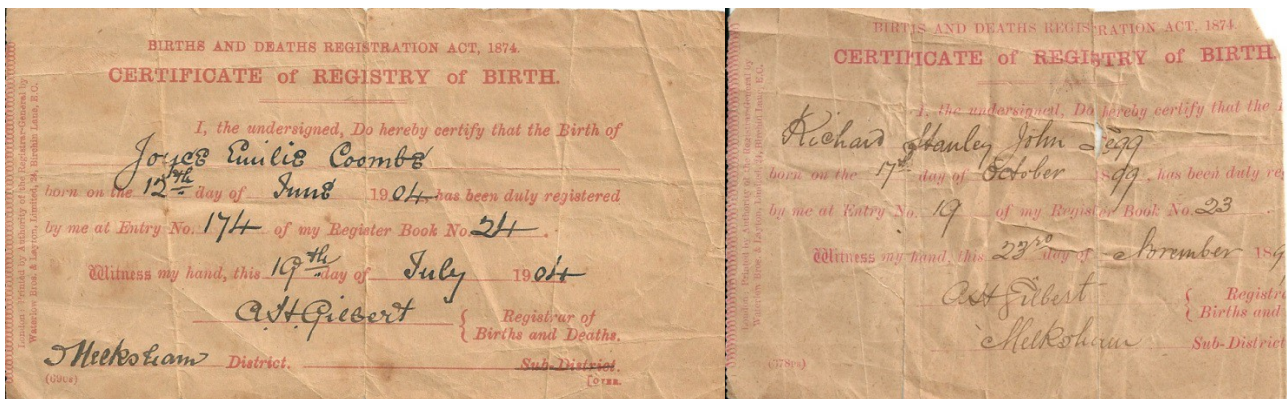


**Linda De Santiz, Her Maternal Grandparents:
Joyce Emilie (Coombe) 1904-1973
& Richard Stanley John Legg 1899-1992**



Joyce Emilie Coombe c1905 & c1908 with younger brother John Henry George Coombe



Both of my Grandparents were born in Melksham. My Gran (who I knew as Gan Gan), only daughter of Marianne (nee Snook) & William Slade Coombe of No.2 Union Street, Melksham, was born June 12th 1904. Her brother John Henry George Coombe (known as Jack) was born September 4th 1907 in Melksham (see separate story about Jack & Freda Coombe & the Spickett family). I can just remember my Great Grandmother – Granny Coombe, the house in Union Street seemed dark and I vaguely remember a cellar, a mangle in the garden and Granny Coombe making her own wine from various fresh produce. My sister Julie’s memory is of Granny Coombes having whiskers and never wanting to drinks from the tea cups there!

My Grandfather was the youngest of 5 children, born to Robert Henry and Mary Legg (see separate article about R.H. Legg), on October 17th 1899. He was born in Melksham and bought up mainly in the Gardens Cottage, Melksham House, Market Place. His siblings were: Margaret Annie Patterson Legg, born 1892, Dorothy Mary Legg, born 1894, Winifred Alice Legg, born 1896 and Robert George Legg, born 1897 (see separate article about Robert George Legg). The Legg family originally came from Dorset and had also lived in Somerset before living in Melksham.

The Gardens Cottage, Melksham House my grandfather remembers there being a boiler in the kitchen at The Gardens. The cottage had no electricity, so they all had to go to bed by candlelight. Richard and his brother George used to read "The Magnet" at the kitchen table by oil-lamp, they shared a bedroom, Sisters Dorothy & Winifred shared another room and the oldest sister Margaret was away working. Baths were taken in a round bath in front of the fire, the water had to be heated up, girls bathed first followed the boys. Their Aunt Louie used to come round to visit and they all played the card game Rummy, Aunt Louie was a bit of a demon player.

Richard Legg started his schooling at the age of 5 in Yorkshire. At the time his father a few years was the head gardener to Captain Challoner at Melksham House and then Gisborough Hall, when Lord Challoner moved to Yorkshire. After that period he always loved Yorkshire. When my Grandfather was 7/8 years old they returned back to Melksham and his Father started to work for Mr. Blathwayt as the head gardener. About this time Richard was struck down with polio and was twice admitted to Bath Hospital.



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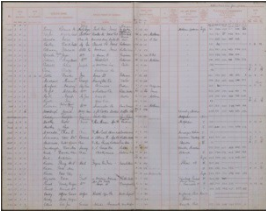


Richard Legg in garden of A. Smith

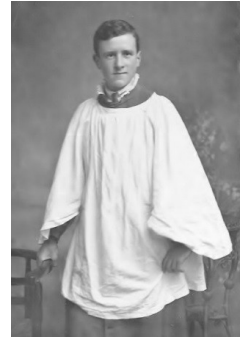


(From left to right) Robert Henry & Mary Legg, Margaret Annie Patterson Legg, Dorothy Mary Legg, Winifred Alice Legg and Robert George Legg.





Sadly, I have no knowledge of my Grans upbringing and what she liked to do. She was brought up in Union Street, with her mother Marianne Coombe who was a dressmaker and her father William Slade Coombe who was an engineer. She went to Lowbourn School. Her brother Jack (John Henry George) sang in St. Michael's Church Choir and Joyce Emilie played the piano.



Coombe Family (and friend) on Williams Motorbike

Richard Legg and his friends used to cycle many miles to all sorts of places. Once they cycled to the top of Bratton Clump and the Brattan Church clock struck 7:00 in the morning, they then cycled to Devizes and got into work for 10:00am. At the time, my Grandfather was 18 and the other two were 17 and 15 years old and were, he remembers Lesley Pearce and Leonard Taylor, they both became church organists, one at St. Michael's and the other at Lacock.

On Bible Class and Choir Outings, my Grandfather remembers going off for the day in an open topped Charabanc, it was a very high vehicle to get into, which they did via a ladder and if it rained, a tarpaulin cover was pulled over from the back of the vehicle. They also did trips on the Wilts & Berks Canal.

When my Grandfather left school, he sought employment. His mother enquired if any vacancies with the solicitor Mr Lock, but another lad had taken the job. Then he heard about another vacancy at the office of Mr Adrian Smith. He started this job in 1915, working hours were good, 10:00 to 16:00 and his starting pay was 5 shillings a week. Used to walk to work in Spa Road from the Market Place (just across the road) and when married and living in West End, walked along the Wilts and Berks Canal, reached by the cutting from West End. He became chief clerk, then later he was employed by the Crown (Lord Chancellors Department), in the Crown Court. This meant he had to give up his private appointments, such as the Treasurer of Melksham Parish Council, Correspondent for the Managers of Lowbourn School and Secretary to the New Hall Trustees, but he said this was no hardship. In Kellys Directories 1927 – 1939 Richard S.J. Legg is listed as Chief Clerk to the Registrar and Acting High Bailiff. His brother George also worked as a clerk, just along the road at C.W. Maggs & Co. Rope Factory.

My grandfather was the enumerator for the Devizes area 1921 census. He used to have to cycle to Devizes to do this work. As not many people with televisions in those days, even a wireless, a lot of people didn't know about the census, so he had a lot to explain and help people with the forms. Some people thought my grandfather "out of his senses!" Lots of people had biblical names he recalls, such as Gadd, Ephraim & Israel, he also remembers a funny little old man sat in a doorway. The census took hours to do, but the pay was good. He also got paid 4 guineas for doing election returns.



I don't know where my grandparents actually met, but from a tape recording made by family of my grandfather, after an evenings courting, they would end up back at Union Street for supper. Grampy said he used remember William Coombe sitting at the kitchen table eating his bread and cheese, whilst the rest of them would gather around the piano which my Gran played and they would all join in singing song after song. My grandad remembered songs such as "Thora", "The Rosary", "When you come down the Vale" and "At night when you are asleep, into your tent I'll creep"! Some of these sings were written by Freddy Weather, who was a Barrister at court in Bristol. Later in life at Brookside Day Centre, my grandad and friends there would also sing some of these old songs. At the time Joyce Emilie worked in the offices at the Avon India Rubber Company.



The Parents

Mary & Robert Heny Legg



Marianne & William Slade Coombe



St. Michael & All Angels Church Choir – Richard S.J.Legg (back row 3rd choister from left).

Richard Legg was in St. Michael's Church Choir, man and boy. I remember going to Church every Sunday with my Gran and seeing my Grandfather in the Choir, I was christened and confirmed at St. Michael's, my mum and dad married there as well. Timothy Richard Legg, my Uncle also later sang in the Choir and my Great Uncle Robert George Legg played the church organ.



St Michael's Church Choir, 1944, on the day of the choir's first BBC broadcast.

The photo was taken on the altar steps and faces west, showing both chancel and nave. Apart from the choristers, it features their Musical Director, Organist and Choirmaster, Jack Arlett (wearing glasses, conducting); and just visible on the extreme right is the Assistant Organist, Kenneth Long, from the Royal Air Force Camp at Bowerhill, RAF Melksham.

WEDDING BELLS

Merry Greeting for Bridal Pair at Melksham Mr. R. Legg & Miss. J. Coombe

A wedding of much interest to Melksham residents was solemnised by the Vicar, the Rev. Basil Aston, D.S.O., at St. Michael's & All Angels, Melksham Parish Church on Saturday, 27th April, 1929. The contracting parties being Miss Joyce Emilie Coombe, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Coombe, Union Street, Melksham, and Mr. Richard Stanley John Legg, younger son of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Legg, the Gardens, Melksham.

The Bridegroom is chief clerk to Messrs. A.G. Smith and Son, solicitors, Melksham, and also a clerk to Melksham County Court and to Melksham Without Parish Council, secretary to the New Hall Trustees, Melksham, correspondent for the managers of Lowbourn Schools, and treasurer of Melksham Parish Church Choir (of which he is also a member).

The ceremony, which was choral, attracted a large congregation. Mr. J. Arlett, who was at the organ, played Guilment's March On A Theme Of Handel, Allegretto Grazioso (Bridge), and the Introduction to Act 3 of "Lohengrin" (Wagner) as voluntaries, and Mendelsohn's "Wedding March" at the conclusion of the ceremony. The choir rendered the anthem "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes" (Clarke), Mr. C.S. Terry taking the bass solo, and also led the singing of the hymns, "We Love The Place" and (during the signing of the register) "Jesu, Joy Of Man's Desiring" (Bach).

As the happy couple left the church they were greeted with a merry peal of bells.

Charming Bride

The bride looked charming in a gown of white satin, with an old lace veil (lent by the bridegroom's mother), which was trimmed with real orange blossom. Her bouquet was of carnations and narcissi. There were four bridesmaids, the Misses Ada Davis and Vivien Whyler, who wore dresses of lemon and blue georgette, and the Misses Barbara and Lila Cowley, whose frocks were of mauve and pink crepe-de-chine.

The two elder bridesmaids laid hats to match their dresses, and carried bouquets of blue and yellow irises, whilst the other two each wore a wreath of silver leaves and carried a basket of tulips. Mr. Coombe gave his daughter in marriage. The best man was Mr. R.G. Legg (bridegroom's brother), and Mr. L.C. Pearce was the groomsman.

A reception, at which there were 60 guests, was held at the Parish Room. The honeymoon is being spent at Weymouth.

The presents were numerous. The bride's gift to the bridegroom was a gold pair of cuff links, that of the bridegroom to the bride being a pearl necklace. By the staff of the Avon India Rubber Company (where she was formerly employed) the bride was given a canteen of cutlery and an oak clock. The bridegroom received a mirror in an oak frame and a nest of Jacobean oak tables as a joint presentation from the Lowbourn School Managers and the trustees of the New Hall, a Jacobean oak clock from Mr. and Mrs. Alan Smith, and two silver serviette rings from the staff of Messrs. A.G. Smith and Son.

Unknown Newspaper Article, April 1929



D 2167 - 92

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF MARRIAGE
Pursuant to the Marriage Acts, 1836 to 1898.

Registration District

1929. Marriage Solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish
of Melksham in the County of Wilts.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Residence.	Rank or Profession of
83	April 27.	Richard Stanley John Legg	29	Bachelor	Law-Clark	Melksham	Robert Henry Legg	Florest
	1929	Joyce Emilie Coombe	24	Spinster.		Melksham.	William Wade Coombe	Engineer

MARRIED in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England

This Marriage solemnized between us, Richard Stanley John Legg in the Presence of us, Robt. Henry Legg William Wade Coombe Basil Aston

I, Basil Aston of Melksham in the County of Wilts do hereby certify that a true copy of the Entry No. 83 in the Register Book of Marriages of the said Church. Witness my Hand this 27th day of April, 1929

Vicar

CAUTION:—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this Certificate, or (2) signs it as true, knowing it to be false, is liable to Prosecution under the Forgery Act, 1861.

After their honeymoon in Weymouth, Richard and Joyce moved into Landhayes, 8 West End, Melksham, a house that had been designed for them. My grandfather had stated that he couldn't carry his new bride across the threshold as she was a little on the portly side!



Richard Legg bought the land for £25 in 1928, plus a bit more for more land added later. He could have bought the whole plot for £100, but needed money for furniture as well.

The furniture was purchased in London, they had seen an advert in the local paper, stating that furniture would be delivered in a plain van, although Richard couldn't see why this was necessary. So they went to London for the day, chose the furniture, then had a super lunch (super my granddads favourite word), complete with a live orchestra playing. The house was on a corner and had a nice big garden, with an orchard.



I always remember my gran being a brilliant family cook, but this wasn't always the case, when they first got married she made a lot of banana custard. We always had a couple of roast dinners a week, invariably left over Sunday roast would served cold on one day and cottage pie the next. Lots of puddings and delicious cakes also. My gran was also a great knitter, the school jumpers were great, but I used to hate wearing the short sleeved & buttoned knitted ribbed vests, especially when I started at the big school!!

My grandparents had 3 children, Timothy Richard Legg – born 20th June 1930; Christine Dorothy Legg – born 25th May 1935 and Rachel Mary Legg – born 6th July 1942.



Timothy



Joyce, Richard & Tim



Christine



Christine, Rachel & Tim



Christine, Joyce, Tim, Helen & Little Me!