of perfection than was obtained by foreigners.

An anonymous writer in 1695, who declaims against the tricks of **stock-jobbers** and the great number of joint-stock trading companies, makes exception in favour of (among other undertakings) the **Royal Lustring Company**, which he says has '**thriven, and will so long as they keep the stock-jobbers from breaking in upon them.**' In spite of its prohibition the importation of French goods still continued, and for its greater protection the Company received a confirmation of their Charter by **Act of Parliament in 1698**, and an important extension of their powers and privileges.

The sole right 'of making, dressing and lustrating of plain and black a-la-modes, renforcez, and lustrings' in England and Wales was granted to them for fourteen years. Before the expiration of its Charter, however, a change in the public taste had set in, fabrics of a different texture had become fashionable, and the Company lost all its money and was finally broken up.

The Weavers in **1713** presented a Petition to Parliament against the commercial treaty with France, in which they stated '**that by the encouragement of the Crown and of divers Acts of Parliament, the silk manufacture is come to be above twenty times as great as it was in the year 1664, and that all sorts of as good black and coloured silks, gold and silver stuffs and ribands, are now made here as in France. The black silk for hoods and scarfs, not made here above twenty-five years ago, hath amounted annually to above £300,000 for several years past, which before were imported from France. Which increase of the silk manufacture hath caused an increase of our exportation of woollen goods to Turkey, Italy &c.**'

The **Silk Industry** received a great impetus from the exertions of **Sir Thomas Lombe**, who introduced from Italy the process of **organzining** (or preparing for the weaver) raw silk by machinery, for which he was granted a patent in **1718**. When his patent ran out in 1732 he applied for a renewal on the grounds that it was owing to his ingenuity that silk was now 5s. a pound cheaper in England. Such outcry, however, was raised by the **Cotton Manufacturers** and others, who wished to use his apparatus, that Parliament refused the renewal, but voted him **£14,000** as compensation.

In 1718 also a certain John Apletree conceived the notion of rendering England independent of importing Italian raw silk by a system of silkworm farming upon an extensive scale. A patent was granted him, and he issued a prospectus inviting the public to subscribe to the amount of £1 million pounds. A plantation of silkworms was actually made in a Chelsea walled park. The apparatus included an evaporating stove and 'a certain engine called the Egg Chestre.' But the English climate not being suitable for silkworm farming, the experiment soon proved a complete failure.

The Spitalfields industry now advanced with great rapidity; but foreign competition, in spite of prohibitory legislation, continued to increase, and was much encouraged by the preference shown to French materials and fashions over those of native design. On the other hand, the tide of fashion in France set with at least equal strength in favour of English goods.

The growing fashion for wearing **Indian calicoes** and **printed linen** was the cause of serious disturbances in 1719. **On 13 June a mob of about 4,000 Spitalfields Weavers paraded the streets of the City attacking all females whom they could find wearing Indian calicoes or linens, and sousing them with ink, aqua fortis, and other fluids.** The Lord Mayor obtained the assistance of the Trained Bands to suppress the rioters, two of whom were secured by the **Horse Grenadiers** and lodged in the Marshalsea Prison.

As soon as the Guards left, the mob re-assembled, the weavers tearing all the calico gowns they could meet with. The troops were hurried back from Whitehall, and new arrests were made. The weavers then attempted to rescue their comrades, and were not deterred by volleys of blank cartridge fired by the soldiers; one of the troops then fired ball, wounding three persons. The next day four of the mob were committed to Newgate for rioting, and on Sunday night two more were sent there for felony in tearing the gown off the back of one Mrs. Beckett.

In 1721 the manufacture of silk in England had increased in value to £700,000 more than formerly. It is described as '**one of the most considerable branches of the manufactures of this Kingdom**' in an Act passed in the same year for the encouragement of this industry. This Act granted on the exportation of wrought fabrics a drawback, or repayment of part of the duties exacted, on the importation of the raw material, which was practically equivalent to a bounty.

The high duties on foreign silk led to smuggling on a most extensive scale. French writers estimate the average exportation of silks from France to England from 1688 to 1741 at about 12,500,000 francs or **£500,000 a year in value.**

In the rebellion of 1745 the Silk Manufacturers of Spitalfields were especially prominent in loyally supporting the throne; they waited personally upon the King and assured him of their unswerving loyalty and readiness to take up arms in his cause if need required. Each firm had endeavoured to induce their workpeople to give a like promise, and the total number of men which Spitalfields thus offered to furnish was 2,919.

The address to King George presented by Mr. Alderman Baker is followed by a list of the manufacturers' names, against each of which is placed the number of workmen 'who have been engaged by their masters to take up arms when called thereto by His Majesty in defence of his person and government,' amounting to 2,919 as above. **The list includes eighty-four masters, the greater proportion of whom bear French names.**

In 1763 attempts were made to check the prevalence of smuggling, and the Silk Mercers of the metropolis are said to have recalled their orders for foreign goods. It appears, however, from an inquiry made by a Committee of the Privy Council appointed in 1766 that smuggling was then carried on to a greater extent than ever, and that 7,072 looms were out of employment.

SMUGGLERS were often executed as a deterrent to others. However, as so few were caught it did not stop the problem of smuggling. When the Government reduced tax on tea and other goods in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries, smuggling declined as it was no longer so profitable.

Riots broke out in the beginning of October 1763, when several thousand Journeymen assembled in Spitalfields and broke open the house of one of the Masters. They destroyed his looms, cut to pieces much valuable silk, carried his effigy in a cart through the neighbourhood and afterwards burnt it, hung in chains from a gibbet.



alamy

Image ID: D96PPM
www.alamy.com

Although the English silks were now considered to be superior to those of foreign make, the latter found a ready market in England, and their importation caused great excitement among the weavers, who petitioned Parliament to impose double duties upon all foreign wrought silks. **Their petition not being granted, the London weavers went to the House of Commons on 10 January 1764 'with drums beating and banners flying,' to demand the total prohibition of foreign silks.**

This was the day of the opening of Parliament, and its members were besieged by the weavers with tales of the great distress which had fallen upon them and their families. Some relief was afforded by Parliament by lowering the import duty on raw silk and prohibiting the importation of silk ribbons, stockings, and gloves. The dealers in foreign silks also undertook to countermand all their orders for foreign silks, and a contribution was made for the immediate relief of the sufferers. By these means the weavers were for the time appeased, and the only violence committed was that of breaking the windows of some Mercers who dealt in French silks.

The agitation was increased rather than suppressed by these concessions, and an Act was passed in 1765 declaring it to be felony and punishable with death to break into any house or shop with intent maliciously to damage or destroy any silk goods in the process of manufacture. This was occasioned by an outbreak on 6 May when a mob of 5,000 weavers from Spitalfields armed with bludgeons and pickaxes marched to the residence of one of the Cabinet Ministers in Bloomsbury Square, and having paraded their grievances marched away threatening to return if they did not receive speedy redress.

Next day serious rioting began, and to the end of the month kept London in such a state of general alarm that the citizens were compelled to enrol themselves for military duty. 'Monday night,' says a contemporary newspaper, 'the guards were doubled at Bedford House, and in each street leading thereto were placed six or seven of the Horse Guards, who continued till yesterday at ten with their swords drawn.

A strong party of Albemarle's Dragoons took post in Tottenham Court Road, and patrols of them were sent off towards Islington and Marylebone, and the other environs on that side of the town; the Duke of Bedford's new road by Baltimore House was opened, when every hour a patrol came that way to and round Bloomsbury to see that all was well.'

In 1767 the '**culters**,' as they were called, again became rioters, breaking into workshops, cutting the work off the looms, and dangerously wounding several who endeavoured to arrest their progress; similar outbreaks occurred in 1768 and 1769. These outbreaks and those which soon afterwards followed were caused by the bitter disputes between the Journeymen and Master weavers on the subject of wages. Their differences gave rise to the famous '**Spitalfields Acts**' of **1773, 1792, and 1811.**

The first Act empowered the Aldermen of London and the Magistrates of Middlesex to settle in Quarter Sessions the wages of journeymen silk weavers. Penalties were inflicted upon such Masters as gave and upon such Journeymen as received or demanded either more or less than should be thus settled by authority, and silk weavers were prohibited from having more than two apprentices at one time.

The Act of 1792 included those weavers who worked upon silk mixed with other materials, and that of 1811 extended the provisions to female weavers. The '**Spitalfields Acts**' continued in force until 1824; and their effect can only be described as disastrous.

They were passed to get rid of an evil, but they originated an evil of a different kind; they were intended to protect both masters and men from unjust exactions on either part, but they only brought about a paralysis of the Spitalfields trade which would have ended in its utter ruin but for their repeal. But, as the effects of the Acts did not immediately manifest themselves, they were at first exceedingly popular.

After 1785, however, the substitution of **cottons** in the place of **silk** gave a severe check to the manufacture, and the weavers then began to discover the real nature of the Spitalfields Acts. Being forbidden to work at reduced wages they were totally thrown out of employment, so that in 1793 upwards of **4,000 Spitalfields looms were quite idle.**

In 1798 the trade began to revive, and continued to extend slowly till 1815 and 1816, when the Spitalfields weavers were involved in sufferings far more extensive and severe than at any former period. At a public meeting held at the Mansion House on 26 November 1816, for the relief of the Spitalfields weavers, the Secretary stated that two-thirds of them were without employment and without the means of support, that '**some had deserted their houses in despair unable to endure the sight of their starving families, and many pined under languishing diseases brought on by the want of food and clothing.**'

At the same meeting **Sir T. Fowell Buxton** stated that the distress among the silk weavers was so intense that '**it partook of the nature of a pestilence which spreads its contagion around and devastates an entire district.**'

The repeal of these Acts was largely brought about by a petition presented to the House of Commons on 9 May 1823. The petitioners stated that **'these Acts by not permitting the masters to reward such of their workmen as exhibit superior skill and ingenuity, but compelling them to pay an equal price for all work whether well or ill performed, have materially retarded the progress of improvement and repressed industry and emulation.'**

In consequence of an order from the Magistrates that silk made by machinery should be paid for at the same rate as that made by hand, few improvements could be introduced, and **'the London silk-loom with a trifling exception remains in the same state as at its original introduction into this country by the French refugees.'**

On the effect of this important legislation McCulloch remarks:

The monopoly which the manufacturers had hitherto enjoyed, though incomplete, had had sufficient influence to render inventions and discoveries of comparatively rare occurrence in the silk trade; but the SPITALFIELDS ACT extinguished every germ of improvement. Parliament in its wisdom having seen fit to enact that a manufacturer should be obliged to pay as much for work done by the best machinery as if it were done by hand, it would have been folly to have thought of attempting anything new. It is not, however, to be denied that Macclesfield, Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, &c., are under obligations to this Act. Had it extended to the whole kingdom it would have totally extirpated the manufacture; but being confined to Middlesex it gradually drove the most valuable branches from Spitalfields to places where the rate of wages was determined by the competition of the parties, on the principle of mutual interest and compromised advantage.

During the continuance of the Acts there was in the Spitalfields district no medium between the full regulation prices and the total absence of employment, and the repeal of this restrictive legislation gave immediate relief to the local industry.

The introduction at this time of the loom invented by JACQUARD, a straw-hat manufacturer at LYONS, France for the manufacture of figured silks, largely helped to restore the falling fortune of the Spitalfields trade.

The elaborate brocades which were previously made at Spitalfields were produced only by the most skilful among the craft, who bestowed upon them an immense amount of labour.

The most beautiful products of the JACQUARD LOOM are executed by workmen possessing only the ordinary amount of skill, whilst the labour attendant upon the actual weaving is but little more than that required for making the plainest goods.



The JACQUARD LOOM

In 1846 the figure weavers of Spitalfields engaged in the production, by the aid of a Jacquard loom, of a piece of silk which was to surpass everything hitherto made in England, and to rival a masterpiece of the Lyons weavers produced in the previous year. The subject of the design was partly allegorical, introducing Neptune, Mars, Time, Honour, and Harmony, with medallion portraits of English naval and military heroes, and figures of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

In the evidence taken before a COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE SILK TRADE in 1831-1832 it was stated that the population of the districts in which the Spitalfields weavers resided could not be less at that time than 100,000, of whom 50,000 were entirely dependent on the silk manufacture, and the remaining moiety more or less dependent indirectly.

The number of looms at this period varied from 14,000 to 17,000 (including 100 Jacquard looms), and of these about 4,000 to 5,000 were generally unemployed in times of depression. As there were on an average, children included, about thrice as many operatives as looms, it is clear that during stagnation of trade not less than from 10,000 to 15,000 persons would be reduced to a state of non-employment and destitution.

An excellent account of the condition of the silk trade, written in 1868, will be found in *Once a Week*. From the census of 1901 it appears that the number of silk weavers in the various processes of the trade in the entire county of London reached only 548, of whom 48 were employers.

The relations between the employer and the operative deserve a passing notice:

The manufacturer procures his thrown 'organzine' and 'tram' either from the **throwster** or from the **silk importers**, and selects the silk necessary to execute any particular order. The weaver goes to the house or shop of his employer and receives a sufficient quantity of the material, which he takes home to his own dwelling and weaves at his own looms or sometimes at looms supplied by the manufacturer, being paid at a certain rate per ell.

In a report to the POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS in 1837 Dr. Kay thus describes the methods of work of a weaver and his family:-

A WEAVER has generally two looms, one for his wife and another for himself, and as his family increases the children are set to work at six or seven years of age to quill silk; at nine or ten years to pick silk; and at the age of twelve or thirteen (according to the size of the child) he is put to the loom to weave. A child very soon learns to weave a plain silk fabric, so as to become a proficient in that branch; a weaver has thus not infrequently four looms on which members of his own family are employed. On a Jacquard loom a weaver can earn 25s. a week on an average; on a velvet or rich plain silk-loom from 16s. to 20s. per week; and on a plain silk-loom from 12s. to 14s.; excepting when the silk is bad and requires much cleaning, when his earnings are reduced to 10s. per week; and on one or two very inferior fabrics 8s. a week only are sometimes earned, though the earnings are reported to be seldom so low on these coarse fabrics. On the occurrence of a commercial crisis the loss of work occurs first among the least skilful operatives, who are discharged from work.

George Richardson Porter in his *Treatise on the Silk Manufacture* gives a pleasing picture of the home life of a Spitalfields weaver and of his happy and prosperous condition; but a writer in Knight's *London* paints in much more sober colours the condition of a weaver and his family.

Each account is taken from personal observation, and the difference is probably to be explained by the state of trade at the time of the visit, and the class of workman visited.

The houses occupied by the weavers are constructed for the special convenience of their trade, having in the upper stories wide, lattice-like windows which run across almost the whole frontage of the house. These 'lights' are absolutely necessary in order to throw a strong light on every part of the looms, which are usually placed directly under them. Many of the roofs present a strange appearance, having ingenious bird-traps of various kinds and large bird cages, the weavers having long been famed for their skill in snaring song-birds. They are used largely to supply the home market with linnets, goldfinches, chaffinches, greenfinches, and other song birds which they caught by trained 'call-birds' and other devices in the fields of north and east London.

The treaty with France in 1860 which allowed French silks to come in duty free, found Great Britain and Ireland unable to compete with France, and in a short time the trade dwindled immensely with disastrous results to Spitalfields and other centres.

The progress of the decay of the Spitalfields silk trade from 1860 onwards and the recent attempted revival of its **silk brocade industry** are well treated in an interesting article by Lasenby Liberty contributed in 1893 to the *Studio*.



Spitalfields: Decline of a neighbourhood as silk weaving collapses

Henry Mayhew: April 26, 2018

When the social researcher Henry Mayhew reported on Spitalfields in 1849, the living conditions that he discovered in some people's homes was shocking. In one weavers' house in the East London neighbourhood he found "spread a bed, on which lay four.... boys, two with their heads in one direction and two in the other.... covered... with old sacks and coats." And he added: "Beside the bed of the old man was a mattress on the ground without any covering, and the tick positively chocolate-coloured with dirt."

At its height of prosperity in the 18th century the Spitalfields weaving trade made the people at the top of the pyramid – the master weavers – very wealthy. But as I wrote in my last blog, even at this time of enormous success when the neighbourhood's floral silk designs were appreciated far and wide, many workers at the bottom of the pile lived a precarious life. Things however deteriorated and yet more people in Spitalfields were brought into poverty over the course of the 19th century as work dried up.

The 'Golden Ages' of silk weaving for Spitalfields occurred roughly between 1690 and 1760 and then again 1800 from 1820. The 1840 House of Commons Commission, which was set-up to study working conditions in the trade, found that although there were still 17,000 looms in operation in Spitalfields at the end of the 1830s, unemployment was high. By 1849 Mayhew found that it was a struggle for survival, with one weaver telling him "the workmen are obliged to take the low prices because they have not the means to hold out, and they know that if they don't take work others will... people are [now] compelled to do double the quantity of work they used to do, in order to live."

For the weavers a free trade treaty with France in 1860 was the final straw for the Spitalfield's silk trade as it brought with it cheap imports. The ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS presented a snapshot of Spitalfields in 1863: "Poor, suffering, nearly starved, and living in a house which shares with the rest the evils of bad or no drainage and insufficient water supply, his business requires at least some of personal cleanliness, or the delicate fabrics on which he is employed could never come out unsullied from the touch of coarser hands."

NEIGHBOURHOOD OF PROTEST

From its outset as a new neighbourhood, SPITALFIELDS was a place of protest. In 1675 weavers in the surrounding area rioted for four days against new engine looms being introduced which apparently “one man can do as much.... as nearly twenty without them.” Others protests in the 17th century were about cheap imports, including an incident whereby Spitalfields workers stormed East India House in 1699.

The government had banned the importing of dyed and printed cloth in 1670, but it did not stop goods being smuggled in over the years. Half a century of prosperity for the Spitalfields silk industry ended in 1760s when labour disputes became extremely heated and violence broke-out in the neighbourhood, resulting in a number of fatalities. Journeymen weavers were said to be paid less than those working in other trades.

The GENTLEMAN’S MAGAZINE reported on one incident in 1763 in which cutters destroyed the looms of a master weaver:

“Several thousand journeymen assembled in Spitalfields weavers and, in a riotous manner and broke open the house of one of their masters, destroyed his looms, and cut a great quantity of silk into pieces, after which they placed his effigy in a cart, with a halter about his neck, an executioner on one side and a coffin on the other; and after drawing it through the streets, they hanged it on a gibbet, then burned it to ashes and afterwards dispersed.”

An Act was passed in 1768 making it punishable by death to break into a house or shop with the deliberate intention of damaging or destroying silk goods, but it by no means stopped the protests in Spitalfields. The weavers, known as the ‘cutters’, were not deterred. They threatened master weavers with death if they did not comply with the rioters’ demands.

In 1769 troops opened fire on journeymen who were plotting at the Dolphin Pub in Spitalfields, killing two. Two of the ringleaders were hung outside the Salmon and Ball pub in modern Cambridge Heath Road as a warning to others.

As a consequence of the protests through the 1760s, the SPITALFIELD WEAVERS’ ACT was passed in 1773 which guaranteed wages for weavers and restricted the number of workers that could enter the industry. The legislation made it illegal for master weavers to pay more or workers to accept less than the rates set by the Lord Mayor, Recorder and aldermen.

Further Acts were passed in subsequent years to make the trade more protective.

REGULATION FOR THE BETTER?

While weavers may have celebrated the passing of the Spitalfields Acts from 1773, some have suggested the introduction of the legislation ultimately represented the beginning of the end for the neighbourhood. Some said it slowed the death of the Spialfields trade and they called for the measures to be applied to the country as a whole. But others had very different views. Journeymen were not able to accept lower wages and so when times were hard for the trade they were left with nothing – rather than being able to accept at least some payment – and consequently out of work weavers were found starving.

By the 1790s some master weavers were starting to abandon their homes in the once fashionable streets of Spitalfields, very aware that they could get around the restrictive local rules by moving to other parts of the country. Houses in the likes of Elder Street and Fournier Street, for example, are recorded as becoming workshops or divided into flats for market porters or labourers.

Many of those who were against the Acts united behind theories put forward by ADAM SMITH, published from 1776, as an argument for repealing the legislation. This eventually came in 1824, but reports of people living in destitution continued and some would argue conditions actually worsened. Strikes continued through this period and there was a rise in groups of workers forming combinations.

There were Huguenot families who had made their fortunes from the Spitalfields weaving trade who wanted to do something for the poor. For example George Fournier, remembered by Fournier Street, left a sizeable bequest to help the local people.

Some believed that the silk weaving trade had declined in the East End because working people weren't represented in Parliament. Mayhew in fact reported in an 1849 publication that he encountered CHARTISTS in an East End pub who were calling for the vote to be widened.

ELDER STREET

David Bartlett visited Spitalfields in 1852 and found that in "street after street" there was "nothing but the most disgusting, the most beseeching poverty." He added: "There are thousands of men and women there who never have known what plenty is, what pure joy is, but are herded together, thieves, prostitutes, robbers and working-men, in frightful masses. You meet beggars at every step; at night the streets are crowded with wretched women."

The journalist William Blanchard Jerrold's 1863 account of the area described passing "the dreary homes of the weavers" and said their "looms may go for firewood." He added: "At the corner of Brick Lane there was a monument of local distress – the deserted houses of the weavers; the broad windows cracked and broken; the doors nailed up, the rusty shutters closed!" Jerrold remembered the "time when the quaint weavers of Spitalfields were a most happy and reputable race. But poverty befell the little streets where the weavers threw the shuttle."

After the Napoleonic wars, duties on imports to Britain were reduced as an attempt to stabilize the French economy. The big killer for the Spitalfields industry came in 1860 when a treaty was signed with France, allowing silks to enter the country at lower costs than those made locally. Thomas Archer, writing in the mid-1860s, noted the impact: "Unfortunately the cheapness of French and German silk and velvet which is now exported free of duty, and the operation of the country factories as well as those of the large towns, have combined to reduce the London weavers to a very deplorable condition."

Charles Booth, the social reformer reported that by the late 19th century "the area's once dominant French community was but a distant memory, its members having been assimilated or obliged to leave Spitalfields when its demise became general." And by that by time another "distant memory," he said "certainly in its poorest enclaves – was the once ubiquitous silk industry."

When a book by A. K. Sabin called *The Silk Weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green* was published in 1931 it reported the only survivors of the old industry were 'a scattered group of eleven [weavers] only, and these eleven all elderly persons, who will leave no successors to carry on on the tradition of Spitalfields silk weaving, when at length they cease to toil at their looms.' It was the end for the once prosperous skilled silk weaving trade in the neighbourhood.

Spitalfields is now a very different place to that of the 18th century. Instead of weavers and merchants, you find a thriving indoor market lined with trendy eateries and boutiques, while espresso bars are in abundance. But what fascinates me is that the area's Huguenot past has not been forgotten. There are the old churches and terraced houses which provide physical reminders, but there are also people alive today that retain connections (one fascinating story is that of Stanley Rondeau, the great-great-great-great-great-grandson of a Huguenot immigrant who came to Spitalfields in 1685, who is a volunteer at Christ Church).

Spitalfields' weaving past is long gone, but it has not been forgotten.

D

eveloping the PORTER FAMILY TREE

Using the RELATIONSHIP TREE feature in [MyHeritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com) we were able to build the Family Tree by researching and recording the individual children related to the earliest ancestor of the PORTER Family, JOHN PORTER, who was born in 1521.

We have identified over 850 people who make up the central PORTER Family, but include the families that merged by marriage with the purpose of strengthening the size of the tribe but also adding the skills and wealth of the “relatives” of many other families named *Browne, Whitehall, Bold, Bennet, Moreton, Godfrey, Oliver, Wolseley, Satchwell, Greenslade, Green, Hawkins, Slater, Cooke, Arnold, Freeman, Marriott, Deacon, Wagstaff, Markey, Berkeley, Jones* and many others.

As more information becomes available from Genealogists investigating our “roots”, we shall be able to extend our knowledge of the earlier members of the Family prior to 1521.

1. John PORTER (1521-1573) born in Stallington Grange, Staffordshire;
2. Thomas PORTER I De Stallington Farm (1540-xxxx) born in Staffordshire;
3. Robert PORTER (1562-1629) born in Staffordshire;
4. Ralph PORTER De Stallington (1584-1663) born in Staffordshire;
5. Thomas PORTER II De Saverley Green (1619-1668) born in Staffordshire;
6. Thomas PORTER III (1633-1680) born in Staffordshire;
7. Thomas PORTER IV (1659-xxxx) born in Staffordshire;
8. Thomas PORTER V (1685-xxxx) born in Staffordshire;
9. Thomas PORTER VI (1727-1763) born in Staffordshire;
10. Thomas PORTER VII (1753-1837) born in Staffordshire; ;
11. William PORTER (1785-1869) born in Staffordshire; ;
12. William Henry PORTER (1812-1886) born in Staffordshire; ;
13. William Henry PORTER (1838-1923) born in Staffordshire;
14. George PORTER (1851-1931) born in Staffordshire;
15. William George PORTER (1875-1951) born in Staffordshire;
16. John Spencer PORTER (1903-1977) born in Staffordshire;

These Ancestors and their Extended Families have crafted a history of their exploits over the last 500-years which we have attempted to discover, to record and explain in a series of BOOKS and VIGNETTES which are available, at no charge, in the WARD FAMILY BLOG.

Enjoy the genealogical tour at <https://wardfamily.blog>



1. JOHN PORTER (1521 - 1573)

"The PATRIARCH"

Dairy Farmer & Cheese Maker



■ JOHN PORTER was born in 1521 AD, probably in the Hamlet of Stallington, near Fulford, Staffordshire, England.

JOHN is the earliest Ancestor of the PORTER FAMILY we have been able to identify, so far. We have not yet traced his Parents, but we know he was the "Primogenitor" of a long PORTER FAMILY HISTORY from the Elizabethan Era in the Hamlet of Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire, England up to the present day.

■ In circa 1539, the 18-year old JOHN PORTER (1521-1573) married 17-year old ELLEN PORTER (1522-1576) probably in SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH, Fulford, Staffordshire. We can find no official record of a Church marriage ceremony or of her maiden name.

A Chapel has been on the site since the 14th Century. In Medieval England couples did not need to marry in Church. All that was needed for a valid, binding marriage was the consent of the couple themselves. Marriage was the only acceptable place for sex in the Medieval Period and Christians were allowed to marry at age 12-years for women and 14-years for men.

According to the Church, which created and enforced marriage law Parental consent was not required. Legal records show a minority of people married in Church; most people then married where they did not require the participation of a Priest.

When this law finally changed in England in the 18th Century, the old rules still applied in Scotland, making towns just over the border, such as Gretna Green, a destination for English couples defying their families.

Around 1872 it was discovered that the new Church of St. Nicholas in Fulford had not been consecrated or licensed for the solemnization of marriages. An Act of Parliament passed in 1873 stated that marriages conducted there should be deemed legal and St. Nicholas was duly consecrated and licensed for marriages.

Whereas, getting married in Medieval England was simple and easy, without the written record that comes with a Church marriage, it is very difficult to prove the informal "wedding" took place. This would have serious implications in legal challenges of inheritance or ownership of property. This struck at the very heart of PRIMOGENITURE and the practice of wealth accumulation. So, in later years, the normal practice of marrying in Church with all the documentation and the participation of witnesses, family and friends was established

■ JOHN PORTER (1521-1573) & ELLEN PORTER (1522-1576) had 9-Children (6-Sons & 3-Daughters):

1. THOMAS I PORTER (1540-xxxx) born in Stallington Grange, Fulford, Staffordshire;

In 1562, the 22-year old THOMAS PORTER fathered a son, ROBERT PORTER (1562-1629) with MARY WHITEHALL BROWNE. Whereas we have found no evidence of their formal marriage, the couple did not need to marry in Church. In accordance with the current "LAWS", they only needed to "consent" to each other to form a legal, binding marriage and the Church would have recognized a valid contract.

If the dates are correct, it would appear that Mary had "married" RALPH BROWNE in February, 1562 soon after the birth of Robert Porter and then had 4 more children named BROWNE. We have found no official record of this marriage, but in accordance with the LAW at that time, the act of consensual sex would constitute a valid "marriage".

2. ISABELLA PORTER (1546-xxxx) born in Chillington (near Brewood, four miles northwest of Wolverhampton, Staffordshire);
Married John Wolseley (1561-1629); had 8-Children incl. Sir Robert Wolseley, 1st. Baronet of Morton (1587-1646);
3. ELIZABETHA PORTER (1574-xxxx) born in Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire;
Married William Young Bennett;
4. HENRY PORTER (1575-xxxx) born in Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire;
5. ROGER PORTER (1576-1589) born in Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire;
Married Joan Porter; had 2-sons Thomas & Johannis Porter.
6. ROBERT PORTER (xxxx-1587) born in Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire;
7. WILLIAM PORTER (1574-xxxx) born in Stallington Grange, Fulford, Staffordshire;
Married Joyce BROWNE; had 4-Children William, Izabell, Margery, Elizabeth.
8. RAUFFE PORTER (1575-xxxx) born in Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire;
9. MARYE PORTER (1576-xxxx) born in Stallington, Fulford, Staffordshire;

■ In 1573 JOHN PORTER died in Stallington Grange, Staffordshire at the age of 52-years.

■ ELLEN PORTER was pregnant at the time with her third child, ELIZABETHA PORTER who was born in 1574.

■ In 1576, ELLEN PORTER died in xxxxxxx, England at the age of 54-years. She was probably buried in St. Nicholas Church of England, Fulford, Staffordshire, England.

Further Reading: "Love and Marriage in Medieval England" on the WARD FAMILY BLOG.

<https://wardfamily.blog>

St. NICHOLAS CHURCH



S TALLINGTON GRANGE

STALLINGTON, Staffordshire was once a small Hamlet one mile north-west of Fulford, belonging to Stone Parish.

At the time of the 1881 England & Wales CENSUS there were 12-households in Stallington housing 78-residents. These buildings included **STALLINGTON HALL** (originally known as **STALLINGTON GRANGE**), a fine red brick building standing in its own parkland with extensive views over the surrounding countryside.



STALLINGTON HALL was occupied by Sir Smith Child, Bart, his wife Sarah, daughter Elizabeth, and eleven staff in 1881. **SMITH CHILD'S** ancestry can be traced back to a **WILLIAM CHYLDE** who married **EARDLEY** in **AUDLEY** in 1623 and who lived at **BOYLE'S HALL** in Audley.

The Town of **AUDLEY** is located in the County of Staffordshire, West Midlands, three miles south of the town of Alsager, four miles north-west of the major town of **NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME**, 115 miles north of Cardiff, and 141 miles north-west of **LONDON**. Audley lies two miles south-east of the Cheshire border. Audley falls within the District Council of Newcastle-under-Lyme, under the County Council of Staffordshire.

SMITH CHILD himself was born in 1808 and married **SARAH HILL** in Fulford on 28th January 1835. He was M.P. for North Staffordshire from 1851 until 1859 and for West Staffordshire between 1868 and 1874. He was created a Baronet in 1868. He was noted for his philanthropy, his many gifts to Churches and towards founding schools, and his generous contributions to the North Staffordshire Infirmary Building Fund.

He died on 27th March 1896, two years after his wife, and is buried at St. Nicholas in Fulford. His grandson Hill Child inherited the Baronetcy. A Century ago, in 1924, Sir Hill Child took an appointment in the **KING'S HOUSEHOLD** and so sold Stallington Hall to the City of Stoke-on-Trent who made it into a home for the mentally ill, both adults and children.

It was called **STALLINGTON HALL HOSPITAL**.



STALLINGTON HALL HOSPITAL TODAY (2022)



2. THOMAS I PORTER (1540 - XXXX) De Stallington

Dairy Farmer & Cheese-Maker



■ THOMAS I PORTER was born in 1540 AD, in Stallington, Staffordshire, England.

He was the son of JOHN PORTER (1521-1573) and ELLEN PORTER (1522-1576) of Stallington Grange, Staffordshire, England.

■ In circa 1561, the 21-year old, THOMAS I PORTER had a relationship with 23-year old MARY WHITEHALL (1538-1615) of Bloxwich, Staffordshire, England. MARY was the daughter of WILLIAM WHITEHALL De Bloxwich (1516-1566) and MARY WHITEHALL De Bloxwich (born HARDWICK) (1521-xxxx). There is no record of a "Parish Marriage".

■ In 1562, the 24-year old MARY WHITEHALL gave birth to an illegitimate son, ROBERT PORTER (1562-1629) in Lichfield, Staffordshire, England.

In 1588, the 26-year old ROBERT PORTER married 28-year old ELIZABETH BOLD (1560-1590) in Caverswall, Staffordshire. She died 2-years later in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire; In 1590, ROBERT PORTER married DOROTHY HOLLINS (1560-1640) Daughter of HUGH HOLLINS of Moseley, Staffordshire

■ On February 10, 1562 the 22-year old MARY WHITEHALL (1538-1615) married 26-year old RALPH BROWNE (1536-1598) probably in Bloxwich, Staffordshire.

RALPH BROWNE was the son of Sir Thomas BROWNE of Ashbourne, Derbyshire, whose Father was previously Lord Mayor of London, and whose Grandfather had been CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER for King Henry VI (and "executed for treason"...))

Could it be that MARY WHITEHALL'S parents hustled her off to marry into the wealthy BROWNE Family before her unregistered "marriage" with THOMAS PORTER produced more illegitimate offspring? (Did the prominent BROWNE family not know of the potential scandal that was unfolding? According to the LAW in those days, it was not so much of a scandal to have a child "out of wedlock" but rather it was proof of compatibility of the couple to bear much-needed offspring for inheritance and wealth-gaining purposes?)

■ THOMAS I PORTER (1540-xxxx) and MARY PORTER BROWNE (born WHITEHALL) (1538-1615) had 4-Children (4-Sons):

1. ROBERT PORTER (1562 - 1629) born in Stallington, Staffordshire;
[Married Elizabeth BOLD \(1560-1590\); Married Dorothy HOLLINS \(died 1640\);](#)
2. THOMAS PORTER (1595-xxxx) born in Stallington, Staffordshire;
3. JACOBUS PORTER (1599-1602) born in Dale House, Stone, Staffordshire;
[Died Young @ Age 3-Years;](#)
4. JOHANIS PORTER (1602-xxxx) born in Dale House, Stone, Staffordshire;
[Not Married;](#)

■ Following their formal marriage on February 10, 1562, RALPH BROWNE De Meere (1536-1598) & MARY WHITEHALL BROWNE (1538-1615) had 4-Children (1-Son & 3-Daughters):

1. MARGARIE BROWNE (1563-1633) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
[Married Mr. Moreton;](#)
2. MARIA BROWNE (1568-xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
3. GRACE BROWNE (xxxx-1570) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
4. WILLIAM BROWNE (1574- xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;

■ On May 9, 1598, RALPH BROWNE died at the age of 62-years and was buried in St. Peter's Church, Caverswall, Staffordshire, England.

■ On April 5, 1615, MARY BROWNE (born WHITEHALL) died at the age of 77-years and was buried in Holy Trinity, Exeter, Devon, England.



St. Peter's Church, Caverswall, Staffordshire, England



3. ROBERT PORTER (1562 - 1629) Dairy Farmer & Cheese-Maker



■ ROBERT PORTER was born in 1562 AD, in Stallington, Staffordshire, England. He was the son of THOMAS I PORTER (1540-xxxx) and MARY PORTER BROWNE (born WHITEHALL) (1542-1615) of Stallington, Staffordshire, England.

■ First Marriage

On November 25, 1588, the 26-year old, ROBERT PORTER married 28-year old ELIZABETH BOLD (1560-1590) at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Caverswall, Staffordshire, England.

■ ROBERT PORTER and ELIZABETH BOLD PORTER had 4-Children (2-Sons and 2-Daughters):

1. RAPHE PORTER De Stallington (1583-1663) born in Stallington, Staffordshire; [Married Anne Bennet \(1586-1633\); They had 8-Children;](#)
2. THOMAS PORTER (1585 - xxxx) born in London, Middlesex;
3. MARIE PORTER (1587-xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
4. ALICE PORTER De Caverswall (1590-xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;

■ In 1590, ELIZABETH PORTER (born BOLD) died at the age of 30-years in Newport Pagnell, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, England.

[\(Her death may have been related to the birth of her 4th. Child, ALICE PORTER.\)](#)

■ Second Marriage

Following the death of his first wife in 1590, 28-year old ROBERT PORTER (1562-1629) quickly married 30-year old DOROTHY HOLLINS (1560-1640) of Moseley Hall, Staffordshire.

DOROTHY was the daughter of HUGH HOLLINS (1535-xxxx) of Moseley Hall, Staffordshire.

■ ROBERT PORTER (1562-16290) and DOROTHY HOLLINS (1560-1640) had 7-Children, (4-Sons & 3-Daughters):

1. RICHARD PORTER De Caverswall (1592-1663) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
2. GEORGE PORTER (1593-1640) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
3. ELIZABETH PORTER (1594-xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
4. MARGERIE PORTER De Caverswall (1596-xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
5. ANNE PORTER De Caverswall (1598-1625) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire;
6. JOHN PORTER (1602-1620) born Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire;
Died Young @ 18-Years Old in London, Middlesex;
7. THOMAS PORTER (1602-xxxx) born in Caverswall, Staffordshire; **(Recycled name);**

■ In 1629, ROBERT PORTER (1562-1629) died at the age of 67-years and was buried in St. Peter's Anglican Church, Caverswall, Staffordshire, England.

■ In 1640, DOROTHY HOLLINS (1560-1640) died at the age of 80-years and was buried in St. Peter's Anglican Church, Caverswall, Staffordshire, England.

HISTORY of BLOXWICH

BLOXWICH is a market town in the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall, West Midlands, England, situated in the north of the borough and forming part of the Staffordshire / West Midlands border.

Bloxwich has its origins at least as early as the Anglo-Saxon period, when the place name evidence suggests it was a small **Mercian settlement** named after the family of **Bloc** (Bloxwich, earlier Blochescwic, meaning "**Bloc's village**").

Some 19th-Century works suggest that at one time **Bloxwich** was a settlement in the **ancient Manor of Wednesbury**. There is no conclusive evidence for this and Bloxwich has since at least medieval times been associated with the **Manor and Town of Walsall** (which for reasons unknown does not appear in the Domesday Book of 1086).

Bloxwich itself is however mentioned in this book under the name '**Blockeswich**'. **Traditionally there has been a strong rivalry between Bloxwich and Walsall** with origins as early as the **English Civil War**, when Walsall was **Parliamentarian** in sympathy and Bloxwich, centre of the Foreign of Walsall, was **Royalist**. This situation was exacerbated by disputes over local taxation for the **POOR RATE** in the 17th and 18th Centuries.

18th and 19th Centuries

Bloxwich grew rapidly in the 18th Century around **coal mining, iron smelting** and various manufacturing industries, as part of the **Industrial Revolution**. **Manufacturing in the area consisted of bridle bits, stirrups, keys, cabinet locks, plane irons, buckle tongues, chains and saddles**. Its most famous product of manufacture were **awl blades**, which it is reputed to have surpassed all other places in the United Kingdom in manufacturing.

In the early 19th Century, Bloxwich was still a Village. **Most of its inhabitants were employed in the newly founded mining and forging industries, as well as light metalworking**. It is also known for its canals.

RECYCLING OF NAMES

It is a recurring theme in England in the Middle Ages, that Parents often lost young children to disease or accidents.

Infant Mortality struck some 25% of babies in the first year of Life. Disease was rampant throughout the community where lack of good sanitation and proper hygiene created an environment where the poor families were exposed to disease, and death was a prominent occurrence.

Poor families lived close to the farm or their “place of work” and children had to join the workforce at an early age which exposed them to danger and life-threatening situations. Parents could not provide 24-hour watchful care as we do today, so life for infants was dangerous.

Over-crowded living conditions often meant that families lived and slept with many people in a room or sleeping in a bed. Adults would often sleep with very young babies in the same bed with Mum and Dad. If an adult unintentionally rolled over onto the baby, the child could be stifled or crushed and unable to breathe or to cry for help.

Poor mothers could not afford to watch their children as carefully as they would today, so infants would be put in the care of older children, but accidents were still prevalent. Polluted drinking water, infected cow’s milk, sewage in the streets and garbage was too close to young fingers that disease was only a step away.



When children died, their names were often re-assigned to the next child of the same sex. It was a memorial to the memory of the dead infant and a reminder of the challenge to "stay alive".

LIFE WAS HARD and only the strong or lucky would survive!



SLUM HOUSING IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND



4. RAPHE PORTER (1584 - 1663) De Stallington



■ RAPHE PORTER was born on April 7, 1584 AD, in Stallington, Staffordshire, England.

He was the son of ROBERT PORTER (1562-1629) and ELIZABETH PORTER (born BOLD) (1560-1590) of Bloxwich, Staffordshire, England.

■ In circa 1615, the 31-year old, RAPHE PORTER (1584-1663) married 29-year old ANN BENNET (1586-1633) possibly at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Caverswall, Staffordshire, England. (We have found no record of a formal Parish marriage.)

■ RAPHE PORTER and ANN BENNET had 7-Children (4-Sons and 3-Daughters):

1. ELIZABETH SUTTON (born PORTER) (1616-xxxx) born in Doxey, Staffordshire;

[DOXEY is a Village and Civil Parish in the Borough of Stafford in Staffordshire, England. It is a north-western suburb of Stafford. The Village became a Civil Parish in April 2005.](#)

2. THOMAS II PORTER (1619 - 1668) born in Saverley Green, Staffordshire;
[Married Frances Moreton](#)

3. DOROTHEA PORTER (1619-xxxx) born in Stallington, Staffordshire;

4. ROBERTUS PORTER (1621-xxxx) born in Stallington, Staffordshire;

5. RANULPHAM PORTER (1622-xxxx) born in Stallington, Staffordshire;

6. GEORGE PORTER (1625-xxxx) born in Saverley Green, Staffordshire;

7. MARIA PORTER (1626-xxxx) born in Cheadle Grange, Staffordshire;
[Married Mr. Henshaw;](#)

■ On March 3, 1633, ANN PORTER (born BENNET) died at the age of 47-years and was buried in xxxxxxxx, Staffordshire, England.

■ On April 7, 1663, RAPHE PORTER De Stallington died at the age of 79-years and was buried in xxxxxxxx Staffordshire, England.



5. THOMAS II PORTER (1619 - 1668)

De Saverley Green



■ THOMAS II PORTER was born in 1619 AD, in Saverley Green, Staffordshire, England.

He was the son of RAPHE PORTER De Stallington (1584-1663) and ANN PORTER (born BENNET) (1586-1633) of Saverley Green, Staffordshire, England.

■ In circa 1632, the 13-year old, THOMAS II PORTER married 17-year old FRANCES MORETON (1615-1686) in Stoke Bardolph, Nottinghamshire, England. (We have found no record yet of FRANCES' parents or siblings.)

■ THOMAS II PORTER (1619-1668) and FRANCES PORTER (born MORETON) (1615-1686) had 5-Children (6-Sons and 5-Daughters):

1. THOMAS III PORTER (1633-1680) born in Stoke Bardolph, Nottinghamshire; Married Elizabeth GODFREY GLOVER circa 1656;
2. FRANCIS PORTER (1637-xxxx)
3. EDWARD PORTER (xxxx - 1683) born in xxxxxxxxxx;
4. MATTHEW PORTER (xxxx-xxxx) born in xxxxxxxxxx;
5. SARAH PORTER (xxxx-xxxx) born in xxxxxxxxxx;

■ In 1668, THOMAS II PORTER died at the age of 49-years and was buried in xxxxxxxxxx, England.

■ In 1615, FRANCES PORTER (born MORETON) died at the age of 71-years and was buried in xxxxxxxxxx, England.



6. THOMAS III PORTER (1633 - 1677)



■ THOMAS III PORTER was born in 1633 AD, in Stoke Bardolph, Nottinghamshire, England.

He was the son of THOMAS II PORTER (1619-1668) and FRANCES PORTER (born MORETON) (1615-1686) of Stoke Bardolph, Nottinghamshire, England.

■ On November 11, 1665, the 32-year old, THOMAS III PORTER married 32-year old ANN GODFREY (1633-1682) in Lichfield, Staffordshire, England. ANN GODFREY was the daughter of JOHN THOMAS GODFREY (1599-1664) of Gedling, Nottinghamshire and his wife, KATHERINE GODFREY (born LEESON) (1600-1673).

■ THOMAS III PORTER (1633-1677) and ANN PORTER (born GODFREY) (1633-1682) had 10-Children (7-Sons and 3-Daughters):

1. MATHEWE PORTER (1657-xxxx) born in Lichfield, Staffordshire;
2. THOMAS IV PORTER (1659 - xxxx) born in Lichfield, Staffordshire; [Mar. Mary Oliver](#);
3. EDWARD PORTER (1661-1712) born in Lichfield, Staffordshire; [Mar. Margaret Lowns](#);
4. JOHN PORTER (1669-1747) born in Gedling, Nottinghamshire; [Marr. Margaret Wright](#);
5. JOANE PORTER (born NEWELL) (1670-xxxx) born in Binstead, Hampshire;
6. FRANCES PORTER (1672-xxxx). Born in Gedling, Nottinghamshire;
7. CHRISTOPHER PORTER (1674-xxxx) born in Binstead, Hampshire; [Marr. Margaret Knight](#);
8. RICHARD PORTER (1676-xxxx) born in Binstead, Hampshire;
9. ELIZABETH PORTER (1683-xxxx) born in Binstead, Hampshire;
10. SAMUEL PORTER (xxxx-1724) born in Binstead, Hampshire;

- In 1677, THOMAS III PORTER died at the age of 44-years in Gedling, Nottinghamshire and was buried in All Hallows Church, Gedling, Nottinghamshire, England.
- In 1682, ANN PORTER (born GODFREY) died at the age of 49-years in Gedling, Nottinghamshire and was buried in All Hallows Church, Gedling, Nottinghamshire, England.



All Hallows Church, Gedling, Nottinghamshire, England.



7. THOMAS IV PORTER (1658 - 1729)



■ THOMAS IV PORTER was born in 1658 AD, in Boughton Under Blean, Kent, England.

He was the son of THOMAS III PORTER (1633-1677) and ANN PORTER (born GODFREY) (1633-1682) of Bloxwich, Staffordshire, England.

■ On June 26, 1681, the 23-year old, THOMAS IV PORTER married 22-year old MARY OLIVER (1660-1735) at St. Peter & St. Paul Church, Blean, Kent, England.

MARY PORTER (born OLIVER) was the daughter of JOHN OLIVER (xxxx-xxxx) and Mrs. OLIVER (born xxxxxx) (xxxx-xxxx).

■ THOMAS IV PORTER and MARY PORTER (born OLIVER) had 1-Child (1-Son):

1. THOMAS V PORTER (1685 - xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;

■ In 1729, THOMAS IV PORTER died at the age of 71-years and was buried in Benenden, Kent, England.

■ In 1735, MARY PORTER (born OLIVER) died at the age of 75-years and was buried in Benenden, Kent, England.



St. Peter & St. Paul Church, Blean, Kent, England





8. THOMAS V PORTER (1685 - XXXX)



■ THOMAS V PORTER was born on September 6, 1685 in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

He was the son of THOMAS IV PORTER (1658-1729) and MARY PORTER (born OLIVER) (1660-1735) of Boughton Under Blean, Kent, England.

BOUGHTON UNDER BLEAN is a Village and Civil Parish between Faversham and Canterbury in south-east England. "Boughton under Blean" technically refers only to the hamlet at the top of Boughton Hill; the main village at the foot of the hill is named **Boughton Street**, but the whole is referred to as "**Boughton under Blean**" or more commonly as just "**Boughton**". The Blean refers to the Forest of Blean, an area of long-standing Kent woodland covering over 11 square miles (28.5 sq. km).

■ On October 13, 1719 the 34-year old, THOMAS V PORTER (1685-xxxx) married 24-year old MAGDALENE PORTER (born MARKEY) (1695-xxxx) at St. David's Anglican Church in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

MAGDALENE was the daughter of WILLIAM MARKEY (1685-xxxx) and ELIZABETH MARKEY (1695-xxxx) of Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ THOMAS V PORTER and MAGDALENE PORTER had 5-Children (4-Sons & 1-Daughter):

1. EDWARD PORTER) (1724-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
2. JOHN PORTER (1726-1727) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
Died Young @ 9-Months Old.
3. THOMAS VI PORTER (1727 - 1763) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
Married Sarah Berkeley; Died Young @ 36-Years Old.
4. WILLIAM PORTER (1728-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
5. MARTHA PORTER (xxxx-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;

■ In XXXX, THOMAS V PORTER died at the age of xx-years and was buried in St. David's Anglican Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ In XXXX, MAGDALENE PORTER (born MARKEY) died at the age of xx-years and was buried in St. David's Anglican Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.



St. David's Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England



9. THOMAS VI PORTER (1727 - 1763)



■ THOMAS VI PORTER was born in 1727 AD, in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

He was the son of THOMAS V PORTER (1685-xxxx) and MAGDALENE PORTER (born MARKEY) (1695-xxxx) of Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ On June 25, 1749, the 22-year old, THOMAS VI PORTER married 18-year old SARAH BERKELEY (1731-xxxx) at St. Michael & All Angels Anglican Church in Ledbury, Herefordshire, England. SARAH was the daughter of Mr. BERKELEY (xxxx-xxxx) and Mrs. BERKELEY (born xxxxxx) of Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire.





Ledbury, Herefordshire Cobbled Street



St. Michael's & All Angels Church, Ledbury, Herefordshire.



■ THOMAS VI PORTER (1727-1763) and SARAH PORTER (born BERKELEY) (1731-xxxx) had 4-Children (2-Sons and 2-Daughters):

1. THOMAS VII PORTER (1753 - 1837) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England; [Married Ann Jones in 1784;](#)
2. SARAH PORTER (1755-1755) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England; [Died Young @ 1-Year Old;](#)
3. SARAH PORTER (1757-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England; [Recycled Name;](#)
4. JOHN PORTER (1759-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England;

■ In 1763, THOMAS VI PORTER died at the age of 36-years and was buried in St. David's & Episcopal Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire.

■ In xxxx, SARAH PORTER (born BERKELEY) died at the age of xx-years and was buried in St. David's & Episcopal Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire.



10. THOMAS VII PORTER (1753 - 1837)



■ THOMAS VII PORTER was born on April 13, 1753 AD, in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

He was the son of THOMAS VI PORTER (1727-1763) and SARAH PORTER (born BERKELEY) (1731-xxxx) of Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ On December 2, 1784, the 31-year old, THOMAS VII PORTER married 18-year old ANN PORTER (born JONES) (January 12, 1766-August 4, 1831) at St. David's Episcopal Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ ANN PORTER (born JONES) was the daughter of THOMAS JONES (xxxx-xxxx) and MARY JONES (born LLOYD) (xxxx-xxxx).

■ THOMAS VII PORTER and ANN PORTER had 9-Children (6-Sons and 3-Daughters):

1. MARY PORTER (February 10, 1800-1800) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
Died Young @ Birth;
2. WILLIAM PORTER (1785-1869) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England;
Married Sarah Wagstaff (1787-1870); Farmer of 105 acres, employed 5 men;
3. SUSANNAH PORTER (1787-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
4. THOMAS VIII PORTER) (1788-1869) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
5. MARIA PORTER (1790-1872) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
Married James Meredith;
6. JAMES PORTER (March 26, 1792 - April 1, 1792) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
Died Young @ 7-days Old
7. JOHN PORTER (1793-1869) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;

8. JAMES PORTER (1795-xxxx) born in Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire;
[Recycled Name](#);

9. EDWARD PORTER (June 24, 1798 - September 16, 1798).
[Died Young @ 3-Months Old](#)

■ On August 4, 1831, ANN PORTER (born JONES) died at the age of 65-years and was buried in St. David's Anglican Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ On July 17, 1837, THOMAS VII PORTER died at the age of 84-years and was buried in St. David's Anglican Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.



Inside St. David's Episcopal Church, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire

Much Dewchurch,
Herefordshire





11. WILLIAM PORTER (1785 - 1869)

Farmer of 105 Acres
& Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver



■ WILLIAM PORTER was born on November 23, 1785 AD, in Foleshill, Warwickshire.

He was the son of THOMAS VII PORTER (1753-1837) and ANN PORTER (born JONES) (1766-1831) of Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire, England.

■ On October 1, 1807, the 21-year old, WILLIAM PORTER (1785-1869) married 20-year old SARAH WAGSTAFF (1787-1870) at St. Laurence Anglican Church in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England.

St. Laurence Anglican Church in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England

■ SARAH PORTER (born WAGSTAFF) (1787-1870) was the daughter of THOMAS WAGSTAFF (1755-1837) and SARAH WAGSTAFF (born BUCKLER) (xxxx-xxxx).

■ WILLIAM PORTER and SARAH PORTER (born WAGSTAFF) had 5-Children (4-Sons and 1-Daughter):

1. WILLIAM PORTER (1813-1873) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire;
[Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver](#);
2. DANIEL PORTER (1816-1882) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; [Silk Weaver Ribbons](#);
[Married Hannah Porter \(also Silk Weaver Ribbons\)](#);
3. JOHN PORTER (July 1817-1817) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire;
[Died Young @ 5-Months Old](#);
4. CAROLINE PORTER (born 1822-xxxx) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire;
5. JESSE PORTER) (1835-xxxx) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire;

■ In 1869, WILLIAM PORTER died in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England at the age of 84-years and was buried in St. Laurence Anglican Church in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England

■ In 1870, SARAH PORTER (born WAGSTAFF) died at the age of 45-years and was buried in St. Laurence Anglican Church in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England.



St. Laurence Anglican Church, Foleshill, Coventry, Warwickshire, England

Coventry Neighbourhoods: **FOLESHILL (Folk's Hill)**

FOLESHILL is a neighbourhood lying to the north of **COVENTRY CITY CENTRE**, on both sides of Foleshill Road (the A444) and Stoney Stanton Road.

Historically the neighbourhood was larger and more important, covering an area that extended as far as **BEDWORTH** and having its own Municipal Council (**Foleshill Rural District Council**) until it was absorbed into Coventry in 1932.

The centre of the historic district of **Foleshill** was **ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH** on Old Church Road, now regarded as being in **BELL GREEN**. Somewhere in this location was a hill where ancient people met, giving rise to its name "**The Folk's Hill**".

The district was one of **heathland** with open fields and scattered hamlets. The names **Broad Heath, Great Heath, Little Heath** and **The Parting of the Heaths** reflect the original geography of the district, whilst **Edgwick** was the name of one of the open fields.

From the second half of the 16th Century scattered **COAL MINES** were developed, particularly in the North of the district and **WEAVING** was a cottage industry throughout the district. As it was outside of Coventry it was known for **poverty** and **lawlessness**. The situation was vividly described to a series of Parliamentary Committees in the early 19th Century. In the report of 1840 one witness said that "**the whole appearance of the single-hand weaving districts, and of their inhabitants**" was "**one of rudeness, poverty, and depression**" and that "**the lawlessness of the district**" had "**of late years much increased**".

FOLESHILL was especially notorious for ignorance, immorality, and drunkenness: "**the magistrates of Coventry well know that when a desperate case is brought before them it is generally from this neighbourhood**". Robbery of **silk** from the canal barges was particularly well organized; the thieves employed their own manufacturers and labourers, and had a warehouse and an agent.

A feature of the last decade of the **RIBBON-WEAVING INDUSTRY** in **Foleshill** was the development of "**cottage factories**" in which a row of cottages was served by a single steam engine. There are said to have been 80 or 90 in **Foleshill**, including buildings in **Edgwick Road** and **Stoney Stanton Road**, which were still standing in the 1960s and 70s.

The only **RIBBON WEAVING BUSINESS** to survive was the **CASH BROTHERS** factory in **Pridmore**. Cash's 100 houses were built on the banks of the canal and allowed weavers to live in the cottages below and work in the "topshop" above, powered by a rotating shaft that went through the whole terrace. **The business survived through the production of WOVEN NAME LABELS** and is still operational today in the **Tile Hill** area of the City of Coventry. The original "**topshops**" were restored and converted to **SOCIAL HOUSING** in the 1980s.



**Workers' Housing
& Topshops in
Coventry circa 1890.**



Public Transport in FOLESHILL circa 1900.

The construction of the Coventry Canal in 1768 and the railway in 1850 made Foleshill an attractive area for the development of industry and the neighbourhood became the home of the important manufacturing industry of the city, including Alfred Herbert Ltd, Courtaulds, Riley, the Ordnance Works, J&J Cash, Webster and Bennett and Stirling Metals. Factories lived side by side with the growing residential population.



The neighbourhood was also known for **BRICK-MAKING**, using local clay that underlies the whole area. This lasted until the late 20th Century with **WEBSTER HEMMING COMPANY** making imperial sized semi-engineering bricks that were very popular in the renovation industry. The brickworks chimney was recently demolished (2016) but the clay pits had previously been filled in and are now used as a local park.

In 1840, a 21-year old woman named **Mary Ann Evans** moved with her father to **Bird Grove in Foleshill**. Her father was a sideman at **St. Paul's Church** on Foleshill Road. While living here she met **Charles and Cara Bray**, a local **RIBBON MANUFACTURER**, who were known as "**free thinkers**". At the Bray's home she met a wide range of influential people and this social contact challenged her religious beliefs.

She took up writing under the pseudonym **GEORGE ELIOT** and wrote many famous books, including **Middlemarch** where **Foleshill** was described under the name of the **Weaving Village of Tipton**.



Part of her home, in George Eliot Road, is a listed building, although having few of its original fittings.

LOCKHURST LANE INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY was established in 1832 and predates the **Rochdale Pioneers** by twelve years. By 1840 there were seven **CO-OPERATIVE SHOPS** in Foleshill and one of them had a small library of works on socialism, political economy, and political science. The Society is now embraced within the **Heart of England Co-operative Society**.

The second half of the 20th. Century has seen the decline of industry in the neighbourhood, with large firms moving out (**Courtaulds**) or closing (**Alfred Herbert's**). The population has changed too, with many people from the **British Commonwealth** coming to live here. Foleshill is the City Ward with the largest non-white population, approximately 40% in the 2001 census.

Despite its high level of deprivation, **FOLESHILL** is a hotbed of energy and enterprise.



12. WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1812 - 1886)

Farmer & Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver



- WILLIAM HENRY PORTER was born in 1812 AD, in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England.

He was the son of WILLIAM PORTER (1785-1869) and SARAH PORTER (born WAGSTAFF) (1787-1870) of Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England.

- On June 9, 1831, the 19-year old, WILLIAM HENRY PORTER married 20-year old SARAH PORTER (born BOWERS) (1811-1891) at St. Laurence Anglican Church in Foleshill, Warwickshire, England

- SARAH was the daughter of JOHN FAULDS (1772-1854) and AGNES FAULDS (born SCOTT) (1782-1854) of Foleshill, Warwickshire, England. **Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver;**

- WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1812-1886) and SARAH PORTER (1811-1891) (born BOWERS) had 11-Children (6-Sons and 5-Daughters):

1. DANIEL PORTER (1833-1896) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; **Emigrated to Australia; Married Eliza Rebecca Rhodes; Hand Loom Ribbon Weaver;**
2. HENRY GEORGE PORTER (1836-1841); born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; **Died Young @ 5-Years Old;**
3. WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1839 - 1923) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; **Emigrated to Australia; Married Mary Slater;**
4. AGNES PORTER) (1839-1915) born in Johnstone, Renfrewshire, Scotland; Married JOHN LOVE (1837-1880); Agnes Love (born Porter) Died in the CUNNINGHAM COMBINATION POORHOUSE, in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland; **(See Article On Page 60.)**
5. SARAH BOWERS PORTER (1840-xxxx) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; **Cotton Factory Worker;**

6. JOHN ROBERT PORTER (1842-1917) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; [Emigrated to Australia; Married Mary Ann Gill & Abigail Chant; Had 6-Children \(2-Sons & 4-daughters\);](#)
7. JAMES PORTER (1844-1924) born in Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Scotland; [Married in Wallsend, NSW in 1881\(?\);](#)
8. SARAH PORTER (1848-1890) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire; [Married Samuel Jeffs; Had 1-Child \(Daughter: Louisa Jeffs\)](#)
9. GEORGE PORTER (1850-1931) born in Foleshill, Warwickshire;

■ On March 5, 1886, WILLIAM HENRY PORTER died at the age of 73-years and was buried in St. Laurence Anglican Church, Foleshill, Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

■ In 1891, SARAH PORTER (born BOWERS) died at the age of 80-years and was buried in St. Laurence Anglican Church, Foleshill, Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

Cunningham Combination, Ayrshire

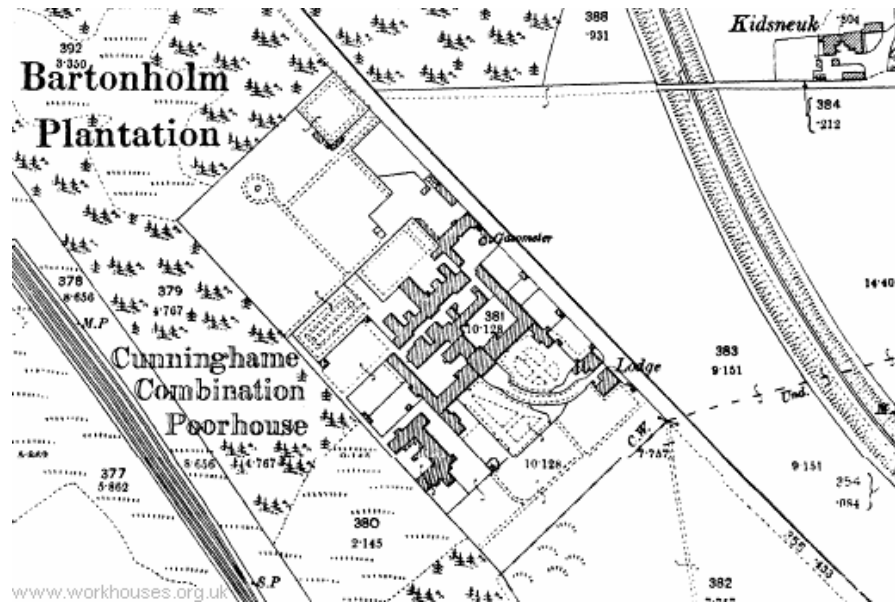
The CUNNINGHAM COMBINATION was formed in around 1856 and initially comprised the Parishes of Ardrossan, Beith, Dalry, Dreghorn, Irvine, Kilbirnie, West Kilbride, Kilwinning, Stevenston and Stewarton. Later members were Dundonald, Dunlop, Galston, Kilmarnock, Kilmaurs, Loudoun and Symington. Fenwick joined in 1895 and Largs in 1906.

Other parishes, such as **Kilbride** and **Kilmory from Arran** and **Old Kilpatrick** in Dunbartonshire, paid to send **PAUPERS** to the **POORHOUSE**.

In about 1889, Kilmaurs established its own local **Poorhouse or Almshouse** in a rented property which the Parish subsequently purchased around 1900. **In 1904**, the building was reckoned to be able to accommodate up to **6 men, 2 women, and 2 children**.

The **CUNNINGHAM COMBINATION POORHOUSE** was erected in **1857-1858** at the north-west of **IRVINE** on what is now Sandy Lane. The Governor, David Hunter, and his staff of three admitted the first four inmates on the **20th September 1858**. The establishment was officially opened two days later.

The Governor in 1873 was Hugh Lockhart who was still there in 1897 at a salary of £75 per year.



CUNNINGHAM POORHOUSE (1896).

An entrance lodge stood at the south-east of the site.



CUNNINGHAM entrance from the east, 2001.

© [Peter Higginbotham](#).

The main block faced south and contained the Governor's quarters at its centre.



CUNNINGHAM MAIN BUILDING from the south-east, 2001.

© [Peter Higginbotham](#).

The rear parts of the main building included kitchens, chapel, bakehouse, bathhouse and cobbler's workshop. The areas between the buildings formed exercise yards for the inmates.



CUNNINGHAM rear of main building from the west, 2001.

© [Peter Higginbotham](#).

In 1858, separate accommodation was provided for 10 male and 10 female "pauper imbeciles and idiots". A separate asylum building was later erected at the rear workhouse building.



CUNNINGHAM Asylum Block from the south-west, 2001.

© [Peter Higginbotham](#).

Many additions were made to the buildings in the late 1800s and early 1900s, including a new west wing, and a further wing at the south-west containing a new board room and offices. A separate house at the south of the main building may have become the Governor's quarters.



CUNNINGHAM from the south-west, 2001.

© [Peter Higginbotham](#).

Considerable expansion also took place at the north, with additional infirmary accommodation, and a large group of single-storey buildings which may have been further workshops.



CUNNINGHAM from the north, 2001.

© [Peter Higginbotham](#).



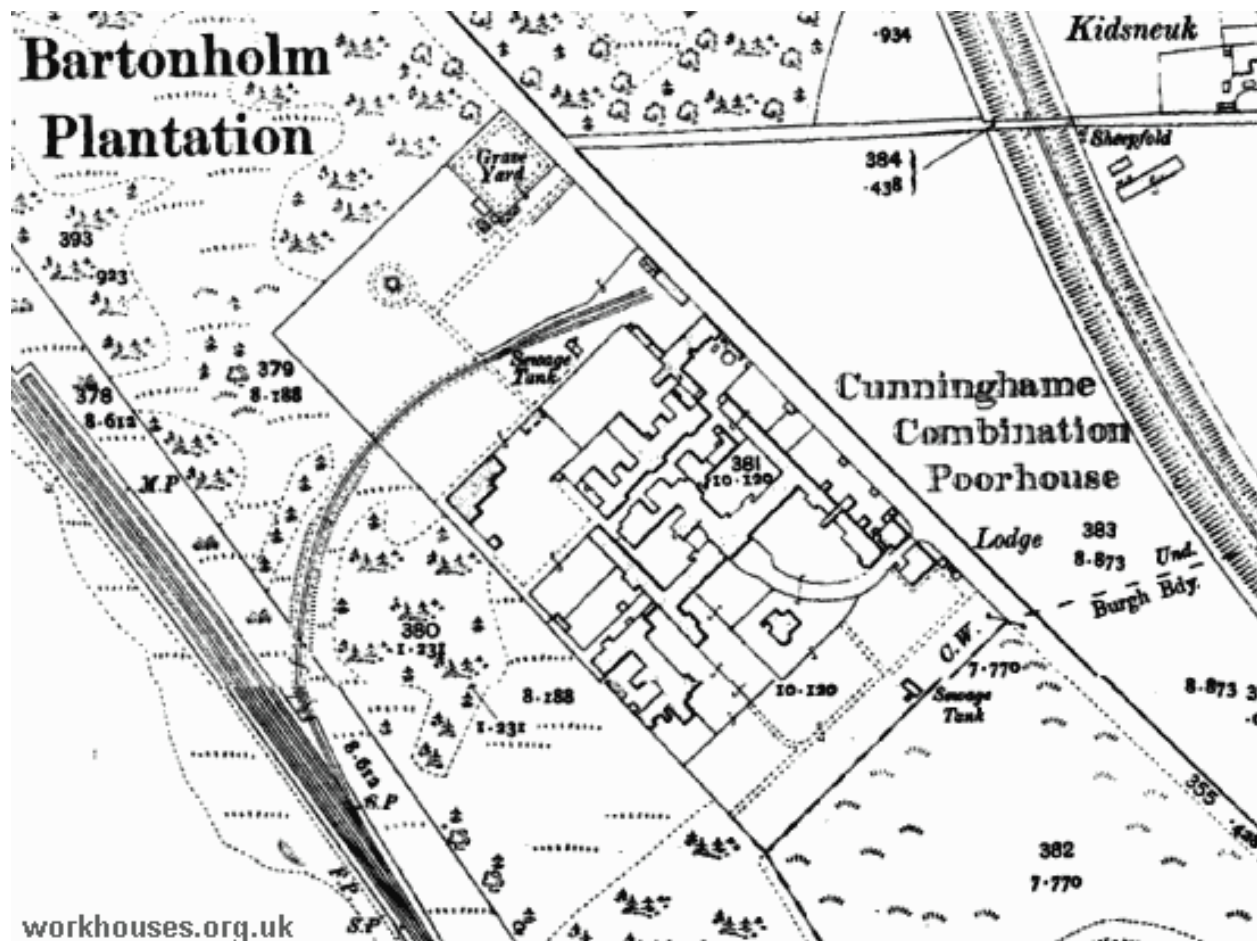
CUNNINGHAM from the north, 2001.

© Peter Higginbotham.

An inspection by the Scottish Board of Supervision in 1880 found that **"the House continues clean and orderly but I observed with surprise that the Committee still maintain the custom of providing but one sheet for each bed."** It also noted that **"for the safety of officials, it is important that some formal record should be preserved for the punishments inflicted in School"** and that **"entertainments given to the inmates should be limited to those of good character and to the children"**.

Another report by the **GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OF POORHOUSES** in 1892 alleged that **"paupers dying in this House, whose bodies are not claimed by friends, are buried in an enclosed part of the garden. I am surprised that no complaint has arisen with regard to this practice and I am afraid that a great scandal may at any time arise. Protestants and Roman Catholics are buried indiscriminately. The ground has been twice gone over during the present Governor's term of office. If any descendant of a deceased pauper, who may have prospered in the world, desires to erect a headstone to his parents' memory it will probably be impossible to indicate the place of sepulture."**

CUNNINGHAM responded that there had never been any complaints about this long-standing practice and that the ground in question, some 508 square yards in extent, was walled off from the Poorhouse garden. **Some action was clearly taken however, as the 1911 Ordnance Survey map shows an area at the north of the site now formally designated as a graveyard.**



CUNNINGHAM POORHOUSE 1911.

During the First World War, when the **RENFREWSHIRE COMBINATION POORHOUSE** at **Crookston** was taken over by the Military Authorities, **over a hundred of its inmates** were transferred to Cunningham.

In 1930, control of the Poorhouse site passed to the Local Authority and the establishment became the **CUNNINGHAM HOME AND HOSPITAL**, providing a **106-BED HOSPITAL**, wards for the elderly, a mentally defective unit, and an asylum block. It became part of the new **National Health Service** in 1948 and in 1958 was renamed **RAVENSPARK**. It continued to provide **psychiatric and geriatric care** up until its closure in around 1996.

The site was finally sold for redevelopment in July 2011, with the purchasers, **DUNDAS ESTATES**, agreeing to "protect and respect the graveyard". Over the following six months all the old **POORHOUSE** buildings were demolished. In December 2012, despite the Company claiming to have spent a considerable amount of time investigating the history of the site, Police were called in after alarmed construction workers unearthed a "MASS GRAVE" of human skulls and bones.

Memorial held for Irvine's forgotten POORHOUSE DEAD

24th October 2013

By Jody Harrison

A MEMORIAL service has been held to mark the reburial of the remains of dozens of people uncovered during development work at a former hospital and poorhouse.

Prayers for the departed were said and a piper played a lament as the bones were laid to rest beneath a new headstone in a cemetery next to the former Ravenspark Hospital in Irvine, North Ayrshire.

Workmen for **DUNDAS ESTATE**, who have developed 75 homes on the site, found the skeletal remains of 35 people, in a mass grave dating back to the 19th century, last year. Investigations by forensic scientists and archeologists, established the skulls and bones were part of a **paupers' grave** for those without families or whose relatives could not afford a proper burial.

The hospital operated as a POORHOUSE and ASYLUM during the 19th Century and the bones were in a mass grave not marked on any maps. The bodies of some who died at the hospital would also have been given over for medical research. After the remains were found, relatives of people who may have been buried at the site came forward to find out if their identities could be established.

A decision was taken to give them a proper burial with a joint service by both the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church. Bruce Dunlop, managing Director of Dundas, said the service was a "fitting conclusion" to a sad story. He said: "Holding the memorial to properly re-inter the bodies was the right thing to do. A number of people who feel they may have family in the grave attended the ceremony."

North Ayrshire Council Depute Provost Councillor Robert Barr laid a wreath during the ceremony, led jointly by Rev Robert Travers of Irvine Old Parish Church and Father Willie Boyd of St Mary's Church in Irvine.

Father Boyd said: "These people should never have been left in an unmarked grave, and this memorial should remind us all of those who are marginalized by society."



13. WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1838 - 1923)

Silk & Cotton Worker

Emigrated to Queensland, Australia 1863



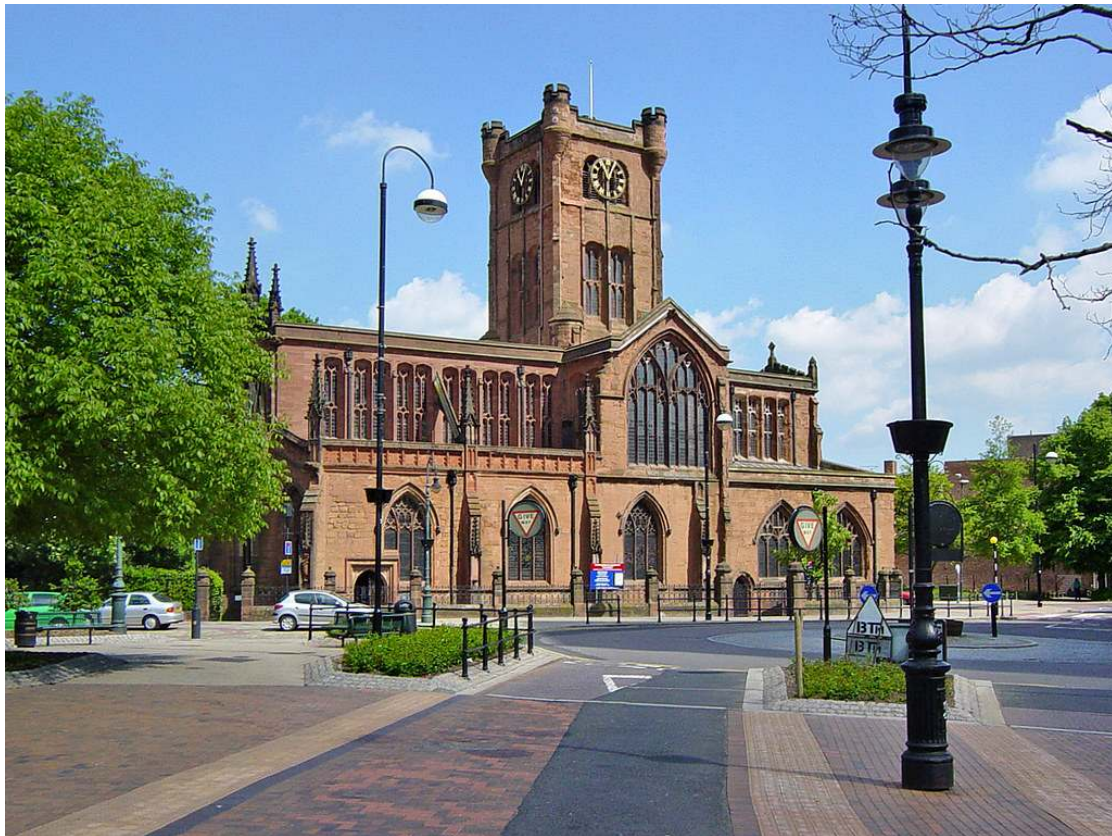
- WILLIAM HENRY PORTER was born on June 18, 1838 in SOUTHERY, Norfolk, England.

SOUTHERY is a small Village located 6 miles south of Downham Market and 11 miles north of Ely, on the edge of the Cambridge border in Norfolk on the A10 and is predominantly an arable farming community. Surrounded by the fens, the landscape is flat with few trees with most of the fields below the waterline of the major tributaries in the area of the Wissey and Little Ouse. The villages name means 'southern island'.

WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1838-1923) was the son of farmer WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1812-1886) and his wife, laundress SARAH PORTER (born BOWERS) (1811-1891) of Foleshill, Warwickshire, England.

- In 1851, at age 13-years, WILLIAM HENRY PORTER was working at home in # 6, Adelaide St., Coventry with his Mother as a SILK FILLER to help boost the family income.
- On February 22, 1857, the 18-year old, WILLIAM HENRY PORTER married 24-year old MARY SLATER (1833-1920) at St. John the Baptist Church in Coventry, Warwickshire, England. MARY SLATER was the daughter of General Labourer, WILLIAM SLATER (1808-1871) and MARY SLATER (born DEACON) (1804-1869) of Coventry, Warwickshire.
- WILLIAM HENRY PORTER and MARY PORTER (born SLATER) had 9-Children (5-Sons and 4-Daughters):
 1. GEORGE WILLIAM PORTER (1851-1931) born in Coventry, Warwickshire; Married 24-year old Selina Satchwell in 1873; had 4-Children in Coventry; Emigrated in 1875 to Australia; **Died Young in 1876 @ 25-years Old by accidental drowning in Kia Ora, Gympie, Queensland, Australia; (We need to research whether Selina Porter (born Satchwell) remarried after George William Porter died in 1876...)**
 2. JOHN PORTER (1860-1870) born in Coventry, Warwickshire; **Died Young @ 10-years Old in Euri Creek, Bowen, Queensland, Australia; Death was not registered.**
 3. THOMAS HENRY PORTER (1862 - 1863) born in Coventry; **Died Young @ 1-Year Old on board ship to Australia; buried at sea.**

4. HENRY PORTER (1867-1952) born Don River, Bowen, Queensland; Died 1952 at age 85-years in Ayr, Queensland, Australia.
5. MARGARET SARAH PORTER (1869-1953) born in Westhoughton, Lancashire; Emigrated to Queensland, Australia (1883) age-14 years; Married John Soper (1886) age-17 years; gave birth to Mary Grace Rutherford Soper on June 16, 1886 in QLD, Australia. She had 12-Children, all named Soper and all born in Queensland. Died in 1953 at age 83-years in Ayr, Queensland, Australia.
6. ANNIE PORTER) (1871-1958) born in Lower Euir Creek, QLD, Australia; Married Charles Carcary (1890); birth of daughter Annie Carcary Rattray (Dec 18, 1890). Had 12-children in all named Carcary.
7. ELIZABETH HENRIETTA PORTER (1874-1964) born in Lower Euir Creek, Bowen, QLD, Australia; Occupation: WEAVER.
8. SARAH PORTER (1876-1943) born in Ayr, QLD, Australia; Married unknown Mackersie; buried in Ayr Cemetery Grave # 1261.
9. WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1879-1947) born in Parish of Inkerman (near Home Hill) QLD, Australia. Unmarried.



St. John the Baptist Church, Coventry, Warwickshire, England

L ONG-DISTANCE COMMERCIAL STEAMSHIPS

The most testing route for steamships was from Britain or the **East Coast of the U.S.** to the **Far East**. The distance from either is roughly the same, between **14,000 to 15,000 nautical miles** (26,000 to 28,000 km; 16,000 to 17,000 mi), traveling down the Atlantic, around the southern tip of Africa, and across the **Indian Ocean**. Before 1866, no steamship could carry enough coal to make this voyage and have enough space left to carry a commercial cargo.

A partial solution to this problem was adopted by the **Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company** (P&O), using an overland section between Alexandria and **Suez**, with connecting steamship routes along the **Mediterranean** and then through the **Red Sea**. While this worked for passengers and some high value cargo, sail was still the only solution for virtually all trade between China and Western Europe or East Coast America. Most notable of these cargoes was **tea**, typically carried in **clippers**.

Another partial solution was the **STEAM AUXILIARY SHIP** - a vessel with a steam engine, but also rigged as a sailing vessel. The steam engine would only be used when conditions were unsuitable for sailing - in light or contrary winds. Some of this type (for instance *Erl King*) were built with propellers that could be lifted clear of the water to reduce drag when under sail power alone. These ships struggled to be successful on the route to China, as the standing rigging required when sailing was a handicap when steaming into a head wind, most notably against the southwest monsoon when returning with a cargo of new tea.^[23] Though the auxiliary steamers persisted in competing in far eastern trade for a few years (and it was *Erl King* that carried the first cargo of tea through the **Suez Canal**), they soon moved on to other routes.

What was needed was a big improvement in fuel efficiency. While the boilers for steam engines on land were allowed to run at high pressures, the Board of Trade (under the authority of the Merchant Shipping Act 1854) **would not allow ships to exceed 20 or 25 pounds per square inch (140 or 170 kPa).**

Compound engines were a known source of improved efficiency – but generally not used at sea due to the low pressures available. *CARNATIC (1863)*, a P&O ship, had a compound engine - and achieved better efficiency than other ships of the time. Her boilers ran at 26 pounds per square inch (180 kPa) but relied on a substantial amount of “superheat”.

A Long and Dangerous Journey to Queensland...



1880 Sailing Clipper illustrated by BILL WOOD

- For those who travelled to Australia in the 19th. Century, the journey was often long and dangerous. In calm weather a sailing ship might take as long as four months, while a well-run clipper ship with favourable winds could make the journey in a little over half this time. These ships represented the pinnacle of sailing ship technology. With their streamlined hulls and acres of sail designed to catch even the slightest breeze, clippers were built primarily for speed.
- By the 1850s it was possible to make the journey by auxiliary steamer, using a combination of steam and sail. However steam technology was still too inefficient to allow a ship to travel all the way to Australia under its own power. With the strong prevailing westerlies on the 'Great Circle' sailing route benefiting the clippers, sail continued to dominate the trade until the end of the 1870s.

- Life at sea was uncomfortable and often hazardous, particularly for passengers who travelled cheaply in 'steerage' (the lowest deck and below the water line). Storms were common in the Southern Ocean, but were not the only danger. Hygiene was poor at the best of times and worse in bad weather. 'Batten-down the hatches' meant passengers on the lowest deck were confined without ventilation or light in conditions that were ideal for the spread of disease. The use of candles or oil lanterns was restricted and sometimes forbidden – cramped conditions with timber, straw mattresses, hemp (rope) and tar caulking, meant a fire could spread with terrifying speed. A disaster at sea or shipwreck on the coast left little hope for rescue – few sailors or passengers could swim, and there were rarely enough life-boats for the numbers on board.

SETTLER ORIGINS

- Regardless of the difficulties in getting to Australia, it had become an increasingly popular destination for free settlers. **Convicts were no longer the major source of new arrivals to the colonies. With the discovery of GOLD in 1851 and a booming economy, people were now coming to Victoria and Australia by choice.** People came from many countries, the majority from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, America, China and Germany.
- However, not all settlers were welcomed equally – for example, from 1855-1861 ship's Captains had to pay poll taxes of up to £10 per head for each Chinese passenger they landed in Victoria, Australia. Word soon spread back home, and many young Chinese seeking their fortunes subsequently disembarked in South Australia and walked overland to the Victorian goldfields.
Chinese immigration remained controversial for many decades.

THE JOURNEY BY STEAM

- **The first iron-hulled steam ships made the journey to Australia in 1852. However, these early steamers, known as auxiliaries, still carried a full set of sails, as their inefficient engines and the lack of coaling ports en route to Australia prevented the use of the new steam technology over long distances.**
- **Whilst speed was not initially improved by the introduction of steam, comfort and strength were. The change from traditional wooden hulled ships to iron hulls enabled steamships to be larger and stronger, with much greater space below the decks.**

- In the 1860s the more efficient compound steam engine, in which steam was expanded in successive cylinders, was introduced. This enabled ships to make the voyage to Australia entirely under steam power. However, it wasn't until the 1880s after the introduction of a government mail subsidy, that steam ships became profitable and began to carry the majority of immigrants. Less reliant on wind, they travelled at a constant speed and provided power for electric lighting, refrigeration and ventilation. Grand saloons were able to be provided for first class passengers, and small cabins instead of sleeping berths were provided in steerage class.



Postcard, 'Mail Steamer Leaving Melbourne Port', circa 1903. Steam stacks and sail capacity are clearly evident.

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY

NAVIGATIONAL INSTRUMENTS: SEXTANT, NAUTICAL TELESCOPE, MARINE COMPASS AND SHIP'S LOG

- Navigating the route to Australia was a complex task, requiring great skill on the part of the ship's captain, as well as the use of various navigational tools. These included the telescope, marine compass, ship's log and sextant. However, navigation was also

dependent on the ship's captain having a good working knowledge of the position of the stars in the night sky.

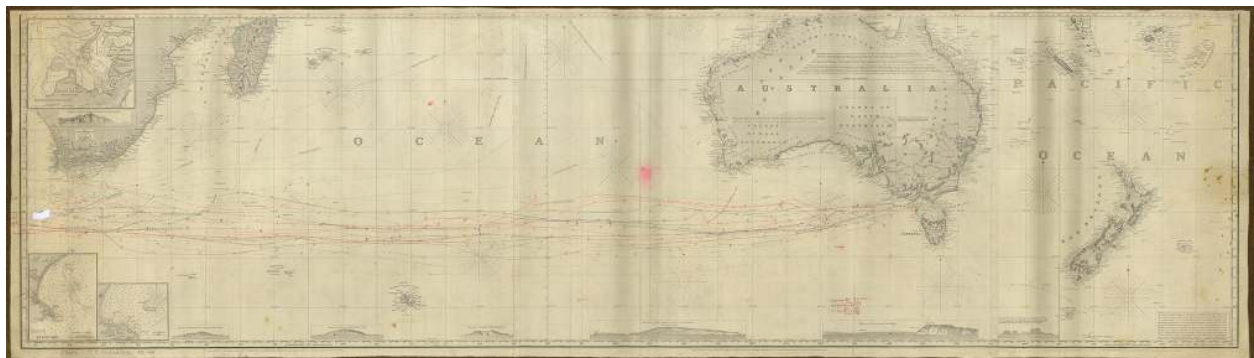
- Telescopes were an essential tool of marine navigation for examining sightings of land more closely and for identifying ships passed en route. This was especially important in times of war.



- The compass is an instrument used for determining the direction in which a ship is travelling. It consists of a freely moving magnetized needle, which indicates magnetic north.
- The introduction of iron hulled ships such as the Great Britain created complications for the use of the compass. The metal in the hull of these ships interfered with the behaviour of the magnetic needle, requiring special adjustments and calculations to be made for accurate readings.

- Charts and navigation maps were developed by the Admiralty for the use of British naval and merchant ships. Detail and accuracy were very important, and many are still in use today. Charts and maps were always kept in the chartroom on board the ship.
- A sextant is an astronomical instrument used for taking latitude readings, by measuring the angle of altitude of the sun, moon or a star above the horizon at sea.
- A chronometer is a timepiece that is able to keep accurate time on board ship. It enables mariners to calculate longitude by observing the position of certain stars in the sky at specific times, and comparing their observations with the data contained in a nautical almanac.
- A Ship's Log looked very similar to a torpedo but was used to measure the speed of a ship. When dragged behind the vessel, movement of water past the propeller caused it to rotate, turning the small needle dials to record the distance and speed travelled.

SAILING ROUTES



Ship navigational chart showing Australia from 1873

- In their dash to reach the Victorian goldfields in the quickest possible time, many ship's captains adopted the new 'Great Circle' route in the 1850s. Passing far south of the Cape of Good Hope, they sought the 'Roaring Forties' – the strong prevailing winds that blew from the west to the east between 40 and 50 degrees south.
- This route involved enormous risks from drifting icebergs and the wild seas generated by frequent storms. It required exceptional navigational skills, as even the slightest error could lead to disaster. The large number of ships that were lost when navigating the narrow path between King Island and southern Victoria led to the West Coast of Victoria becoming known as the Shipwreck Coast.

- The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 gave ships coming from Europe an alternative route to Australia. However, as early steamers still partially relied on wind power, most shipping lines continued to use the 'Great Circle' route. It was several decades before steam engines were reliable and efficient enough to enable ships to complete the entire journey to Australia under steam.
- Initially, it was only mail steamers from the P & O and Orient lines that travelled to Australia using the Suez Canal. Government contracts made the route profitable for these companies.

'BRIEF SKETCHES OF LIFE ONBOARD A STEAM VESSEL'

EXTRACT FROM TRANSCRIPT OF ALLY HEATHCOTE'S DIARY:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1874



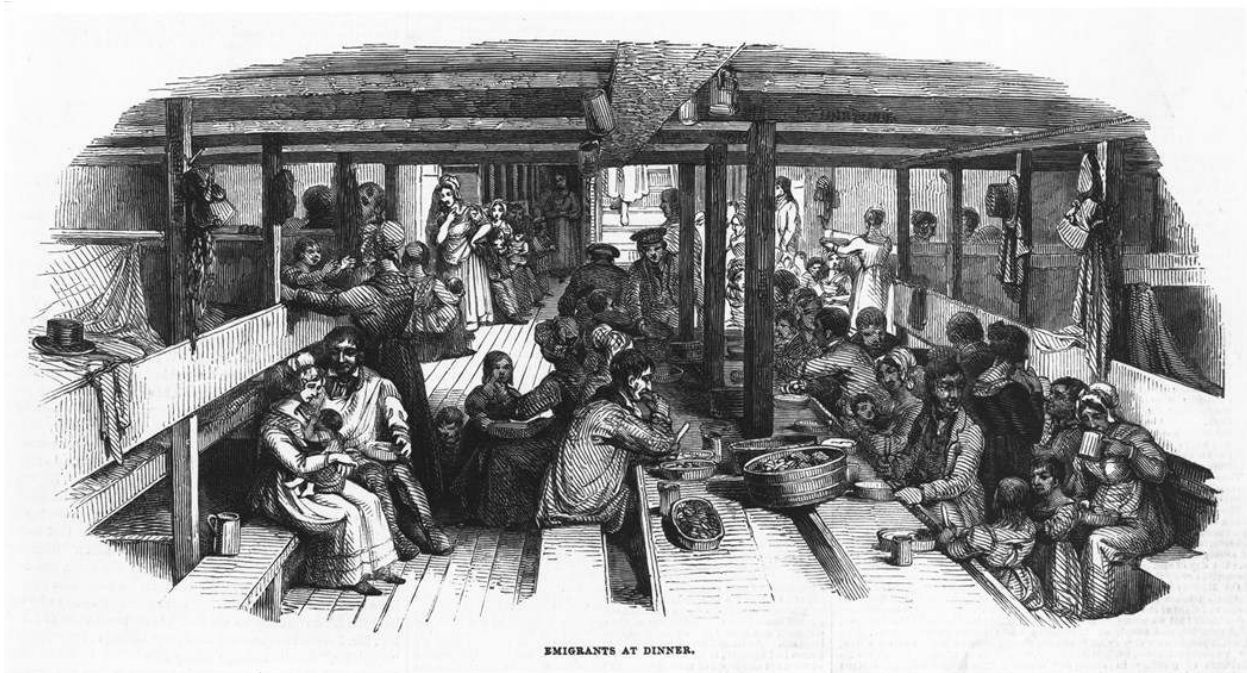
HT 1104 – Diary - Ally Heathcote, England to Melbourne, Victoria,
Onboard 'SS Northumberland', 1874

- We were just wondering how long the storm would last and sending up a silent prayer for protection when crash went something on deck, and the water swept over the decks and down in the cabin, we gave ourselves up for lost and the people rushed out of their cabins looking terrified. Ma sat quite calm, I looked at her and could see her lips

moving, she was pale as death and so was Papa, we did not know what had been the matter, some thought it was the cookhouse washed away but one of the passengers who is a Sea Captain went on deck and came and said it was only a little bit of the flimsy part of the bulwarks gone, the hatching had broken open in the second class cabin and they were almost able to bathe, as the water then had come in, they all had to get to work baling out, all hands were called up, even the waiters had to start baling water out of the saloon as there in some parts it was a foot deep, the windows were all smashed and the things were all floating, we in our cabin fared the best, as we had not much in comparison.

LIFE AT SEA

- Most migrants making the voyage to Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century set out unaccustomed to sea travel, but by the end of the journey shared an experience few others had – a passage through some of the world's most treacherous oceans. With the introduction of the faster, but more dangerous 'Great Circle' route in the 1850s, free settlers were ironically less likely to survive the journey than their earlier convict counterparts.

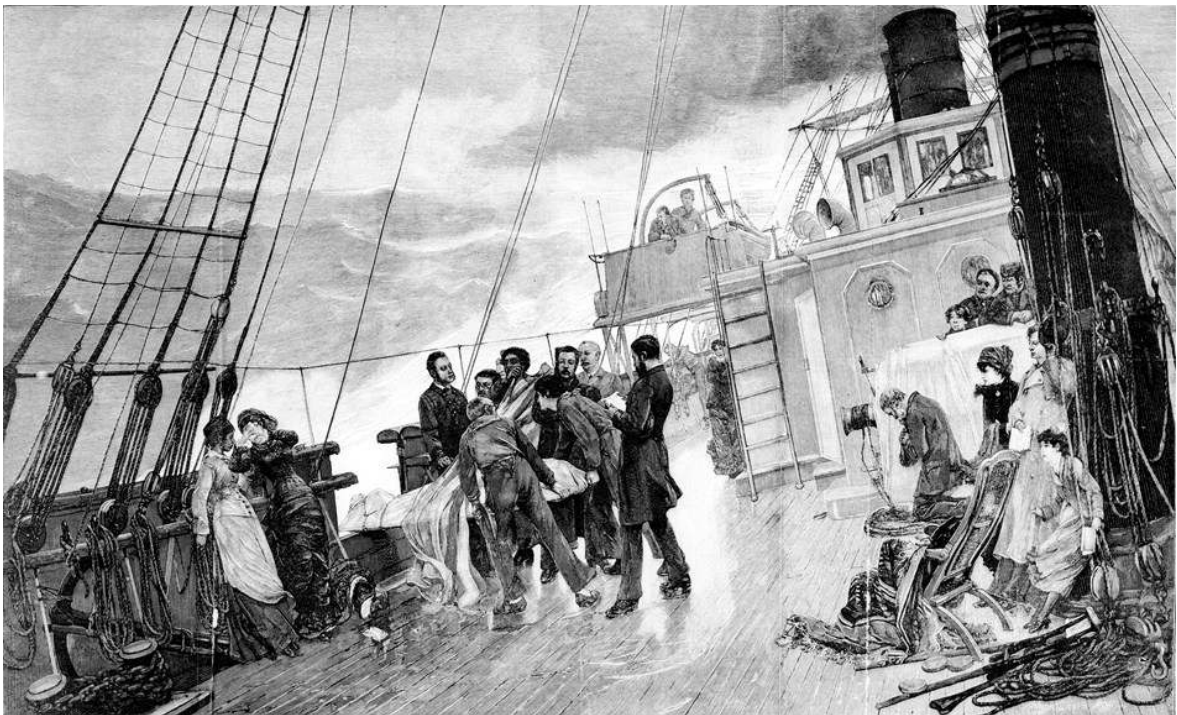


Married couples' accommodation in steerage, by unknown artist, taken from the Illustrated London News, 13 April 1844.

- For 'steerage' passengers in particular, cramped and unhygienic quarters became worse when tremendous storms were encountered in the Southern Ocean. At such times, all passengers were confined below deck for days, sick and tossed around, often in complete darkness, and fearing for their lives.
- Our water barrels were rolling from side to side and our cans, teapots and cooking utensils were adding to the confusion by bouncing one after the other down the area between the bunks. Some of the young ladies [were] screaming and some tried to climb up the hatchways screaming to the officers to let them out.
– Anne Grafton migrated from England in 1858
- Unfortunately, the ship's doctor was not able to offer much in the way of relief from seasickness –

(It is) enough to pitch my insides out. It's all up to me. I am not able to stir. The doctor can give me no relief, but at that I am not surprised. He is very young, never been to sea and is just as ill as all the other people.

– William Merrifield travelled to Australia on the Lincolnshire in 1858.



Engraving, 'Burial at Sea', by unknown artist, taken from the Australasian Sketcher, November 1880.

- Deaths at sea were tragically common. As many as one in five children, and one in 60 adults died on the voyage to Australia. For the burial, the body was sewn into a piece of canvas or placed in a rough coffin (often hastily knocked up by the ship's carpenter) and weighed down with pig iron or lead to help it sink.
- A plank had been placed on deck, one end over the ship's side, and upon this plank the sailors placed the body, covering it with an ensign. The sailors gently lifted the ensign and running out the plank and lifting up one end, the body dropped over the side into the water.
- Thomas Park arrived in 1852 from England, aboard the Great Britain's maiden voyage.
- In the late 18th Century, Captain Cook and others had discovered that a lack of vitamin C was the cause of scurvy. The juice of oranges, lemons and limes was subsequently given to sailors and passengers to prevent death from scurvy.
- Water kept in wooden barrels would become very stale after a few months. Rats and mice would fall into the open barrels and drown, and algae would grow in the barrels and make people violently ill. The link between cholera and contaminated drinking water was not discovered until 1848, but even after this, ships continued to draw water from polluted rivers in ports that they visited.
- To feed the sailors and passengers, stores were kept in the hold and opened as needed by the cooks. Stores such as pickled meat (pork or beef in brine) flour, sugar and dried pulses (peas) were kept on board in wooden barrels. These barrels were usually fitted with lids, but were often kept open overnight. The stores could be raided by hungry rats and mice, leaving traces from their nocturnal visits, and the grain and flour stores were often infested with weevils. Adulterated food and water caused diseases like dysentery to be commonplace, resulting in many deaths on some voyages.
- Vinegar and chloride of lime were used to wash the wooden floors and decks of the ships, as fresh water was reserved for drinking and cooking. Cleaning with vinegar helped prevent the spread of disease and made the ship smell better. It also removed the vomit of people suffering from sea-sickness and other diseases.
- The death toll among passengers squeezed into cramped and uncomfortable steerage berths on clipper ships was often very high. On one of the voyages of the Marco Polo, captained by the infamous 'Bully' Forbes, 53 passengers died. All but two were children. In contrast, the loss of only seven passengers on a voyage of the CHAMPION OF THE SEAS was considered as commendable .

- The ship CHAMPION OF THE SEAS has again made a highly successful voyage to this port [of Melbourne] bringing about 400 passengers - 277 of whom are passage-warrant holders. Dr. Bowden, surgeon-superintendent, reports them to be in a highly healthy state, no diseases but measles having exhibited itself. There were seven deaths during the voyage - six of them infants not more than five years old, and one, the ship's Engineer (who died of Tuberculosis - called "consumption").
– The Argus, November 1865.

'BRIEF SKETCHES OF LIFE ONBOARD A STEAM VESSEL'

EXTRACT FROM TRANSCRIPT OF ALLY HEATHCOTE'S DIARY:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23rd. 1874

- Another fearful cold day. We are starved to death almost, our good ship rolls us about in a frightful style, every meal time we have to hold on to the tables and seats and keep our cups from wandering all over the cabin. During the night, we have been constantly on the move, first one side then the other, and we have been troubled to an alarming extent during the hot weather with a brown kind of insect, a terror to tidy English matrons and maidens, and one of the ladies in my cabin says she will pin a letter onto her berth to certify that it will accommodate a regiment of things besides a lady, of course you will comprehend the name of the regiment. We have fared better than the second cabin passengers, as they have the engine right in the midst of them and it made it much hotter.
- It would take up too much room to dot down all the mishaps and adventures we encounter, so I must be brief, we often as we sit down in our cabin see the water rising much higher than the bulwarks, and then we hear a rush and a hearty laugh, as it is too comical a scene to witness a lot of folks running out of the way of the sea, and it rushing after them and giving their toes a slight ducking, not many ladies appear on deck except if they have an escort, as it is almost impossible to stand alone, but tonight we had quite a grand procession headed by one of the officers and one engineer, we walked two abreast and pretty soon got quite warm. I stood inside the cook house to warm myself before going down and the cook gave me some cocoa, he is very kind and often gives us some little cakes, he says he likes to oblige the ladies, but now it is bed time and the storekeeper will be down in a minute or two to order out the lights so I must close.

Today's log is Latitude 41 - 30, Longitude 13 - 25, Distance 245 knots.

PRIVIES AND HYGIENE



'SEA BATHING IN THE TROPICS' from the illustrated diary of Edward Snell, who sailed from London to Melbourne aboard the Bolton in 1849.

This illustrates the difficulty of keeping clean onboard, not least the lack of privacy available.

- Most ships provided only basic toilet and bathing facilities. Authorities complained that even these were under used and the sailors often had to wash the upper decks which passengers used as open-air toilets. Some steerage passengers had never used a privy or a water closet before. Buckets of water were used to flush contents down to the bilges [under steerage], which were emptied when the ship finally docked at port. The smell would have been disgusting.
- The toileting process became much worse in storms, or during the night, when passengers in steerage were locked in and no lights were allowed. Accidents were messy affairs. As people did not understand the basic rules of hygiene, and toilet paper had not been invented, rags or clothes were soaked in vinegar and hung on the back of the toilet door to be used by all. This led to the spread of diseases like dysentery and typhoid. Deaths at sea were common.
- On better managed ships, the areas below deck were thoroughly cleaned every few days by sailors and many of the women in steerage. Bedding which was usually made of straw, attracted fleas and cockroaches. People brought up their bedding in fine weather to shake it out and air it. However, in storms and bad weather, the bedding was often soaked through and this led to outbreaks of influenza and pneumonia. In the over crowded conditions in steerage, epidemics were common. Most victims were babies and young children, who often died of complications and lack of medical care. Infected passengers often came on board, having passed undetected through pre-boarding medical checks. Tuberculosis, an infectious disease of the lungs, was one of the most dangerous diseases.
- The sleeping berths were disinfected as often as possible, using a mixture of vinegar and chloride of lime. But often the cracks in the wooden slats of the bunks harboured lice, cockroaches and fleas. It was not uncommon for rats or mice to be found in the beds and bedding.
- Many people in the 19th. Century didn't bathe regularly and the connection between personal hygiene and disease was not well understood. Due to the cramped and overcrowded conditions in steerage, people could not really take baths and made do with a clean-up with a damp cloth under a blanket. Most people did not have the room to change their clothing and often wore the same garments or clothing for the entire voyage. Facilities for washing clothes were very restricted. Underclothes were virtually unknown to many people at the time, deodorants were not used and many people did not clean their teeth. One can only imagine the smells of soiled nappies, grubby clothes, and unwashed bodies in a crowded environment!

'BRIEF SKETCHES OF LIFE ONBOARD A STEAM VESSEL'

Extract from transcript of Ally Heathcote's diary:

Wednesday, October 7th 1874

- Awoke this morning to find it raining heavily, rather a miserable day to look forward to but our folks are taking some buckets to catch the rain water as we intend having a washing day, if we are spared till tomorrow. The sailors scrubbed our cabin out this morning, they do it twice a week, Wednesday and Saturday, they use chloride of lime and it makes the boards look quite new and white, tomorrow we are hoping to cross the line and then we expect to have the trade winds, if we had been on a sailing ship, probably we should not have been any farther than the Bay of Biscay. We have some delightful evenings, and the sunsets are much more gorgeous than we see them at home.

The log for today is Latitude 4 - 21, Longitude 16 - 22, Distance 188 knots.



THE SOPER FAMILY EMIGRATION TO QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

In 1880, the 23-year old Agricultural Labourer JOHN SOPER (1857-1944) learned that GOLD had been discovered in Victoria, Australia. The SOPERS' Ancestors were among the first influx of Dutch immigrants to Britain in the late 1500s as Dutch Protestants fled religious persecution. Many settled in the Southeast of England and Scotland.

Like most of his extended family, JOHN SOPER was an Agricultural Labourer in DEVON, England and life was hard.

The SOPERS came in the 1800s from a long line of Dutch immigrants to Southeastern England. The first big wave of Dutch immigrants to leave the Low Countries were from present day Northern Belgium as they wanted to escape the heavily urbanized cities in Western Flanders (such as Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels, Charleroi, Liege, Anderlecht and Bruges).

In the late 1800s the Australian Government was hiring workers from around the world to provide the essential manpower to develop their young Country on the other side of the world.

ASSISTED PASSAGES were granted by the Government of Queensland to particular categories of immigrants, and their families, which were from time to time, particularly required in Queensland. The categories include farmers, farm labourers, vine dressers, labourers, mechanics and domestic servants. To be eligible they had to be unable to pay the full passage, they could not have resided previously in any Australian colony, and they must intend to reside permanently in Queensland.

With the lure of "assisted passage" and the chance of riches from mining or other well-paid employment, JOHN SOPER decided to emigrate, accompanied by his 18-year-old brother, Agricultural Labourer SAMUEL SOPER (1861-1926) aboard the Steamship SS "CARNATIC" from Plymouth, Devon to Townsville, Queensland, Australia.

The voyage across two oceans on a fast, modern Steamship lasted "only 101-days"; they departed Plymouth on June 19, 1880 and arrived on September 28, 1880 in the Port of Townsville, Queensland.



The STEAMSHIP "CARNATIC" (1863)



JOHN SOPER (Senior) (1857 - 1944)
Agricultural Labourer



- JOHN SOPER (Senior) was born in 1857 AD, in Meeth, Devonshire, England.

He was the son of Agricultural Labourer SAMUEL SOPER (1826-1906) and his wife, GRACE SOPER (born HAMMETT) (1828-1905) of Hatherleigh, near Okehampton, Devon, England.

- On January 5, 1886, the 29-year old, JOHN SOPER (Senior) married 17-year old MARGARET SARAH PORTER (1869-1953) in Ayr, Queensland, Australia. MARGARET was the daughter of WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1838-1923) and MARY PORTER (born SLATER) (1833-1920). (The bride was likely already pregnant at the wedding ceremony.)

■ From 1903-1925 JOHN SOPER (Senior) and MARGARET SARAH SOPER and their growing family lived at HARVEST HOME FARMS, Ayr, Queensland.

■ JOHN SOPER (Senior) and MARGARET SARAH SOPER (born PORTER) had 12-Children (6-Sons and 6-Daughters):

1. MARY GRACE SOPER (June 1886-1979) born in Queensland, Australia;
[Married Mr. Rutherford;](#)
2. JOHN SOPER (Junior) (May 1888-1971) born in Queensland, Australia;
3. ELIZABETH SOPER (Nov 1890-1949) born in Queensland, Australia;
4. SARAH JANE SOPER (May 1892-1982) born in Queensland, Australia;
[Married Mr. Page;](#)
5. WILLIAM GEORGE SOPER (March 1894-1985) born in Queensland, Australia;
6. ELLEN SOPER (Feb 1897-1983) born in Queensland, Australia;
[Married Mr. Giddy.](#)
7. ETHEL SOPER (Feb 1899-1970) born in Queensland, Australia;
[Married George Edwin Giddy; had 1-son John Joseph Giddy;](#)
8. EMILY MARGARET SOPER (March 1903-May 1903) born in Queensland, Australia;
[Died Young @ 3-Months Old.](#)
9. HENRY SAMUEL SOPER (April 1904-1987) born in Queensland, Australia;
[Married Ellen Jessie Gray; had 1-son Henry John Soper;](#)
10. HERBERT FRANCIS SOPER (June 1906-1976) born in Queensland, Australia;
11. ARTHUR FREDERICK SOPER (May 1908-1979) born in Queensland, Australia;
12. WALTER JAMES SOPER (May 1910-1964) born in Queensland, Australia;

■ On February 16, 1944, JOHN SOPER died at the age of 87-years and was buried in Grave #336X in Ayr Cemetary, Burdekin, Queensland, Australia.

■ On April 7, 1953, MARGARET SARAH SOPER (born PORTER) died at the age of 83-years and was buried in Grave #424X in Ayr Cemetary, Burdekin, Queensland, Australia.



14. GEORGE PORTER (1851 - 1931)

Iron Moulder



■ GEORGE PORTER was born on July 10, 1851 AD, in Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

He was the son of WILLIAM HENRY PORTER (1838-1923) and MARY PORTER (born SLATER) (1833-1920) of Southery, Norfolk, England.

■ On March 2, 1873, the 21-year old, GEORGE PORTER married 24-year old SELINA SATCHWELL (1849-1901) at St. Michael's Anglican Church in Coventry, Warwickshire, England. SELINA was the daughter of CHARLES SATCHWELL (1823-xxxx) and SARAH SATCHWELL (born PRITCHARD) (1819-xxxx).

■ GEORGE PORTER and SELINA PORTER had 5-Children (2-Sons and 3-Daughters):

1. WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER (1875-1951) born in Coventry, Warwickshire; Married Alice Mary Green (b. 1876) in 1902; resided in Chichester, West Sussex in 1911;
2. LUCY PORTER (1877-xxxx) born in Coventry, Warwickshire; Married John William Collinge;
3. ELIZABETH PORTER (1881-xxxx) born in Coventry, Warwickshire;
4. NELLY PORTER (1885-xxxx) born in Coventry Warwickshire; Married Arthur William Cummins;
5. PERCY CHARLES PORTER (1891-xxxx) born in Coventry, Warwickshire;

■ In 1901, SELINA PORTER died at the age of 52-years and was probably buried in Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

■ In June 1931, GEORGE PORTER died at the age of 80-years and was buried unregistered in Kia Ora, Queensland, Australia. It would seem that 50-year old George Porter may have emigrated to Queensland after his wife died in 1901 in England. However that possibility seems unlikely due to his age, and therefore needs further investigation.

IRON MOULDING:

Automobiles use a large number of parts cast from molten metal. For instance, the engine block of a Model T was made of cast iron. To make a block casting, an iron molder would fill a large box with special molding sand and insert hard sand "cores" that represented voids inside the block, where the iron would not flow. The molding sand was rammed into the mold, around the cores, either by hand tools or with an air-powered rammer. Then molten iron was poured into the mold. When the iron cooled and solidified the sand was broken off and poured out, leaving behind the finished casting. Molding was originally a skilled job, but standardization and mechanization reduced it to a semi-skilled job.





15. WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER (1875 - 1951)
Machinist / Shop Assistant



■ WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER was born on November 30, 1875 AD, and later, on January 7, 1877 was christened in St. Michael's Church, Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

He was the son of Iron Moulder GEORGE PORTER (1851-1931) and Silk Ribbons Weaver SELINA PORTER (born SATCHWELL) (1849-1902) of Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

■ In 1902, the 27-year old, WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER married 26-year old ALICE MARY GREEN (1876-1974) in London, Middlesex, England. ALICE was the daughter of WILLIAM GREEN (1857-1931) and EMMA ALICE GREEN (born CROFTS (1854-1907) of Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

■ WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER and ALICE MARY GREEN had 1-Child (1-Son):

1. JOHN SPENCER PORTER (1903-1977) born in Chichester, Sussex, England;
[Married Carrie Cooke on February 13, 1932 in St. Giles & St. Mary, Pontefract, Yorkshire;](#)

■ In January 1922, 46-year old ALICE MARY PORTER (born GREEN) married GEORGE W. BATES in Coventry, Warwickshire.

[\(We have not yet found any record of a prior divorce. Therefore, one might conclude that Alice Mary Porter \(born Green\) deserted William George Porter and married George W. Bates.\)](#)

■ In 1951, WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER died at the age of 76-years and was buried in St. Peter's Anglican Church, Caverswall, Staffordshire, England.

■ In July, 1974, ALICE MARY PORTER (born GREEN) died at the age of 98-years and was buried in Coventry, Warwickshire, England.



16. JOHN SPENCER PORTER (1903 - 1977)



■ JOHN SPENCER PORTER was born in 1903 AD, in Chichester, West Sussex, England.

He was the son of WILLIAM GEORGE PORTER (1875-1951) and ALICE MARY PORTER (born GREEN) (1876-1974) of Coventry, Warwickshire, England.

■ On February 13, 1932, the 29-year old, JOHN SPENCER PORTER married 23-year old CARRIE COOKE (1909-xxxx) at St. Giles & St. Mary Anglican Church in Pontefract, Yorkshire, England. CARRIE was the daughter of EMMANUEL JOHN COOKE (1865-1937) and EMMA COOKE (born SAUNDERS) (1869-1933) of Pontefract, Yorkshire, England.

■ JOHN SPENCER PORTER and CARRIE COOKE had no Children.

■ In October 1977, JOHN SPENCER PORTER died at the age of 74-years in Hove, Sussex England.

■ We have not yet discovered details of CARRIE COOKE'S death.