

SIR CHARLES WOOLLCOMBE'S FAMILY PEDIGREE – 1877

Digitised by Tamsyn Woollcombe, Nicholas Woollcombe and David Woollcombe,

Dear Woollcombes:

CHRISTMAS UPDATE – 2022

A Very Happy Christmas to all Woollcombes everywhere + a prayer, in this season of Peace and Goodwill, that, in 2023, our brothers and sisters in Russia and the Ukraine will find a way to end the appalling war that scarred 2022 so badly for so many of them – and us.

Two BIG news stories in this update:

1. Sir Charles Woollcombe's stunning Family Pedigree of 1877 is now digitized and on our website: the Coat of Arms (*above*) was hand-drawn & painted by Sir Charles for the scroll;
2. **Save the Date!** Charley Wood has finished the refurbishment of his family seat at Brockfield Hall near York and has generously offered to host the 1st Ashbury-Hemerdon Woollcombe Family Reunion in 400 years over the weekend: 8th – 9th July 2023. You're all invited!!

Other news includes:

1. Some historic 19th & 20th Century family photographs dug up Honor Borwick;
2. A Hindu / Christian wedding on our side of the Woollcombe Family;
3. The sad death of Emma Woollcombe Bromet; she died of cancer, 20th April 2022
4. News about a campaign to restore the Tomb of Vice-Admiral George Woollcombe, a hero of the British campaign to implement the Abolition of the Slave Trade;

SIR CHARLES WOOLLCOMBE'S FAMILY PEDIGREE – 1877

Sir Charles Woollcombe's Family Scroll of 1877 is perhaps the most extraordinary artefact in the Woollcombe Family Archive, for several reasons: first, it goes further back than any other document we've found – to 1170!! Second – it was hand-written and hand-painted by Charles on a 10m long sheet of paper – TWICE!! The original was burned when Ashbury House burned down in 1877. But, by lucky chance, Charles had taken the original papers and coats of arms back to his house two days before so he was able to re-create – even better than his first draft! [see [History](#)]

His great grand-daughter, Tamsyn, now holds the scroll and guards it with a passion. Very kindly, she got an expert archivist to photograph the scroll on a rostrum camera. Her cousin, Nick Woollcombe, got every entry photographed and he & I typed it up and got it mounted on the Gallery Section of the website (See [HERE](#) – and use the password: robin) You can zoom into and read the different parts of it. Click [HERE](#) to read Charles' own story of making the Scroll and the Fire which destroyed Ashbury.



Sir Charles Woollcombe's Family Scroll of 1877
 Sir Charles Woollcombe's Family Scroll of 1877 is perhaps the most extraordinary artefact in the Woollcombe Family Archive. It is extraordinary for several reasons:
 1. It goes back to 1700 – further than any other document we have found.
 2. It is hand-written and hand-painted on a 1m wide – 10m long sheet of paper;
 3. The original was burned when Ashbury House burned down in 1877. The 26-year old Charles set to immediately to re-draw it, probably better than before.
 4. He could do this because, by lucky chance, he'd taken the original papers and coats of arms away from Ashbury to his house two days before. [See History!](#)
 His great grand-daughter, Tamsyn, now holds the scroll and guards it with a passion. Very kindly, she agreed to get an expert archivist to scan the scroll and, with the help of her cousin, Nick Woollcombe, we have now photographed and typed up each entry so that you can zoom into and read the different parts of it. Use the buttons below, or click on sections of the whole scroll reproduced on the right side of your screen, to access the digitally-reproduced scroll. And [Click HERE](#) to read Charles' own story of making the Scroll and the fire which destroyed Ashbury and his first edition of it.
 There are many things that we don't understand about the scroll – like why Charles chose to include some entries in red, gold and blue circles. Or why he annotated the scroll with unbordered notes (which we have included here with a purple border.) Much work has still to be done by future Archivists to reproduce the linklines on the scroll and to reconcile Charles' entries to national & municipal archives. But – this is a start and where, before, only a handful of Woollcombes ever saw this glorious scroll, now, through the generosity of Tamsyn Woollcombe, all Woollcombes will, for ever, be able to access, study and appreciate the extraordinary work of her great-grandfather, and thank them both for caring so much about the Woollcombe family.

- Part ONE
1170 to 1500
- Part TWO
1500 to 18350
- Part THREE
1835 to 1967

Nick Woollcombe Scroll Landing Page Scanning the Scroll Photographing individual entries

There are many things that we don't understand about the scroll – like why Charles chose to include some entries in red, gold and blue circles. Or why he annotated the scroll with unbordered notes (*which we have now included inside purple borders.*) And – please understand that we are far from professional archivists – and we have not even been able to reproduce the linklines showing how the various entries are related. Much work has still to be done by future Woollcombe Archivists, more competent than I. The scroll needs to be roller-scanned professionally and Charles' entries need to be reconciled to national & municipal archives.

But – this is a start and where, before, only a handful of Woollcombes ever saw Charles' meticulously hand-painted coats of arms on the scroll, now, through the generosity of Tamsyn Woollcombe, all Woollcombes will, for ever, be able to access, study and appreciate the extraordinary work of her great-grandfather, and thank them both for caring so much about the Woollcombe family.

ASHBURY / HEMERDON WOOLLCOMBE REUNION
– 8TH – 9TH JULY, 2023 –



Last year, I brought you news of Sue Woollcombe, daughter of a niece of an Ashbury Woollcombe, who married the head of Hemerdon Woollcombes – thus becoming the first Woollcombe in 400 years to link both sides of the family. To mark that historic moment in our history, Charley Wood and his family have generously offered to open their beautifully restored Country House near York, Brockfield Hall, to a reunion of both sides of the family. So: **SAVE THE DATE – 8-9 July 2023!** The exact details of the reunion will be worked out in the next few weeks, but be assured of a fantastic Woollcombe / Yorkshire welcome: in addition to a reception and party at Brockfield Hall, there will be a chance to visit Bishop Harry's church at Bolton Percy – as well as the sights of York – one of Britain's most beautiful walled cities, with its magisterial Minster towering over it: the biggest mediaeval church in Europe! For overseas visitors, we shall organise visits to the historic Ashbury Church – and Hemerdon House so you can see the iconic family seats of all the family. So – where-ever you are in the world, do start making plans to be in the UK in Summer 2023 – and meet your cousins who share your name and heritage – and close this 400-year period of separation so that we can become a single family again!

We shall be in touch with you by early April with a full schedule of events and itinerary + an Invitation to you all for which we shall expect an RSVP.



Brockfield Hall is a beautiful late Georgian house and estate built in 1804. It is currently the home of Mr. and the Hon Mrs. Charley Wood whose grand-parents bought the house in 1951. The Woods have recently completed a major refurbishment of the house – and now open it to the public on certain days of the year. The house contains the UK's biggest collection of paintings by the Staithes Group of artists. Charley Wood, founder and CEO of the Underbelly theatre Company & great-grandson of Bishop Harry Woolcombe, looks forward to welcoming Woolcombe cousins from all over the world to his family home in July next year.

See: <https://www.brockfieldhall.co.uk/>

FAMILY PHOTOS – 18?? TO 1935

Honor Borwick, of the Grayson branch of the Hemerdon Woolcombes whose mother, Monica, was a great family archivist, found these interesting and well-captioned photographs in her mother's collection:



At Rumleigh

(Left to Right) Dicky, Rupert & Donetta Woolcombe
+ Monica Grayson
1935



Richard & Lena Woolcombe's Children

(Left to Right - standing) Basil, Kenneth, Charley
Gladys, Winny, Honor, Lily,
Franky



Richard & Lena Woolcombe's Family – August 1898

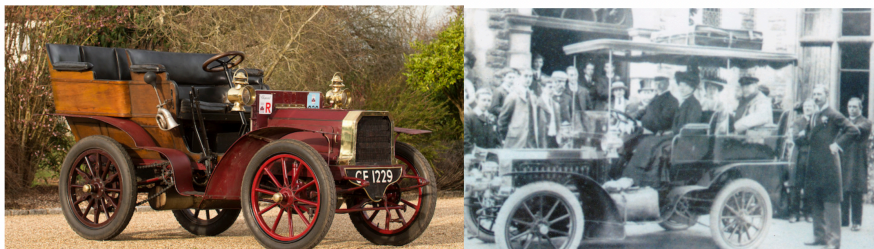
(Left to Right - standing) Marion Honor, Winifred Lina, Kenneth Macaulay, Basil Richard,
Gladys Constance (Paddy); Frank Rupert, Carolina Eliza with youngest (Lina),
Edgar Philip (Topples); Charles Ley, Richard, Lilian Mary, Edward Percy



Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Richard & Lena Woolcombe – around 1934

(Left to Right) Peter Devitt, Helen Devitt, Gladys Mary, Peter Devitt, Paddy, Basil, Ursula & Sheila Devitt, Frank Elsie, Percy, Bice, Richard, Lena, Winny Devitt, Honor Grayson
Dick, Kenneth, Rupert, Monica Grayson, Donetta, Bill Grayson, Daphne

Monica is the one in the centre with the prodigiously long pig-tails. And the blonde, handsome eldest son of Richard and Lena, is the unfortunate Kenneth Macaulay Woollcombe: unfortunate because, when posted to India as a young Lieutenant, he made the mistake of falling in love with his Colonel's wife. Worse, the Colonel's wife fell in love with him. Not knowing what to do about the impossible situation – with opprobrium and isolation facing both of them if the scandal were to become known – he shot himself in the regimental gun room – and made it look like an accident. Which is what the family understood it to have been for many decades until, after his parents died, one of his brothers let the secret out. One of very few Woollcombes who have died for love. Another photo turned up by Nick during the year is the one on the right below of the Woollcombe's of Ashbury's first motor-car: A Gladiator – imported from France in 1903 – and assumed to have been Devon's 1st Car.



A Gladiator at Ashbury – possibly the 1st Motor Vehicle in Devon

Apparently, this French, single-cylinder, rear-engined car seen here on the right outside the front porch at Ashbury in a historic photograph of June 1904, found by Nick Woollcombe, was one of the 1st cars in Devon. Now very rare, the Gladiator was an impressive beast as the photo on the left shows.

SOUTH AFRICAN / HINDU / CHRISTIAN WEDDING – JULY 23RD 2022

So many weddings were postponed due to Covid – the Weddings that happened in 2022 were perhaps even more spectacular, and more welcomed by the family, than any before. Certainly the wedding between our daughter, Natasha Woollcombe, and her South African husband, Shri Pillay was hotly awaited, not least by Shri's father, Sundrej, who had taken a particular delight in the Woollcombe family and the part of England they lived in: he told me that, in their Tamil / Hindu tradition, when two people get married, their families get married with them – and thus each becomes the others' brother and sister – looking out, not just for the Bride and Groom, but for all members of the family. That idea became particularly poignant when Sundrej went down with pancreatic cancer and died two weeks before the wedding. Tradition suggested his widow should not travel so soon after a spouse's death but, the day before he died, Sundrej summoned his wife and, before witnesses, told her: "Whatever happens to me – you're going to that wedding, right?!" And she did. And it was WONDERFUL!! – as these photos show:



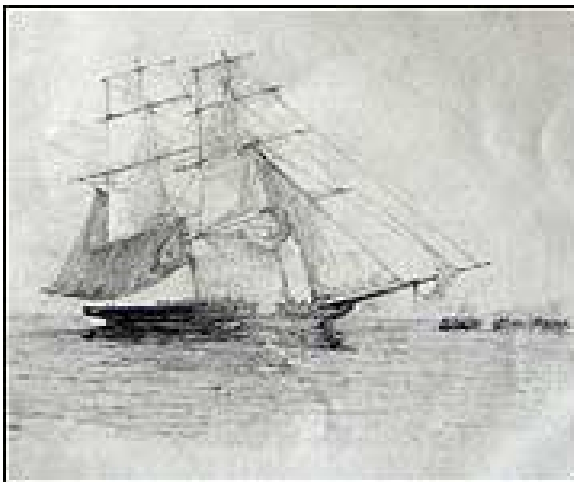


ASHBURY WOOLLCOMBES MOURN THE DEATH OF EMMA BROMET – 1967 TO 2022

Emma died on April 20th 2022 after a long fight with cancer. Her funeral was at All Saints' Church, Wighill, North Yorkshire on 29th April 2022. She was the eldest grand-daughter of Rosamond Woollcombe Smith, and great grand-daughter of Bishop Harry Woollcombe. She was a pillar of strength to the family and will be much missed by all of us – particularly when we gather for the family reunion at Brockfield Hall next year. She would have loved to have been there.

ADMIRAL GEORGE WOOLLCOMBE TOMB RESTORATION APPEAL

Vice-Admiral George Woollcombe was a leading member of the West Africa Squadron in the early part of the 19th Century. The Slave Trade was abolished by an Act of Parliament on 25th March 1807. But, until men like George Woollcombe were recruited to lead naval forces to police the enforcement of the Act, the slave traders merrily carried on making money shipping their slaves to the USA. George Woollcombe's West Africa Squadron finally got active in 1815, and Lieutenant George Woollcombe was promoted to command both HMS Owen Glendower and HMS Victor on anti-slave trade work in West Africa, eventually rising to very senior ranks as other Woollcombes did in the time of Nelson (- read the entries in the *Charles Woollcombe Scroll!*) He patrolled the coastlines, intercepting and detaining slave ships and freeing those on board. He was also charged with negotiating a series of treaties with local chiefs to prevent the continuation of the trade.



A drawing showing the capture of slaves off Africa



Naval commander Lt George Woollcombe

He wrote in his diaries now held in private archives:

On the 11th day of August 1824, being in latitude 2.15 north and longitude 5.13 east, I detained the Brazilian brigantine named the Diana sailing under Brazilian colours armed with two guns of four pounds caliber, commanded by Manuel Dos Santos da Costa, who declared her to be bound from Benin to Rio de Janiero with crew consisting of fourteen men and having on board one hundred and forty three slaves of both sexes.

Like the Bishops I wrote about in last year's update (*see now in the Archive alongside Charles' Scroll*) – it is men like George that make us proud to bear the name of Woollcombe. It is his tomb that has fallen derelict in Plympton St Mary's Churchyard: Kate Woollcombe will be in touch in the New Year as she begins the task of raising funds to restore the tomb to its former glory. If any of you feel minded to join her and help us raise the funds, please contact Kate at: hemerdon.house@gmail.com

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas, and a prosperous and peaceful 2023
– and hoping that I shall meet several of you face-to-face during it,
Sincerely,

David R. Woollcombe, Keeper of the Woollcombe Family Archive