

## The Willoughbys of Illogan and Redruth

The Willoughby family in Cornwall lived in and around Redruth over more than three hundred years and through many generations. At the present time there are still a number of Willoughbys living in the same area. It seems likely that there have been members of the same family – distant cousins of one another, all descended in some way from the same ancestors, who reached Cornwall in the mid seventeenth century. Thus the Willoughby family have had a foothold in and near Redruth for more than 350 years.

The first of the family to settle in Cornwall may have been Thomas Willoughby, who was born in Colchester in about 1621. His father was supposedly one John Wilbie (b about 1591) and his mother is said to have been Katherine Collins (b about 1596). They are believed to have married in 1620. There were several variations in the spelling of the name over the generations. Wilby, Wilbie, Willaby, etc. were all used by different ancestors.

There were other Willoughbys in Cornwall earlier than this date, but that family appear to have died out prior to Thomas Willoughby's move to Cornwall, which seems to have been the result of his having to leave Essex in a hurry!

Thomas married Margaret Nicholas, daughter of James Nicholas and Elizabeth, on 21 Jul 1647 in Wendron Cornwall. (Margaret Nicholas was born circa 1627 in St.Breage Cornwall and died circa 1679 in St.Martin Meneage Cornwall.)

This couple had at least three children, John, Thomas and Peter. All three reached adult life, but only Thomas is known to have married. This Thomas (baptised July 21 1649) had three known children, by his first wife, though no details of his wife survive. His sons are given as Thomas (1674), George (1678) and Nowell (1679). Presumably his first wife died sometime after the arrival of Nowell, because Thomas re-married in 1700. His second wife is recorded as being Mary Willoughby, but whether she was a cousin or this was her married name is uncertain. Over the next eight years they managed to produce eight further children, including twins. The first mention of Illogan as a place of residence is associated with this generation. Thomas died in Illogan and both his two wives seem to have come from the same locality.

Thomas's son by his first marriage, Thomas (b 1674), married Jane Richards and had at least six children. Their son Thomas, born 1700, married Elizabeth Pascoe and was the father of at least 11 known children, who included the first Oliver Willoughby (b 1739). Oliver married Margaret Webster and they had nine children who included two of our direct ancestors – Thomas (b1761) – the eldest and Peter (b 1779) – the youngest of this family. Thomas married Ann Chapel (whose family were ancestors of Greg and Ian Chapel – cricketers). They had six children before Thomas died around 1800. Oliver Willoughby (b 1794) was the second son in this family. He married Phillipa Grose in 1815 and, after her death, married Sarah Andrew (Andrewartha), the widow of Charles Andrewartha, whose maiden name was Sarah Locket (b 1796).

The sister of Phillipa Grose, Elizabeth Grose, married Oliver's uncle, Robert Grose. These two Grose sisters are ancestors to several of the Willoughby researchers of recent times. Elwyn Rigby, in Mildura, Australia is a descendant of Robert Willoughby and Elizabeth Grose, while Bill Phillips, in Melbourne is a descendant of Oliver and Phillipa.

Peter (born 1779), the youngest of Oliver and Margaret's family, married Julia Uren in February 1808. Her name is represented differently in different sources – Julian, Julien and Julina having all

been suggested. The family bible of her youngest son, Richard Willoughby, shows her name as "Juluia". It seems likely that she was Julia and that the bible representation was a phonetic spelling – allowing for the Cornish dialectical version of the name "Joule-yerr". She and Peter appear in the Redruth census of 1841, when he is documented as a "Mine Agent". Her name is given in this source as "Julia". Peter's name is given in the family bible as "Petter" – which may again be a phonetic spelling of the dialectical name "Pay-terr"? Peter and Julia had ten children between 1809 and 1835. Richard, the last of the family, arrived when his mother was 46 years old.

Fred Morley in the USA, who did a huge amount of research on this family, is also descended from Peter and Julia Willoughby (his grandmother was Helena Willoughby).

In the latter part of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century many of the Willoughbys were involved with the Copper and Tin mining that was a major local industry.

When one thinks of mining in Cornwall it is typically associated with tin. When mining was at its peak it was for copper. In the eighteenth century copper mining became of greater importance than tin and Cornwall by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was the greatest producer of copper in the world.

The effect of copper mining on Cornwall was drastic, demand for the metal was high with the industrial revolution. Prices were good and copper reserves were large with little competition from elsewhere in the country. When mining was at its peak it employed up to 30% of the county's male workforce. It was a huge industry even to the degree that copper was smelted here. It became more economical to smelt in coal mining areas rather than bring in the coal.

With the copper loads almost vertical, the mines were progressively deeper and fortunately many ran into tin deposits. When copper was no longer viable it was possible to continue to mine by changing to tin.

Deeper mines led to greater problems with drainage and higher costs, but mining was still viable. The tin industry could not replace the importance of copper mining to the local communities. It was on a smaller scale requiring a considerably smaller workforce.

The problems of drainage, and the benefits of large profits, drove the development of large powerful steam engines. Many were built locally in such places as Hayle and the industry expanded to produce engines for export. Cornish technology could be found at mines all over the world.

International scientific reputations were made in the development of new innovations in steam engineering, such as that of Richard Trevithick with his high pressure systems. His "Cornish Steam Engine" was used in the mines for generations. His locomotive pre-dated that of Stephenson by almost a decade.

Despite the romantic notions portrayed by so many of the Cornwall Holiday Tourist Brochures of today, the life of a Cornish miner was a hard and brutal one. Though woman and girls only worked on the surface, a man often began underground work at the age of 12. Diseases such as bronchitis, consumption and rheumatism were rife. A man was often no longer fit enough to work underground beyond the age of 40.

Death and injury were an everyday fact of life. One just has to walk around any Cornish Churchyard in the Mining Districts to see the evidence!

By the middle of the nineteenth century however huge surface deposits were discovered abroad, and the drop in the price of tin, and in the price of copper a few years later, made the mining of these mineral uneconomic in Cornwall. Many mines were forced to close, leading to mass unemployment and the mass emigration of Cornishmen to Countries as far afield as South Africa, the USA and Australia. There was an all too true saying "that down any mine anywhere in the World one would find a Cornishmen".

Peter and Julia's youngest son Richard was himself a tin and copper miner during his early adult life. His wife Ann was the daughter of his first cousin Oliver Willoughby (a copper miner) by his second wife, Sarah. At the time of the 1841 Illogan census Oliver and Sarah were living with their two small daughters, Elizabeth (1837) and Ann (1838). Also in the house were Sarah's three sons by her first marriage – John, William and Charles Trewartha (all copper miners) and several of Oliver's first family, including John, William, Oliver and Henry Willoughby – all described as copper miners too!

Other Willoughbys, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were farmers, labourers and "Yeomen". Many of them died relatively young – not lasting beyond middle adult life. However a number survived into their seventies or eighties.

Richard and Ann Willoughby, who were my 2g grandparents and who owned the "big Willoughby bible", were born in a period when mining in Cornwall was beginning its great decline. Richard certainly worked as a miner, but many of his family (cousins, sons, etc) had to look elsewhere for work and moved away or overseas. He himself worked in the tin and copper mines as a young man. Later he was described as a "Commission Agent as Traveller" (1881 census) and later still as a "Bookseller" (1891 and 1901 census).

They had a large family with 11 children, most of whom reached adult life – though information about them is sadly incomplete. One of the younger daughters, Edith Jane Willoughby, born in 1875, was alive and still living in Redruth in the 1950s. Known to us as "Aunty Edie" we certainly visited her in Cornwall and she probably came up to Bristol to see us. My recollection is that she died in the early sixties?

One of the brothers – James Lander Willoughby came out to Australia with his wife, Mary Kinsman and two small children. They left Cornwall in 1898 and settled in Chiltern Valley, Victoria where they had three other Australian born children. No further information about this family has been obtained as yet, but there may well be living descendants in Victoria or elsewhere in Australia? James Lander Willoughby died in Abermain, NSW in 1926.

My great grandfather, William Charles (Charlie) Willoughby, was the first child in the family. My mother suggested that he went into the ministry to get away from the mines? If so he probably followed the same route, and for similar reasons, as did her paternal grandfather, Richard Crozier, in the North East of England, where his family were coal miners. However it seems clear that both were devout non conformist protestant clergymen and very committed to their life in the ministry.

WC Willoughby was born in Redruth on March 15<sup>th</sup> 1857. As a young adult he studied at Spring Hill Theological College in Birmingham, being appointed by the London Missionary Society (LMS) to central Africa and ordained as a Congregationalist minister in 1882.

He returned home with malaria in 1883 and resumed study at Spring Hill. He married Charlotte Elizabeth (Bessie) Pountney (b 8/1/1862, d 1940) on October 27<sup>th</sup> 1885 at Moseley Road Congregationalist Church, Birmingham. He was a minister in Perth, Scotland between 1885-1887,

where the first son of the marriage, Howard, was born in 1886, and thereafter was engaged in deputation work for the LMS between 1887- 1889. He worked as a minister in Brighton from 1889-1892 and was then appointed an LMS missionary to the Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana) in 1892. He went to Palapye to work among the Bamangwato of the Christian chief Khama (Kgama) III in 1893. He accompanied Khama and other chiefs, Bathoen and Sebele, to England to help them oppose Cecil Rhodes's demands for administrative rights over the Protectorate in 1895.

The fact that Bechuanaland retained its independence from South Africa had a number of knock on effects in the years that followed. The Boer war has been said to have occurred as an indirect consequence – though this is probably a very tenuous connection, if linked at all?

More directly attributable is the fact that Bechuanaland (Botswana as it now is) retained a black African government and was never ruled over by white imperialists. The fact that Botswana is one of the very few stable and relatively peaceful and successful African countries, still ruled by black Africans, is a direct legacy of Willoughby's influence.

He was a member of the South African Native Races Committee, London, 1900-1908. He removed with the Bamangwato tribe to Serowe, 1903 and was appointed first principal of the proposed LMS Central School for Bechuanaland in 1903.

He established the school, named the Tiger Kloof Native Institution, on a farm near Vryburg in the Cape Colony in 1904 (it celebrated its centenary last year). He was the local correspondent of the Royal Anthropological Society from 1905. He gave evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Assembly of the Cape of Good Hope in 1908. He resigned as principal of Tiger Kloof owing to ill-health in 1915. He had responsibility for the Molepolole mission in the years from 1914-1917. In 1917 he visited Australia and New Zealand on an LMS deputation and he returned to England via America in 1918. Thereafter he was Professor of African Missions at the Kennedy School of Missions of Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, USA, 1919-1931.

He was elected Vice-President of the Fourth International Congregational Council, 1920. He was awarded an honorary doctorate of sacred theology, Hartford Seminary, on his retirement in 1931. He then settled in Birmingham, where he lived until his death in 1938, aged 82.

He was a fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and of the Royal Geographical Society.

He and his wife had five children, of whom only three lived to adulthood. The eldest son, Howard, died from TB at the age of 15. The youngest, Grace, died in infancy. Two sons – Godfrey (b 1888) and Edgar (b 1894) lived to an advanced age, but neither had children of their own.

Doris, born in 1890, married John Crozier, a school teacher and the son of a Wesleyan Methodist minister, in 1914 at a joint ceremony at which Godfrey Willoughby was married to Medora (Dora) Woods. I have always assumed that the marriage took place in South Africa – possibly at Tiger Kloof, but the wedding photograph does not provide any definite evidence and there were no Africans amongst the wedding group seen, so it could have been elsewhere? Chris Woods, a nephew of Dora, was not sure where the wedding took place either.

The subsequent story of the Croziers is covered in "The Croziers of Northumberland and Durham".