

William Harris Inglesant of Quorn

These days, whilst it is still unusual to live until a hundred years old, a hundred years ago it was almost unheard of – but the 1911 census for Quorn, shows us that this is exactly what was achieved by William Harris Inglesant. In 1911 there was nobody living in Quorn in their nineties – but there **was** one centenarian - William Harris Inglesant.

William Harris Inglesant was the eldest son of at least six children, born in Quorn to William Harris Inglesant (senior) and his wife Ann, on 11th January 1811. William (senior) had married Ann Sarson on Wednesday 12th September 1804 in St Bartholomew's Church. Ann was a member of a very old Quorn family, part of the same Sarson family that Sarson Street was named after, were wine merchants and are still famous for producing vinegar today. William (senior) was a tanner - it is known that there was a tannery on the site of the Village Hall, and it is likely that this is where the Inglesant's business was based. The first documentary evidence relating to the Inglesant family living in the village, is that William Harris Inglesant (senior) was appointed as the Parish Constable for Quorn in 1803. At this time Parish Constables were private

citizens, elected every year by the Parish Vestry Meeting. Vestry meetings were a precursor of the modern form of Local Government. If there were incidents that parish constables could not cope with, they could call upon any able-bodied person to help. The Parish Constable had a whistle, and if he saw a crime being committed, everyone was expected to chase the person until they caught them; this is where the expression 'hue and cry' comes from. It was an offence not to help! If William had come across anyone who was unruly, e.g. drunk and disorderly, he would have arrested them and taken them to the 'lockup' on the village green. This is now a pizza takeaway on our village car park. For minor offences people would have been put in the stocks, which were close to the lockup.



Bleak House

The Inglesant family lived at 'Bleak House', a large double fronted property with a Swithland slate roof. This still exists as 29 Loughborough Road, on the corner of Barrow Road and Loughborough Road.

When he was 26 in 1837, the younger William Harris Inglesant married Caroline Hyde at Quorn Church. Caroline was the youngest daughter of Saville John Hyde, a member of the local gentry, with strong connections with the Farnham family. Hyde family memorial plaques can be seen inside the Church. William took over the family tannery, and although he retired from this whilst still in his forties, he continued to run the family land holdings. William and Caroline had three children. Their eldest, Eliza, did not marry, but stayed at home to look after her parents.

William was a very keen sportsman. He followed the Quorn Hunt on horseback until in his eighties, and played tennis, cricket, bowls and billiards. His obituary records that he played cricket for the Quorn House Team, started by Mr Farnham, and was still running for his own runs, late into his seventies. When in his nineties he used to walk from Quorn to Loughborough to play billiards.

William's 101st birthday seems to have caused quite a stir. It was even reported in newspapers in New Zealand!

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Below is a newspaper report from January 11th 1912:

"100 YEARS WITHOUT A DOCTOR

Proudly claiming to be England's oldest sportsman, Mr William Inglesant will tomorrow celebrate his 101st birthday in his old house [Bleak House], in Quorn, Loughborough. Although for the last three months he has not been able to leave his bed there is not a more cheerful or happier man in Leicestershire.

When I called on Mr Inglesant this evening he was fast asleep, but in a little while he awoke and explained how he has been able to keep fit and well all his life. "I have never had toothache" he said, "and until my legs began to give way last year I did not know what it was to have a doctor near me. Even now I wish the doctor would keep away. I do not believe in doctors; I never need a dose of medicine."

His 101st birthday will be celebrated in a quiet manner, for Mr Inglesant disliked a room full of strangers. His menu for the day will be:

9 a.m. – Breakfast: consisting of a cup of tea (very hot, the liquid being half milk and half water).

1 p.m. – Dinner: Roast fowl, potatoes, brussel sprouts and a little bread; plum pudding and brandy sauce.

5 p.m. – High tea: Tea, buttered toast and pie

9 p.m. – Supper: Milk and bread and butter

Mr Inglesant makes a point of eating exactly the same as the rest of his family. Although he still has the stumps of five teeth left, his food is cut up in tiny morsels and with it is mixed his favourite Worcester Sauce. Since he was quite young, he has never touched alcohol until quite recently, ordered to do so by his doctor. He is very fond, however, of brandy sauce, and that is the only way his doctor has of giving him a fair quantity of brandy daily. He has never tasted cheese.

Every day he has the newspapers read to him. He does not care for novels or other books. He is much interested in the quotations of stocks and shares in the newspapers, and his remarks on the decline of Consols [government bonds] are pungent.

A descendent of a long line of yeoman farmers, Mr Inglesant farms his land and formerly was the owner of a large tannery. He retired from business when he was forty years of age, and the greater part of his time since has been spent in the open air. He has devoted himself to every kind of sport, and at the age of 98 he bought a motor-car, in which he followed the Quorn Hounds last year.

Mr Inglesant has only one recipe on how to obtain old age – "Live a simple and entirely outdoor life. Eat what suits you. Don't take any notice of doctors and don't worry. I never worried about anyone. I am perfectly contented with my life. I have had a good innings and am very glad that I have lived as long as I have. I am very well satisfied now that my life is getting to a close, but I still hope to get better and be able later on in the year to follow the hounds again."

William must have been quite a character, the thought of him starting to drive a car aged 98 is astounding!



William Inglesant died two months after his 101st birthday, on 27th March 1912, at Bleak House. He was buried next to his wife Caroline, who had died 13 years earlier aged 86, and he is the oldest person buried in the closed part of Quorn Churchyard. During his long life he had seen many changes. He was born when George III was on the throne and lived in the reigns of six monarchs. He was born four years before the Battle of Waterloo, and his life saw the advent of steam power, railways, cars, gas, electricity, hygienic water supplies, telephones and aeroplanes.

I have tried very hard to find a photograph of William Harris Inglesant, but despite tracing several branches of his family forwards, I kept hitting dead ends. It would be nice to think that one exists somewhere that will eventually come to light.

It would appear that William's direct family line via his children has died out, although a few people in Quorn today may remember his last Quorn descendent carrying the family name; that of his grandson William Hyde Inglesant, who was born in 1873 and died in Quorn in 1934 aged 61. William Hyde Inglesant was a member of Quorn Excelsior Football Club in the very early 1900s. He was an accomplished bell ringer, not only at St Bartholomew's, but he was also a member of the band of bell ringers who established the change-ringing world record, on Easter Monday in 1909, at All Saints Church in Loughborough.



William Hyde Inglesant
(Grandson)

As you walk through Quorn Churchyard, round the back on the North side, going from Church Lane, towards Nursery Lane; cast your eyes to the left of the path. You will see William Harris Inglesant and Caroline's gravestones – hopefully, a little less anonymous than they once were.



On the next page is a chart showing the Inglesant family relationships.

Postscript

This article appeared in the Quorndon Magazine in Spring 2013. More than three years later, in December 2016, an amazing photograph/postcard came to light. On the reverse it says:

“Thought you would like photo of Quorn Centenarian took day before his 100th birthday.”

At last! A photograph of William Harris Inglesant in 1911!



