

A stitch in times gone by!

Sue Templeman

Earlier this year [2016] Sue Templeman was delighted to find her third example of a sampler embroidered by a young girl in Quorn – and this set her off on yet another investigation



The sampler is about one foot (30cm) square, and the needlework is exquisite. The fabric and thread are in surprisingly good condition, considering they are over 160 years old. At the bottom of the sampler, in neat embroidered letters is written:

"Elizabeth Winsley Power, Quorndon Aged 12. 1853."

So who was Elizabeth?

Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of Sarah Winsley, who originally came from Rothley, but lived in Quorn for many years. Sarah was 25, a servant and unmarried, when she gave birth to Elizabeth in December 1840, in the small village of Stapleton near Hinckley. The space for a father's name, on both the birth certificate and Elizabeth's baptism record was left blank and Elizabeth was declared as 'illegitimate'. Although on the sampler Elizabeth calls herself Elizabeth Winsley Power, her official name at birth is only Elizabeth Winsley. It proved relatively easy to trace Elizabeth's mother, but with illegitimate children, the father's name is often impossible to trace. All very frustrating!

Where is Elizabeth in 1841?

On the 1841 census Elizabeth should appear as a baby, but this is where another mystery arises. Elizabeth's mother, Sarah, was born in Rothley, and the 1841 census finds her back there, despite having given birth in Stapleton. She is recorded as a dressmaker and is shown as living with Joseph and Mary Irvin, at 'Porters Lodge', Rothley.

City or Borough of _____		Parish or Township of _____		28 Enumeration Schedule.			
PLACE	HOUSES Uninhabited or Building Inhabited	NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.		AGE and SEX	PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
		Males	Females			Whether Born in state County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or a Foreign Part
Porters lodges	1	John Smith	30	Ag. Sal	Y		
		Mary ch	40	Sal	Y		
		Sarah Wimbley	20	Destitute	Y		
				236			

GIVEN AT _____

Application Number 7403887-1



REGISTRATION DISTRICT	MARKET BOSWORTH	
1841 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Market Bosworth	in the	County of Leicester

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration

Seventeenth of December 1840 at Stepleton	Elizabeth Gid	Sarah Wimbley	Sarah Wimbley Mother Stepleton	Twenty Shillings January 1841	Richard Stepleton Registration
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CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the

25th

May

2016

BXCG 874803

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A little more digging revealed that Mary and Joseph were almost certainly Sarah's relations. When Mary married Joseph Irvin at Cossington in 1840, her name was Mary Winsley, however she was a widow, so had acquired the name Winsley from her first marriage. It seems likely that she was Sarah's aunt or sister-in-law - but this still leaves the question of why wasn't baby Elizabeth recorded on the census return? Perhaps Sarah didn't declare her daughter, because she was embarrassed about not being married? Or was the baby being looked after elsewhere?

Elizabeth becomes Elizabeth Power

In 1844, when Elizabeth was 3½ years old, Sarah Winsley married William Hunt Power in St Mary's Church in Leicester. Both of them had addresses in the city centre and William is described as a 'gent'. Finding this marriage was a breakthrough in the investigation – but also raised even more questions. It seems quite strange to find a young woman of 28, a servant/dressmaker with lowly roots and an illegitimate child, to be marrying a 'gent', who is also eleven years her senior. Sherwood's Pedigree Register traces the Power and Hunt families back to 1707, mentioning the villages of Barwell and Barlestion in the south west of the county. The entry relating to Barwell in 'A Topographical History of the County of Leicester' dated 1831, states that William Hunt Power is one of the three principal land owners in the area.

Moving to Quorn

After marrying in Leicester the newlyweds moved to Quorn, but sadly life was not kind to them, and after only seven months of marriage William died of consumption (TB or tuberculosis) in 1845, leaving Sarah six months pregnant. Despite having died in Quorn, William was returned to Barwell to be buried in St Mary's Parish Churchyard. His Welsh slate gravestone can be seen there today, its condition as good as when it was made.

Sarah must have been devastated. One moment she had a secure marriage and the promise of a happy family life, and the next instant she was on her own, with a toddler and a baby due very soon. She was in a difficult position and had very few options open to her. It seems strange that William's family do not seem to have stepped in to look after their daughter-in-law, and one can only speculate about the reasons for this. William's parents were still alive, but it is likely that the marriage did not meet with their approval. Sarah's relations, Mary and Joseph Irvin, had recently moved from Rothley to Quorn, and it is almost certain that Sarah went to live with them once more. Three months later, on 6th June 1845, her son was born in Quorn, and named William Hunt Power after his father.



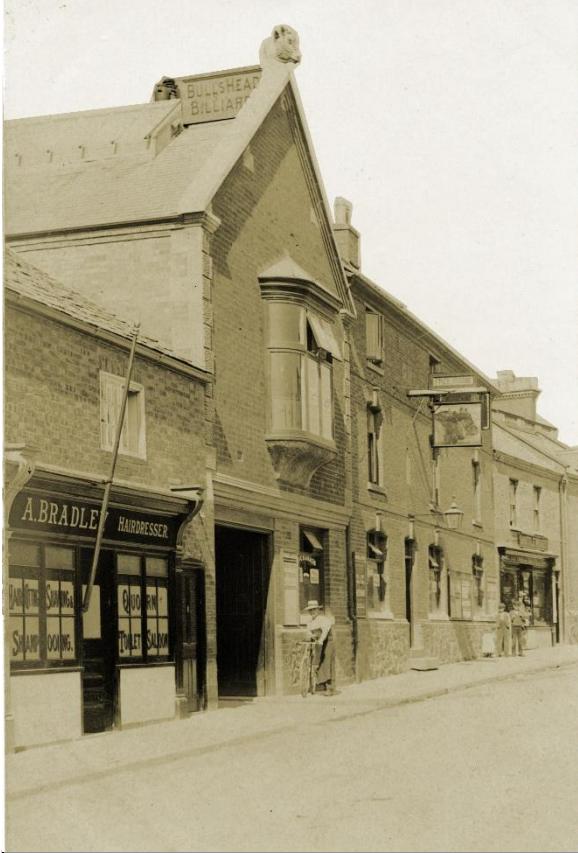
A new start for Sarah

Sarah gradually adapted to her new life in Quorn and continued to work as a dressmaker. The village was a bustling place, not least because of the Quorn Hunt, based at Quorn Hall. The hunt brought many opportunities for employment, including for grooms, farriers, saddlers and as servants for the gentry who owned or rented the many 'hunting boxes' in the area. Sarah started to 'walk out' with a hunt groom called Joseph Rose, who was originally from Wiltshire. He was just a few years older than Sarah and a widower. They were married on 11th December 1849 in Quorn Parish Church by the formidable Rev Robert Stammers.

Initially Sarah, Joseph, Elizabeth and William lived on Soar Road, and it was whilst here that Elizabeth, under her mother's guidance, completed her sampler. It is often thought that only girls from wealthy families would have time to sew in this way, but samplers were often used as a 'reference' to demonstrate the owner's skills and industry, when they were later seeking work.

Sarah and Joseph soon started a family of their own, and the 12 year old Elizabeth was no doubt delighted to have a baby in the house. Sadly infant mortality was commonplace, and their first son, James Rose, died as a small baby in 1850. Mary Ann Rose, their second child, was born in 1851 and Elizabeth would certainly have played a role in caring for her, as well as enjoying watching her grow from a baby into a toddler. Unfortunately Mary Ann fell ill during a measles epidemic in the village, which claimed the lives of nine children during June and July 1853. Mary Ann died just before her second birthday. It must have been such a painful experience for the young Elizabeth, and one has to wonder if that is why, in that very same year, she chose to use such a poignant verse for her sampler?

*"Tell me, ye knowing and discerning few,
Where I may find a friend both firm and true,
Who dares stand by me when in deep distress,
And then his love and friendship most express."*



The Bulls Head, High Street, early 1900s

worked and where she had spent time after William Hunt Power had died. The farmhouse is located today at the end of Flesh Hovel Lane, just after the right turn into the modern Pillings Lock. The 1861 census shows that also living in the farmhouse was a young farmworker called William Wainwright. There was not a whirlwind romance, but in the parish records there is an entry for 28th November 1864, when Elizabeth Winsley Power married William Wainwright.

The 1861 census finds Sarah and Joseph living on High Street, next to the old Bull's Head pub and they went on to have five more children. Joseph died between 1861 and 1871, again leaving Sarah as a widow with young ones to care for. She moved to Leicester, supporting herself with her work as a seamstress and by taking in washing and having a lodger. Sarah died in 1907 at the grand age of ninety.

Elizabeth grows up

As the oldest of her mother's nine children, Elizabeth had been through a lot during her childhood. As soon as she was old enough, as her mother had before her, she went into service. This was not into one of the impressive houses of the gentry, but for a local farming family – the Smiths - who owned Quorn Fields Farm where her uncle



Quorn Fields Farm in 1899

1864. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Quorn and in the County of Leicestershire								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession Father
227	November 28 th	William Wainwright	24	Bachelor	Labourer	Quorn and	Thomas Wainwright	Labourer
		Elizabeth Winsley Power	23	Spinster		Quorn and	William Hunt Power	Gentleman
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after Banns by me,								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		William Wainwright		in the Presence of us,	Thomas Wainwright		A. Gordon	
		Elizabeth Winsley Power			Mary Ann Holmes			

Her father is said to be William Hunt Power and a 'Gentleman'. At this stage in the research it was thought that William Hunt Power had been entered as Elizabeth's father as a matter of respectability, and simply documented what everyone probably took for granted – however then another document was discovered. William's father (William Hunt Power senior), died in 1861 aged 86, and a copy of his will

showed that he left the majority of his estate in trust for his only grandson, ie Elizabeth's brother, also William Hunt Power (the third) – but another bequest is very revealing!

"I give and bequeath to Elizabeth Winsley the natural daughter of my late son William Hunt Power the sum of one hundred pounds."

So there it was – proof that Elizabeth's father was in fact William Hunt Power. For a servant girl to have a baby by a man from the upper classes, was not uncommon, but for them then to get married was very unusual. The will also shows that whilst William Hunt Power senior may not have approved of his son's marriage, he had not disregarded him completely, nor disinherited his legitimate grandson.

One hundred pounds may seem very little in the context of Elizabeth's grandfather's will, but it was a very large sum to a young single servant girl in 1861. It was worth about £8,400 at today's prices.



A miniature silhouette of William Hunt Power Senior – Elizabeth's grandfather

Married life

Elizabeth and William moved around to wherever William could find work. They were in Sileby in 1871 and Loughborough in 1881, by which time they had two children. Their first child was born in 1869 and they called her Mary Ann, after Elizabeth's much loved sister. William followed in 1872, and although the family are still recorded in Loughborough in 1891, with a third child, Leonard, it was shortly after this that they moved to Hanging Stone Farm, which was part of the Beaumanor Estate at Old Woodhouse.



Hanging Stone Farm
A photograph taken from sale particulars in 1951

Elizabeth was over 50 now, and although the children were growing up, her health was poor. She had been deaf for about 20 years and was suffering from heart problems. She died on 24th March 1895 at Hanging Stone Farm, aged 54. She was buried in an unmarked grave in the nearby Churchyard at St Mary's at Old Woodhouse.

William Wainwright remarried and remained in Woodhouse. He died in 1927.

Elizabeth's brother, William Hunt Power (the third), took control of his inheritance at the age of twenty-one in 1866. He ran a beer house on Granby Street in the centre of Leicester, but the venture failed and he was declared bankrupt in 1868. He eventually moved to Liverpool, and the name William Hunt Power was passed on through his son and grandson.

This article was produced by Sue Templeman on behalf of www.quornmuseum.com. If you have any photographs of old Quorn and would allow them to be copied, or have stories you would be happy to share, Sue would love to talk to you! Please contact sue@quorndon.com or pass a message through the Parish Office.