

VOL: 1

NO: 3

TALBOTANIA



THE BULLETIN OF THE
TALBOT RESEARCH
ORGANISATION

TALBOTANIA

the Bulletin

of the

Talbot Research Organisation.

XX
Vol. 1. No.3. Christmas 1978.

EDITORIAL

It is Christmas once again, and here we are with the third edition of Talbotania. Membership is increasing gradually, and an innovation in this edition, is the publication of a list of members, and their particular interests. We won't be able to include all members in this journal, so please bear with us if your name isn't included this time.

For this edition of Talbotania we are using our own Duplicator, acquired recently with the help of William (Eddy) Parker. Previously we had been dependant on the help of a brother with a duplicator.

We have applied to become an Associate Member of the Federation of Family History Societies, which we hope and anticipate will give us additional publicity. Before we could apply for membership, it was necessary to form a steering committee, and the name and addresses of committee members can be found inside the front cover.

The Federation has suggested that any individual or group studying a single name and its variants should have accumulated a reasonable amount of material. One of the requirements is the listing of the name and its variants from U.K. telephone directories. This is something we haven't done, and we wonder if members would be willing to copy out the Talbots from their own telephone directory, and send them to us?

Mike is building up a small library (in addition to his own collection) of books, pamphlets, articles, etc. relating to Talbots. He will be publishing a list of what he has, and is willing to help with any queries.

Finally it remains for me to wish everyone a very happy Christmas, and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Mary Talbot.

THE STORY OF MATT TALBOT

On February 15th, 1978, a small item appeared at the bottom of a column in "The News", the evening paper for the Portsmouth area of the South Coast of England. The item was as follows:- 'Dublin's £1m Talbot Memorial Bridge - named after a reformed drunk who became a devout Catholic - has been formally opened.'

Needless to say we found this item intriguing, and wondered who this Talbot was to have had a bridge named after him. A letter to the Public Library in Dublin produced two photocopies of articles in the Irish Times & Irish Press on February 14th & 15th respectively. The first article was concerned with the construction of the bridge, the first new bridge over the Liffey for 99 years. The second article concerned the official opening of the bridge and the attendance of some 200 protestors drawing attention to the problems faced by the City Quay area south of the bridge. They declared, "We want houses not bridges!" However neither article provided any information on MATT TALBOT who gave the bridge its name. So after several visits to the library, spent delving into the book "MATT TALBOT and his times" by MARY PURCELL which was published in 1954, I am able to relate the following story.

On September 19th, 1853, a wedding took place at the Church of St. John The Baptist, Clontarf, 2 miles N.E. of Dublin. The bridegroom was CHARLES TALBOT aged 30, and his bride ELIZABETH BAGNALL, then aged not quite 20. CHARLES' father ROBERT, was an employee of the Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, and he was able to get his son on the Preferable Labourers list. That meant that CHARLES enjoyed the rights of precedence when the firm with whom he was listed took on extra men. The newly married TALBOTS went to live at number 2, Lower Rutland Street, and when in work, CHARLES earned about 15/- a week. During the next twenty years the TALBOTS had 12 children, and many more addresses, they seemed to have moved on average, twice a year. The children were as follows:- JOHN JOSEPH b. 1854 MATTHEW b. May 2nd, 1856, ROBERT b. 1858, MARIA b. 1860, Twins EDWARD & CHARLES b. 1862, but both died in childhood, PHILIP b. 1864, JOSEPH (Baptism not found as the family were probably living on the outskirts of Dublin at the time of his birth), ELIZABETH b. 1867, PATRICK b. 1869, SUSAN b. 1871, and CHARLES b. 1874.

On May 6th, 1867 JOHN & MATTHEW TALBOT were entered on the roll of the Christian Brother's School at N. Richmond Street - O'Connell School. JOHN was then aged 12 and MATTHEW 11. They were put into a special class for boys whose education would be short. They were taught to read and write, and were prepared for Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation. On January 24th, 1868, MATT TALBOT enrolled at O'Connell School again, but it is recorded that he was a very bad attender and he finally left the school altogether in May of that year to become a messenger-boy with E&J BURKE LTD, wine merchants. It was there that he learned to take alcoholic drink to excess.

On September 1st, 1872, thanks to the influence of his father and grandfather, MATT went to work for the Ports and Docks Board, (as the Corporation for Preserving & Improving the Port of Dublin had now become) as a messenger earning 6/- a week. He stayed for almost two years, until April 24th 1874 when he left to become a brick-layers labourer.

His reason for leaving was to avoid bringing disgrace on his father, as he spent all his wages on drink. From then until his late 20's the pattern of Matt TALBOT'S life according to MARY PURCELL, "was that of drunkard, lost to self respect, deaf to the appeals of a heart broken mother, a slave to the craving for alcohol, a workman who in his hours of leisure drank not only his hard-won earning, but any other money that he or his companions could raise". Nor was he the only member of his family to crave for alcohol, his father and brothers were also drunkards, and this is one of the reasons for the families frequent moves. Most of the men's earnings was spent on drink and as there was little money going into the home, they were forced to seek cheaper and cheaper accomodation, each home poorer than the preceding one.

In 1882, MATT took a pledge of total abstinence from the Reverend Dr. Keane at Concliffe College, and he never drank or swore again. In later life he admitted that the first few months after he signed the pledge were very difficult when the craving for drink returned again & again. Very little is known of him for seven years after his conversion, He worked very hard as a bricklayer, and it took him a long time to pay back to publicans his debts of earlier years. He became very religious, praying, fasting and sleeping on a broad plank with a solid lump of wood for a pillow. His evenings after work were spent in some city church or other to keep him away from the temptation of the bars.

In March 1899 MATT'S father died at 23, Middle Gardiner Street and Matt (who had left home at the time of his conversion) returned to live with his mother. All his sisters except one, were married. CHARLES had a shoe-shine stand and JOHN a position of trust with the Ports & Docks Board. BOB had died in 1886 aged 28. Early in the present century, MATT found permanent employment with T.&C. MARTINS, Timber Merchants. This job was preferable to the bricklayers job, because he didn't have to start work so early and therefore had more time for Mass. At the turn of the century it was very unusual for someone to go to Mass daily, but MATT rose at 4.0am and prayed in his room until it was time for Mass. Afterwards he would go home for a cup of cocoa before starting work at 8.0am. He was honest and hardworking and an excellent timekeeper. He never wasted his employers time and if he was sometime found praying, it was at times when he was waiting for something to do, He was a very silent man, retiring, with no interest in wordly things. He would answer politely when spoken to, but went about with his eyes cast down. He always took the blessed sacrament on his way home from work, but he liked to be clean after work, so he would spend a long time cleaning himself up. Eventually he got a cleaner job that involved some calculations for which he used ready reckoners and table books. His reading had improved since his school days because after his conversion he read widely but he wrote a poor hand and his spelling was weird. There was nothing striking about MATT'S appearance, he was described as poorly clad, but clean, and he wore clothes that had been given to him, and were often too big for him. He had a habit of keeping a small smooth white pebble in his mouth, but no explanation was ever given for this,

His midday meal at work consisted of tea or cocoa and one little piece of bread. During Lent he took no milk and only two small meals without meat or butter.

He took no milk during June either, in honour of the Sacred Heart. Every Wednesday he ate no meat, but occasionally a little butter. On Sunday his first meal of the day was dinner at 2.0pm. If it was a substantial meal, he did not eat again, otherwise he had a light meal of cocoa or tea and bread. On Monday he ate dry bread and black tea. On Tuesdays & Thursdays, breakfast of "cocoa" and bread and butter and dinner of a little meat. Friday was always a full fast. As he got older, he found the dry bread hard to swallow, so to enable him to eat it without butter, his sister would boil a whiting and he would steep his bread in the water in which it had been cooked. His sister took the fish home for her family. In his late 60's when his health failed he ate what was recommended meat, egg or bread and butter.

MATT received spiritual direction continuously from the time of his conversion until death. He always checked bad language, and would take a large crucifix from his pocket, hold it up and say "look boys, see who you are insulting". It has been estimated that MATT spent 10/- a week on rent and the necessities of life, and anything left over he gave to charity. Up to 1915 when his mother died he gave her £1 a week. He attended every charity sermon preached in the city and suburbs, and never went with less than £1 note. He also gave money to the needy, but not to those who liked to drink. He never carried money with him, so that if anyone was making a charity collection at work, he would always promise to bring it the next day. The reason for this was that once, soon after he had taken the pledge, he was tempted to go and buy drink. So from then on, he never carried money. When his two brothers, JOE and CHARLIE died there was no money to bury them as they had spent it all on drink. MATT did not like the way they had spent their lives, but nevertheless he paid for their funeral expenses.

In 1913 when the employees of T. & C. MARTIN came out on strike for fairer wages, MATT joined them, not for himself, but because he wanted to see his fellow workmen fairly treated. He was not asked to picket and he did not go for strike pay unless someone brought it to him. During the strike he spent his time in church saying his prayers or reading the Lives of Saints.

In 1923 MATT'S health began to fail and on June 19th he entered the Mater Hospital suffering from a Kiney and Heart condition. Two days after arriving, he received the Last Sacraments, but he recovered and was discharged on July 17th. He was admitted again on September 10th and this time when he had recovered and could walk again, he received special permission to go up in the life to the chapel, but he was not allowed to kneel. He was discharged again on October 27th, but was unable to work, and had to attend the hospital dispensary regularly. For six months until November 26th, he received 15/- a week National Health Insurance, and after that a disability pension of 7/6d a week. Some friends managed to persuade him to accept gifts of money at this time and he also received a grant of £3 from the Society of St Paul, but for most of the time he was very badly off. He had 6d a day to live on after paying his rent, but even so he managed to make donations to charity from his meagre savings. In the spring of 1925 he went to work at T. & C. MARTINS again but only the lightest of work.

On Sunday June 7th, 1925 which was Trinity Sunday, he was going to Mass at St Saviours when he stumbled and fell in Granby Lane. On arrival at Hospital he was

found to be dead, and when the body was undressed, the porters found a chain about the size of a horse's trace, the links being about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long wound round the body. On one arm was a lighter chain and on the other a cord. There was also a chain below one knee immediately below the knee cap, so placed that it must have caused pain when kneeling. The chains were not embedded in the flesh, but they had worn grooves in the skin and seemed to have been worn for a long time. MATT was buried with the chains in the coffin beside him on June 11th at St Bridget's Section, Prospect Cemetary. On June 29th, 1952, his body was exhumed and reburied in the Gentili Vault, Glasnevin Cemetary.

In 1931 the Ordinary or Informative Process for the Beatification of MATT TALBOT was begun by the Archbishop of Dublin, and 28 witnesses were examined under oath. A copy of their evidence was sent to the Holy See for consideration. In November 1937 a Papal Decree was signed formally introducing the cause of MATT TALBOT.

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A letter to Father Morgan Costelloe of Glencullen, Co. Dublin, Vice-Postulator of the Cause of Venerable Matt Talbot, enquiring on the progress of the cause, produced the following reply:

"MATT TALBOT has not yet been beatified, or canonised, yet. We are one stage away from beatification and he was declared "Venerable" in 1975. This means that from a purely human point of view, the Church authorities are satisfied that he has the qualifications of a Saint, but this opinion must be confirmed by two miracles, as Canon Law stands To-day".

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FURTHER READING

MATT TALBOT AND HIS TIMES by Mary Purcell. £3.63 incl.
Obtainable from: V.A.T.(33p)
C. Goodliffe Neale (Ireland) Ltd. & postage.
Dublin Industrial Estate,
Finglas Road, Dublin 11.

THE VENERABLE MATT TALBOT

Pamphlets and Prayer Leaflets

1. "Spotlight on Matt Talbot" by Edward O'Connor S.J. Price 12p.
 2. "The Making of Matt Talbot" by Mary Purcell. " 10p.
 3. "Addict for Christ" by Francis Johnston. " 15p.
 4. Prayer leaflets with the revised prayer for his canonisation
Price 1p each or 80p for 100.
- (allow extra for postage please)

The Secretary,
The Irish Messenger Office,
37 Lr. Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

MATT TALBOT CASSETTE

Interviews with People who knew him. Also Father Morgan Costelloe and Mary Purcell talk about what Matt has to say to people today.

Available from VERITAS
7/8, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, 1.

Price: £2.99 plus 25p P/P
Postage U.S.A.
Air Mail 85p
Surface 35p.

progress I was busy watching the girls doing Gym and so engrossed was I, MR SMITH asked me to repeat the subject he had been speaking about of course I was unable to as my eyes had been elsewhere, hence my punishment was an exhibition of Gymnastics with the girls! This cured my interest in Gym for good as you can well imagine!

Leaving school at 14 I took up an apprenticeship with the Provincial Bus Company at Hoeford and after a year or so I left and went to Cedar Service Station at Fareham, completing my training, and where I stayed until 1936. During this period I was in the Territorials Hampshire Regiment, where my brother BILL was Battery Quartermaster Sergeant. I later volunteered for the Royal Navy where I served until Xmas 1938 but was invalided out and went back to the Cedar Service Station until the Second World War. I joined the Royal Air Force in late 1939 and was stationed at Biggin Hill, Kent until my health gave way through continual enemy upheaval and I was discharged on these grounds in May 1942.

This is when I left the South and came to Wales where I joined the team of maintenance fitters with Crosville Motor Services Ltd. who with some 500 buses of almost every company in England, were taking an army of workers to one of Britain's largest munitions factories just outside of Wrexham.

I served with Crosville for some 7 years, during which time I met and married DOROTHY who was at that time secretary to the Divisional Manager. After this spell of work I joined the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Board as maintenance fitter and spent 20 years in their workshops, 7 of these as Assistant Foreman Fitter until, after an accident under a wagon, I was forced to leave the heavy diesel side of the trade to look for a different and lighter field of engineering. Consequently, I obtained work where I am still employed namely with ITC Europe Ltd.

We have two sons - KEITH and JOHN. Both have been through University and obtained B. Sc. Honours Degree. Keith is married and lives at Caerphilly, South Wales, where he teaches Maths at Whitchurch Comprehensive School; LESLEY (KEITH'S wife) who also holds a B. Sc. Honours Degree teaches Physics at Llanedeyrn High School, near Cardiff; and JOHN has just commenced his career with Vick International Ltd. at Slough, Berkshire as a Research Scientist.

Oh, by the way, both JOHN and myself have the TALBOT fingers, (Symphalangism). During a visit by JOHN a few years ago to MR J. ROWLAND HUGHES, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Wrexham War Memorial Hospital, following an accident, upon seeing JOHN'S name on his file MR ROWLAND HUGHES asked to see his fingers and said " Oh yes, the EARL OF SHREWSBURY had some malformation of the little finger!" He then asked to see my fingers and was even more interested to see I had the malformation too, (3)

(1) A distance of about 4 to 5 miles each way across what can only be described as Hampshire at its most rural.

connect distantly with a branch of the Earls of Shrewsbury. JOHN STUART TALBOT, authentic ancestor, was born in London about 1770-76. (Could he be the JOHN, son of JOHN TALBOT, bp. 11 Mar. 1775, St. Dunstan in the East?) He may have been son of a Sir JOHN TALBOT and wife, Lady JANE STUART, but there is no proof of either names or titles. His mother died early, and his father remarried. And the stepmother, after the father's death, placed JOHN in the Navy at 14 as an apprentice seaman. At times he had trouble with his superiors and once attempted to escape by jumping through a porthole. Other colorful but unsubstantiated tales exist: (1) that he deserted ship in Indis; (2) that he turned pirate and, in the East Indies, finally burned his ship to avoid capture; and (3) that he rose to the rank of Admiral. During the Napoleonic Wars he was definitely a seaman, or petty-officer, and under Lord Howe, fought off Brest in 1796 and at Trafalgar in 1805. He served under Captain Alexander Stewart. About 1802, during a lull in the wars, he married PRISCILLA. Desendants in South Africa think she was a LOVERIDGE, of Oxford, whose people were lace-makers in Warwickshire. But others, in America, on the evidence of a grandson's name HYRUM PURCELL TALBOT, insist that she was a PURCELL - a French beauty with black hair reaching the floor, whom he met and married in India or the East Indies. Uncle HENRY TALBOT, deceased, of Lewiston, Utah, wrote in his "Autobiography" that she was born in England. PURCELL seems to be a British name, for it is common in Cork, Ireland, in London, and in Shropshire and Staffordshire. When the war ended, JOHN and PRISCILLA settled in the City of Westminster, birthplace of their children, baptized at St. Martin's, St. Margarets, and on Broadway:

1. JOHN STUART, Jr., b 26 March 1803, some say abroad, others that bells of Westminster rang in recognition of his high birth; m 2 Sept 1830 SARAH POULTON (b.1813, d.1892), St. George's Church; d. 11 Jan. 1878, also at Grahamstown;
2. Daughter, perhaps b. abroad (?) d. early in Westminster, of Small-pox;
3. CHARLES STUART, b. 23 March 1807-09 (?), Westminster; m. ELIZABETH MILLER (d. 1 Aug. 1887, Grahamstown); and d. 9 Oct. 1883, Grahamstown;
4. AMELIA, b. 30 Aug. 1811, Westminster; m. JOHN PASKIN (b. 12 May 1803, London, and died 25 March 1877); and d. 13 Jan. (?) 1882, South Africa;
5. HENRY, b. 16 Oct. 1813, Pimlico, Westminster, and bp. at St. Martin's or St. Margaret's; m. 20 Mar. 1833, RUTH SWEETNAM, (b. 4 Feb. 1817, Kent, England, and d. 21 May 1903, Layton, Utah, dau. of THOMAS SWEETNAM, b. Sussex or Kent, and wife, JANET BARTON, b. 12 April 1780 Kent England); and d. 15 Dec. 1895, Layton, Utah;
6. MARIA, b. 1815, Pimlico, Westminster; m. 1. THOMAS FANCUTT, and 2. MICHAEL BAIN (d. 1868, Johannesburg); and d. 9 March 1871, South Africa;
7. SOPHIA, b. 1 March 1817, Pimlico, Westminster, and some say bp. at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, London; m. CHARLES ROBINSON (b. 25 Aug. 1812, England, and d. 1850 (?) South Africa); and d. 3 Dec. 1901, South Africa.

In 1820, signing up with Sephton's Party as "JOHN TALBOT, Mariner, aged 44, and wife, PRISCILLA, aged 45", they sailed for Algoa Bay, South Africa, on the ship "Aurora", with the "Settlers of 1820". At Grahamstown they made their home, and there, 11 Jan. 1822, PRISCILLA died. JOHN later married ANNE and lived at Salem.

HENRY, third son, and his wife, RUTH SWEETNAM, left South Africa 28 Feb. 1861 on the ship, "Race Horse". They landed at Boston, U.S.A. and later crossed the Great Plains in HOMER DUNCAN'S party and reached Salt Lake City on 28 Sept. 1861.

Relatives in England, please send me an account of yourselves and your ancestors. KENNETH LARSON 168 L Street Salt Lake City Utah 84103 U.S.A.

