

SIMPLY SILLIFANT?

Or Pillifant, Pilliphant, Silliphant, Lillifant,

HOLSWORTHY FUNERAL.

The Late Mrs. Mary Jane Sillifant.

Memories of olden times at Holsworthy were recalled by the death of Mrs. Mary Jane Sillifant in her 77th year.

Mrs. Sillifant was the widow of Mr. William Sillifant who died 22 years ago, and who was always spoken of as "young granddier" Sillifant. He and his friend "Sam" Collins, were very popular, and trustworthy employees of the local Council. Since her husband's death Mrs. Sillifant has been residing with her daughter, Mrs. S. Parnell, at Northcott Hamlet, where she died on Friday.

The funeral took place at Holsworthy Church on Tuesday, where her husband lies, and her son-in-law, Mr. E. Cobbledick, is churchwarden. There was a large attendance. The service was conducted by the Rev. G. L. Jarratt, Rector of Thornbury.

The mourners were Messrs. Wm. Sillifant, Okehampton, S. Sillifant, Exeter, Mesdames F. Prouse, Bridgerule, C. Gliddon, F. Cobbledick, J. Parnell, Northcott Hamlet (sons and daughters), Messrs. F. Prouse, S. Parnell, E. Cobbledick, S. Gliddon, Mesdames W. Sillifant and H. Sillifant (sons and daughters-in-law), Grandchildren and other relatives were Bert Prouse, Joyce and Trixie Prouse, Elsie Carter, Gladys Sillifant, Elsie Wonnacott, Arthur Downing, Tetcott, P. Dart, Milton Abbott, Mark Carter, J. Crocker, Grace Cobbledick, Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell, Launceston, and W. Worth, M. Worth, G. Parnell, and R. Edwards, Northcott Hamlet.

The bearers were Messrs. R. Perkin, E. Hookway, A. Fetherick, J. F. Oke, L. J. Whitlock, W. Kinver.

There were many floral tributes.

Left, Exeter and Plymouth Gazette
3 November 1933

Funeral of Mrs Mary Jane Sillifant, widow of Mr William Sillifant

Below, Exeter and Plymouth Gazette
11 November 1932

Death of Samuel Sillifant

Samuel was born in 1872 of William and Jane (nee Baily) Sillifant. Marrying **Mary Elizabeth VOADEN** in 1894, Samuel had eight children between 1895 and 1910

FATAL INJURIES.

Inquest on Copplestone Jobbing Mason.

At the inquest held at Exeter by the Deputy-Coroner (Mr. H. Linford Brown) on Friday on Samuel Sillifant, 63, jobbing mason, of Coleford, Copplestone, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.

Sillifant died at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital on November 2nd following injuries sustained in a collision at Exhibition Corner, near Creedy Park, on October 14th. There was a collision between his pedal cycle and a motor car driven by Mr. F. R. Williams, of Bude. Sillifant sustained concussion and a fractured arm and ankle.

Dr. Scher, house surgeon at the hospital, attributed death to degeneration of the heart and septicemia.

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Camelford: The village of the damned

Mysterious suicides. Agonising illnesses. And now, 25 years after the UK's worst case of mass poisoning, the first evidence that dirty water has killed people.

In 1988, **Camelford was poisoned with aluminium sulphate** when a van accidentally **dumped 20 tons** into the household water supply. The villagers were immediately poisoned but the water was soon deemed 'safe'. Since then, several deaths and illnesses have been linked to aluminium, with villagers suffering early onset dementia and dying relatively early, with high levels of aluminium in their brain.



The cause of the contamination

On 6 July 1988 **John Stephens**, a **relief tanker driver** working for Bristol-based distribution firm ISC, arrived at Lowermoor Water Treatment Works on Bodmin Moor and found it unmanned. Unfamiliar with the location, he had been given a key by another driver and told simply that "once inside the gate, the aluminium sulphate tank is on the left". However, the **key fitted almost every lock** used by the South West Water Authority (SWWA).

After twenty minutes looking for the correct tank, John tried the key on a manhole cover and when it unlocked believed he had accessed the correct tank. He poured the load of 20 tonnes of aluminium sulphate, used to remove solid particles from cloudy water, into the tank, which **actually held treated water prior to distribution** to the consumers in Camelford. This immediately **contaminated the water supply** to 20,000 local people and up to 10,000 tourists. The maximum recorded aluminium concentration was **620,000 micrograms per litre** compared with the maximum concentration admissible at the time by the European Community of **200 micrograms per litre**.

Sarah Sillifant died in 2005. She was in her twenties when she was exposed and hanged herself after suffering **dementia and other symptoms**. *The Post and Weekly News*, 29 December 2005, featured a lengthy obituary for 'Mrs G. Sillifant (age 45) of Egloskerry'. **Sarah Amblin** moved with her parents to Cornwall as a young girl where she met and **married Graham Sillifant in 1983**. In the list of mourners, there were no less than 11 more Sillifants. Sarah was obviously **well known, loved and respected** because there were two entire columns of names mentioned and the **Egloskerry Parish Church** was reported to be full to overflowing for a lady who played football and achieved the status of England Ladies Trialist.



From Bude to Battlefield - a story of the Great War

By David Sillifant, Camborne, Cornwall

August 2014 is the centenary of the start of the **First World War** – the “Great War” to those who lived through it. We may know a little about whether some of our forebears fought in it and possibly where they fought: but do we really understand how it changed their world and that of the communities they lived in? Especially, do we appreciate how vast the scale of change was for some? My maternal grandfather, with whom I was close, **was conscripted into the Royal Navy** from his job as a **schoolmaster** in 1916. A placid, tolerant, and very liberal individual; he nevertheless retained a bitterness against the Church of England for the rest of his life. Its clergy, safe as he said in their personal positions, used the pulpit every Sunday as a recruiting platform to send young men to their deaths. A very gentle man, he would never set foot inside a church again for the rest of his life.

However, this story starts seventeen years before the start of the Great War, in January 1897. Conflict in Europe was not a thought in the minds of British people then. Indeed, the **dominant wars and recent conflicts** were in the Empire. The Anglo-Zulu War had only occurred just eighteen years before, with the defeat of British forces at Isandlwana and the defence of Rorke’s Drift. Shortly after that, another campaign in Afghanistan had led to British losses; and a hostile public reaction had led to government reluctance to intervene in the Sudan until too late, leading to the death of General Gordon. There had been **minor conflict** with the Boers in Transvaal; but the Boer War itself was still two years into the future.

In as much as the British people had any interest in foreign affairs therefore, it did not involve western Europe. Queen Victoria still had another four years to reign and the focus of most peoples’ lives was largely very parochial. Even national events were remote. The small port of **Bude in North Cornwall** was far removed and isolated from London, and a typical inward-looking community. As a port for the coastal sailing trade it was at its height but it was very isolated from land communications. The railway would not arrive for another year and the only means of public transport was the **horse-drawn stage coach** routes to Boscastle in the West, Bideford to the North, and Holsworthy inland. The canal that led inland from the port had largely fallen into disuse. The one major invention that had transformed most peoples’ travelling habits in recent times was the **invention and availability of the bicycle** – meaning they could travel independently ten miles in one hour instead of the four achievable on foot.



Coastal shipping in Bude canal basin, 1897

People did not generally, therefore, move very far during their lives. **William Henry Sillifant**, born at **Burnards House** in 1874, was a good example. In 1896, he married **Lydia Snowden** who had been born in Launcells in 1873 and they settled in Rodd’s Bridge Farm on the banks of the Bude Canal one mile inland from the sea locks where it began in Bude - all less than eight miles from where they had been born. William Henry was a farm labourer. In January 1897, he and Lydia had a son, **William Thomas**, who became known more usually as “**Tim**”. Tim would have grown up as part of a farm worker’s family although the family’s fortunes gradually improved.

By 1911, the family had moved to a house in **Downs View Road in Bude**, and William Henry was no longer a farm labourer but a 'Coachman – cab'. He **drove the stage coach** from Bude to Boscastle on behalf of George Brendon, the **owner of the Falcon Hotel**. A better job also allowed the family to have one live-in maid. Tourism was beginning to make a mark in Bude and the family had benefited from it. Middle class visitors arrived to stay in Bude's new hotels and visit the seaside. Still a coastal port, Bude was now also becoming a small resort and growing in size.



Tim Sillifant (boy standing on left) and father William Henry (driving coach), circa 1904

Prior to the outbreak of war in August 1914, Bude had become a place that the local County Regiment, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, visited from time to time. On Empire Day in May 1914, a detachment of the regiment had held a service on the Downs. With the outbreak of war itself, the regiment visited again, this time to recruit both men and horses. On 4 August 1914, the regiment formed a new battalion - the 1st/5th - and began recruiting throughout the county. The new recruits were sent for **training in the Falmouth area** where they spent 1915. In April 1916, the battalion was re-designated an "Infantry Pioneer" battalion whose role was to be in support of the Royal Engineers in creating and maintaining the structures of static trench warfare – trenches, walkways, shelters, bridges and roads – and to be able to do so under fire. After a short period of **conversion training on Salisbury Plain**, the battalion sailed for France in May 1916. One of the **new Infantry Pioneer** recruits in that battalion was **Tim Sillifant**.



Laventie, in Picardy

During the Summer and Autumn of 1916, the battalion was based in the small village of Laventie, then one and a half miles behind the front line. During Christmas 1914, the front line had been closer to the village and the famous Christmas Day football match between British and German soldiers took place in no-man's land nearby. Laventie was a rest area and therefore a **haven from the horrors of the trenches**. This sector of the front was relatively peaceful; the great battles of the Somme were raging sixty miles to the south. The battalion took part in an attack on the German front line east of Laventie in July; but otherwise fighting largely passed them by. The end of October 1916 brought change: the battalion was ordered to **march south to the Somme**. Temporarily housed in huts, the battalion found itself housed in dugouts from November. The majority of the dugouts were shell craters, covered in corrugated iron. For the length of the cold, wet winter the battalion lived in these craters, working to repair trenches, lay wire, and repair bridges and roads – usually under fire. After a brief spell of rest in February, Tim's battalion was re-billeted to the **ruined village of Herleville** – described at the time as "... a verminous slum... famous for rats. There were millions of them..." From this base, in August 1917, as part of the 61st Division, Tim's battalion found itself a part of the **battle of Passchendaele**.



Soldiers of the DCLI at Arras in May 1917

Passchendaele is synonymous with the horrors of the Great War. The battle lasted from 9 August to 14 September and during its course, **77,479 British and allied soldiers were lost, wounded or killed**. Tim's battalion laboured constantly to repair tracks and trenches, and relay barbed wire – usually at night and usually under fire. As well as the 1st/5th Battalion, the sister 7th Battalion of the DCLI was involved. Harry Patch, of the 7th Battalion, described the battle:

"We were sitting among a sea of shell holes, you can't imagine how many, craters lip to lip. They were half full of water, and one, just at the back of where we were, well, **the stench was terrible**, a half-rotting body was in there, no doubt about it. Right across the battlefield, the bodies of the wounded who were dying, or those who had died, would sink out of sight in the morass. They would never be buried. In places we were up to our knees in mud, gluey, sticky mud. ... As night approached and the firing subsided, you could hear the **moans of the wounded and the cries for help** in both languages."

The story - **after the battle was over** - will continue in the next edition of *Simply Sillifant?*

Ed.

Married life in England

By Beryl Young, Brisbane, Australia

When a child was baptised in the 1600s, many parish registers **only record the father's name** and it can often take considerable research into other parish documents to locate the name of a wife or mother, and some are never found.

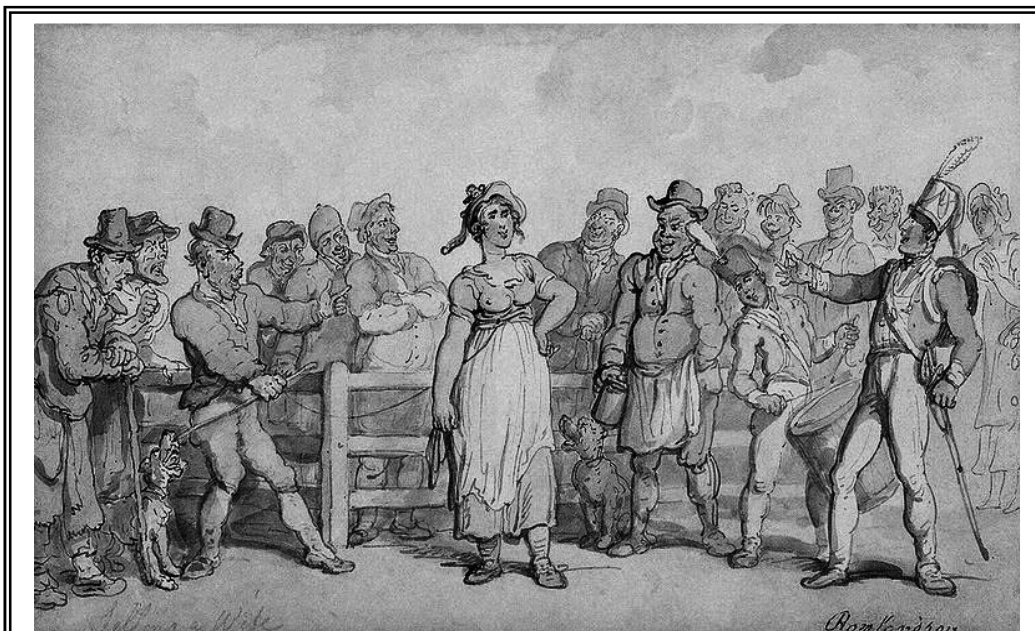
Most early marriages were those of convenience or dictated to by the protocols of upper class economical status. For most of history, it was inconceivable that people would choose their partners on the basis of something as fragile and irrational as love. Then, marriage for love was popularised by the writings of Jane Austen and followed soon after by the Brontë sisters. They wrote with **male pseudonyms** because it wasn't considered possible that a woman could write with such passion and feeling!

It was only in the sixteenth century that the church decreed that weddings were to be performed in public, by a priest and before witnesses. Marriages had to be **performed by the church** – unless one was a Jew or a Quaker – until civil registration was adopted in 1837. Sometimes a couple could have several children before a rector could visit a remote location to marry them; in such a case all children were christened at the same time when their parents were married but not noted as illegitimate. Many marriages took place on 25 December, because that was the only day in the year which labourers would have off work.

Divorces were very rare; apart from the notorious King Henry VIII, divorce by the people very seldom occurred. Up until 1857 and the Matrimonial Causes Act, only men - their wives had no say at all - could request a divorce and only if they were wealthy. From then on, divorces were still rare because each divorce had to be granted by an individual Act of Parliament and it was very difficult for a wife to prove her husband's infidelity. It was only in the 1960s that divorce became easier and hence more widespread.

Wife selling in England was a way of ending an unsatisfactory marriage usually by mutual agreement though sometimes by force, and this probably began in the late seventeenth century. After parading his wife with a halter around her neck, arm or waist, a husband would publicly **auction her to the highest bidder**. Wife selling provides the backdrop for Thomas Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, in which the central character sells his wife at the beginning of the story, an act that haunts him for the rest of his life, and ultimately destroys him.

Right up to the twentieth century, the life of a wife was **fraught with difficulty** health-wise. Perhaps the reason a mother's name was omitted from a baptism record, was that the father would quite frequently have several wives and which one was the mother was not considered to be important....



This Thomas Rowlandson painting of a wife being auctioned dates from about 1812-14. From the attitude of the woman, it seems she was happy to comply!

The most frequent reason for multiple wives was **death in childbirth**. We can be grateful for the advance of medicine which means that the mortality rate is now very low in comparison. It is only recently that the Church of England prayer book removed the service for the 'churcing of women who had recently given birth' which starts by giving thanks to God for '*the safe deliverance and preservation from the great dangers of childbirth.*'

There was little pain relief available for anyone to begin with and even aspirin was discovered only in 1897. Prior to that, obstetrician **Sir James Young Simpson** introduced chloroform as an anaesthetic in 1847 but that could be administered only by a doctor so poorer women coped without. As Europe became more crowded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, death from disease in childbirth became more frequent.

The rise of physician-assisted births increased the reported cases of **puerperal fever**, a bacterial infection that became apparent within days of giving birth and resulted in acute symptoms of severe abdominal pain, fever and debility. It was usually fatal. The rise of maternity wards in hospitals meant that many women gave birth in close proximity of each other. Doctors went from patient to patient, unknowingly carrying the bacteria on their instruments and their unwashed hands.

In the 1790s, Alexander Gordon highlighted that the disease was being spread between patients and in 1847, Ignaz Semmelweis reduced the rate of fever in his obstetric ward by ordering hand washing. However, the idea was still vehemently rejected by the medical industry at large until the 1870s. Even then, doctors had little medical knowledge compared with today. A doctor learned his trade by a sort of **apprenticeship**, following and observing another doctor who was his mentor. Even if puerperal fever was avoided, there were other medical conditions which could result in the woman's death, which now can be successfully treated. Puerperal fever often resulted in peritonitis and septicaemia or blood poisoning was a common cause of death in childbirth until the mid-1930s.

There were few doctors and they could be used only by the wealthy; **untrained midwives** were available for the less affluent members of society and they too did not understand the importance of good hygiene. Often a midwife was just a neighbour and usually their only qualification was that they had had children themselves. Poorer women would have to work until the birth of their child and resume work straight after, while wealthy women would usually have a few servants in the household to take care of the newborn, allowing them to rest.

We have found many records where a mother died about 7 to 10 days after a child was baptised, frequently her burial was followed by the burial of the child. If a 'wet nurse' was not available, a baby would be fed 'pap' which was bread soaked in milk or water, which often resulted in the child eventually **dying from 'marasmus' or malnutrition**. Often left with several young children, a father had no option but to marry again as soon as possible; with no government benefit payable he could not afford to stay home to care for the children so probably they were left to care for each other while he was working. The second wife may then die in childbirth or some other illness leaving several more children, so a third wife was married.

For example, my ancestor **John Pillavant married Grace Gunn** in 1781; they had six children and when Grace died the youngest was three. So within seven months, he **married Ann Blight** and they had another five children, one dying as in infancy.

Life was usually hard for men as well. Most occupations, unless one was a wealthy land owner, involved **long hours of hard physical work**. Until the twentieth century, it was uncommon to live beyond the age of about 55, by which time they were worn out. We have much to be thankful for....

Right, a **nineteenth century maternity hospital** for the wealthy

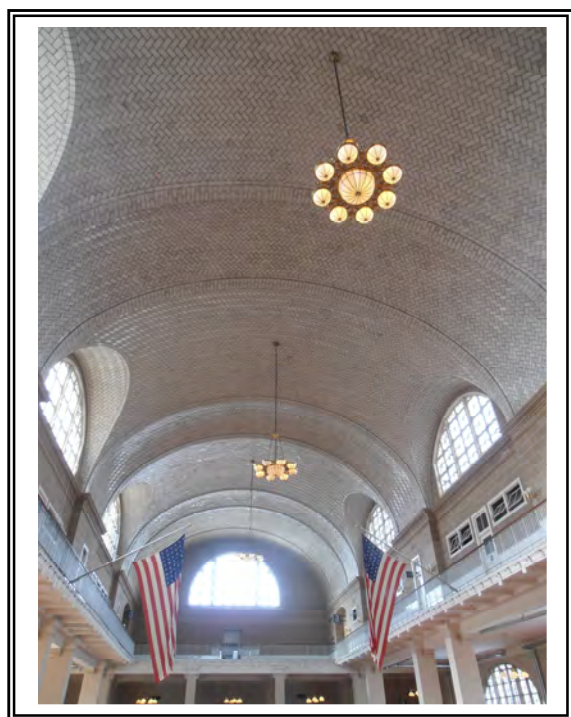


Ellis Island

When the **great steamships** of the early twentieth century sailed into **New York Harbour**, the faces of a thousand nations were on board. A broad, beaming, multicoloured parade, these were the **immigrants of the world**: there were bearded Russian Jews, Irish farmers, Greeks, Italians with waxed moustaches, Arabs with long robes, English, Cossacks and more. The Old World lay behind them. Ahead of them was a **new life**, huge and promising. But behind were friends and family, as well as traditions and customs generations old.

New York Harbour was busy with activity, tugboats churning river water and dockhands wrestling cargo at America's most populous port. The **Statue of Liberty** offered a powerful welcome, salt-green and copper-clad. In the shadow of all the activity were the red brick buildings of Ellis Island. The four towers of the main building rose over 140 feet into the air. This was the official building where **five thousand people a day** were processed, see below right.

Though relatively few immigrants who landed on Ellis Island were denied entry, the **two per cent that were excluded** often equalled over a thousand people a month during peak immigration years. The new arrivals would form a line which stretched from the dock into the **Baggage Room**, winding its way up to the second floor where the immigrants were met by doctors and inspectors who would decide which way the Golden Door would swing. Making their way up the steep flight of stairs, they made their way into the **Registry Room** - a foreboding place, see below left.



Ellis Island's role quickly changed during World War 1 from a **depot to a detention centre**. By 1937, the population of the island had dwindled to about 160 deportees and 30 detained immigrants. It was a very costly facility to run. Opening its doors in the early 1890s, by 1953 the island's staff numbered roughly 250 to serve approximately 230 detained immigrants and the island's doors finally closed on 19 November 1954. Its last resident, **Arne Peterson**, was a seaman **detained for overstaying his shore leave**. He was granted parole and ferried back to the mainland.

For ten years, Ellis Island stood vacant and was subject to vandals and looters who made off with anything they could carry, from doorknobs to filing cabinets. The copper ornamentation deteriorated, roofs leaked, windows were broken and weeds sprang up in corridors. Ellis Island was forgotten. Until 1964 when Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior for President Lyndon Johnson, visited and recognised its importance in America's heritage. The island was placed into the permanent care of the **National Park Service** and became part of the **Statue of Liberty National Monument** in 1965.

On 17 April 2001, the **Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation (SOLEIF)** launched the **American Family Immigration History Center® (AFIHC)**, on Ellis Island and the Internet, making **25 million** arrival records and over **900 ships of passage** pictures in the Ellis Island Archives available to everyone, free.

First Name:	William
Last Name:	Sillifant
Ethnicity:	Great Britain, British
Last Place of Residence:	
Date of Arrival:	Jun 05, 1923
Age at Arrival: 29y	Gender: M Marital Status:
Ship of Travel:	Wells City
Port of Departure:	Bristol, England
Manifest Line Number:	0009

The screenshot shows the website interface with a search bar at the top. Below the search bar, there are navigation links: PASSENGER SEARCH, ELLIS ISLAND, GENEALOGY, ABOUT US, GIFT SHOP, and DONATE. The main content area is titled "MATCHING PASSENGER RECORDS" and includes a "VIEW:" section with options: Exact Matches Only, Close Matches Only, Alternate Spellings Only, Sounds Like Only, and All Records. Below this, a table lists 8 exact matches for the search criteria.

Name of Passenger	Residence	Arrived	Age on Arrival	Passenger Record	Ship Manifest	Ship Image
1. Clara Sillifant	Torrington, England	1908	30	View	View	View
2. George Sillifant	Manchester, England	1913	25	View	View	View
3. George E. Sillifant		1911	25	View	View	View
4. Luise Sillifant	New York, New York	1913	23	View	View	View
5. Rosi Sillifant	Worcester, Massachusetts	1913	27	View	View	View
6. William Sillifant		1922	27	View	View	View
7. William Sillifant		1923	28	View	View	View
8. William Sillifant	Bristol	1923	29	View	View	View

EllisIsland.org allows searching by ship, rather than just by the name of a person and also has the option of using close matches on spelling. William Sillifant (above) is actually indexed as **Jillifant** another variant to add to the transcription spelling error list. The same character also arrived in September of 1923, noted on the passenger records as **Lillifant.S**

And just who are **Luise and Rosi Sillifant** who arrived in 1913? Rosi was said to be **German** and Luise, a **US citizen**.

There were also a few **Pillivant and Pillifant** characters in the index - one as young as one year old, Arthur, when he was recorded entering America in 1905, with his mother, Hannah. Another website worth using to while away an hour or two.....

The Sillifant/Pillivant family album



Left, **Francis James Sillifant**

Photo from Ancestry,
attributed to both father (1858-
1912) and son (1893-1965),
Francis James Sillifant

Right, **Donna Pillivant** (1925-2012)

United States Cadet Nurse
Corps 1944





Above left, **George Pillivant** (left) with unknown co-worker, aboard an Ore Boat on Lake Erie circa 1930s. George worked for a couple of years on the ore boats that ran the Great Lakes

Above right, **George Pillivant**
1902-1966



Below left, **Laura (nee Wolfe) and George Pillivant** at their Grafton, Ohio home circa 1950

A-Z of Victorian Occupations

Part 7: G is for Galerius

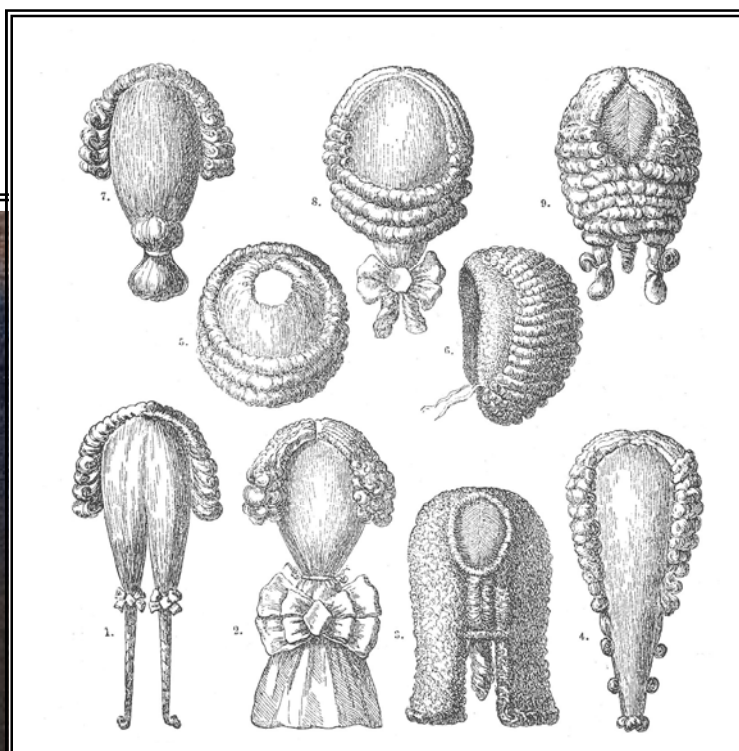
Galerius or nob thatcher was a wig maker, with the term occasionally referring to someone who made caps or bonnets. Wigs became fashionable for men during the eighteenth century. They were largely worn by tradesmen, clergy, military, merchants and ship captains, though only the **upper classes of society** could really afford wigs, so along with looking fashionable, wearers were also declaring their wealth.

The eighteenth century is considered the golden age of male wig-wearing. In the early part of the century, the full-bottomed “periwig” reigned, featuring a **cascade of wonderful curls**. These wigs decreased in length as the century progressed; by then a variety of fashionable forms had entered the picture.

By the middle of the eighteenth century both in the USA and in England, wig-wearing had become accessible to all levels of society. While many of the wigs men wore rarely had any particular connotation, certain wigs did serve to announce the wearer to be associated with a specific profession, like the law. Even today, notably in the British Commonwealth nations, judges may be seen wearing wigs.

Early wigs must have been uncomfortable, especially during the summer months, as they were **made of either human, horse or goat hair**. They usually were sewn onto a cloth foundation.

Towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, wigs became much less common amid the younger men and the only people left wearing them were **mainly conservatives**.



The subject of this eighteenth century portrait (left) is an already established citizen who can afford the latest style of dress and a flowing wig

Staten Island Advance/Irving Silverstein



Images of Devon

Above, **Wembury Church** and beach

Right, **Holsworthy Church**

Below, **Bampton Church**, circa 1900s



From the Cradle to the Grave



RALPH J. C. PILLIFANT

Born: 25 August 1867 St Peter Port,
Guernsey, registered as
Ralph John Clarem PILLIPOT
Married: Eliza Amelia JONES,
September qtr 1893 Gravesend RD
Died: June qtr 1921 Gravesend RD

Ralph was the first of two sons of **Joseph William and Kate (nee Du Putron) PELEFANT**. Their marriage has yet to be located and this spelling of PELEFANT is the spelling on Joseph's birth registration in 1843.

Kate was born in Guernsey and 'William' was referred to as a **master mariner** in 1871 when the couple are living at 44 New Street, Withycombe Raleigh, Exmouth. Perhaps he was serving on Guernsey and met Kate there? Their second son, **Joseph Richard**, was born on 30 November 1871 at St Peter Port in Guernsey. It would appear that their return to Devon in 1871 was short-lived!

Ten years later (in 1881), the **PILLIFENT family** were at 3 **Pollet Street, St Peter Port, Guernsey**, Channel Islands - Kate Pillifent married aged 36, Ralph J.C. 13 office boy and Joseph R. 9 scholar. Ralph's whereabouts in 1891 are currently unknown though he marries Eliza Amelia JONES in Gravesend RD in 1893, as **Ralph Claude PILLIFEND/PILLIFENT**. Is it any wonder these people are hard to find in census transcriptions!

Ralph and Eliza had four children:

- **Frederick Ralph PILLIFENT** b. September qtr 1894 Gravesend RD. Married Lily ABBETT September qtr 1919 Gravesend RD
- **Inez Bertha C. PILLIFENT** b. September qtr 1896 Gravesend RD. Married Charles P. BAKER September qtr 1923 Gravesend RD
- **Winifred Hilda PILLIFENT** b. September qtr 1898 Gravesend RD. Died March qtr 1899 Gravesend RD
- **Elsie Irene T. PILLIFENT** b. March qtr 1907 Gravesend RD. Married Ernest A. ROBINSON September qtr 1930 Gravesend RD

Ralph was a **ships rigger/raftsman** according to the twentieth century censuses:

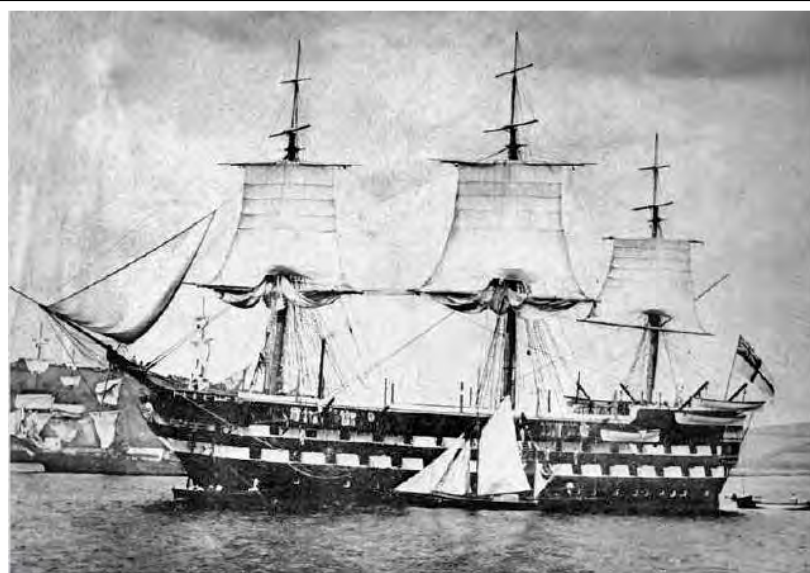
Ralph Pillifent	Head	M	40	Ships Rigger
Eliza do	Wife	M	30	/
Fred do	Son		6	/
Mary do	Daughter		4	/
Mary Jones	Ma-in-Law	M	40	/
Albert Edgar	Boarder	M	19	Grocery Assistant

1901: 11 Lower Kempth' St, Gravesend, Kent [RG13/713/17/26]

It would seem that seafaring was 'in the genes' as Ralph's brother, **Joseph Richard**, joined the Navy on 17 October 1889 though he died in August 1890 of an intestinal obstruction and is buried in Mylor Parish Church. Ralph died in June qtr 1921 in Gravesend RD, recorded as aged 59.

In 1866, the name "Ganges" entered the history of the Royal Navy when the ship came to Mylor and started a tradition of training young boys for a service career. The ship remained at Mylor for 33 years and during that period approximately 14,000 boys were trained but, unfortunately, the boys who are remembered on the memorial in the church - including Joseph Pillifent - were to remain at Mylor forever.

The majority of them died because of illness; this was the age when measles, scarletina and influenza could be fatal. Eight of the boys, however, died because of accidents, either killed on board or drowned - a fact that is entered alongside their names on the memorial.



H.M.S. "Ganges", circa 1900

At least 16 of the ships' company also died during the same period. The ship was removed from Mylor on 27 August 1899 and transferred to Harwich where she continued to train boys until 1905.

The memorial, erected in 1872, records the names of the 53 boys who died whilst training for a career in the Royal Navy on board H.M.S. "Ganges" between the years 1866 and 1899 including:

PHILIP ERNEST RINTOUL, died 5 September 1898 - Aged 16 Years & 2 Months
 ALGERNON HORACE NEAL, died 3 October 1898 - Aged 15 Years & 8 Months
 GEORGE WILLS, died 22 October 1898 - Aged 16 Years & 6 Months
 THOMAS HENRY ATKINSON, died 28 October 1898 - Aged 16 Years & 6 Months
 JOSEPH BENJAMIN JOHN BAUGH, died 23 November 1898 - Aged 16 Years
 WILLIAM GEORGE CARTER, died 20 December 1898 - Aged 17 Years & 9 Months

151025

Name in full } *Joseph Richard Pillifent*

Date of Birth *30 Nov 1873*

Place of Birth } *Drifters Port, Guernsey*

Date and Period of C. & S. Engagements.	Age.	Height. ft. in.	Hair.	Eyes.	Complexion.	Occupation.—Wounds, Scars, Marks, &c.
<i>30 Nov 1891 17 years.</i>	<i>16.</i>	<i>5 2 1/2</i>	<i>Dark</i>	<i>Blue</i>	<i>Dark</i>	<i>Labourer. Skew on on left arm.</i>

Ships, &c., served in	List and No.	Rating.	Sub-ratings and Indigos.	Ceased.	Period of Service. From To	Character.	If Discharged, Whither, and for what Cause.
<i>Impregnable</i>	<i>150 1310</i>	<i>B.2.6</i>			<i>17 Sep. 89 19 Sep. 89</i>		
<i>Ganges</i>	<i>122 1322</i>				<i>20 Sep. 89 27 Aug. 90</i>	<i>V.L.</i>	
<i>R. Fingard.</i>	<i>122 1322</i>						
<i>Portsmouth</i>							
<i>Charles Henry Punter.</i>							
<i>151030.</i>							
<i>1 Feb. 11.</i>							
<i>1.10.12 1 Feb. 11.</i>							
<i>25 Mar. 12</i>							
<i>0.2.12 12 Feb.</i>							
<i>1890.</i>							

Joseph Richard Pillifent, Royal Navy Register of Seaman's Services [ADM 188/217/151025]

North Devon Journal, 11 July 2013



Simon John Sillifant, 41, of North Road, Holsworthy, pleaded guilty to three motoring offences

A man who drove away after **hitting a child with his car** appeared before North Devon Magistrates' Court on Friday. **Simon John Sillifant**, 41, of North Road, Holsworthy, pleaded guilty to driving without insurance, failing to stop at the scene of an accident and failing to report an accident which happened on January 17.

The court heard Sillifant was unaware he had hit a child with his car in Bodmin Street in Holsworthy. It was only through Facebook that he was made aware of what happened..... Probation officer Melanie Wright said Sillifant was **remorseful, accepted full responsibility and hated himself** for what he did.

Michael Oerton, for the defence, said Sillifant had "suffered considerably as a result of what took place".

Sillifant was given **18 weeks in prison suspended for 12 months**. He was disqualified from driving for 12 months and given a three month curfew. He was ordered to pay £500 compensation.



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[SILLIFANT and variant spellings](#)

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- (5) Freda Hockin, Bude, Cornwall, England
- (6) David Sillifant, Camborne, Cornwall, England
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- (8) Rosemary Shadrick, Bideford, Devon, England
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- (22) William Allin, Cowley, Oxfordshire, England
- (23) Jenny Shobbrook, Holsworthy, Devon, England
- (24) Jean Sillifant, Macclesfield, Cheshire, England
- (25) Violet Conolly, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, England
- (26) Win Scott, Timmins, Ontario, Canada
- (27) Peter Sillifant, Dawlish, Devon, England
- (28) Merv Sillifant, Holsworthy, Devon, England