

**Henry and Elizabeth
Baggs**

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Opening

Henry Baggs

Henry Baggs was probably born in the spring of 1808, for he was baptised on the 8th May of that year, in the parish church of Hannington, in Hampshire, the day after the burial there of his ten-year-old uncle James Baggs, who had accidentally drowned in a brook near Kingsclere, Hampshire¹.

Not all his family background is clear, so it's as well to look at what we do know. His father's parents were Henry and Elizabeth Baggs (née Wyeth or Wythe). The couple had married in Hannington in 1773, and had had settled on them a moiety of the Wythe copyhold farmhouse, a large farmhouse at the centre of the Wythe copyhold, in the centre of Hannington village, less than 100 metres from the village pond. Henry worked locally, as a labourer. He had died not long before his grandson and namesake was born, being buried in Hannington churchyard on the 23rd February 1807. Elizabeth Baggs survived her



The Wythe copyhold farmhouse in Hannington, photographed in 1997

husband thirty years, and her grandson would have come to know her well².

Henry and Elizabeth Baggs had 14 children, of whom Henry Baggs's father John, baptised in Hannington on the 22nd May 1781, was the eldest son, though the fifth child of the family³.

John Baggs – a farm labourer, who became a sieve maker in later life—married Jane Gale on the 25th July 1805, in Bentley, Hampshire.⁴

Henry Baggs's mother's parents were John and Mary Gale (née Portsmouth), who had married in Bentley, Hampshire, on the 27th July 1778. Mary had died in 1801, but John lived well into his grandson's lifetime⁵.

John and Jane Baggs had already had one child when Henry was born—his elder brother John, baptised in Bentley on the 2nd February 1806⁶.

¹ Hannington parish register; born 1805–8, according to various census entries; Ken Smallbone (2010) *Baggs: The History of a Family. The Ancestors and Descendants of the Baggs Family of Hannington, Hampshire, England*. Basingstoke: The Changing Seasons

² parish register; Hampshire Burials, at FindMyPast.co.uk; Smallbone

³ Hannington parish register; Smallbone

⁴ Smallbone

⁵ Hannington parish register; "England Marriages, 1538–1973," database, FamilySearch: 10 December 2014, John Gale and Mary Portsmouth, 27 Jul 1778, citing Bentley, Hampshire, reference index based upon data collected by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, FHL microfilm 804,137; Smallbone; Hampshire Burials; "England Deaths and Burials, 1538–1991," database, FamilySearch: 24 December 2014, John Gale, burial 10 May 1832, citing Bentley, Hampshire, index based upon data collected by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, FHL microfilm 1,596,070

⁶ Hannington parish register; Smallbone

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Elizabeth Rolfe

Elizabeth Rolfe was born in Baughurst, Hampshire, around 1813 or 1814¹.

It has not so far been possible to locate the record of her baptism, but her origins can be surmised with a high degree of probability².

At the time of her marriage, she gave her father's name as Wm Rolfe, saying he was a gardener³. The only other clue to Elizabeth's background lies in the witnesses to that marriage: Rachel and Robert Rolfe. It seems highly probable that these were close family members of Elizabeth's, though it's not immediately clear whether Rachel was a Rolfe by kinship or marriage. There were two Rachel Rolfe's [spelt with an 'e'] in Hampshire old enough to have been a witness at her marriage—one born in 1776, resident in St Mary Bourne in 1841, and one born in Kingsclere in 1779, daughter of a Thomas Rolfe⁴. Neither of these, however, shows any link with a Robert Rolfe⁵.

By far the likeliest contenders for the Rachel and Robert, though, are as follows: In 1806 a William Roff (so spelt) married Jane Thomas in Dummer (where Elizabeth herself would later marry). Among their children were both Rachel Rolf [sic], baptised in Baughurst in 1817, later resident as a domestic servant in Basingstoke in 1851, and Robert Rolf, baptised in Baughurst in 1822, and living in Dummer in 1841. I believe this is a correct identification of the witnesses to Elizabeth's marriage. By way of corroboration, at Robert Rolfe's [sic] own marriage, at Speenhamland, Berkshire, in 1848, he gave his father's name as William Rolfe, and had as one of his witnesses Rachel Rolfe. Given the gap between the marriage date of William and Jane Roff, and the first known baptism of one of their offspring (eleven years, from 1806 to 1817), it seems reasonable to guess that they may have had other children during this interval, born elsewhere. I consider it likely that Elizabeth was one such⁶.

This being so, we can say that Elizabeth's father William Rolfe (Roff/Rolf) was born around 1780-6, in Hampshire—probably in Kingsclere⁷. From 1817-22 he worked as a labourer in Baughurst, though he had apparently left the village by 1831; at any rate he was not the head of any household there at that date⁸. In 1842 he was described as a labourer. At Elizabeth's wedding,

¹ Census; Smallbone(2010). 1851 and 1871 censuses suggest birth year c. 1813, 1861 & 1881 suggest 1814. All entries agree on Baughurst.

² Her baptism does not appear in the parish registers of Baughurst, Hannington, Wolverton, Tadley, Wootton St Lawrence, or Ewhurst, in Hampshire, or in those of Brimpton, Wasing, Aldermaston or Padworth, in Berkshire. There's an Elizabeth Rolfe baptised in Kingsclere on the 30th July 1815; she is described as base-born, daughter of Mary Rolfe, spinster, of Marsh—which appears inconsistent with information from Elizabeth's marriage certificate. Also in Kingsclere is an Elizabeth Rolfe, baptised on the 2nd June 1816, daughter of William and Ann Rolfe. I don't consider either of the Kingsclere baptisms to be the Elizabeth in question: the Baughurst and Dummer connections are absent, the date is wrong (though not grossly), and there appear to be no related Robert and Rachel Rolfe. However, given the absence of a baptism of Elizabeth, daughter of William and Jane, the 1816 Kingsclere baptism should perhaps not be dismissed out of hand. [parish registers; FamilySearch; marriage certificate]

³ Marriage certificate; Dummere parish register

⁴ Marriage certificate; censuses

⁵ Parish registers; FamilySearch

⁶ Baughurst parish register, Hampshire RO 58M80; HO 107/385/21 f8 p11; Robert Rolfe's marriage certificate

⁷ Death certificate suggests 1780, HO 107/385/21 f8 p11 suggests 1782-6. In the period 1778-90 no-one of this name was baptised in Dummer, Baughurst, Wotton St Lawrence, Tadley, Ewhurst, Wolverton, North Waltham, Deane, Church Oakley, Winslade, Farleigh Wallop, Nutley, Chilton Candover, Northington, Woodmancote or Popham. However there were two individuals named William Rolfe baptised in Kingsclere at this time. One was baptised on the 15th December 1780, son of John and Sarah Rolfe; the other on the 6th August 1786, son of William and Elizabeth Rolfe. It's not clear which of these is Elizabeth's father. [Kingsclere register is Hampshire RO 90M72]

⁸ Baughurst parish register HRO 58M80; 1831 census enumerator's return, HRO 58M80/PO18

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in 1843, he was described posthumously as a gardener; in 1848 he was described as a labourer; but in 1866, at his younger daughter's wedding, he was again described as a gardener. One may speculate that, as the only two 'gardener' references are from his daughters' marriages, his occupation may have been slightly upgraded socially, for the benefit of prospective sons-in-law.¹

Elizabeth's mother, born Jane Thomas, was born in about 1783, and was christened on the 28th September that year at St John the Baptist's church, Hannington (as Jenny). She was the third child and second daughter of William and Jane (Traish) Thomas. William Thomas, a farmer, had died in 1803.²

¹ HO 107/385/21 f8 p11; Baughurst parish register; FamilySearch

² "England Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," database, FamilySearch: 30 December 2014, Jenny Thomas, 28 Sep 1783, citing Hannington, Hampshire, reference item 4, FHL microfilm 1,596,135; "England Marriages, 1538–1973," database, FamilySearch: 10 December 2014, William Thomas and Jane Traish, 21 Oct 1779, citing Whitchurch, Hampshire, reference index based upon data collected by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, FHL microfilm 1,041,304; Hampshire Burials

Early Life

Henry to 1841

There's no getting away from the fact that Henry Baggs does not appear at all in the historical record from the time of his baptism up to 1841. The first 33 years of his life, then, are largely obscure.

Henry's brother Charles was born in 1810, and baptised at Hannington on the 10th June that year. His sister Catherine was born in 1813, being baptised in Hannington on the 1st August that year¹.

In December 1813 his uncle Richard Baggs married Sarah Walden, in her native parish of Overton².

Henry's sister Emily was born about this time, being baptised in Hannington on the 10th September 1815³.

Henry probably went out to work for the first time in 1816, for in the corn-growing districts of the south boys usually began work at the age of eight⁴. Writing in the year of Queen Victoria's succession, one observer, William Howitt, noted that village boys were set to work as soon as they were old enough to look after themselves. Often their first job would be watching a gate

that stands at the end of the lane or the common to stop cattle from straying, and there through long solitary days they pick up a few halfpennies by opening it for travellers. They are sent to scare birds from corn just sown, or just ripening . . . They help to glean, to gather potatoes, to pop beans into holes in dibbling time, to pick hops, to gather apples for the cider-mill, to gather mushrooms and blackberries for the market, to herd flocks of geese or young turkeys, or lambs at weaning time; they even help to drive sheep to market or to the wash at shearing time; . . . and then, they are very useful to lift and carry about the farm-yard, to shred turnips, or beet-root—to hold a sack open—to bring in wood for the fire, [. . .] They are mighty useful animals in their day and generation, and as they get bigger, they successively learn to drive plough, and then to hold it; to drive the team, and finally do all the labours of a man⁵.

Hop-picking—mentioned above—employed many children in Hampshire⁶.
Of the simple task of birdscaring, a later Victorian writer, F.G. Heath, recorded:

This occupation is almost invariably the first which is given to the children of the peasantry. It may seem a pleasant one to some persons, and, doubtless, like everything else, it has its sunny side. But the sunshine is very much chequered. In summer time a well fed child might manage sometimes perhaps to while away the dreary hours. But even in bright warm weather the monotony of bird-scaring must be painfully felt by the solitary child, who mostly has no

¹ Hampshire Baptisms, at FindMyPast

² "England Marriages, 1538–1973", database, FamilySearch: 13 March 2020, Richard Bags, 1813

³ Hampshire Baptisms

⁴ W. Hasbach (1894/1908/1966) *A history of the English agricultural labourer*. London: 228

⁵ Quoted in Pamela Horn (1976) *Labouring life in the Victorian countryside*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan: 61

⁶ Pamela Horn (1981) 'Country children,' in G.E. Mingay, G.E., ed., (1981) *The Victorian countryside*, 2 vols. London: II: 524

companions but the birds, and even these it is his duty to drive away. In winter, however, the case is far worse. It is difficult properly to realize the miseries endured by little children who, ill-fed and ill-clothed, are exposed to the inclemency of the weather, being often pinched by the cold and drenched with rain, which the imperfect shelter of the hedge cannot effectually keep off. It is hard dreary work, too, for a young child, who must be up before daylight so as to get to the field before the birds—who are always early risers—have begun their daily raids on the newly-sown seed. Then from early dawn until the birds have retired to roost the little bird-scarers have to scream and shout at the pilferers¹.

Birdscaring was a lonely task, for only one boy per field was normally permitted: farmers believed that “two boys is half a boy and three boys no boy at all”, since they would spend their time at play instead of work. The isolation in which the children worked was blamed by contemporaries for the slowness of speech and of comprehension which were considered characteristic of the country child².

Henry’s uncle Henry Baggs had moved to Thatcham, in Berkshire, by 1817, and married Mary Marcham there the following year. By Michaelmas 1819 Henry and Mary were at Dorrell’s wood, just to the north of Hannington village, but in the parish of Wolverton. They were to remain there for the remainder of their lives³.

Henry’s brother James was born in Hannington in 1818, being baptised there on the 11th January that year⁴.

His sister Sarah was baptised in Hannington on the 9th July 1822. She may have been born a year or so earlier, as John and Jane Baggs’ next child, Eli, was born in 1822 and baptised later that same year, on the 27th October, in Hannington⁵.

During the period 1816–34, for male farm servants and labourers in this part of England the mean age of leaving home was 14.2. If Henry was typical in this respect, he probably left home in 1822, for a live-in post as a farm servant⁶.

Henry’s sister Ann was baptised in Hannington on the 20th March 1825⁷. His great-uncle William Baggs died there in early May that year. In this year the Hampshire Friendly Society was founded, providing medical insurance for members, as well as endowments for children taking up apprenticeships⁸.

Henry’s brother Edmund Baggs was born in Kingsclere, and baptised in Hannington on the 6th August 1827⁹.

¹ Francis George Heath (1874) *The English peasantry*. London: Frederick Warne & Co.: 177-8

² Horn (1981) II: 525

³ “England Marriages, 1538–1973”, database, FamilySearch: 12 March 2020, Henry Baggs, 1818; Smallbone (2010)

⁴ Hampshire Baptisms

⁵ Hampshire Baptisms

⁶ K.D.M. Snell (1985) *Annals of the labouring poor. Social change and agrarian England, 1660–1900*. Cambridge: 326

⁷ “England Births and Christenings, 1538–1975,” database, FamilySearch: accessed 13 January 2016, Ann Baggs, 06 Aug 1827, citing Hannington, Hampshire, reference FHL microfilm 1,596,135; Hampshire Baptisms actually has two Hannington baptisms for an Ann Baggs, daughter of John and Jane Baggs, the earlier being on 1825-03-20—either this reflects private and public baptisms, or the first Ann may have died in infancy, with the name being re-used for the next daughter

⁸ Pamela Horn (1980) *The rural world 1780–1850. Social change in the English countryside*. London: Hutchinson: 145

⁹ Hampshire Baptisms

The winter of 1829-30 was a particularly harsh one; the harvest was not gathered in until “the snow was already on the barn in early October”. In the opinion of one Hampshire farmer it was the severest winter he ever remembered, “hard Frost, with a great Quantity of Snow on the Ground, from the middle of Feby”. The labourers must have faced the spring of 1830 with the memory of cold, hunger and unemployment clear in their minds and the conviction that they were not prepared to endure another season like it. The men’s forebodings were doubtless increased by the fact that the summer of 1830 was wet and cold and the harvest unimpressive. These were all contributory factors to the widespread rioting that took place in 1830 in many southern counties—the ‘Swing’ riots. Though Hampshire played a prominent part in the history of Swing, the riots seemed to have missed Hannington and Kingsclere. Certainly no member of the Baggs family was ever indicted for participation.

Henry’s youngest sibling, his sister Elizabeth, was born in Hannington in 1831, being baptised there on the 3rd July that year¹.

John Baggs, Henry’s older brother, a labourer, married Hannah Jewell at Baughurst on the 20th October 1832². Their children Esther, Frederick, and Edmund were baptised at Hannington in 1833, 1834, and 1836 respectively.³ Their sons Jacob and Charles were baptised at Southwick in 1839 and 1840 respectively.^{4 5}

Catherine Baggs, Henry’s sister, married Joseph Bridgeman at Hannington on the 5th May 1833⁶.

Henry’s grandmother, Elizabeth Baggs, died in Hannington in 1837, at the age of 82, and was buried in Hannington churchyard on the 1st = June that year⁷.

Charles Baggs, Henry’s brother, married Amy Garrett at Hannington on the 7th June 1838. Family tragedy followed, as his bride was dead within a month of the wedding, and was buried in Hannington churchyard on the 2nd July.⁸

This was a hard time for the family, as John Baggs, Henry’s father, died in Kingsclere on the 24th June, of Fistula [an ulcer]. He was buried in Hannington churchyard on the 26th June. John had worked most of his life as a labourer, but at the time of his death he was working as a sieve maker⁹.

¹ Hampshire Baptisms

² Baughurst parish register

³ “England, Hampshire Bishop’s Transcripts 1680–1892,” database with images, FamilySearch: 16 March 2018, Esther Baggs, 14 Jan 1833; citing Baptism, Hannington, Hampshire, Hampshire Record Office; “England, Hampshire Bishop’s Transcripts 1680–1892,” database with images, FamilySearch: 16 March 2018, Fred Boggs, 10 Aug 1834, citing Baptism, Hannington, Hampshire, Hampshire Record Office; “England Births and Christenings, 1538–1975,” database, FamilySearch: accessed 17 January 2016, Edmond Baggs, 09 Oct 1834, citing Hannington, Hampshire, reference FHL microfilm 1,596,135; “England Births and Christenings, 1538–1975,” database, FamilySearch: accessed 17 January 2016, Jacob Baggs, 10 Mar 1839, citing Southwick, Hampshire, reference item 6 p 61; FHL microfilm 1,041,288

⁴ “England Births and Christenings, 1538–1975,” database, FamilySearch: accessed 17 January 2016, Jacob Baggs, 10 Mar 1839, citing Southwick, Hampshire, reference item 6 p 61, FHL microfilm 1,041,288; Smallbone

⁵ Apart from exceptional events, this is the last time I’ll mention Henry’s nephews and nieces, of whom there were to be nearly forty. It would simply render this work unreadable.

⁶ Smallbone

⁷ Hampshire Burials; although “England Deaths and Burials, 1538–1991”, database, FamilySearch: 14 March 2020, Elizabeth Baggs, 1836 gives the year as 1836, “England, Hampshire Bishop’s Transcripts 1680–1892,” database with images, FamilySearch: 16 March 2018, Elizabeth Baggs, 01 Jun 1837, citing Burial, Hannington, Hampshire, Hampshire Record Office, confirms it as 1837.

⁸ GRO index; Smallbone

⁹ death certificate; Hannington parish register; Smallbone

Henry's sister Emily married John Oram on the 24th April 1840, at St Mary's, Kingsclere.¹ Henry's brother James married Frances Hillier at Kingsclere on the 11th December 1841.²

Elizabeth to 1841

As is the case for Henry, Elizabeth's early life is largely a mystery. She doesn't even make her first appearance in the historical record in 1841, as I have failed to locate her in the census enumerators' books for that year. The first real evidence of her very existence is the record of her marriage to Henry in 1843.

Her sister Rachel was baptised in Baughurst on the 2nd November 1817. Her brother John was baptised there on the 1st October 1820—and buried in Baughurst churchyard, aged just six months, on the following 17th April. Her brother Robert was baptised there on the 30th June 1822³.

Girls went out to work less often than boys, and as a rule not till they were twelve years old. After twelve, they were occasionally employed in hay-harvest, potato-setting and potato-pulling; Elizabeth would undoubtedly have assisted with gleaning⁴.

If her mother had to go out to work—as seems likely—Elizabeth, as a daughter of the household, would have had to take over the household duties, which would have involved not only the housework and cooking but also the tending and care of any younger member, as well as nursing any sick members of the family⁵.

Elizabeth's mother, Jane Rolfe, died in St Mary Bourne at about half past eleven o'clock in the morning of the 10th September 1837. She was described as a "poor person," and had died of a diseased liver. She was buried at Dummer on the 15th⁶.

¹ "England, Hampshire Parish Registers, 1538–1980," database, FamilySearch: 13 February 2021, John Oram and Emily Baggs, 29 Mar 1840; citing Marriage, possibly other reference information Hampshire Record Office, FHL microfilm 1,041,209

² GRO index; censuses; "England Marriages, 1538–1973," database, FamilySearch: accessed 13 January 2016, James Baggs and Fanny Hellier, 11 Dec 1841, citing Kingsclere, Hampshire, reference FHL microfilm 1,041,210; *Hampshire Advertiser*, 1891-06-24'; Smallbone

³ Baughurst parish register (HRO 58M80)

⁴ Hasbach: 227

⁵ Jennie Kitteringham (1975) 'Country work girls in nineteenth-century England,' in Raphael Samuel, ed. (1975) *Village life and labour*. Oxford

⁶ death certificate—NB very unusually there are two distinct death registrations for Jane Rolfe, one erroneously recording her burial, a marginal note referring to the other.

1841, and Marriage

The 1841 census recorded Henry Baggs as an agricultural labourer, living with his mother in the Kingsclere parish part of Hannington, apparently in Hannington village¹.

Also living in Hannington in 1841 were (Henry's uncle) Joseph and Elizabeth Baggs, and their son Stephen—Joseph working as an agricultural labourer. Richard Baggs (also Henry's uncle), his wife Sarah, and five children, were living in neighbouring Ibworth—Joseph also an agricultural labourer. Henry's uncle Henry Baggs, his wife Mary, and two children, were living at Wolverton—Henry another ag. lab.

Henry's brother John, an ag. lab., was living with his family in Southwick, Hampshire. Charles was living with his parents in Hannington. Recorded as a sieve maker, he had probably stepped into his father's shoes in this trade. Their sister Catherine Bridgman was living with her family in Burghclere, Hampshire. Emily Oram was living with her husband at Dublin, Overton, Hampshire. Their brother James, an agricultural labourer, was also still at home. Eli Baggs had left home, and was working as an agricultural servant in Litchfield, Hampshire. Their sister Ann was in domestic service, in the household of William Lewis, draper, of Swan Street, Kingsclere Dell. Edmund Baggs was working for Philip Hyde, farmer at Freemantle Park Farm, boarding in one of the farm cottages. The youngest sister, Elizabeth, was still living at home; not yet ten years old, she may have already been put to work, as the census return records "agricultural labourer".

In 1841 Elizabeth Rolfe was recorded as a servant in the household of George Buckeridge, grocer, of Bridge Street, Newbury, Berkshire.²

William Rolfe was living in Dummer village, working as a male servant. Resident with him was Elizabeth's brother Robert, who was an apprentice wheel-wright³.



Dummer parish church, photographed in 1997

Henry Baggs and Elizabeth Rolfe were married by banns on the 16th March 1843, at the parish church in Dummer. Henry was described as a labourer from Kingsclere, Elizabeth as of Dummer. Both were able to sign their names⁴.

One can only speculate as to how they met. There appear to have been no Rolfes in Hannington in 1841, but by 1851 there was a Rolfe household, resident at Stubbingtons—Samuel and Martha Rolfe, and their children. Stubbingtons is the very nearest settlement to Cottingtons Hill, where Henry and Elizabeth had taken up residence by that date. If Elizabeth was related to the Stubbingtons family, and Henry had already been working at Cottingtons Hill, he could easily have met her on a visit.

¹ TNA: HO 107/391/10 f29 p7

² HO 107/33/7 f17 p28. This entry is the only Eliz* Rolfe [soundex] resident in Hampshire or Berkshire who is apparently single. As her father died in Newbury only a year later, this seems more than coincidental.

³ HO 107/385/21 f8 p11

⁴ marriage certificate; Dummer parish register

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1849 Marriage solemnized by *Deans* in the *Parish* of *Dummer* in the County of *Southampton*.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
23	<i>March 16th</i>	<i>Henry Baggs</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Lab^r</i>	<i>Kingsclere.</i>	<i>John Baggs</i>	<i>Laborer</i>
		<i>Elizabeth Rolfe</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Widow</i>		<i>Dummer</i>	<i>John Rolfe</i>	<i>Gardener</i>

Married in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Church of England* by me, *H. Terry* Vicar.

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Henry Baggs* in the Presence of us, *Robert Rolfe* and *Rachel Rolfe*.

The marriage entry in Dummer parish register

Cottington's Hill and Hannington

After their marriage, Henry and Elizabeth took up residence in Hannington, staying there for the remainder of their lives¹. This is not to say they were wholly immobile, as in fact successive censuses show them resident at three distinct locations within Hannington. Clearly, however, Hannington was the focal point of their lives after 1843.

Henry, of course, had been born in Hannington. Whether he remained there through his early life can't be established, but certainly the 1841 census still shows him as resident with his mother, in the part of Hannington village that lies within the boundary of the parish of Kingsclere².

In 1851 and 1861 Henry and Elizabeth Baggs and their children are shown as resident at Cottington's Hill—again, in the parish of Kingsclere but actually a tiny satellite hamlet of Hannington. By 1871 the family are again living within the Kingsclere part of Hannington village, but at a different location from 1841. After Henry's death, Elizabeth took lodgings in another labourer's cottage in Hannington village³.

These cross-parish references need a little explanation. If one were to rely on the census exclusively, one would hardly realize that the Baggs household lived in Hannington at all, for much of this time, as most entries clearly place them in Kingsclere parish. However, part of Hannington village actually lay within Kingsclere parish, rather than Hannington parish. White's *Directory of Hampshire* for 1859 makes the picture clearer: "Part of the village is in the tithing of Hannington Lances, in Kingsclere parish." But to complicate matters further, whilst it's readily understandable that Cottington's Hill—to the north of Hannington, on the way to Kingsclere—could be part of Kingsclere parish, it's actually the southern part of Hannington village itself that comes under Kingsclere⁴.

I have had, therefore, to adopt a working definition of 'Hannington' that doesn't correspond precisely to any contemporary administrative unit or enumeration district. This definition includes: the whole of Hannington village, Freemantle Park, Cottingtons Hill, Stubbingtons, Walkeridge, Polhampton, Tidgrove, North Oakley, Bolthams, and Freemantle Farm. It excludes the Turnpike Road, Cannon Heath, Sheardown, Malshanger, and Ibworth. The intention has been to try and include all the tiny satellite communities, but not those large enough to be considered separate villages, or those I consider more likely to have related more closely (because of ease of communications) with Kingsclere itself. This is the fairest definition I was able to construct. I don't think it will distort anything I have to say, but I may as well mention one arguable exception to this: in later years, there were large training stables established west of the turnpike road, which were significant employers—however, specialist staff were evidently brought in, and there seems to have been little impact on local employment⁵.

White describes Hannington as "a pleasant village on the south side of the North Downs [. . .] crossed by the Roman Road from Salisbury to Silchester, near Cottington's hill, where there is a tumulus or barrow." "The Dean and Chapter of Winchester are lords of the manor, and owners of a great part of the soil, and the rest belongs chiefly to the Duke of Wellington." Described by Ken and Linda Smallbone in 1986, the village—first recorded in 1023—is "dominated by the

¹ censuses; children's birth certificates; death certificates

² HO 107/391/10 f29 p7

³ census returns

⁴ White (1859) *Directory of Hampshire*; TNA: RG 18/12/20289 (reference map of the registrar's district)

⁵ census



Detail from 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1810

The Old Series Ordnance Survey Maps of England and Wales, Vol. III. 1981, Lympe Castle, Kent

parish church of All Saints, and the three main farms—Manor Farm, Hannington Farm, and Dicker's Farm—grouped around the village green where the large pond used to be. Several old cottages fringe the road through the village, and at its southernmost edge stands the Wellington Arms, where the Vine Hunt kennels are located.”¹ To the north of the village lies Freemantle Park farm and Cottington Hill. Freemantle Park was an ancient royal estate, of which Cottington Hill—also known as King John's Hill—was a prominent feature. “According to tradition King John's house occupied a site on the South slope of King John's Hill, which reaches a height of 745' above the ordnance datum and commands a splendid view extending over six counties. A spectacula or watch tower was built on the summit by one of the Cottingtons in the 18th century, but is now in ruins.”²

The soil around Hannington is described as clayey, with chalk subsoil. Chief crops are given as wheat, barley and oats³.

¹ Ken and Linda Smallbone (1986) *The Baggs family of Hannington*, privately published: 53. Hannington is described at much great length in Ken Smallbone (2010) *Baggs: The History of a Family. The Ancestors and Descendants of the Baggs Family of Hannington, Hampshire, England*. Basingstoke: The Changing Seasons

² *Victoria County History of Hampshire*, 1911, vol. 4.:253

³ *Kelly's Directory of Hampshire*, 1880; VCH

Of Freemantle Park farm we can give a more detailed description, thanks to the survival of a 1936 sale catalogue. Although improvements had been made since Victorian times, including the construction of garages for several cars and even an aeroplane landing ground of about 800 x 300 yards, much of the farm appeared to have changed little over the period. The farmhouse was approached from Hannington village by a carriage drive on the south side, with a spur leading to a broad gravelled terrace in front of the residence; the drive continued beyond the residence over the Downs belonging to the estate, and gave access, on the northern boundary, to a road leading into Kingsclere. The total area of the farm was 454.352 acres, including 13 acres of woodland, 165 acres of downland (including the 100 acre Freemantle Park Down), 88 acres rough pasture, about 9 acres arable, and the remainder grassland. There were numerous well-built hunting jumps on the property (three removable oak rails). The farmhouse itself dated from about 1792, though part was older. It consisted of a lounge, hall, and two other reception rooms, eight bedrooms



Freemantle Park farm, photographed in 1936

(several with lavatory basins), two bathrooms, and a servants' sitting room. The building was of mellowed red brick, the upper walls tile hung, with a tiled roof including four dormer windows. Water was supplied from a 530 ft-deep artesian well. Farm buildings included, in addition to a magnificent stable block, two pairs of cottages, of which one was not modernised—this was the building on Cottington Hill, that the Baggs family had occupied. The rateable value of the farmhouse was £60, of the cottages just £8 each¹.

Hannington as seen in the census enumerators' books

1841

The 1841 census returns are particularly difficult to read—indeed, quite illegible in places. So 1841 details as given here are easily the least dependable of those I will be discussing. Other particular difficulties I should mention include: great uncertainty over the interpretation of 'household' and 'house', both between censuses, and between enumerators; and inconsistent recording of occupations—particularly between enumerators (Hannington was, of course, split between two civil parishes, so each census had two distinct enumerators).

1841 found Hannington a community of 266 souls, forming 55 households living in 52 houses (see Table 1).

¹ Hampshire Record Office 114M93. When I visited Cottington Hill in late September 1997, I found that the Cottington Hill reservoir had been built on the site formerly occupied by these cottages; two local men I spoke to told me the cottages had been demolished about 20 years previously.

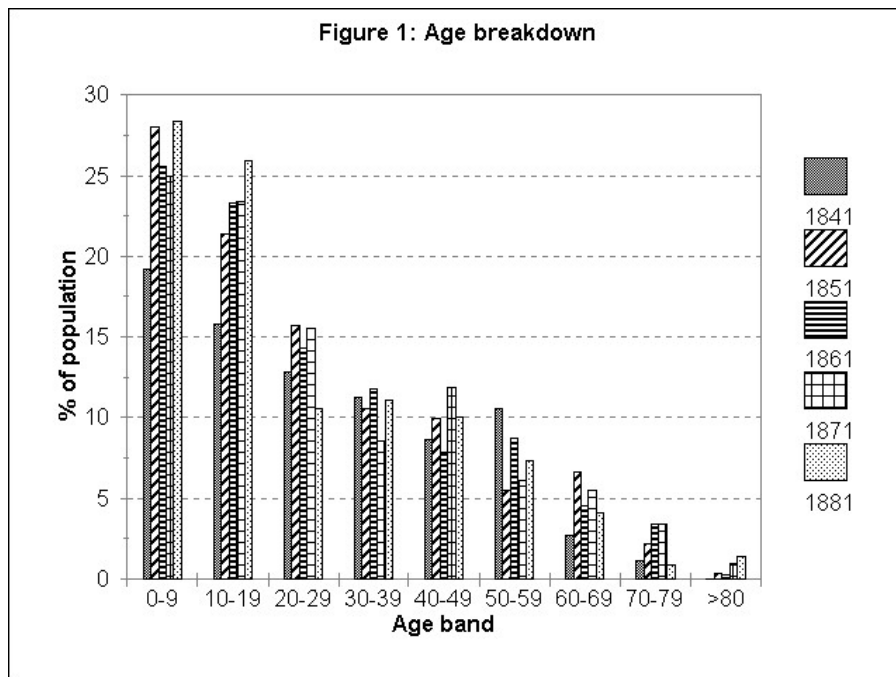
Totals	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
Houses	52	62	74	66	72
Households	55	68	76	74	77
Individuals	266	332	356	329	370
Average household size	4.84	4.88	4.68	4.45	4.81

Table 1—Census Totals

42% of the population was aged less than 20 years—58% less than 30. By 10-year age bands, there’s a steady decline from the youngest to the oldest, apart from a small peak in the 50-59 age band [13%]. Only three individuals are aged over 70, and none over 80. (NB fully 18% of age entries are illegible—my percentages are of the 210 legible entries.) (Table 2, Figure 1)

Age Band	1841		1851		1861		1871		1881	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
0-9	51	19.2	93	28.0	91	25.6	82	24.9	105	28.4
10-19	42	15.8	71	21.4	83	23.3	77	23.4	96	25.9
20-29	34	12.8	52	15.7	51	14.3	51	15.5	39	10.5
30-39	30	11.3	35	10.5	42	11.8	28	8.5	41	11.1
40-49	23	8.6	33	9.9	28	7.9	39	11.9	37	10.0
50-59	28	10.5	18	5.4	31	8.7	20	6.1	27	7.3
60-69	7	2.6	22	6.6	16	4.5	18	5.5	15	4.1
70-79	3	1.1	7	2.1	12	3.4	11	3.3	3	0.8
>80	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.9	5	1.4

Table 2—Age breakdown



94% were born in Hampshire—only 15 individuals being born elsewhere. (Table 3)

Place of Birth	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
Hannington/Kingsclere, or adjacent	-----	270	293	259	307
[elsewhere in] Hampshire	251	28	36	45	42
not in Hampshire	15	34	27	25	21

Table 3—Place of birth

Only three households appear to have domestic servants—just one in each. (Table 4)

Number of servants	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
1	3	7	2	1	4
2	0	1	3	4	3
3	0	0	1	1	2
4	0	1	2	0	0
5	0	0	0	1	0

Table 4—Domestic servants

Only 63 residents have meaningful occupational descriptions. Of these, 49 (78%) are described as Agricultural Labourers. There are 4 farmers, 3 servants, 3 blacksmiths, a carpenter, a sieve maker, the parish clerk, and one individual of independent means. (Table 5)

Henry and Elizabeth Baggs

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
Agricultural Labourer	49	97	57	57	20
Agricultural Labourer, Pauper		6	1		
Agricultural Labourer, Pensioner 19: Foot			1		
Pensioner					1
Farm Labourer					1
Labourer				4	44
General Labourer					4
Head Carter					3
Carter, Agricultural Labourer			25	2	
Carter Boy, Agricultural Labourer			13	2	
Carter				1	2
Carter Boy				6	7
Shepherd			1	2	3
Shepherd, Agricultural Labourer			5		
Shepherd Boy, Agricultural Labourer			2		
Plough Boy					3
Farm Servant [indoor]		2		13	15
Servant [on farm]		1			
Groom			2	1	
Gardener & Groom			1		
Gardener				1	1
Dairy Maid			1		
Farm Bailiff			1		
Woodman		2			
Farmer	4				
Farmer [shown as employing]		7	7	5	7
Farmer [not shown as employing]		1	1	1	
Retired Farmer					3
Servant	3				
Domestic Servant			3	8	12
General Servant - Domestic				1	1
House Servant		9	6		
House Maid			3	3	2
General Servant		1			
Housekeeper			1		2
Cook		1	2	2	1
Nursemaid		1	1		1
Nurse (children)		1		1	
Pauper, formerly Nurse		1			
Lady's Maid		1			
Governess			1	2	2
Companion				1	
Page			1		
Servant out of place				1	
Laundress		1	3		
Landed Proprietor		1	2		
Landed Property				1	
Landowner				1	
Independent	1				

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881
Fundholder			2		
Annuitant				1	
Gentleman					1
Blacksmith	3	2		1	2
Blacksmith [employer]			1	1	
Blacksmith [employee]			2		
Carpenter	1	3		3	3
Carpenter [employer]			1	1	
Carpenter [employee]			1		
Shoemaker			2		1
Cordwainer		1			
Sieve Maker	1	2			
Sieve & Basket Maker			2	2	
Basket Maker					1
Bricklayer					1
Bricklayer (Journeyman)				1	
Engine Driver				1	
Plain Needlework				1	
Dressmaker					1
Grocer, Baker & Publican			1		
Baker & Grocer			1		1
Assistant Baker					1
Grocer & Victualler				1	
Public House Landlord & Grocer					1
Grocer				1	
Shopwoman			1		
Draper					1
Carrier			1		
Curate of Hannington		1			
Rector of Hannington			1	1	1
Rector's Son Unemployed					1
Parish Clerk	1				
Parish Clerk Agricultural Labourer				1	
Teacher, Village School		1			
Schoolteacher					1
Schoolmistress			1		1
Parish Governess				1	
Scholar		31	34	41	99
Accountant					1
Police Constable			1	1	1
Pauper			1		
Total for whom meaningful occupations given	63	174	194	175	254

Table 5—Occupations

1851

In 1851 Hannington consisted of 332 individuals, forming 58 households in 62 houses. This may not really represent much of an increase on 1841, as some outlying parts of Hannington, as defined by me, may have been missed out from my 1841 figures, as not identifiable in the

enumeration books.

49% of the population was aged less than 20 years—65% were under 30. The small peak in age bands visible in 1841 was still present in 1851, now in the 60-69 age band [7%]. Seven individuals had reached their seventies, and one was now over 80.

90% of the population were born in Hampshire; 81% were actually born in Hannington, Kingsclere, or the neighbouring parishes.

69% of households consisted of married couples with children. 12% were childless couples. 10% were extended families, with a resident grandmother or grandfather. (Table 6)

Household type	1851	1861	1871	1881
1a	2	5	4	2
1b	2	2	6	6
2a	0	1	0	1
2b	0	0	0	0
2c	2	0	3	4
3a	7	9	3	7
3b	40	43	39	41
3c	2	2	2	1
3d	1	2	3	5
4a	1	1	0	2
4b	6	7	4	5
4c	0	0	2	1
4d	1	4	6	4

Table 6—Household types¹

- Key: 1a Solitaries (singletons in households), given as widowed
 1b Solitaries, given as non-married or of unknown marital status
 2a No family households (co-residents not constituting conjugal family units), co-resident siblings
 2b No family households, other co-resident relatives
 2c No family households, co-residents with no familial relationship given
 3a Single family households (conjugal family units), married couples without children
 3b Single family households, married couples with children
 3c Single family households, widowers with children
 3d Single family households, widows with children
 4a Extended family households (conjugal family units having kin-linked individuals), extension upwards
 4b Extended family households, extension downwards
 4c Extended family households, extension sideways
 4d Extended family households, combinations of 4a–4c, or any other form of extension

Source for analysis: Ruth Finnegan & Michael Drake, eds (1994) *From family tree to family history*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP in association with the Open University

Nine households included domestic servants; of these two had more than one.

¹ No information on household type can be established from the 1841 census.

174 individuals have meaningful occupational descriptions. 59% were described as agricultural labourers—the figure rises to 62% if woodmen and farm servants are included. Eight people were farmers. Fifteen described themselves as domestic servants of one form or another. 31 children [18%] were described as scholars. Hannington had gained a laundress, a cordwainer, a new curate, and a village schoolteacher.

1861

Hannington's population in 1861 was 356, made up of 76 households in 74 houses. 92% were Hampshire born, 82% born in the immediate parishes.

57% of households were married couples with children, and 12% childless couples. 9% were extended families. The same percentage were single-person households, of whom $\frac{2}{3}$ were widowed.

Eight households had domestic servants, of whom six now had more than one.

We have occupational details for 194 individuals. Whilst it's interesting to note that Hannington now had a couple of baker/grocers and a publican, as well as its first resident police constable, it's perhaps more interesting to see the breakdown of types of agricultural labour that this census provides for the first time: Although 59 people were generic agricultural labourers (one was also described as a pauper, and one as an army pensioner), there were additionally 38 described also as carters, including 13 carter boys; as well as 8 shepherds, including 2 shepherd boys.

1871

1871 saw an apparent decline in population over the previous ten years, with 329 individuals in 74 households; the reason for this decline, if real, is quite obscure. 92% of individuals were born in Hampshire, 78% in the immediate parishes.

53% of households were married couples with children, with now only 4% childless couples. 13.5% were single-person households, of whom less than half were widowed.

Seven households had servants; a single household had one servant, but four had two.

Agricultural occupations are confused this census year, with 13 individuals described as farm servants (indoor), and a considerable decrease in those described as carters. The industrial revolution appears finally to have reached Hannington, with one man now working as an engine driver.

1881

In 1881 Hannington's population was at its peak for the 40 years under review, with 370 residents. 54.3% were aged under 20, 64.8% under 30. 23 individuals—6.3%—were over 60, including no fewer than five octogenarians.

94% of the population were born in Hampshire, 88% in the immediate vicinity of Hannington. If anything, then, this rural community was more stable than it had been forty years previously.

In 1881 Elizabeth Baggs was one of eight singleton households in the village, of whom only one other was widowed.

In this year nine households had domestic servants, but for the first time since the 1840s none had more than three, and households with just one servant were commoner than those with two or three.

Agricultural work categories shifted again this year, but it's perhaps noteworthy that Hannington had three plough boys in 1881, for the first time so styled. The village also had its first recorded draper. There was a huge increase in the number of recorded scholars—39% of all individuals with a meaningful occupation stated. This presumably reflects the impact of Forster's

Education Act of 1870.

Work

Henry worked most of his life as an agricultural labourer. During the 1840s, however—certainly from 1844 to 1848—he worked as a woodman¹.

Surviving records give no indication of the manner in which Elizabeth Rolfe contributed to the household income, though doubtless she did, probably sharing in some of Henry's farmwork.

The work of an agricultural labourer

The Victorian labourer, unless he was casually employed, was hired by the year. The working year began and ended at Michaelmas or old Michaelmas. This was the end of harvest when the rent was paid and the men changed jobs².

The actual work done by the farm worker varied according to skill and season. The experienced man could be called upon to set seeds, hoe, weed, mow, make hurdles, cut chaff, spread dung, thresh, hedge and ditch, and even help maintain the farm roads³.

Labourers' usual hours were from six to six in summer, with an hour and a half off for meals, and from seven or first light to dusk in winter. Farm servants put in extra hours fetching hay, preparing teams, and tending to the horses and cows, often starting at four or five a.m. These tasks had to be done every day of the week, and Sunday work occupied three or four hours. Whether day labourers were paid in bad weather was a variable matter. In long periods of snow or frost they might not be required at all, but on the occasional days of heavy rain they were often employed in the barn at threshing or other jobs. Part of Sunday, and meal hours in the week if the allotment were handy, would be spent in raising vegetables, but often the allotment or potato ground was as much as a mile or more off and many hours were spent in tramping to and fro.

Harvest was the busy season of the year. Every man and woman was required from dawn to dusk, and although horse-drawn mechanical reapers came in from the 1850s they were for long supplementary to hand labour and most of the corn was still cut by scythe, sickle or bagging hook. It was laborious work and slow, and a gang of five, led by a good scytheman, required a day to cut two acres.

From about 1830 the threshing machine became widely used in southern England—a source of grievance among labourers—because it reduced winter employment—and a factor in the Swing riots. Other improvements, mainly appearing in the early decades of the century, such as drills, horse-hoes, cultivators, harrows, clodcrushers, scarifiers, probably added to the total amount of farm work because they usually represented additional operations or more intensive methods of cultivation rather than a saving of labour. On the whole, machinery made little impact on labour demands in farming, and indeed the total numbers employed on the land continued to rise up to the 1850s, and then began to decline only slowly⁴.

John C. Morton's *Handbook of Farm Labour*, published in 1861, gives the following 'Calendar of Farm Labour: Monthly Operations on the Farm':

January: Drainage operations; carriage of manure to heaps in fields, also of lime and marl, also of grain to market; threshing grain for sale; ploughing, probably the last of the stubbles for root crops; applying clay and marl, carrying lime, &c.; attendance on cattle and sheep; road and fence mending; top-dressing pastures.

¹ marriage certificate, children's birth certificates

² Alun Howkins, 'In the Sweat of thy Face: The Labourer and Work', in Mingay 1981 II:508, 512

³ Horn 1976: 61

⁴ G.E. Mingay (1977) *Rural Life in Victorian England*: 22, 82-3

February: Preparing for and sowing spring wheat, beans, and peas towards the end of the month; continuance of all works of carriage, viz. manures, lime, &c.; purchase of manure and seeds, and carriage home; marketing of grain and fat stock; attendance on feeding and breeding cattle, sheep and swine; gathering stones off the meadows which are to be mown.

March: Finishing sowing wheat, peas, beans; preparation of land for and sowing oats, barley, carrots, grass, clover, vetches; potato cultivation and planting; preparation of land for mangold-wurzel, turnips, cabbage, flax; turning manure heaps in the field and yard, for use in the cabbage or mangold-wurzel field; threshing, if necessary, for marketing or for straw; attendance on fattening and breeding stock of all kinds; marketing; mowing-fields to be cleaned, harrowed, rolled, and shut up.

April: Finishing sowing oats, barley, carrots, grass, and clover seeds; also potato planting, and, if possible, mangold-wurzel sowing; sowing sainfoin, vetches, flax; cleaning out yard and carrying to field all the manure for turnip fields; horse hoeing wheat, and possibly beans and peas; attendance on breeding and feeding stock of all kinds.

May: Finishing sowing of mangold-wurzel; transplanting cabbage; preparation of land for turnips; horse and hand hoeing grain crops; also carrots and parsnips and early-planted potatoes; cutting and carrying green rye and vetches. Cattle fed in houses or turned out to pasture; sheep in pastures; sheep-rearing.

June: Sowing turnips; horse and hand hoeing mangold-wurzel, carrots, parsnips, beans, cabbages, potatoes; preparing land still for turnips, rape, &c. Attendance on cattle and sheep in pastures; sheep-shearing; haymaking.

July: A last horse hoeing of carrots and parsnips; finishing sowing turnips as a main crop; sowing rape and mustard; mowing clovers and meadows; haymaking; harvesting peas and winter beans; ploughing and sowing turnips and rape, after rye and vetches; pulling flax when ripe enough; horse and hand hoeing turnips and mangold-wurzel; carriage of tiles, road material, &c. for autumn and winter use; also of lime for use on either clover or corn stubble.

August: Wheat, barley, oat, bean harvest; finishing haymaking; horse hoeing turnips and mangold-wurzel; ploughing and scarifying stubbles; finishing sowing turnip and rape after vetches or corn crop.

September: Corn harvest; autumn cultivation; ploughing clovers (after in some cases carrying manure on them) for wheat; sowing trifolium on corn stubbles.

October: Finishing corn harvest; preparation for and sowing wheat, rye, winter beans, winter vetches; harvesting potatoes, swedes, and mangold-wurzel; autumn cultivation of stubbles; carrying and application of lime, also of manure, on fields for root crops. Folding sheep on turnips.

November: Wheat sowing; finish harvesting swedes, mangold-wurzel, carrots, potatoes; continue carrying manure on to stubbles and ploughing them in; also ploughing clover and grass lands for oats; threshing grain for market and for straw. Attendance on cattle in stalls, and sheep on turnips in the field. Road mending, draining, chalking, marling.

December: Wheat sowing in favourable weather. Continuing ploughing stubbles, and finishing ploughing lea for oats; threshing and marketing; carriage of manure

to field. Attendance on fattening stock in stalls, yards, and fields¹.

The work of a woodman

Twentieth century census reports identify ‘male labourers in woods and forests’ as a distinct category from ‘male foresters and woodmen’, in number about 9% of the latter². J.D.U. Ward defined a woodman as “normally the lowest rank of worker employed in the maintenance of a wood or forest,”³—presumably equating the term more with the category of ‘labourers in woods and forests’. It’s not clear, in fact, that either interpretation adequately conveys the work Henry Baggs actually undertook.

It wasn’t uncommon for a labourer to work as a woodman as well as a farm worker. “In nearly every county are to be found men who can not only shave hoops, make hurdles and wattles, and sheepcribs during the winter months, but also work as skilled agricultural labourers on the farm in the summer.”⁴

Ken Smallbone described the work of one Jesse Baggs, a cousin of Henry’s slightly later in the century, in the following terms:

Jesse worked as a casual labourer [. . .] making hurdles and pea- and beansticks as a woodman when seasonal farm-work was in short supply. In the winter the men of Hannington would cut hazel sticks for crate-rods which were then sent to Sheffield for packing china.

In the spring and summer, however, there was enough work to do on the farms in the area. Jesse and his friends would walk to work—normally a distance of between twenty and thirty miles a day. He would be employed as a sheep-shearer and hay-maker in the early summer. Then he would be work at thatching hayricks—which would begin at 3 o’clock in the morning and would finish each day at noon when it was getting too hot for such work. High summer was the time for harvesting and making cornricks for the neighbouring farms. The men would also be employed to thatch the local cottages [. . .] In the autumn it would be back to the woods again for rod-cutting, when the sap was no longer rising.⁵

Given the evident local knowledge, it seems likely that this work pattern would have resembled Henry’s. Possibly Henry’s work as a woodman was more than seasonal, though, as the sources describing him as such in fact straddle the summer season⁶.

Women’s work

As mentioned earlier, there’s no direct evidence for Elizabeth Baggs’ employment, but it seems highly likely that her economic role would not have been restricted to the home.

Cobbett described a group of women labourers whom he met by the roadside in Hampshire as “such an assemblage of rags as I never saw before”⁷. Exhaustion must have been a familiar

¹ quoted in Horn 1976: 251-2

² Rowland Prothero, Lord Ernle (1961) *English farming past and present*. 6th edition, introduction by O.R. McGregor. London: 508

³ J.D.U. Ward (1952) *A woodman’s diary*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul: 95

⁴ F.E. Green (1920) *A history of the English agricultural labourer 1870–1920*. London: 3

⁵ Smallbone: 168–169

⁶ children’s birth certificates

⁷ quoted in J.L. & Barbara Hammond (1948/1978) *The village labourer*. London: 130

condition for the farm labourer; though the forms of field work were diverse most of them involved terrific physical effort¹. Even in 1867, women were considerably employed in Hampshire, weeding in the corn-fields, picking stones, spreading manure, and sometimes during winter in the barns².

But as the century progressed, day-labour by women was more and more confined to harvest work, though in the neighbourhoods where it had formerly been most extensive relics were still to be found outside harvest-time, as in Hampshire, where potato-growing employed many women into at least the 1880s³.

Where women didn't actively or regularly take part in agricultural labour they did other work, for instance in village industries. One such occupation, common in Hampshire, as in other woodland areas, was the harvesting and peeling of willow bark, for its subsequent weaving into baskets. Given that in 1861 and 1871 Hannington had sufficient work for two basket-makers, both members of the Baggs family, it's not unreasonable to guess that Elizabeth may have engaged in this activity⁴.

Standard of living: the balance sheet

Income

Of the period 1780–1830 the Hammonds wrote:

The agricultural labourers whose fathers had eaten meat, bacon, cheese, and vegetables were living on bread and potatoes. They had lost their pigs and fowl, they had ceased to brew their beer in their cottages. In their work they had no sense of ownership or interest. They no longer 'sauntered after cattle' on the open common, and at twilight they no longer 'played down the setting sun'; the games had almost disappeared from the English village, their wives and children were starving before their eyes, their homes were more squalid, and the philosophy of the hour taught the upper classes that to mend a window or to put in a brick to shield the cottage from damp or wind was to increase the ultimate miseries of the poor⁵.

Rather less emotively, Hasbach said:

Up to the passing of the new Poor Law in 1834 the material condition of the labourers as a class was on the whole not unsatisfactory where the parish gave adequate support. Two classes, however, suffered badly: namely the unmarried men, and those married men who, though they had no holding of their own, would accept no parish relief⁶.

Henry Baggs, of course, was in the former class at that time.

As a boy of 12, in the south, Henry probably earned 6d a day, on average, or 3/- a week. After

¹ Kitteringham: 94

² Hasbach: 412, Green: 19

³ Hasbach: 336

⁴ Kitteringham: 113, census

⁵ Hammonds: 177

⁶ Hasbach: 204

that wages gradually rose, so that at fourteen to sixteen boys would earn about 8d a day, or 4/- a week, and at sixteen to seventeen 10d or 1/-, i.e. 5/- to 6/- a week. But again it must be remembered that many fathers employed their children with them when engaged on a job paid by the piece¹.

How far wages rose (during the 19th century) is a difficult question. The remuneration of labour varies with the different seasons, with the different occupations of the men, with different contracts of service, with different districts of the same county. The one outstanding point is that the real earnings of agricultural labourers are not now, and, to a greater extent, were not then, represented only by the weekly sums which are paid in cash. To these weekly payments must be added earnings at piece-work, at hay and corn harvest, perks, allowances in kind, cottages and gardens, either rent free or rented below their economic value².

Some indication of the value of these in Hampshire is given by the Victorian writer T.E. Kebbel, who reported that agricultural wages in this county during the period December 1885 to December 1886 (admittedly just outside the life spans of our central figures, but a good guide for all that) were as follows: for men day labourers, 10s by the week, with extra for hay and corn harvest, hoeing and general piecework; the larger the farm the more they earned. For women, 5s or 6s by week; at harvest time, working with their husbands, 1/6 per day; with 4½d for beer and piece-work in harvest³.

The following table gives a guideline on local wage patterns in the first half of Henry and Elizabeth's lifetime:

	Male	Female
1806-10	6.8	4.09
1811-4	6.32	3.92
1816-20	6.61	4.11
1821-5	7.26	5.28
1826-30	6.01	3.03
1831-5	7.17	4.64
1836-40	5.64	4

Table 7—Mean yearly wages (in £) in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire & Hampshire⁴

¹ Hasbach: 228

² Ernle: 313

³ T.E. Kebbel (1893) *The agricultural labourer*. London: Swann Sonnenschein: 26

⁴ Snell: 415

Table 8 synthesizes a number of reports on weekly wage rates, though to the end of our period:

	Hampshire	SE & E Midland Average
1824	8/6	9/8
1833	10/4	
1837	9/6	10/10
1850-1	9/-	9/5
1860	12/-	11/9
1867	10-11/- (women 8d a day)	
1869-70	10/10	12/5
1872	13/8	14/10
1880-2	12/-	14/1

Table 8—Average weekly wages of ordinary agricultural labourers in England¹

The 1836 Report on Agriculture noted that in Hampshire, though there were not many absolutely out of work, “employment is not sufficient to give them remunerating prices, they are obliged to work for low wages, and the farmer cannot afford to pay higher wages, from the low price of his farm produce.”²

Wages rose sharply in 1853 and 1854, the years of the Crimean War, and from this period until 1871 the upward movement continued, with slight interruptions coincident with falls in the price of corn³.

According to a leading historian, F.M.L. Thompson:

There is no particular mystery about the agricultural prosperity of the twenty years from the early 1850s to the early 1870s. In this period rents increased by about one-fifth, farmers’ net incomes doubled, and the earnings of agricultural labourers rose by around 40 per cent, with particularly rapid wage increases in the 1860s. In the same period retail prices, although they cannot be measured with great accuracy, probably rose by about a quarter; and the general level of agricultural prices, on which all agricultural incomes rested, increased by much the same amount. In aggregate terms farmers and labourers were becoming better off⁴.

Throughout the nineteenth century the wages of agricultural labourers remained low, however, compared to those of most workers in manufacturing industry. In the middle of the century they were a mere 49% of the average industrial level.

¹ Ernle: 525; Green: 19, 76; Hasbach: 285, 412; Snell: 130

² quoted in Hasbach: 221

³ A. Wilson Fox, 1903, quoted in Horn 1976: 118

⁴ F.M.L. Thompson, ‘Free trade and the land,’ in Mingay 1981: 104

Admittedly within this general picture there were considerable regional variations as well as wide differences between individual workers according to age, experience and post held¹.

In 1872 and 1873, just after the Franco-Prussian War, rates of wages again rose considerably, and the agitation amongst the labourers, led by Joseph Arch, helped to maintain the high level until the period of agricultural depression which followed the disastrous season of 1879².

Expenditure

The average family in 1863 bought the following quantities weekly (Table 9). The weights are given in decimal fractions because that is the easiest way to calculate an average. They related to 370 unidentified families of an unstated composition:

	<i>lb</i>
Bacon	4.55
Bread	55.75
Potatoes	27
Cheese	1.5
Butter	1.56
Tea, coffee or cocoa	0.14
Sugar	2
Milk (pints)	1.75

Table 9—Average weekly expenditure³

In the middle of the century the average price of wheat was 50-55s the quarter, of potatoes c. ½d a pound; and (in Hampshire) of bread 1¼d, of butter 1s. a pound, and of meat 5d a pound⁴.

In 1870 cottage rents in Hampshire were from 1/- to 1/6 per week⁵.

By the early '80s, though labourers were able to buy many things cheaper than ten years previously, it should be borne in mind that beef, butter, and potatoes showed a distinct rise in price, whilst wheat and cheese remained the same as during the previous decade⁶.

The best overall view of the standard of living of labouring families in Hampshire, at the

¹ Horn 1976: 118-9

² A. Wilson Fox, 1903, quoted in Horn 1976: 118

³ G.E. Fussell (1949) *The English rural labourer*. London: 134

⁴ Fussell: 145; James Caird (1968) *English agriculture in 1850-1*. 2nd edition, introduction by G.E. Mingay. London: 474

⁵ Heath: 14-5

⁶ Green: 75

mid-point of the nineteenth century, is given by the contemporary writer James Caird:

The rate of wages for labour in Hampshire is at present from 8s. to 9s. and 10s. per week, the higher scale prevailing in the southern districts and the lower on the chalk-lands. Task-work is extensively resorted to by the farmers, and, on the whole, the labourer is better paid than in the adjoining counties. In many cases, however, he is not better off or more comfortable on that account than elsewhere, having to pay an increased rent for his dwelling house, from the scarcity of cottage accommodation. This scarcity arises from the effect of the law of settlement, which has induced the landlords in some parishes to pull down, whenever they had the opportunity of doing so, all buildings that were likely to afford a harbour for the poor. The consequence has been that the labouring-classes in Hampshire have had their families crowded together, to the great detriment of their morals. The rent of cottages, which in many of the surrounding counties does not exceed 3l. per annum, here rises to 5l. and 6l., and in some cases even to 10l. a year¹.

Accommodation

William Howitt, in *The Rural Life of England*, published in 1838, recorded that “In many of the southern counties, but I think nowhere more than in Hampshire, do the cottages realize, in my view, every conception that our poets have given us of them.” For a modern critic, Keith’s “rather desperate attempts to equate the evidence of his senses with the ‘pastoral’ poetic tradition prove revealing”².

A more objective view was very far removed from Howitt’s. In a survey of 5735 country cottages across 821 parishes, made in 1865, it was found that there was an average of from two to three persons per room. Only 250 cottages (4.4%) had more than two bedrooms. As to the air-space in the sleeping rooms, the law required 240 ft³ per person in common lodging houses, the Poor Law authorities required 500, and the Board of Health put the necessary amount as high as 800 ft³: but in the ordinary labourer’s dwelling there were only 156. The roofs were often warped, the houses were badly aired, the floors were often rotten or full of holes, the rooms had no windows, or perhaps glass was stuck into a mere opening in the wall³. James Caird, in 1851, had already commented on “the wretched old wood and thatch hovels common in the country.”⁴

The plot occupied by the old cottages on Cottington Hill occupied .402 acres. Cottage accommodation in Hampshire was said to be worse where the farms were large, like Freemantle Park farm⁵.

Where a large family shared a single bedroom there might be some attempt to obtain privacy by hanging counterpanes or old gowns, cut and sewn to form a curtain, across the room. But this had the disadvantage of preventing the circulation of air in what was already a close and uncomfortable atmosphere. In such circumstances furniture was kept to a minimum—a fact which family poverty was in any case likely to reinforce—while even cooking facilities and the supply of water were inadequate in many communities⁶.

Interestingly, it was not the labourers’ dwellings alone that were in poor condition. Caird

¹ Caird: 95

² W.J. Keith (1981) ‘The land in Victorian literature,’ in Mingay 1981: I:140

³ Hasbach: 400

⁴ Caird: 98

⁵ Fussell: 54-5

⁶ Horn 1981: II: 521-2

described Hampshire farms in 1851:

The farm-buildings consist of a huge barn, and a few sheds and yards; the barn and sheds being constructed of wood and thatch. The barn is generally large enough to contain a stack of 300 bushels of wheat, which is about the usual size of stacks on the larger class of farms. The sheds and cow-houses are very inadequate in extent, and entirely without plan or convenience for the economy either of labour or food. The tenants [Hampshire farms were normally held on yearly tenures] are bound to keep them in repair, however expensive it may be to do so. In every respect, the present state of the farm-buildings in Hampshire is unsatisfactory: insufficient in point of accommodation, placed here and there more by random than on any definite principle, constructed of materials so frail as to be in constant need of repair, they show that the landlords have given little attention to the wants of their tenants, and that their agents have failed to perform a most important part of their duties, when these duties are rightly understood¹.

Dress

At this period, Henry Baggs would certainly have worn a smock. Probably any labourer above the poverty line would have owned two smocks, one for working days and one for Sundays. Other garments were probably owned in much the same quantities². On the 18th January 1856 Henry Baggs was given a jacket, in a distribution by administrators of a Hannington parochial charity. On the 1st January 1862 he was given a great coat, on New Year's Day 1870 another jacket, and on the 2nd January 1871 a length of flannel³.

Children often wore clothes that had been handed down from older members of the family. In the case of the boys these were usually made from serviceable corduroy, while the girls wore long pinafores over their dresses, black woollen stockings, and stout boots like those of their brothers. On the 8th January 1857 the Hannington charity gave Henry Baggs a boy's jacket—it's not clear whether this was specifically for Henry Baggs junior, or whether the gift was to his father for the use of his sons; similarly in 1863 he was given a boy's great coat, and in 1865 his son, Walter—aged 10—was given a great coat, as was his youngest son, William, in 1869, at the same age—suggesting perhaps that the authorities deemed them likely to be working out of doors by that age. Although poorer children might run around cottage and village barefoot, especially during the summer months, they had to have suitable footwear to attend school, and buying the family's boots was, therefore, the first charge on a farm worker's harvest money. Due to the strong hard leather from which they were made they were extremely uncomfortable to wear when new, and during the winter months children's heels and toes would be rubbed raw with blisters and chilblains⁴.

¹ Caird: 88-90

² Fussell: 118

³ Hampshire Record Office 90M72/PK1

⁴ Horn 1981 II: 522; Hampshire RO 90M72/PK1

Diet

Dr Edward Smith, in 1863, surveyed the dietaries of rural workers, identifying average consumption as follows:

Bread	11.6lb
Sugar	6.6oz
Potatoes	4.4lb
Milk	1.6lb
Meat	15.3oz
Fats	5.2oz

Table 10—Average weekly consumption

Nutritionally, this represented:

Kilocalories	2760
Protein	70g
Fat	54g
Carbohydrate	460g
Iron	15.9mg
Calcium	.48g

Table 11—Average daily nutrition¹

For many families, bread and weak tea formed the staple items of consumption, supplemented by vegetables grown in the garden and a little bacon or cheese—though often these latter would be reserved for the father, the major breadwinner. Smith concluded that children were normally given the cheaper foods, like bread smeared with dripping or treacle, while milk was in surprisingly short supply, as farmers preferred to feed their surpluses to the pigs rather than make them available in small quantities to labouring families. According to Smith, tea was the only item of which women and children consumed more than men; and in many cases this was made from tea leaves which had been used more than once².

Leisure

In most communities it was the inn which acted as the social centre of the village. In its clubroom members of the local friendly society would meet to discuss common problems and

¹ John Burnett (1981) 'Country diet,' in Mingay 1981: II:559

² Horn 1981: II: 522-3

interests. Its taproom acted as an impromptu debating chamber, and in the skittles yard adjoining there was more vigorous fun for those who sought it. Hannington appears not to have had its own public house till some time in the 1850s, so prior to that time the Baggs family presumably made its amusement elsewhere¹.

Significant new forms of recreation also appeared in the mid-Victorian countryside. The already established pattern of holidays and fun-times (some immemorial, some quite recently introduced) persisted: occasions such as harvest home, shearing supper, Whitsun walks, agricultural shows, tithe feasts, markets and fairs—especially the annual hiring fairs at which farm labourers and domestic servants got fixed up for the coming year. The entertainments and wonders brought to the markets and fairs by travelling showmen reflected to some extent the developments of technology and communications; panoramas of the Wild West and the Australian gold-fields simply were not available earlier on; and the biggest roundabouts were beginning to be harnessed to steam-power. A slight widening of the countryman's horizon must have taken place; there was by all accounts a lot more drinking both on holidays and weekdays than there had been before the thirties; and, partly to counteract it, there were church- or chapel-organised entertainments (reading, lantern lectures, musical evenings, etc.) of a more systematic and deliberate kind than was usual before the forties. But overall the pattern of rural recreation saw only minor and incidental changes during most of Henry's and Elizabeth's lifetimes².

¹ Horn 1976: 16; 1861 census

² Geoffrey Best (1971) *Mid-Victorian Britain*. London: 218-9

Henry and Elizabeth Baggs

Family Life

Elizabeth's father, William Rolfe, died of a liver complaint on the 11th June 1842, at Sandford, near Newbury, in Berkshire—just over the county border, a few miles north-west of Kingsclere.¹

Amy Baggs, the first wife of Henry's brother Charles, had died in 1838. He was married again in June 1842, to Maria Kearsley, at Sherfield upon Loddon, Hampshire.²

On the 26th December 1843 Henry and his brother Charles gave evidence at an arson trial at the Hampshire Winter Assizes:

Charles Baggs said, that on Sunday the 15th day of October last, he was with his mother on a Down, which commanded a perfect view of the rick destroyed, and of the country about it. About a quarter before four o'clock he saw a woman standing under the rick, and a few minutes after he first saw her she ran away towards a hedge-row, which separated the field in which the rick stood from an adjoining one. Immediately after she left the rick, it burst out into flames. He and his brother directly ran towards the hedge-row, and after some search, found the prisoner sitting down in it. He was quite sure that the person who ran away from the rick could not pass through the hedge-row without he and his brother seeing her, as the elevated place where they stood entirely commanded the country about them.³

Henry's sister Ann married James Payne at Bentley, Hampshire, in March 1844.⁴

Henry and Elizabeth's first-born child came into the world on the 6th January 1844, in Kingsclere, and was named after his father. He was baptised in Hannington on the 18th February. A doctor wouldn't normally have been present at the confinement, unless complications were feared. Instead, for the charge of a shilling or so the local midwife or perhaps a neighbour would have presided, returning later to help nurse the mother and baby for a few days after the birth⁵.

Henry's uncle Richard Baggs died at Ibworth on the 5th April 1844⁶.

Hannington's village school, built in 1844, opened in 1845, in time for Henry and Elizabeth to send their children there, though it's not known whether they did. The Rectory House in Hannington was also improved, in 1844⁷.

Henry and Elizabeth's eldest daughter, Rachel, was born in Kingsclere on the 12th May 1846, and baptised in Hannington on the 21st June⁸.

On the 1st January 1847 the repeal of the Corn Laws came into effect. The long term result was an influx of cheap wheat from the New World⁹.

On the 24th July 1848 Elizabeth was delivered of another son, given the name John. Interestingly, the birth registration states that he was born at 7pm. The time being stated on the birth certificate normally suggests a multiple birth, but if a twin was born he or she certainly

¹ death certificate

² "England Marriages, 1538–1973," Database, FamilySearch: accessed 27 June 2015, Charles Baggs and Maria Kearsley, 1842, citing Sherfield Upon Loddon, Hampshire, reference 2:W7P658, FHL microfilm 1,041,370

³ *Hampshire Telegraph*, 1844-01-01

⁴ GRO index; Smallbone

⁵ birth certificate, parish register, Horn 1981 II:521

⁶ death certificate

⁷ White

⁸ birth certificate, parish register

⁹ Everyman

didn't survive. John was baptised at Hannington on the 20th August¹.

In this year a market was still being held in Kingsclere each Tuesday, but it was already falling into disuse, and probably ceased altogether about 1850².

On Christmas Eve of 1848 Elizabeth's brother Robert Rolfe married Ann Goddard, at Speenhamland, Berkshire. By this time he had become a carpenter, and was living at Speenhamland. His bride's father, Richard Goddard, was an innkeeper^{3 4}.

In 1851 Henry and Elizabeth Baggs were living at Cottingtons Hill, outside Hannington, where Henry worked as an agricultural labourer. The household included their three eldest children, Henry, Rachel and John. On census night Elizabeth was heavily pregnant with twins⁵.

In 1851 Henry's mother, Jane Baggs—now widowed—was working as a nurse—house servant, resident in the household of Andrew and Mary Twitchin, a farmer in North Oakley, Kingsclere. Mary Twitchin was a Baggs by birth, being Jane's late husband's first cousin once removed. The census records a baby in the household, just eight hours old—presumably the reason for Jane's presence⁶.

In 1851 Henry's aunt Rachael Allen was living in Sydmonton. His uncle Henry Baggs was still living at Wolverton with his wife and two children, working there as an agricultural labourer⁷.

In this year Henry's brother John was living in Southwick, Hampshire. Charles was still working as a sieve and basket maker in Hannington. Eli was now living in Farlington, Hampshire. Edmund was living at Wootton St Lawrence, Hampshire. Elizabeth, Henry's sister, was working as a servant at Deane, Hampshire.⁸

At the time of the 1851 census Elizabeth Baggs's younger sister, Rachel Rolfe, was working as a domestic servant in the household of Robert Meatyard, chemist and druggist, of Winchester Street, Basingstoke⁹.

On the 10th May 1851—nine days after Queen Victoria opened the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace—Elizabeth Baggs gave birth to twin girls, Jane being born at 7pm, and Elizabeth at 7:15pm. Both were baptised at Hannington on the 22nd June¹⁰.

Henry's aunt (by marriage) Elizabeth Baggs died in 1852, being buried in Hannington churchyard on the 10th November¹¹.

“In a famous phrase, Lord Ernle characterised the years 1852-63 as ‘the golden age of English Agriculture’. The human derelicts of an industrialising society who got subsistence by working on the land would not have recognised that description as an apt comment on their lives at any time during the nineteenth century.”¹² Nonetheless, “Wages rose sharply in 1853 and 1854, the years of the Crimean War, and from this period until 1871 the upward movement continued” . . .¹³

On the 9th May 1854 Henry and Elizabeth's son Walter was born in Hannington, where he was

¹ son's birth certificate, parish register

² VCH Vol 4:252

³ marriage certificate

⁴ Robert was the only one of Elizabeth's siblings who had children; though her Rolfe nephews and nieces were far fewer than Henry's, for consistency I'll omit all but exceptional references to them.

⁵ census, children's birth certificates

⁶ HO 107/1684 f158 p7; Smallbone

⁷ census

⁸ census

⁹ HO 107/1681 f159 p11

¹⁰ daughters' birth certificates; parish register

¹¹ parish register

¹² O.R. McGregor, Introduction to Ernle: cxviii

¹³ A. Wilson Fox in 1903, quoted in Horn 1976: 118

baptised on the 4th June¹.

Henry's mother, Jane Baggs, died in Hannington at the age of 69, on the 8th May 1858. She had suffered from cystitis for five weeks, and had finally been taken away after seven days of typhoid fever. She was buried in Hannington churchyard on the 12th May².

On the 10th December 1858 the Baggs' youngest child, William, was born at Cottingtons, Kingsclere. He was baptised at Hannington on the 9th January 1859³.

Henry's uncle Joseph Baggs died at Hannington in February 1859 at the age of 77.⁴

Henry's sister and brother-in-law Catherine and Joseph Bridgeman took the big decision to emigrate to Western Australia in 1859. They have descendants there today⁵.

By 1861 Henry and Elizabeth's eldest son, Henry, had left home, his whereabouts being obscure. Their eldest daughter, Rachel, was now working as a domestic servant, in the household of James Bradfield, farmer and miller, at Gaily Mill, Kingsclere. Jane, Elizabeth, Walter and William Baggs were still living with their parents at Cottingtons Hill. John, a woodman, was living with his family in Southwick.⁶

Henry's sister Hannah died in Kingsclere in 1863, aged just ten.⁷

On the 27th January 1866 Elizabeth's sister Rachel married Jesse Phillis Bone at Lady Huntingdon's Chapel in Basingstoke. Her husband was a widowed railway labourer, originally from North Waltham, son of a timber carrier. Rachel lied about her age, understating it by a full ten years—presumably to bring it closer in line with her husband's 36 years. Robert Rolfe was a witness to his sister's wedding.⁸

In 1871 James and Fanny Baggs were living at Frost Hill, near Overton⁹.

By 1871 Henry and Elizabeth had taken up residence back in Hannington village. Their son Henry had returned to the fold, and was living there with his parents. So too was Jane—still living at home, but now described as a domestic servant. Walter had become a farm servant, living in at Freemantle Farm, Hannington, in the household of Edward S. Spackman, a 27-year-old farmer, and his family. William Baggs had left home, as had their daughter Elizabeth¹⁰.

¹ birth certificate; parish register; information from Sidney Beck (Walter Baggs's grandson)

² death certificate; parish register

³ birth certificate; parish register

⁴ GRO index; parish register

⁵ Smallbone; information from Col Heading (one of the descendants)

⁶ census

⁷ GRO index

⁸ marriage certificate

⁹ RG 10/1239 f48 p18

¹⁰ census

Henry and Elizabeth Baggs

Close

Henry Baggs died in Hannington on the 29th May 1872, after four weeks' paralysis. He may in fact have been ill for some time, as the 1871 census gives him no occupational description—he was the only head of household in Hannington of which this is true. His body was buried in Hannington churchyard on the 3rd June 1872¹.

On the 7th June 1877 Henry and Elizabeth's eldest child Henry—now a gardener—married Marian Jeffreys, a printer's daughter, at Bishopstoke, Hampshire.²

On the 31st October the same year Henry and Elizabeth's son Walter married Alice Jane Ferry, at St Luke's parish church in Southampton; the bride's father had begun his working life as a ropemaker in Burton Bradstock,



Hannington churchyard, photographed in 1997

but had worked as a railway porter in Southampton for the last 20 years. By this time Walter had joined the drift from the land, and was working as a railway porter, resident in St Mary's Road, Southampton. Both Walter and his father-in-law Richard Ferry were employed by the London & South-Western Railway Company.³

On the 24th March 1878, Henry and Elizabeth's first grandchild was born to Henry and Marian in Hannington—Arthur Henry Baggs⁴.

On the 13th October 1879 the new grandson was joined by Walter and Alice's first child, Walter William, born at 15 Lower Dover Street, Southampton. Their elder daughter, Alice Margaret, was also born there, on the 31st March 1881⁵.

The 1881 census found the widowed Elizabeth Baggs living in a cottage in Hannington, as a lodger in the household of one James Cleave, a 48-year-old labourer, with his wife and eight children. Her sister and brother-in-law Rachel and Jesse Bone were living on the East side of Bunyan Place, in the parish of St Michael, Basingstoke; Jesse was still working as a railway servant—now a horse keeper. Elizabeth's brother Robert, by now a widower, was working as a millwright, and living with his family in Northbrook Street, in St Nicolas' parish, Newbury, Berkshire.⁶

At this date Henry and Marian Baggs were living in Kingsclere, Henry working as a gardener. Rachel Baggs was again a domestic servant, working as a nurse in the household of one Robert Harrison in Bishopstoke. John was a bricklayer, living with his family at 4 Dallas Road, Lewisham, London. Jane was a parlourmaid (domestic), of 47 Brunswick Road, Hove, Sussex;

¹ death certificate; parish register; RG 10/1246 f29 p12

² son's marriage certificate

³ marriage certificate; Richard Ferry's marriage certificate; RG 9/677 f20 p33; RG 10/1187 f35 p19; *Hampshire Advertiser*, 1877-04-14

⁴ grandson's birth certificate

⁵ grandchildren's birth certificates

⁶ census

Henry and Elizabeth Baggs

household of William Humphreys, lodging house keeper (she was later to marry Fred Appleton, and have three children). Elizabeth was a nurse domestic serv., of Scoop Cottage, Brighton Road, Kingston, Surrey, in the household of John Tilleard, solicitor. Walter Baggs was living with his wife and two young children at 15 Dover Street, Southampton—still working as a railway porter. William Baggs was a builders labourer, of 4 Bagley St, Battersea, London, lodger in the household of John Evenden, builders' labourer; he died in the Small Pox Hospital in Fulham in July 1881¹.

The 12th May 1881 saw the marriage at Bishopstoke of Henry's sister Rachel to Ludwig August Hirtes, a German-born widower, dairyman, and innkeeper at the Prince of Wales Inn, Eastleigh, Hampshire. The marriage was of extremely short duration, for she died on the 31st of the same month.²

On the 22nd December 1882 Walter and Alice's second daughter, Ruth Elizabeth, was born at 32 Dover Street, Southampton. By this date Walter had again changed occupation, working now as a prison warder. They were to have just one more child, Frank Henry John, born at Princetown, Lydford, Devon, on the 5th January 1888³.

On the 18th December 1884 Elizabeth's youngest daughter, Elizabeth—a resident of Hannington—married William Booker, a farmer, at Hannington⁴.

The summer of 1885 was characterised by a notable drought. This was the last summer Elizabeth Baggs was to see, for she died in Hannington on the 7th December 1885, from 10 months' malignancy of the liver and 2 months' ascites (the abnormal build-up of fluid in the peritoneal cavity⁵). Her body was buried in Hannington churchyard on the 12th December 1885⁶.

¹ RG 11/648 f13 p20; GRO index; Westminster cemetery registers

² GRO index; RG 12/924 f29 p21; Smallbone

³ grandchildren's birth certificates

⁴ marriage certificate

⁵ Wikipedia

⁶ Alan Armstrong (1971) *Farmworkers. A Social and Economic History 1770–1980*. 1988, London: Batsford: 110; death certificate; parish register; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 1885-12-19; Smallbone

Appendix: The cottage where Walter Baggs was born

On the 19th August 1948 Sidney Beck (a great-grandson of Henry and Elizabeth Baggs) and his family visited Hannington, Sidney noting in his diary:

In the morning we motored over to the little Hampshire village of Hannington to see the house where my grandfather (my Mother's father Walter Baggs) was born, opposite the village school. The "oldest inhabitant" was leaning against the doorway of his house & gave us some information about some old ladies who might tell us more about my grandfather. We went to visit them, 3 old ladies over 80 who were very pleased to see us. One of their sisters had married my grandfather's brother (his second wife).

The last reference must be to Susannah (Denman) Baggs, who was the second wife of Walter's brother John.

By 1997 Sidney could no longer remember how he knew which cottage in Hannington was the one his grandfather had been born in, though he guessed he had been told it by his uncle John Baggs. Sidney photographed the cottage on this visit, and I found it very little changed on my own visit nearly 50 years later, though the path and forecourt had now been gravelled over, and a fence erected across the path in line with the house, now known as Yew Tree Cottage.



The cottage, photographed in 1948

What remains a puzzle is that Walter Baggs was born in this cottage in 1854, yet his family were living, in 1851, 1858 and 1861, at Cottingtons Hill. Three explanations seem possible: i) the family lived in this cottage for a time, between 1851 and 1858 (when Walter's brother was born at Cottingtons); ii) Walter Baggs (presumably the ultimate source of the identification) was remembering a family home of his childhood, rather than his birthplace—his parents had moved from Cottingtons Hill back to central Hannington by 1871, and in theory could have done so by the summer of 1861, when Walter was just seven years old; or iii) Sidney or his source were simply mistaken. On the whole there seems little reason to doubt the identification of the cottage, and I am inclined to believe it was the Baggs family home during the 1860s.¹

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¹ All attempts to identify precise dwellings as recorded in the census, by comparison with tithe maps etc., have proved unsuccessful. The complicated boundaries of the enumeration districts, added to the difficulty of reconstructing the routes taken by the enumerators, have rendered the task apparently insurmountable.

Henry and Elizabeth Baggs