

YE STYAN CHRONICLES

PART SIX, MISSING LINKS

We all know what the Missing Link is. It is Man's distant forbear who proved our common ancestry with the Apes. If the reader thinks that Your Chronicler has been so successful in his researches that he has traced our Family Tree back that far then the mistake needs instant correction.

The "links" to which he refers are those which have been recently discovered enabling our Tree to be extended - but only in the 19th Century, and not the millions of years required to track down the traditional 'link'.

More than one link is the subject of our researches. One is in Your Chronicler's more immediate family and another is a very tantalising link - which could establish common roots with an extensive family of American Styans, but more of that later.

In an attempt to provide some interest to all readers this Part of these Chronicles is divided into Sections each of which stands on its own feet. The first of these is concerned with the London Styans and is entitled

The Gunpowder Plot - The Plot Thickens

(Non-London Styans can skip this bit if they wish).

To recap it may be remembered that William Styan (of the Life Guards) having been brought up on a farm in Whixley, Yorkshire enlisted in the 2nd Life Guards in 1827 and after bringing up a family in London died in 1869. His youngest son George Styan (born 1852) married Frances Marion Purchase in 1876 and became the writer's grandfather. It is with the parentage of Frances Marion that we are now concerned.

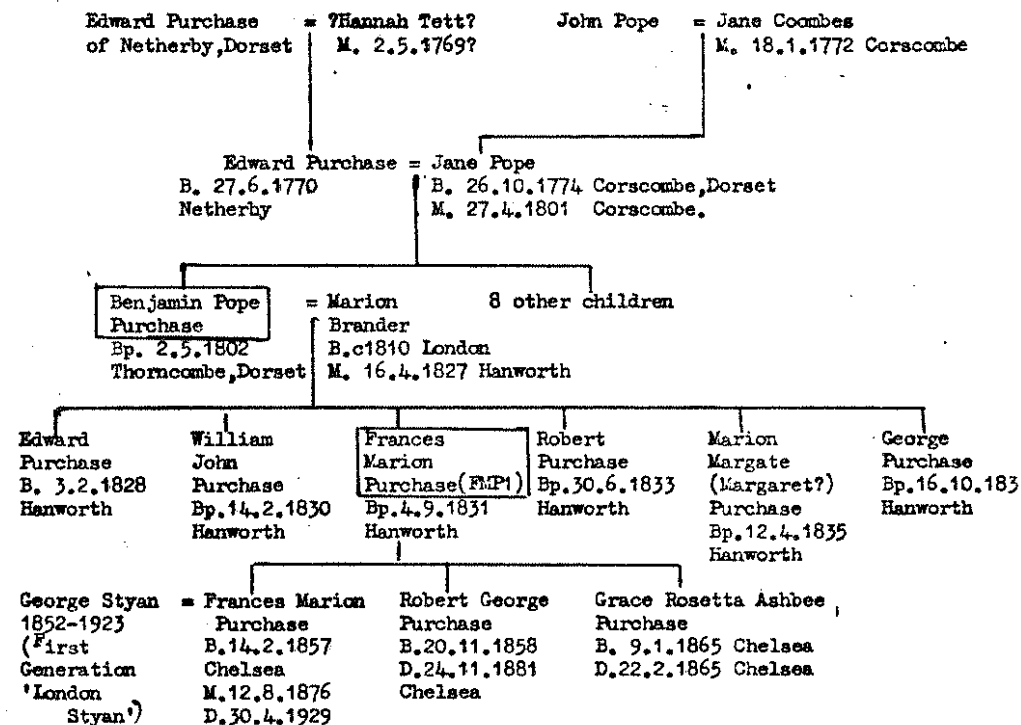
She was the first child of a relationship between her mother (also named Frances Marion Purchase, and whom we shall call FMP 1) and Robert Ashbee, (the manager of Hounslow Gunpowder Mills from 1844 until his death in 1867). The Ashbee history is well known and has been recorded in these Chronicles but the Purchase ancestry has been a complete mystery - until now, that is. Much fruitless research has gone in to the search until everything was pinned on the 1881 Census yielding a clue.

Data from Census Returns is not made available to the public for 100 years after being recorded, so the search could not proceed until 1982 - and then it might have proved useless. And so after much nail-biting the story did eventually start to unfold and although all has not yet been revealed much progress has been made.

The main thing discovered was that FMP 1 was born and brought up at Hanworth, only a few minutes walk from the Gunpowder Mills. What also came to light was that the relationship with Robert Ashbee was more permanent than previously known and furthermore they had 3 children and not 2 as previously thought.

Another significant thing is that her mother's maiden name was Brander. This ties up with the story of a man named Brandon who was reputed to be connected with a possible bequest. However that is a major research project in its own right. The main success has been in tracing her father's roots back to deepest Hardy country in Dorset - and forward to the tragic circumstances of his death.

To make the picture clearer a part of the Purchase Family Tree is now presented.



What is known of FMP 1's father BENJAMIN POPE PURCHASE

is now related. Just how much his story is influenced by his daughter is unknown but it is difficult to avoid speculation. He was born of farming stock in the thinly populated parish of Thorncombe in Northwest Dorset in 1802, the eldest of 9 children. Nothing is known of him for 25 years until he married Marion Brander, Spinster of Hanworth by Banns on 16th April 1827 - at Hanworth. His migration to Middlesex will probably never be explained.

His 6 children were born at about 18 monthly intervals at Hanworth and his occupation at the time of Baptism of the first 5 is given as Butcher. In those days that could mean a stockman. For the 6th one in 1836 it is given as Labourer. His station in life was clearly fairly humble.

In the 1841 Census for Hanworth he is described as a 39-year old Agricultural Labourer and his eldest daughter (and 3rd child) Frances was then 10 years old. One of his neighbours is described as a Mills Clerk, presumably at the Powder Mills. In the 1851 Census for Hanworth no specific address is again given but he is described as a 50 year old labourer and his 19-year old daughter is now a servant. Her 14-year old brother George is now a shepherd.

A pause now occurs until February 1857 when her daughter Frances Marion is born in Chelsea with Robert Ashbee named as father. This is followed by the birth of her son Robert George- also in Chelsea- in November 1858.

In the 1861 Census for Hanworth she is shown as being with her parents (and her

2 children, Frances aged 4 and Robert aged 2). Her father's occupation is now given as Surveyor and the house was located in Twickenham Road, four houses away from the 'Hope and Anchor' pub. Both FMP1 and her mother are described as Dressmakers. Their next door neighbour was a Farm Bailiff and 3 doors away was a Powder Maker.

Now let us ponder on that for a moment.

Benjamin Purchase, an Agricultural Labourer, has now become a Surveyor. This must surely be an uplift in status. His daughter has borne two children to the manager of the local Powdermills. He was the employer of over 200 people and no doubt a very influential person in this fairly sparsely inhabited area. Can these facts be connected? There never seems to have been any attempt to conceal the paternity of the children and at least one of the neighbours worked at the Powdermills. Let it rest there for the time being.

A copy of the 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey Map of 1865 held at Hounslow Public Library shows the location of the houses in Twickenham Road and the 'Hope & Anchor.' In 1930 the Chertsey Road was constructed and this involved rebuilding the pub on the other side of Twickenham Road. The houses including that in which the Purchases had lived remained, however. They were within a mile of the Powder Mills.

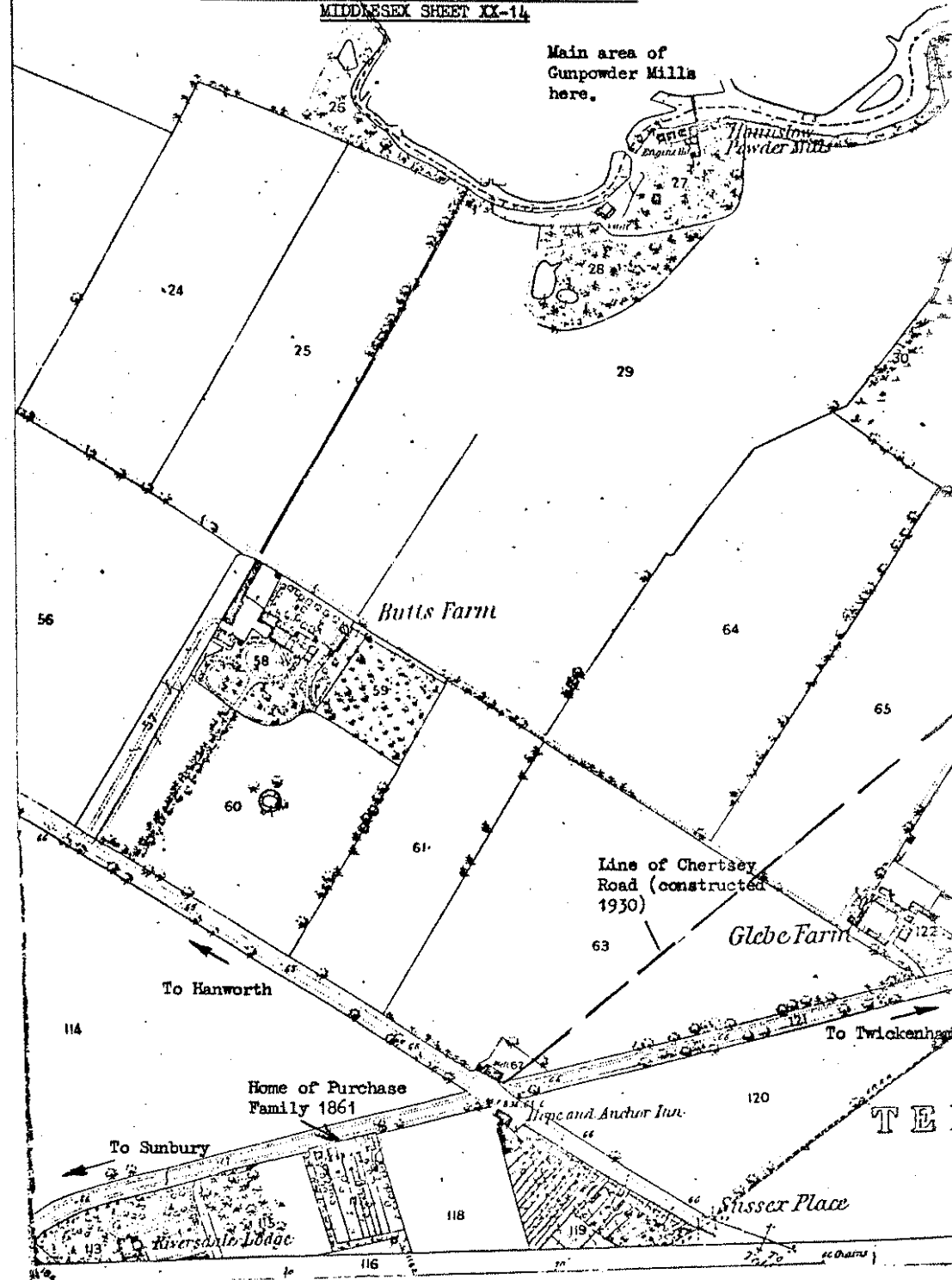
At about 1970 the Chertsey Road was widened as a feeder to the M3 and to build one of the flyovers the houses were at last destroyed. Before this happened however the authorities photographed them. Your Chronicler passed this spot very frequently both before and after the houses were pulled down, completely oblivious to any ancestral connection. It gives him a spooky feeling. But to get back to the story.

Robert Ashbee's wife died in March 1862. If he had wanted to marry his mistress no technical impediment now remained, although their difference in position no doubt made it unthinkable. However it is difficult to believe that everybody, including his own family did not know what was going on.

On 9.1.1865 FMP1 gave birth to Grace Rosetta Ashbee Purchase at 20, King Street, Chelsea to an unnamed father. Can we doubt who he was? This was 8 years after their first child. The baby died 6 weeks later at the same address. 2½ months later Benjamin Purchase took his own life whilst 'temporarily insane' at the age of 64. His occupation was given as Land Surveyor. Your Chronicler has the feeling that the facts are related somehow, but he has been unable to verify this because no contemporary Coroner's Records remain and no surviving local newspaper has yet been traced. Robert Ashbee himself died 2½ years later aged 63. That then is all that is at present known of this episode in the Styan Family History. Part of that early Ordnance Survey Map is enclosed. FMP1 was aged 34 when her father died by the way. It is difficult to follow a tale like that. But life must go on, and next we have

'BROADENING HORIZONS'

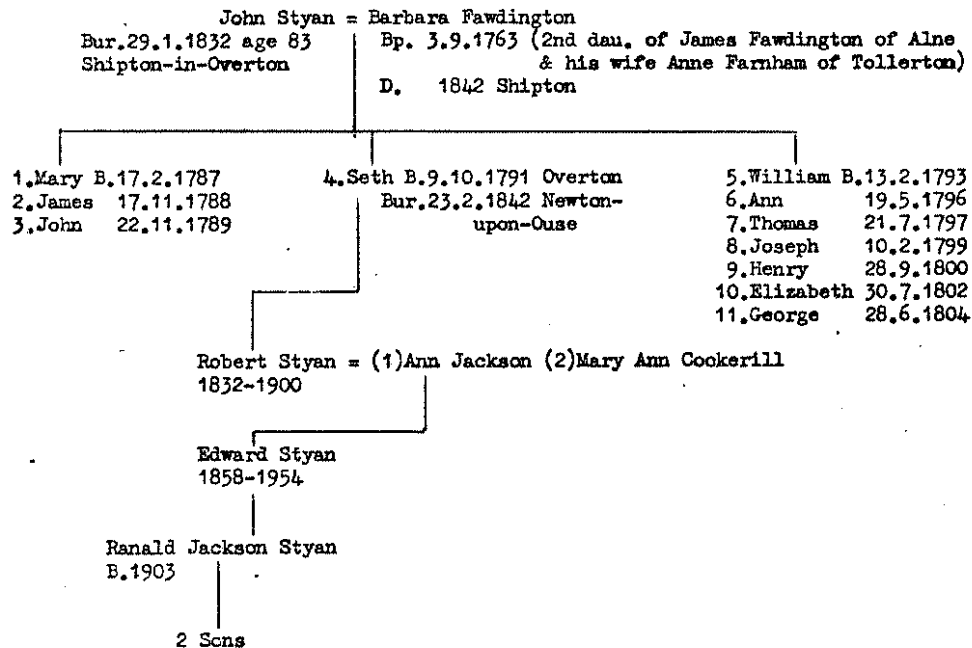
Your Chronicler was surprised when in May 1981 a letter arrived from his cousin's son Leigh Styan (then resident at Urbana, Illinois, U.S.A) saying that not only had he received a phone call from a Mr. Ronald J. Styan who lived near there purely on the strength of our exclusive Surname but that on a subsequent visit a copy of Mr. R.J. Styan's uncle's memoirs was produced stating that his family had emigrated from Beningbrough, Yorks in 1882 after an outbreak of Foot-and-Mouth Disease had ruined their fortunes in England. As Beningbrough is only about 6 miles from Whixley (whence many branches of Styans have originated) there was an irresistible challenge to Your Chronicler to discover if we had common roots.



The Beninbrough Styans were traced back via Newton-on-Ouse to one John Styan who married a Barbara Fawdington and had 11 children (all born at Overton, Yorks between 1787 and 1804). John Styan died at Overton in 1832 aged 83.

It was John Styan's grandson Robert Styan who headed the family that emigrated. He had 8 children - one (Edward) by his first wife and 7 by his second. Initially he intended to become a sheep farmer in Australia or New Zealand, but his son Edward who had gone to the USA the previous year, sent back such glowing reports of Illinois that he changed his mind and settled in Sadorus, Illinois.

It is not Your Chronicler's purpose to tell the Illinois Styans their own story but merely to set the scene for the rest of us in the search for a relationship. He therefore hopes that they will not mind his presenting a small part of their Family Tree for this reason.



The antecedents of John Styan were (and still are) the objects of our quest and one remarkable coincidence has been observed. If John Styan was 83 when he died he would have been born in 1748/9. There was a John Styan amongst the Whitley Styans who disappeared from the records early in life although the rest of his family can be accounted for. He was born in 1749. A possible candidate.

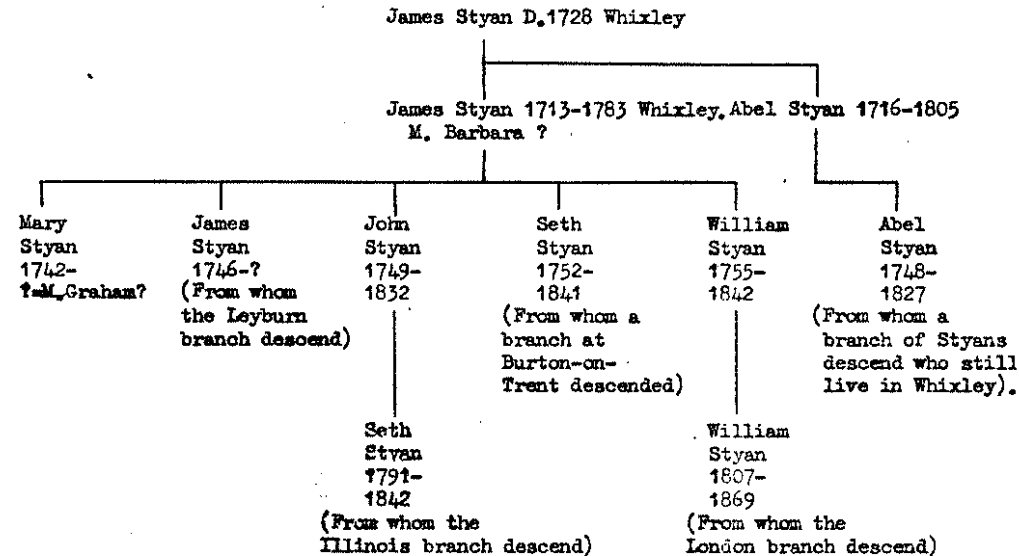
Now let's look at his family. He was the 3rd child of 5 and their names were

1. Mary B. 13.2.1742 Whitley
2. James 9.1.1746 Whitley
3. John 9.7.1749 Whitley
4. Seth 10.10.1752 Whitley
5. William 17.11.1755 Whitley

But that is exactly the same sequence of names as John Styan's first 5 children near the top of this page! So Mary, James, John and William are very common names and it could have been a fluke....but SETH! The odds against this sequence happening by chance to two families with the rare name Styan must be phenomenal.

To verify this strong possibility of a connection an attempt is being made to identify all John Styans born in the likely time frame within a reasonable radius of Overton. An attempt is also being made to check the incidence of the name Seth amongst the Styans. So far they have all either come from Whitley or have descended from John Styan of Overton.

In a situation like this we must not allow wishful thinking to make us confuse probability with proof. But if John Styan of Overton was the missing John from Whitley just what would the Family Tree look like then? Well here it is:



As previously reported a strong contingent of the Leyburn branch emigrated to Canada in the early 1900's. If the Illinois connection can be proved then a new dimension will be added to our North American interest thus Broadening our Horizons yet farther.

#### More About Leyburn

On a less dramatic scale Your Chronicler had the pleasure of meeting members of the Leyburn branch whom he had not previously met (in the Summer of 1982). Apart from being an enjoyable occasion it enabled the link with Whitley Bay to be confirmed and an extensive Family Tree of one of the Canadian branches was added to the Archives.

At the same time more information was obtained on other Styans who used to live in the Leyburn area who were previously thought not to be related. There was more than a hint that a connection existed after all. The message was clear. At some time in the future Your Chronicler will have to trace another

#### MISSING LINK.