

Sir John Stainer's Family Line

By John Ranald Stainer

It is nearly certain that Sir John Stainer's great grandparents were John and Mary Stainer, who had five children baptised at Lydlinch in Dorset and 3 others at Henstridge in Somerset. Sir John descends from their youngest Robert, baptised at Henstridge in 1764 who is stated in the register to be the son of John and Elizabeth, but there are good reasons for considering this to be a slip of the pen by the person making the entry.

Mary (nee Lovel) was baptised at Henstridge on 25th July 1720. She was the second child of John and Elizabeth Lovel and the third child in the family was christened Elizabeth, possibly accounting for the mistake, if there was one. If Mary had died between the baptism of her previous child James (1760), and Robert (1764), it is likely that she would have been buried either in her home village of Henstridge or at Lydlinch, and there is no record of death at either place between these dates. Nor is there any record of a second marriage of John to an Elizabeth. A Mary Stainer was buried at Henstridge on 6th December 1767 and this may have been Robert's mother.

Another point is that there was a family tradition that Sir John's great grandmother was a Miss Loder, and related to a musical family in Bath of that name. I did a considerable research on this possibility, but I could not get anywhere. It is striking to me that the two names Loder and Lovel are so similar - and this may account for the tradition.

The marriage of John and Mary took place at Maperton, Somerset, on 23 September 1745. John is described as of Werrington Devon and Mary as of Henstridge Somerset. The entry for John is disconcerting and casts doubt on the assumption that he was the John baptised at Lydlinch 1714/15 and almost certainly the son of William Stainer and Mary Allen, who were married at Blandford St. Mary.

I have been unable to trace any Stainers in the Werrington area (the extreme west of the county near Launceston). If he was the Lydlinch John, why was he to be found such a long way off? Just recently we visited Werrington and found that at almost exactly that time the original church at the Manor House had been demolished by the owner and a new one had been built to replace it. Perhaps John had been involved in that work? - a very wild guess! The fact that John married a Henstridge girl is strong evidence in favour of his Lydlinch origin, and if we accept that assumption, it is possible to construct a tree back a long way from the 105 Stainer entries occurring in the Lydlinch parish register between 1559 and 1809.

The dates of baptism of the children of John and Mary are as follows. (H = Henstridge L = Lydlinch)

John 1746 H

Joseph 1748 L

Charles 1750 L

William 1751 L

Ruth 1753 L

Anne 1755 L

Hannah 1757 L

James 1760 H (died in infancy)

Robert 1764 H

It seems probable that the family migrated to Wimborne Minster some time after 1757.

Joseph married Ann Clench in 1782. She died in 1786 and he then married Jane Clench, presumably Anne's sister. Of the four children of the marriage, only one daughter, Mary, reached

adult age. Joseph was an innkeeper and in 1821 was the licensee of the 'Old Bell' at Wimborne. He bought a house in Poole High Street, which for a time was occupied by his brother Charles, who was a shoemaker. Joseph died at Wimborne aged 77 and was buried in the Minster churchyard on October 24th 1824.

His daughter Mary, who died in 1854, was an important person in our family history as she left most of her family effects to her cousin William Stainer (Sir John's father) and the will provides clear evidence that Joseph and Robert had been brothers. The Poole house was left to the Rev William Stainer (Sir John's brother) and remained in his possession until his death in 1898.

Charles was apparently living in Blandford in 1779 as banns of marriage to Mary Yetman were read in Blandford church in May. He is described as of this parish. There is no record of the marriage, but it must have taken place as in 1791 he married Mary Rogers. On this occasion he is described as widower, of the parish of Poole.

Charles' first wife was buried in the Protestant Dissenters burial ground in Lea Lane, Poole on 23 June 1790 and in the same dissenters register Charles' burial is recorded. He is described as shoemaker aged 67. Cause of death - decay of nature.

There were two children of the second marriage. 1792 Charles (died in infancy) and 1795 John - born May 25.

Ruth married Stephen Jeans of Stafbridge at Wimborne in the presence of Joseph Stainer on April 7 1788.

John. Two John Stainers died at Wimborne in 1795. One was the infant son of Joseph. The other may well have been Joseph's elder brother.

Robert (1764 - 1832) Sir John's Grandfather. Much of the information on Robert was provided by William Stainer of St. Albans, a cousin of Sir John's, in a written statement sent to J.F.R. Stainer in 1901. He declares that Robert was resident in Poole from 1790 - 1795. Robert then migrated to Buckinghamshire and married Mary Howitt by licence at the village of Hanslope on the 17th November, 1796. She was the daughter of Jeffrey Howitt, a cabinet maker of Stamford Lincs. Their first child Robert was baptised at Hanslope. Towards the end of 1800, they moved to Wing where Robert became keeper of the Cock Inn. Wing at that time was an important village - Petty Sessions for the county were held there and Public Meetings and Dinners took place at the Inn. Here the registers record the baptisms of their children. Mary (1800), John (1801 though born 1798), William (born 22 March 1802, Sir John's father) Jane and Hannah (1803) and the deaths of Jane, Hannah and Charles in infancy and Mary at the age of 8. Charles was born at Ampthill.

By 1805 the family had moved to Ampthill in Bedfordshire, where Robert carried on a "Wine and Spirit Trade". Their son John remembered "when a child, his parents walking about their garden in great trouble with a bag of money, intending to bury it, as it was feared Napoleon would invade England."

By 1809 the family were on the move again, this time to Markyate Street, where Robert became the proprietor of the Bell Inn. (The Inn was later converted into a private house, and some part of it was demolished in 1825 to make room for a new street.) Markyate Street was on the Great North Road, and many travellers stayed at the Inn.

The final move to No. 2 Broadway Southwark (A property owned by St. Thomas's Hospital) took place in 1818 or early 1819, Robert purchasing a Tallow Chandler's business attached to it, which he ran himself, though he may have intended it for his son Robert. The records of St. Thomas's Church show that in March 1819 he was proposed as an Overseer of the Poor, though not elected, but later, in April 1821, he was elected to the office and held it for about a year. He attended vestry meetings fairly regularly between 1820 and 1825 and became a churchwarden in 1823 and 1824.

Robert and Mary were both buried in St. Thomas's Churchyard - Mary in 1825 and Robert in 1832. He died suddenly as a result of a stroke. His estate was valued at £600. St. Thomas's Church is now used as the Chapter House for Southwark Cathedral.