



Editorial

It is some time since I have received any material for the periodical and it seems that the interest in the *Marion* has subsided and further issues not justified. This view has been reinforced by the reduction in the number of copies posted out. A year ago the number was 14, now reduced to 5. This was, of course, additional to the unknown number of copies copied directly from the *Marion* web site.

With this issue I will cease further monthly publications. Should I receive letters, articles, photographs, etc sufficient to produce an issue in the future I will do so at that time.

My thanks to contributors who have helped to produce the 16 issues so far distributed.

My thanks also to Beverley Matthews who has meticulously and punctually placed copies of this periodical on her web site. I'm sure we are all grateful to Beverley for producing and maintaining the site and hope that she will continue to maintain it.

John Keynes, Editor

Wiltshire Blake/Phillips

As with other couples who met on board ship, as reported in previous issues of this periodical, Eliza Blake and Ambrose Phillips married in 1853, two years after their arrival in South Australia.

The Blake emigrant family comprised 39-year-old Joseph Blake, an ag lab, dairyman and carter from Wilton in Wiltshire, his 38-year-old wife Ann (nee Bennett), daughter 15-year-old Eliza, described as a nurserymaid, 11-year-old son George described as an errand boy, 6-year-old William and 1-year-old Henry.

Ambrose Phillips emigrated as a 21-year-

old, single, ag lab from Alderbury in Wiltshire.

Mark Baker in his article *'From Wiltshire to Australia 1851'* referred to both Joseph and Eliza Blake and Ambrose Phillips. His references were of life in Wiltshire as well as in Australia.

Regarding Eliza Blake, he wrote: "... *Concern was always shown for the religious welfare of emigrants - and before they embarked at Plymouth. every one of the Wiltshire party was given a bible and a prayer book by the Emigrants' Employment Society. But again, with a much more personal touch, Mrs. Sidney Herbert sent a little parcel of religious books and a short serious letter in her own hand to **Eliza Blake**, a girl of fifteen who had worked as a nurserymaid at Wilton House, shortly before she departed to Australia with her family. "I send you some books, Eliza, which I hope you will read on your voyage and which may help you to remember one who will ever be anxious to hear of your welfare", the letter begins....*"

Baker also made mention of Ambrose Phillips with some preliminary remarks about the Wiltshire Emigration Association and how it operated to assist potential emigrants: "... *Some landowners who subscribed to the Association did not recommend any emigrants but showed interest; others who did not subscribe helped individuals. Lord Radnor, riding one day in April 1851 across Alderbury Common, shouted out to young **Ambrose Phillips**, whom he saw walking along with his brother, and asked what ship he was going on and when....*"

Baker described some of their treatment in South Australia after rescue: "*Most of the luggage had been lost in the wreck, but a change of linen was issued on the fourth day and money was given to all the emigrants, so that they could buy clothes to replace what they had lost. This compensation money, issued on*

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the Governor's orders, amounted to £690. The rest of the saga - the long quarrel between the ship's captain and the harbourmaster, the argument about how much money the ship's owners should pay the Emigration Commissioners, and the other argument about who, if anyone, should repay the £690 compensation money to the South Australian Government, the problem of whether or not to have a lighthouse on the Troubridge Shoal - these things did not concern the emigrants. They had at any rate, with two exceptions reached Adelaide, and were temporarily fed and housed to the best of the colonists' ability. It was an eventful beginning to a new life and

was remembered vividly by William Blake, a child at the time, sixty years later."

Finally Baker referred to a measure of success for the family in their new country: "... Australia provided opportunities for a working man which simply did not exist in England. **Ambrose Phillips** and his father-in-law, **Joseph Blake**, went to the gold diggings and between them made just enough money to buy a small farm, which prospered: neither of them had any hope of acquiring land in England. "

Not a lot more is known about this family. Mrs Rosalie M Reynolds, whose husband is a direct descendant of Eliza Blake's father, Joseph Blake has sent advice of her connection and examination of BD&M records show the descendancy from Eliza's father George. This descendancy is shown on the attached chart.

DESCENDANCY CHART

Joseph BLAKE, b. 1810 Wilton
 +Ann (--?--), b. 1811, m. 1835
 Eliza BLAKE, b. 1835 Wilton
 +Ambrose PHILLIPS, b. 1830, m. 1853 Res of Mr Blake's
 Green Hills Survey, Adelaide
 Jane PHILLIPS, b. 1854
 Charles PHILLIPS, b. 1858 Bulls Creek
 Edwin PHILLIPS, b. 1860 Green Hills
 Lucy Emma PHILLIPS, b. 1867 Bulls Creek
 Carolyn PHILLIPS, b. 1870 Bulls Creek
 Hannah PHILLIPS, b. 1872 Bulls Creek
 John Ambrose PHILLIPS, b. 1875
 Herbert PHILLIPS, b. 1878 Bulls Creek
 George BLAKE, b. 1838 Wilton
 +Sophia OAKES, b. 1847, m. 1866 Giles Flat
 John BLAKE, b. 1867 Bulls Creek
 Esther BLAKE, b. 1868 Bulls Creek
 Rebecca Ann BLAKE, b. 1869 Bulls Creek
 Eliza Emma BLAKE, b. 1870 Bulls Creek
 +William Joseph ARTHUR, b. 1872, m. 1900
 Methodist Parsonage, Parkside, Adelaide
 Effie May ARTHUR, b. 1902 Bulls Creek
 Ruby Vera ARTHUR, b. 1906 Paris Creek
 George BLAKE, b. 1872 Bulls Creek
 Joseph William BLAKE, b. 1874 Cross Roads
 Elizabeth Alice BLAKE, b. 1876 Cross Roads
 Arthur BLAKE, b. 1878 Bulls Creek
 Henry Earnest BLAKE, b. 1880 Bulls Creek
 James Reynolds BLAKE, b. 1881 Bulls Creek
 Rose May BLAKE, b. 1883 Bulls Creek
 William BLAKE, b. 1844 Wilton
 +Charlotte MARSH, b. 1850, m. 1875 Adelaide
 +Susannah WHITEHAND, b. 1849, m. 1897 Parkside
 Henry BLAKE, b. 1849 Wilton
 +Sarah GOLDING, b. 1854, m. 1876 Moonta
 Eliza BLAKE, b. 1877 Cross Roads
 Joseph Henry BLAKE, b. 1879 Port Wakefield
 +Millicent Lily OSMOND, b. 1880, m. 1902
 Methodist Church, Kangarilla
 Archie BLAKE, b. 1880 Prospect Hill
 Margaret Rebecca BLAKE, b. 1882 Prospect Hill
 Isaac BLAKE, b. 1884 Prospect Hill
 +Amy Mary MILLARD, b. 1885, m. 1906
 Residence of W (William?) Blake,
 Parkside, Adelaide
 Percival Douglas BLAKE, b. 1906 Yankalilla
 Ethel Jean BLAKE
 +(--?--) REYNOLDS
 Leslie Barrie REYNOLDS
 +Rosalie M (--?--)
 Martha BLAKE, b. 1886 Bulls Creek
 Lydia Laura BLAKE, b. 1892 Bulls Creek
 Stephen Reuben BLAKE, b. 1894 Bulls Creek
 +Sarah BONE, b. 1848, m. 1898 Bulls Creek

Wiltshire Ag Labs c 1850 – Part 5 and Conclusion

MARK BAKER'S ARTICLE CONTINUES –
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"...Some of the parsons complained of the bad effect of overcrowding on morals. The loudest protest on this score came from Dorset, not far from the Wiltshire border, when the Rector of Bryanston and Vicar of Durweston, the Hon. and Rev. Sidney Godolphin Osborne, published in 1844 his View of the Low Moral and Physical Condition of the Agricultural Labourer. S. G. O., as he came to be known from the letters and articles published over his initials in The Times, became a parson because his father told him to one day when they were out shooting, and having become one took his duties very seriously, sacrificing all prospect of promotion in the church by his championship of the rural poor. What a nuisance he would have been on the bench of Bishops in the House of Lords - almost as tiresome as Stanhope! In a more

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restrained way, without writing to the press about it, Lord Lansdowne's domestic chaplain, John Guthrie, Vicar of Calne, expressed the same concern about morals, and his remarks were not inconsistent with S.G.O.'s broad hints at the prevalence of incest and abortion. A general decline in moral standards seemed obvious to observers. In 1845 Ella Wyndham, while staying with her Codrington cousins at Wroughton near Swindon, wrote: 'I dislike this place much, it has no recommendation for me, the population being numerous, dirty, idle and drunken. The whole place swarms with children that are being brought up to anything but obtaining an honest livelihood'. When the cholera took a hold on the country during the summer of 1849 and Salisbury, as the Annual Register said, was 'grievously afflicted', the vestry of Wilton became seriously alarmed at the overcrowding in their midst and took the then unusual step of rehousing 'such of the poor inhabitants of the parish as the medical officer may consider fit and proper objects to be removed from their residences by reason of the confined state thereof or the number of residents therein'. Such were the consequences of overcrowding - a population 'numerous, dirty, idle and drunken', 'fit and proper objects to be removed'. That line of thought led straight to emigration.

To consider the labourer's position without taking into account his wages would make an incomplete picture; yet it is very difficult to assess the real value of the weekly wage. It was bound to vary so much according to whether a man had to pay rent for his cottage or not, whether he earned much at harvest time, how large a garden he had and how large a family. The nominal value of the weekly wage seems small. In Wiltshire in 1850 it was seven shillings or eight shillings, the latter being more common in the north of the county. In times of great difficulty for farmers it might be reduced to six shillings; and in 1835 there had even been talk among farmers at Devizes market of bringing it down to five shillings. Roadmenders, working on the parish roads, as opposed to the turnpike roads, might earn four shillings and sixpence or even less; but it is not clear whether they were working part-time or not. At the end of his pamphlet on the low moral and physical condition of the labourer Sidney Osborne published two tables showing the expenditure and earnings of a labourer with a wife and four children for 49 weeks of the year 1843; this Dorset evidence could apply almost equally well to Wiltshire, and lets us into the secret, which puzzled Guthrie and

others, of how the labourer contrived to make ends meet. Francis Horlock, the labourer concerned, was earning eight shillings a week, and was lucky enough to keep fit throughout the year; he made a little extra by haymaking and even more in the corn harvest, which enabled him to buy that vital domestic article, the backyard pig, without having to sell it later on, like one of the Calne families, to pay the shoe bill. His children earned a little by making Dorset buttons, an occupation not available to Wiltshire children. The table of expenditure in housekeeping shows how near to the breadline, even with these advantages, the Horlock family lived. Their only luxury food was a few currants; their household replacements were absolutely minimal; butcher's meat was a great rarity; and for clothes they were dependent on the clothing club, which cost them one shilling and eightpence a month. Clothing clubs were very important, and provided blankets as well as material for making clothes; this can be clearly seen in the handsome Corsley clothing book, started when the clothes and blankets were the landowner's gift under the management of Harriet Bath. Francis Horlock's careful budgeting allowed him to pay eightpence a month for 'schooling', presumably for one child, and to make a monthly contribution to the benefit club. This also was very important; for the benefit club stood between the labourer and the workhouse or starvation when he fell ill or for one reason or another ceased to be employable, and helped his widow when he died. It would not be long before benefit clubs were largely replaced by friendly societies, among which the Wiltshire Friendly Society after a shaky start became outstandingly successful. With its greater numbers and securer finances the Friendly Society could offer the invalid or injured labourer greater protection than the much smaller benefit club, which might have to demand an extra payment when a member died and spent some of its slender resources on social occasions. The Wiltshire Friendly Society was the creation of T. H. S. Sotheron Estcourt and was perhaps his greatest achievement." One cannot help wondering whether Lord Derby had it in mind when he persuaded Sotheron Estcourt to become President of the Poor Law Board in 1858.

Wages were not always paid wholly in cash; part of them might be paid in corn or butter or firewood, at the farmer's estimate of their value, or even, it was sometimes ru-

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moured - though instances cannot be quoted - in beer. Payment in kind was the natural consequence of the old-fashioned way of regulating the weekly wage according to the price of a bushel of wheat, on the assumption that bread was the staff of the labourer's life and wheat to make it with the main thing he would have to buy if it was not supplied by the farmer. There were of course different qualities of wheat, as is shown by the fact that wheat for making the royal bread at Windsor Castle used to come from a particular farm at Heston in Middlesex which has been obliterated by London Airport; and the conscientious farmer would see that his labourers got good wheat. 'In former times', wrote Charlotte Starky, wife of the squire of Bromham, in 1835, 'the price of a bushel of wheat was reckoned good pay for a week, and if a shilling over the bushel very excellent pay'. Not all the men who worked on the Spye Park estate would necessarily have agreed with her, but her words suggest that the bushel of wheat standard for wages was only just on the way out in 1835. The repeal of the Corn Laws seems to have killed it for good. But part-payment of wages in kind continued on some farms, and was not regarded as a bad thing provided it was done fairly. As late as 1871 the Archdeacon of Wiltshire, giving evidence to a Royal Commission, mentioned occasional part-payment of wages in butter in his parish of Burbage; and, though there was much that he disapproved of in the condition of the Burbage labourer, he did not disapprove of that. It made sure that the labourer and his family did have some butter to put on their bread; and, as we have seen, butter was included even in the diet of the labourers of the Plain in 1850.

The attitude of the Wiltshire labourer to wages was, roughly, that seven shillings or eight shillings a week was what you had to put up with, six shillings was hitting below the belt, and nine shillings, never obtained by 1850, would be decent. When during the winter of 1850 labourers in West Lavington heard that farmers were about to reduce the weekly wage to six shillings, they protested to the landowner's agent; and, that having no effect, they went round the farms, like flying pickets, preventing people from working. Once more Captain Meredith and the county police were brought into action. When the magistrates locked up the ring-leader, there was a march of angry men to Devizes, who arrived too late to rescue him. Then in the winter of 1853, in the valleys of the Wylye and the Nadder men actually went on strike for higher wages, demanding nine shillings a week; emigration to the Australian goldfields and elsewhere had thinned their ranks, and they were in a stronger

position than they had been three years before. The strike was conducted in an orderly manner, unlike the Lavington affair, but the men were very positive about the nine shillings. When the Rector of Barford St. Martin - a Fellow of All Souls and a future bishop - was called upon to arbitrate between farmers and labourers and proposed a weekly wage of eight shillings, this was 'indignantly rejected by the men'. As so often happens, the story is incomplete, and we do not know whether they got their nine shillings. The incident provoked an interesting comment in an article on 'Landlord and Tenant' in the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* in March 1853. 'Scarcely a year ago', we are told, 'agricultural labourers, starving or maintained by the poor rates, constituted one of the nightmares which haunted the dreams of some of us. Now the tables are turned, and we hear from all quarters of a scarcity of labourers... Labour is now about to have its day'. Famous last words. In that same month it was rumoured that men were agitating in Beckhampton, Winterbourne Monckton and East and West Kennet for higher wages, and the agitation quickly collapsed. The presence of Mr. George Brown in the area may have had something to do with that. Similar agitations for higher wages occurred in other parts of the country in the sixties, and culminated in the disastrous strike and lock-out of the Suffolk labourers in 1874, which nearly killed Joseph Arch's National Agricultural Labourers' Union almost as soon as it was born. No - on the farms and great estates of Wiltshire as well as in other parts of the south of England labour was by no means about to have its day.

There was some security of employment for those who were taken on for a year at the hiring fair; and an old farm servant could not easily be sent away, even when he quarrelled with the farmer. '**Look here, Sir**', said a carter who continued to turn up for work after dismissal, '**if you don't know when you got a good servant, I know when I got a good master. I broke in all our hosses, so no man knows how to feed and place them as well as I do, and I tells you plainly I beaint agoing to leave you.**' That was that. James Stratton, who tells the story, says that the carter remained on the farm 'until the end' and was 'never allowed to want'.

Very small wages, bad or indifferent housing, little help in illness, few amusements, no holidays - these things could not deprive the labourer of the pleasure of working in the beautiful English country-side of the mid-nineteenth century, before pesticides had killed off so many of the wild flowers and so much of the wildlife, and before a farm could be run by two or three men working in solitude, cooped up for much of the day inside the cabin of a tractor."