

Two letters here – 17 Nov 1978 and 4 March 1979. The last contains most of the family information.

30. Abbotts Drive
Sneyd Green
Stoke on Trent
ST1 6HU
17 November 1978

Dear Bill & Brenda.

Glad to have your letter and the photographs. You all look well and happy and ERIN is a smasher. Of course now you have told us it's really quite obvious but honestly only one lady said she was sure it was Erin but that was after we had had your letter. We must be "thick"! Mind you we all like the name although to us in this area it is most unusual; in fact we haven't come across it before. Of course I can't really approve of the Irish connection! For as long as I can remember this country has been hoping the two factions would come together but the North won't have it so we are stuck with it. It's like U.S.A. in Vietnam or Korea - they just can't win unless they wipe out both North and South. It wouldn't be a bad idea if U.S.A. added Ireland to their set up because they have a strong Irish connection. It's like Scotland and Wales they both want to go it alone providing England finances them and allows free trade and accepts all passports and immigration. Mind you in the army we all mixed together quite happily generally speaking. After all we were all in the same boat and bullets had the same effect on us all. Never mind the Irish question will "quieten off" in due course and then erupt again as usual. It isn't really religion - it's just that some realise they can make some easy money.

Well, we've just come home after a week at Meole Brace. John has had to go on a conference so we kept Glennys company. Actually she didn't need us because the 'phone was ringing regularly and so was the door bell. Still Vin was able to spend most of her time with Ruth which was just what Grandma wanted. Ruth is running about now and is real sharp. She is only slow in getting her teeth through. She has six at the moment and the rest are nearly but not quite. It won't be long before she is talking and when that happens life is going to be really hectic!

Now, Bill about your enquiries about our family. I'm afraid I'm almost in the same state as you are. I always relied on Flo when a question cropped up. You see I'm the youngest of the family and as such took little interest in such things. I can remember my grandparents on Dads side but not on mother's side. I can remember quite a few folks I called Auntie or Uncle who I assume were either blood relations or relations by marriage on my mother's side. I have an idea that my mother may have spent some years prior to her marriage (her parents having died) with a sister's or brother's family or even with the family of a friend. My mother's maiden name was Harriet Garner but the people whom I called Aunt or Uncle were as far as I can recall surnamed Machin, Hancock or James. I only know one person who could perhaps give me some information. She is a cousin, Florence Hancock, but she will be over eighty and I haven't met for many years but I did speak to her on the 'phone when Flo died in January. I'll see if I can contact her again - it depends on what her health is like. Anyway leave it with me and I'll try and make a plan of some sort. If Flo gave you any names or information let me know as it may help.

Well I guess that's all for now as I just have time to catch the post.

All the best to all of you and lots of love

From
Syd & Vin

P.S. After all I've said about the Irish I remember my Dad telling me we might be of Irish extraction. The possible connection being an Irish political refugee who possibly was named O'DWYNE or O'DWYER or some such but I've no proof of this.

30 Abbott's Drive
Sneyd Green
Stoke on Trent
ST1 6HU
4 March 1979

Dear Bill & Brenda,

Thank you for your letter and the Digest - also the copy of Auntie Flo's account of our family and family life. I agree with all she has written but I can't add much to it. Being the youngest I did not know my relations very well and was not sufficiently interested to ask exactly what relationship they were - I simply knew them as Uncles and Aunts but I'm fairly sure one or two of them weren't really blood relatives or close relatives by marriage.

I do remember my father's father (Grandad) and vaguely his mother (Grandmother). They had three children - my father (William Thomas), Uncle Harry and Aunt Lottie. Uncle Harry married Aunt "Jinny" (I suppose she was named Jean or possibly Ginette) & they had three children, my cousins, Gordon, Eric and, I think, Gladys who all went to our school. I seem to remember Gladys became a missionary but returned to this country and settled in the Crewe district. Aunt Lottie married Percy Salmon. He was the brother of Ted Salmon who married my sister, your Auntie Gertie. I do remember a number of other Aunties and Uncles who I assume were on my mother's side. For instance in a house in Louise Street, Burslem where I often called, I can remember Uncle Sam Machin and his wife Auntie Emma Machin, and living with them was Auntie Clara James and her children, apparently my cousins George and Elsie, also Auntie Mary Machin who was a spinster. In the case of Uncle Sam & Aunt Emma I'm not even sure of the surname but on the face of it the aunties could be my mother's

sisters but I'm by no means certain of this. I never knew Aunt Clara's husband or heard his christian name. I also recall a Uncle Harry (not my father's brother) visiting us periodically but I don't ever remember his surname being mentioned. The only other Uncle was Uncle Tobey Hancock whose wife was my Aunt Maria. I remember these quite well and I suppose Aunt Maria was another of my mother's sisters. Their children were my cousins Patty and Flo. Flo is still living and I will try and get in touch with her but it is awkward as she must be at least 80 years old (& not well in health) and I have never visited her except with my mother and father when I was a boy. Of course I have met her at family funerals occasionally. As a matter of fact I rarely meet any of my relatives on my side or Auntie Vin's - perhaps that is reason we keep friendly because Vin tells me I'm an awkward "perisher" at the best of times. Never mind, I can't help being an unsociable sort of a (gink/girl)! As you know my mother's maiden name was Garner and although large families were usual in those days it is almost certain that some of those "Aunties" were not actually my mother's sisters.

Well it's been a long hard winter plenty of snow and ice. I haven't been out since Christmas morning but I'm feeling better for the enforced rest. The weather is very slowly moving towards "Spring-like" but it remains very cold and we had just a light snow shower during last night but it has disappeared now and we have bright sunshine but a freezing wind to go with it. The seasonal spate of strikes are petering out - they weren't as devastating as the papers or politicians would have you believe. In this area we don't have much upset as the people are probably apathetic and also they object to losing money. The trouble with our shop stewards and unions is that they are the worst negotiators to be found and consequently cry "strike" so often that no one seems to take much notice and we are all prepared for strikes anyway.

Glad to know you are all keeping well - it sounds as though Erin is making ground really fast. Thanks for the photo's. Ruth has quite a few teeth now but not a complete set. She is very sharp and roguish. She is not quite talking but has no difficulty in making herself understood and she certainly understands everything we say. I am enclosing a snap which John has sent for you. I think perhaps she looks a little older than she actually is (19 months) or it may be I'm not used to seeing her all "spruced up". We see them fairly regularly, about once per month but not often enough to suit Grandma!

Tell your mother I will be writing her soon but I'm way behind with my correspondence and I must say I'm sorry not to have written to you much sooner. A lot of old folks like me complain of being bored but honestly I don't have time to turn around. I have a whole list of jobs waiting and books to be read but they just have to wait. I suppose I'm like Jerome K. Jerome in "The idle thoughts of an idle fellow" - I just like to look at the jobs to be done. Just to sit back and admire the list was his idea of bliss. He claimed it was no use being idle if you had no work waiting to be done. Jerome K. Jerome, besides being mine, was one of your father's favourite authors so if you haven't already read them get hold of "Three men in a boat", "They and I", "The idle thoughts of an idle fellow". The first will be easy to get but the other two are probably out of print - I've been trying to get them for sometime. He wrote a lot of others I believe but I haven't read any. * At the moment mum and I are taking interest in a few religious books as it should help us to understand John & Glennys and their friends. Funny thing is, except occasionally to tell us how things are going at their church in a very general way, they never mention religious matters - we find that it is ourselves who want to have their opinions.

I guess that's all for now. When I started this letter I hadn't a clue what to write about but now I've started I can't stop. But stop I must as I must not risk boring you; like all good writers I must leave you wanting more! No need to throw anything, Bill, - it won't hurt me.

'Bye for now, all the best and lots of love to you all.

Syd & Vin

Xxxxxxx

*I think I should mention that the main reason for our interest is that we are always anxious to learn more of the One of whom we are followers. That sets you thinking doesn't it?