

# A few lives from Frogmore 1841

In 1841 the very first village census was held. So who lived in Frogmore? What had they done, where did they go? Eighty two people lived in the village in 17 households. Only three were over 60. All who worked were agricultural labourers. But life's paths differed. Five individuals have been chosen at random. Most had descendants in East Meon within living memories.

## ***Merritts***

Ann Cross came from Clanfield and married John Merritt on 23 September 1828. She was 18. She moved to her husband's village and set up home in Frogmore. By 1841 she had five children; there were another five to come. Whilst carrying her last, Luke, her husband died of unknown causes. She was a widow with six dependent children to support and three teenage sons working as labourers or "under carter". She was a pauper on parish relief. By 1861 she had moved to Portsmouth as a charlady with two teenage sons who became sailors. Luke moved to his sister Anne's (married name Restall) farm at Pidham Hill (on the Petersfield Road). His sister died in 1871 but Luke made it to some prosperity as an eventual cattle dealer and left the equivalent of half a million pounds at his death in 1898. Descendants of the Merritts still lived in the Alms Houses in the 1950s.

## ***Silks***

At the time of the 1841 Census John Silk was 8. He and his brother James were to be the key workers at Frogmore Mill for the next 50 years, and John's son George took over the lease and was both the miller and ran the associated 100 acre dairy farm until his death in 1943. John was the son of William Silk and Lucy Deadman....both families still farm in this area today. By age 17 he had been "posted out" as a general servant in Warblington, but in 1861 age 28 he was a journeyman miller at Frogmore Mill under the master miller John Lillywhite. John and his brother James were obviously competent millers as by 1871 Lillywhite was living in The Square, Petersfield leaving the Silks to it. They never acquired the lease as Benjamin Ayling took over as master. That fell to John's son George, who was leaseholder from the Bonham-Carters upon Ayling's death in 1896.

## ***Volkes***

Olive Volkes nee Porter came from a longstanding East Meon family. Born in 1755, at the time of the 1841 census she was 86 and the oldest person in the village. She had married Thomas Volkes in 1779 age 24. He had died in 1816. They had lived at Drayton. They had four children. By 1841 one son was dead, the other had moved to Soberton, both daughters had married, but Hannah (Newland) had now been widowed for six years and at 60 supported her mum, living alone next door now in Frogmore.

## ***Pollards***

On 29 February 1840, George Pollard married Hannah Grant in All Saints. They were both 23. They set up home next to Hannah's family in Frogmore (perhaps the same cottage). George was a labourer. They never had children, but by 1851 George was head of the household which consisted of his 70 year old and pauper father-in-law, two unmarried brothers-in-law, and two orphans, a

nephew and niece William (7) and Lucy (5) Greentree! At least by 1861 it was reduced to just William and Lucy, now teenage shepherd and housemaid respectively. Hannah died in 1870, but by 1871 Lucy (now a housekeeper) and another niece. In 1876 George remarried a 60 year old from Portsmouth...no less than Ann Cross or Merritt (who we met earlier) ... his once Frogmore neighbour! Ann died in April 1895 after what was hopefully fulfilled partnership in a three roomed cottage in a Frogmore she had returned to after more than 20 year absence. George still working to the end at 87 finally passed away in January 1904 spending his final years as a lodger with relatives at Langrish.

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