

## Yo Styen Chronikler - Thirdo Parte

### WHAT'S IN A NAME? (Romeo and Juliet, Act 2 Scene 2).

In the first two parts of these Chronicles the histories of two ancestors of our family of Styans were traced as far as information was available at the time. On this occasion your Chronicler is taking the liberty of discussing the name itself and its relevance to the present generation.

Our surname is important to us because it is the one thing that unites us and (for men at least) we are stuck with it for life. It is surprising therefore that many people in this country go through life without knowing the origins of their own names. Your Chronicler is therefore being pompous enough to assume that his reader is in this category and is about to launch forth on the topic.

#### Present Day Confusion.

Whether it is your maiden name, married name or (in the case of men) your hereditary family name, one thing is certain and that is that STYAN is an unusual name.

Those of us who are blessed (cursed?) with this name will all have our tales to tell of the confusion that it has caused. Of the more bizarre is the letter addressed to "Mr. St. Yan" -and there is a town in France called St. Yan. The writer's father thought that STYAN was probably a corruption of STYMAN - a keeper of pigs. This was at least a realistic recognition of our humble origins.

The commonest mistake is to confuse our name with STEIN with its Teutonic or Semetic connotations. (Fancy being named after a beer mug!) We know that some of our Victorian and Edwardian predecessors suffered abuse mistakenly on these grounds. There is even a man (a Canadian) who in recent years changed his name from STEIN to STYAN because he thought it sounded better. Heaven help anybody who tries to trace his family tree. There is also an Afrikaner name STYEN but whether or not it has common roots with our own name it has so far been impossible to ascertain.

The writer's Great Uncle - Robert Styan (born 20.11.1849) enlisted in the 3rd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards on 16.1.1868 under the name Robert Tyne and married in 1883 in that name and his descendants have thereafter borne that name. Perhaps he disliked being called STYNE and so dropped the 'S' from the beginning. Despite this he received a bequest from his brother James Styan in 1888 under the name Robert Styan without any apparent impediment. Sort that one out. So much for recent events, but how did the name STYAN come about?

#### The Origin of Surnames

Surnames have a doubtful legal status and did not become a universal form of family identity in England until the late 14th Century. Even then the process was gradual and tended to spread from the South to the North and from the prominent families to the humble over many years. Before that time a man was often given an unofficial second name (A Surname) to distinguish him from other men in the same locality with the same name.

This second name could be from four main groups i.e. occupation (Smith), place (Woods), father's name (Johnson), nickname (you name it). These names would usually die with the man and his son might get a new one until the custom gradually caused them to be passed from father to son. In practice many names do not fall neatly into one of the four groups but are combinations of more than one type. Very few modern surnames have obvious sources like 'Smith' and be warned against guessing because what appears to be the logical origin is usually wrong.

Surnames were established in this way rather earlier in England than in Scotland or Ireland, and in some parts of the world they still do not exist. They are convenient to us from the Genealogical point of view because they help us to trace our ancestry through such records as exist.

The name STYAN is derived by anglicising the old Norse name "STIGANDR" which was probably brought to this country by the Vikings. This does not mean that we are descended from the Vikings although it is tempting to think so. After all many Vikings settled permanently in Yorkshire and our Styans go back several hundred years in that County. It is just possible that the name was a traditional name in a family or family group (just as George was a traditional name in the House of Hanover) until it evolved into a surname in the up-to-date sense. Pure speculation of course and it must be emphasised that the modern bearer of a surname cannot claim any family connection with the ancient bearer of its original source. It is not clear if the name STIGANDR meant anything in particular, by the way.

#### STIGAND

By the 11th Century the variant STIGAND had emerged and the most famous ('notorious' some people might say) bearer of this name was Archbishop of Canterbury in the reigns of Edward the Confessor, Harold and William the Conqueror. At least he bore that title on and off from 1052 to 1072 (when he died) although successive popes of the time either endorsed or denied his right to hold it. His authority seems to have been a trifle shaky and very shady. (One of his less attractive acts was to retain the bishopric of Winchester even after his elevation to the province of Canterbury).

On Christmas Day 1065 he officiated at the consecration of Westminster Abbey (supported by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London, Sarum and Exeter). The rebuilding had been started in 1049 by Edward the Confessor who attended the consecration ceremony despite a severe illness from which he died seven or eight days later as a result of this exertion.

This triggered the rival claims of Harold and William to the English throne and Stigand threw in his lot with Harold presumably because there lay his own best chance of staying in Office. When Harold was defeated, William did his best to get rid of Stigand and finally succeeded in 1071 with the aid of the papal legate, to be replaced by William's nominee Lanfranc.

However perhaps our family's main interest in Stigand is that he featured (and still does) on the Bayeux Tapestry. He is shown at the Coronation of Harold and is one of only twelve people whose names are actually embroidered into that historic fabric. So there is almost unique evidence of the antiquity of our surname. (Incidentally it is spelt 'STIGANT' on the tapestry but as

we shall see later, spelling was not regarded as important in those days).

#### Later Variants

In 1230 there are records of Robertus filius STIAND and in 1275 Nicholas STIANT and these serve to illustrate the evolution of the name. (These examples are taken from 'A Dictionary of English Surnames' by P. H. Reany). During the course of the ensuing years other variants arose such as STYANCE, STYANTS, STIGGINS and STIGGANTS. The modern names STILES, STYLE, STEIN and SPEINER etc. are derived from a completely different source. The writer has been able to find no 'Styance' in the modern General Register and very few 'Styants'.

The first STYAN that the writer has so far traced is a JOANNE STYAN who married a John Wright at St. Mary's, Woolwich on 15th February 1545. She has no ancestral connection with us but does go to show that there had been Styans in the London area long before our own ancestor William Styant of the Life Guards arrived in 1827.

It was in 1537 (at the time of the Reformation) that it became compulsory for local Parish Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials to be maintained at Parishes Churches and these are the real start of the systematic recording of names for the population in general in this country.

Up until that time most people were illiterate and had no idea how to spell their own names and it was a case of verbal transmission of phonetic sounds. Even after Parish Registers were firmly established the spelling of names was a bit hit-and-miss because most people were still illiterate and it was up to the clerk or curate who happened to fill in a particular entry in the register to guess how the name was spelt.

Thus your chronicler finds that one of his ancestor's surnames was FIGGOTT, but on studying the Parish Register for Great Marlow between 1734 and 1776 he finds the name spelled PICKETT, FIGGOT, FIGGOTT, FIGOTT and FIGOT during a span of only 42 years - and this was only 200 years ago. Fortunately STYAN was recorded in Whixley Parish Register at least as far back as 1609 and has remained unchanged to the present day.

#### Relevance to Us

These Chronicles have talked about "we Styans" and it might be as well to consider the facts. The name descends through the male line, and men tend to become parents at a later age than women. On average there are three and a third generations in the male line per century.

Suppose now that the first man in our direct line to have our surname in the modern hereditary sense lived about 1350. There would have been earlier Styans but because of the probable lack of continuity we cannot count them - for the moment at least.

Now the present day reader (1979) who can claim descent through our line

of Styans was born between 1897 and say, 1968. These give a mean date of birth of 1933, which is about 580 years after our assumed 'first Styant' lived. This corresponds to 19 generations. (We have traced 6 of these with certainty and made guesses at the next 3, and they seem to have been a bit slower at reproducing than the average).

At each generation the proportion of 'original Styant' blood is halved so that a person is  $\frac{1}{2}$  a Styant after 1 generation,  $\frac{1}{4}$  after 2 generations and only one part in 524288 after 19 generations! And we still call ourselves STYANS. All we have really inherited is the name. In practice it is not quite as bad as that because in the old villages most people were related and as they intermarried their children gained descent from the same ancestors through both parents. So just how much of the original 'Styant blood' we have inherited it is impossible to determine but it is sure to be more than one part in half a million.

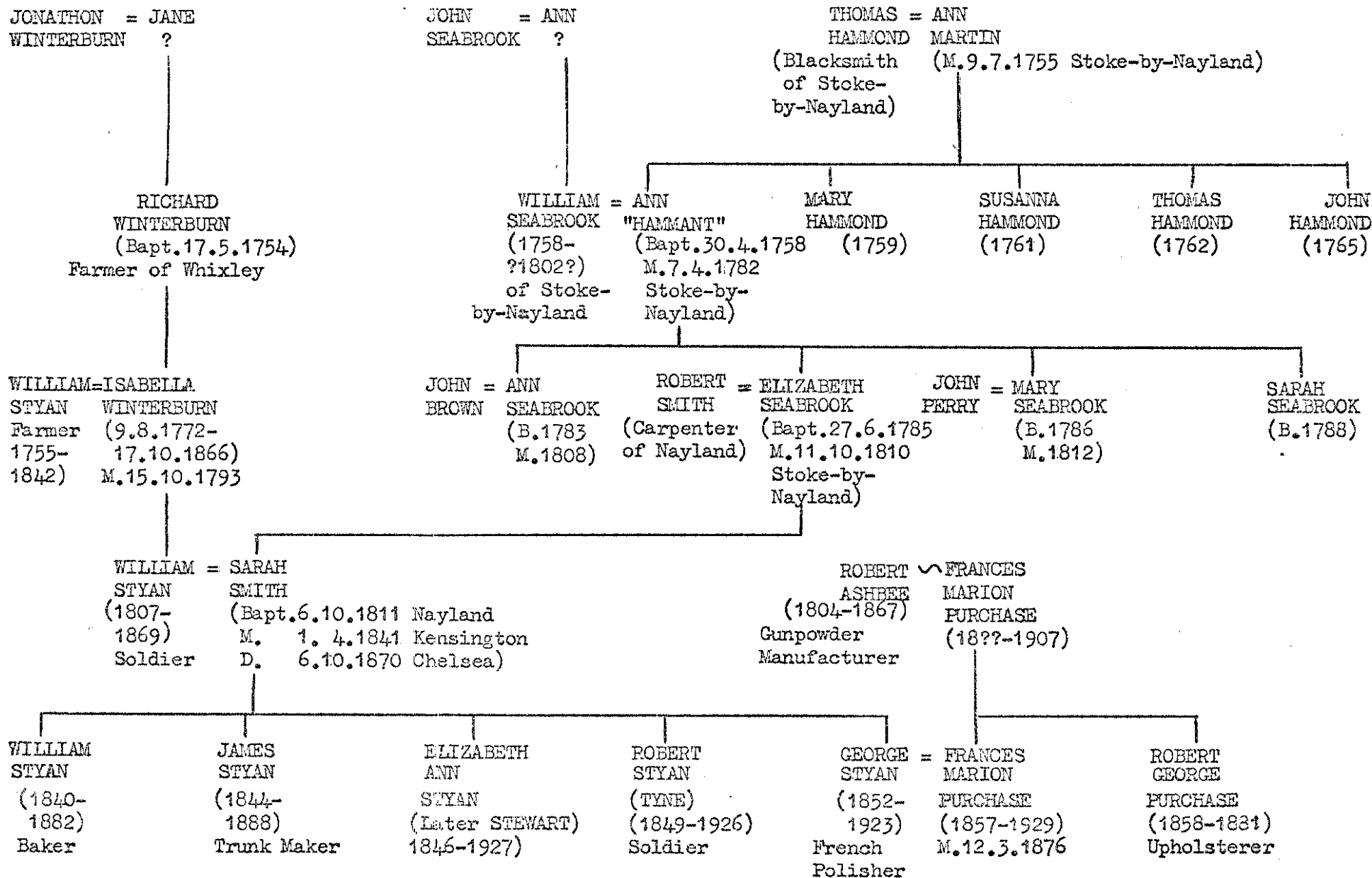
To illustrate this point, if the original Styant had in fact been 2 or 3 generations earlier than we have supposed then he would have been one of several million separate ancestors, and since that exceeds the population of England at that time it is clearly impossible without much intermarriage. I don't know if you followed that.

Of course, to be sure of that special half-millionth bit that descended down the direct male line we have to be confident of the paternity of all 19 generations of Styant babies and although we have no doubt about the parentage of recent generations, what do we know of the characters of our earlier forbears? After all, a very large proportion of first-born children prior to the present century were conceived out of wedlock (the Parish Registers tell all) and the paternity of at least some of these must be in doubt. We are therefore on much safer ground if we trace our descent through the maternal line. This also introduces us to a new series of family names which may be of some interest.

#### FEMALE LINES

In the Second Part of these Chronicles a start along one of the female lines was made when George Styant (1852-1923) married Frances Marion Purchase (1857-1929) daughter of Frances Marion Purchase (18??-1907). Here the trail on the maternal side ran cold and is still being researched.

However, we have had more luck with George Styant's mother (born Sarah Smith) but before we go into that we need to see the relevant part of our family tree.



From whom the present readers descend

SOME OF THE FEMALE BRANCHES OF THE STYAN FAMILY TREE

SARAH STYAN nee SMITH (1811-1870)

The easiest way of telling what is known of Sarah's story is to go back three further generations and start at the beginning. Her great-grandmother ANN MARTIN married Thomas Hammond, a blacksmith on 9th July 1755 and the eldest of her 5 children was ANN HAMMOND who married William Seabrook on 7th April 1782. She was married by Licence which was unusual for working class people in those days and perhaps we shall get more information about that one day. The Hammonds and the Seabrooks both came from the village of Stoke-by-Nayland on the Southern border of Suffolk. Her name was spelled 'Hammant' in the Marriage Register which illustrates the point made earlier, but there is no doubt that we have got the right person.

The Seabrooks were a long established Suffolk family and still are. One of the programmes on the B.B.C. TV series this year called "A Bob or Two" (which featured self-employed men with unusual jobs) was about a Richard Seabrook who operates as a sort of contract shepherd in Suffolk. He is an expert whose services are much valued and he also runs a gang of contract sheep shearers in the area. As well as that he raises a few sheep of his own on the side, and was shown as being one of the pillars of the local community. Whether or not we have common roots with him we may eventually discover. Anyway to return to our story, William and Ann Seabrook had four daughters but no record has been found of any sons. The second daughter

ELIZABETH SEABROOK was married when she was 25 on 11th October 1810 to Robert Smith, a carpenter from the neighbouring village of Nayland where she then went to live. It was almost inevitable that we would find a Smith somewhere in our pedigree which more or less dooms any further progress we are likely to make up that branch of the Family Tree. In fact there were two contemporary Robert Smiths living in Nayland at the time and it has so far been impossible to determine which one was our ancestor.

Robert and Elizabeth Smith had one known child- SARAH SMITH who was baptized at Nayland on 6th October 1811, a year after they were married. They then all fade from the records except that Sarah reappears nearly 30 years later by which time she was living in Brompton and on 1st April 1841 she married William Styan of the 2nd Life Guards having already borne him a son. The movements of this family have been recorded previously and they always lived within a literal stone's throw from the barracks at Regent's Park or Hyde Park until William was invalided from the Army 11 years later. A further gap of 17 years followed until 1869 when William died at what is now Pavilion Road and Sarah died a year later.

WINTERBURN

If we now go back to Whixley we find that William Styan's mother's maiden name was ISABELLA WINTERBURN and she was the daughter of Richard Winterburn of that village who was apparently 18 years old when she was born in 1772. A map of Whixley dated 1805 shows a field by a crossroad about 1/2 mile from the church marked with the name Richard Winterburn which he presumably farmed and possibly owned. By the time of the Tithe Commutations in the 1840's however, no land in Whixley is shown as being owned by, or occupied by anybody called Winterburn- or Styan for that matter.

We have now collected the names SMITH, PURCHASE, HAMMOND, MARTIN and WINTERBURN, all with their different origins which are listed at the end.

Other STYANS

We started by giving some examples showing the evolution of our name. In the course of the research many other holders of the modern name STYAN have been encountered, some of whom have an interesting story and a few of these are briefly recounted below.

Pride of place must go to Charlie Styan of Whixley. He lives at Cherry House, Whixley with his wife Pat and he is understood to be the local butcher. He has a son and grand-daughter living nearby. When she eventually dies the Styans of Whixley will at last pass into history. Charlie is descended from Abel Styan (born 1716) who is currently believed to be the great-uncle of William of the Life Guards. If this can be proved then Charlie and his family are not "Other Styans" but "Our Styans".

An unrelated Styan (STAN STYAN) was in 1972 a conscientious Poppy seller at Meanwood, Leeds at the age of 82, having won the Military Medal in the First World War.

In Lancashire there is actually a STYAN Street. The history of this will be an interesting subject for research on some future occasion.

Kate E. Styan published a "History of Sepulchral Cross Slabs" in 1902 which just goes to show that somebody somewhere will find almost anything interesting.

T. G. Styan delivered an 8-page address to the Sanitary Inspectors Association in 1894 on the topic of guarding the health and sanitation of Ramsgate from rapacious landladies who packed whole families into a single room in the holiday season. Apparently the complaints about Majorca Packages had their precedents.

Finally there is Fred Styan and the 'Case of the Missing Moggies' which hit the headlines last year. Since your Chronicler has been unable to find anything to beat it he will enclose the report of the episode in the Daily Telegraph of 14th April 1978 and leave it at that.

K.G.S.  
1979.

# Judges block woman's hunt for lost cats

By JAMES O'DRISCOLL, High Court Reporter

A SMALL, white-haired woman lost a four-year fight and around £500 of her life savings yesterday when two High Court judges blocked her search for two of her missing friends—"Pixie" and "Minkie Lou."

They were two tabby cats, Mrs Morna Asher, 63, explained to Lord Justice Stevenson and Lord Justice Ormrod.

Mr Alan Ward, her counsel, said Minkie died at the age of 16 and Pixie, aged 20, four years later in 1960.

Both cats were buried in oak and mahogany caskets in a neighbour's garden because Mrs Asher, living alone in a flat at Streatham High Road, had no garden of her own.

## White lie

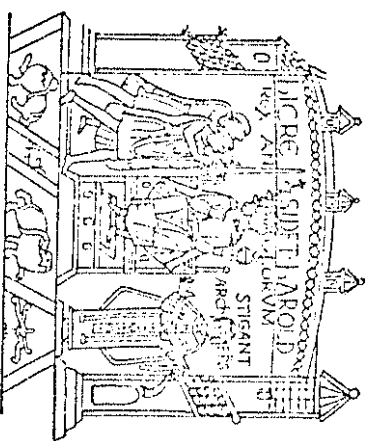
When the neighbours Mr and Mrs Fred Styan, now pensioners, moved from Streatham to Mitcham they could not find the caskets and told Mrs Asher

a "white lie" that the cats had been reburied at their new home.

But she challenged this story and they admitted lying — to spare her feelings. Mrs Asher then started a legal battle against the couple claiming return of the caskets. Before yesterday's appeal hearing, she had lost two previous and separate actions in the High Court.

Giving judgement, Lord Justice Stevenson said it was impossible to rule that the earlier court rulings "were wrong."

Later Mrs Asher said: "I am an animal lover and help any that need help. I shall devote the rest of my life to finding the caskets. I now have a garden where I can bury them, if I find them."



2. KING HAROLD CROWNED. (BAYEUX TAPESTRY)

## Persons Named on the Bayeux Tapestry

1. EDWARD (the Confessor).
2. HAROLD.
3. GUY (of Ponthieu).
4. DUKE WILLIAM (the Conqueror).
5. ALROIVA (William's daughter or Harold's sister?).
6. CONAN (Count of Brittany).
7. STIGANT.
8. ODO. (William's Half-brother).
9. ROBERT (of Mortain).
10. LEFFRYN. ( Brothers of Harold.
11. GYRTH )
12. EUSTACE (of Boulogne).

Daily Telegraph 14.4.1978

## Origins of Some Stryan Family Surnames

ASHREE (& Ashby, Ashbey). From one or other of the many places of this name.

HAMMOND (& Hammond, Hammant, Hamman, Hammon). From the Old French name Hamond introduced by the Normans.

MARTIN (& Martins, Marten, Martens, Martyn, Martyns). From the name of a Saint, also a nickname from Mars, a diminutive of Martinus a very popular christian name and early surname.

PURCHASE (& Purchas, Purches, Purchase, Purkess, Purkis, Purkiss, Pirkdis, Pirkdiss, Pordiss, Porcas). From the Old French name Purchas meaning 'eager pursuit' used as a name for messengers and couriers.

SEABROOK No origin for this name has been found.

SMITH (& Smiths, Smyth, Smythe, Smye). From the Saxon word to SMITE, used for the occupation of one who smites metal on an anvil. The name of the particular metal was dropped with a few exceptions (e.g. Goldsmith). Although the most common smith was a blacksmith there are no modern records of this existing in this form as a modern surname. Other variants of this occupation (e.g. Farrier) do exist as surnames.

WINTERBURN (& Winterbourn, Winterborne, Winterborn, Winterbourne). From the place names Winterborne (Dorset), Winterbourne (Berks, Wilts) and Winterburn (W. R. Yorkshire).