

Newsletter

Volume Five - January 2018

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A very happy new year to everyone. I'm hoping that 2018 brings a lot of interesting developments in my research, and certainly been anything but uneventful. Unfortunately the past few months have eaten up my time, with both my research and a family wedding (and accompanying trip to Scotland) taking up so much of my free time. As such I feel I must apologise for not having brought a new edition of the newsletter out at the end of last year – as, indeed, had been my initial intention. But hopefully 2018 will allow for regular newsletters as well as developments in research.

In general things have been plodding along methodically with the study over the past few months. My time and research has mainly been involved in two projects: consolidating and indexing name for the index on the website (for which I'm currently working on the "E" names - which admittedly is one of the more time-consuming of the letters to work through, as there are a significant numbers of Elizabeth, Eliza, Ellen and Edward Twymans I'm having to check & work through), and working on the ongoing book project. So without further ado...

Book Project

Writing of volume one of the book is now close to completion, and the main work remaining is for my draft to go through the process or being proof-read. After a few final tweaks to the text, I'm hoping to send it up to Lulu (the self-publication company, not the singer! Although who knows, she may be interested.) ready for publication by the summer. This does raise a question, as to whether I request it in hardback (as is my preferred preference, solely because hardbacks tend to survive reading better than paperback) or paperback or both. If anyone has any thoughts or preferences, please feel free to email me and I'll take people's views into account.

As this volume is intended to discuss those Twyman branches who can trace their ancestry back to Kent, I've also had a few people enquire as to how I intend to discuss the other branches of surname throughout the world. To answer this, I'm intending to write at least four volumes of the book

over the coming year - with each volume as follows:

- Volume One: The Kent Lines
- Volume Two: The Twymans in the United States.
- Volume Three: The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Twymans.
- Volume Four: The Twyman Surname Globally.

Volume Four is intended to cover specifically the branches of the surname in Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. While some of these can indeed trace their origins back to one of the Kent or Hampshire/Isle of Wight branches, I've made the decision to carry them over to a separate volume as there are some branches I'm yet to trace back to "The Old World" - and feel it puts all emigrant branches in a fuller context to discuss them along with their emigrating cousins.

Jewish Records

One other aspect of my recent research has been looking into Jewish records, in an attempt to following up on John Crowe Twyman of Ramsgate - who converted to Judaism in the 1830s, and was an active member of the Sephardic Jewish community in Ramsgate. My biography this month will be about him, so please read ahead for an overview of his life.

I wish to express my thanks here, though, to Miriam Rodriguez-Pereira, the Honorary Archivist to the Spanish & Portuguese Jewish Congregation - who hold the records for the Montefiore Synagogue in Ramsgate. Ms. Rodriguez-Pereira was so kind in forwarding details of John Crowe Twyman and his family from the records she is the custodian for, and my heartfelt thanks go out for your assistance with this. Many thanks.

Future Research Trips

It has come to that time of year again where I'm planning my annual research trip, which this year will be a little later in the year than usual due to financial commitments and to wanting to visit during the spring months – with lighter evenings leading to more time to visit graveyards, etc. It will

come to no surprise to anyone who knows me that I'm planning on a trip down to Kent again. Part of this is that I intend to visit the Jewish Cemetery in Ramsgate (where I now know that John Crowe Twyman and his family are buried) to take photographs of any extant burial monuments, and am also hoping to visit Ramsgate and/or Margate Cemeteries while I'm there to take photos and see if I can sweet-talk the cemetery staff to letting me loose with the burial registers for long enough to extract details of all the Twymans buried there.

It's also my intention to visit Canterbury Cathedral Archives for my annual attempt to go through the parish registers, and no doubt prove to be a thorn in the sides of the ever patient staff there (especially Daniel, who by now is used to the speed I both get through volumes and request more!). I also may decide to visit Maidstone Library/Archives, depending on where my research is focusing at the time.

I am also intending to undertake what I view is the important task of visiting St. John's Church in Ickham to view the parish registers, as the original registers from the mid-19th Century onwards have not as yet been deposited with the archives at Canterbury Cathedral. This is unfortunate as Ickham itself is a town with a relatively large population of Twymans (my own direct ancestors were from the neighbouring town of Wickhambreaux and I know that some cousins that are relatively close in a generational sense moved to Ickham), and as such a viewing of the registers would prove to be invaluable.

If anyone has any documents they would like me to check while I'm there, then please feel free to get in touch and I'll be more than happy to pencil in that document or documents as part of my "to do list" for the trip.

Profile: John Crowe Twyman

John Crowe Twyman was born in Ramsgate to John Twyman & Charlotte Crowe, and was baptised in St. Lawrence's Church there on 13th July 1817. As I mentioned above, he made the decision to convert to Judaism sometime in the 1830s. It is unknown exactly when he converted, although it was presumably sometime before his marriage to Rosetta Jessell in December 1837 - as she was from a well-known family of German-Jewish ancestry.

He is perhaps best known for his work as a successful photographic artist, and there is a photograph taken by him in the National Portrait Gallery. This photograph is of the well-known Jewish philanthropist Sir Moses Haim Montefiore (ancestor of the well known author & historian

Simon Sebag Montefiore), and this is no coincidence - as the two clearly knew each other as part of the Jewish community in Ramsgate, as Twyman is reported in the local press as playing an active part at Montefiore's funeral (and indeed one of John Twyman's grandchildren was given the middle-name Montefiore, in honour of Sir Moses). John Crowe Twyman is also noted in the local newspapers as being the victim of reprehensible anti-Semitic attacks - the most significant being an incident in 1860 in which a John Carter directed verbal insults towards Twyman for his Jewish faith and towards his considerable beard. In retaliation Twyman "bonneted" and punched Carter, for which Twyman was charged.

On a much more positive note, John Twyman was also heavily involved in local politics in Ramsgate - being elected as overseer for the town in 1862. He held this position for some years.

He passed away in 1886, and is buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Ramsgate along with his wife and several of their children.

GRO Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes

In recent months I've also made a visit to the Family & Local History at Ty'r Ardd in Bridgend, and as many will be aware they are one of only seven sites in the country that hold the GRO civil registration indexes from 2006 to the present. I have now transcribed the entries from there up to the end of 2016 for births and deaths, and up to the end of 2015 for marriages. Unfortunately, though, I've not been able to work through the birth or death entries for 2017 or for the marriage entries for 2016. I'm informed by staff on site that unfortunately there was an oversight with the creation of the draft editions microfiche for these years, whereby for an entire quarter only a single microfiche was delivered - omitting literally thousands of entries, as there are generally dozens of fiche per quarter. As soon as I'm able and as soon as new versions of the microfiche are supplied to the library, then I'll be certain to visit and undertake this extra piece of research.

So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish...

And so concludes this issue of the newsletter. Thanks again to Miriam Rodriguez-Pereira as well as anyone else who has helped not just recently, but over the years.

Once again a very happy & prosperous new year to everyone.

Take care.

Simon Golding