

# The Life and Times of Sir Henry Samman



## Sir Henry Samman

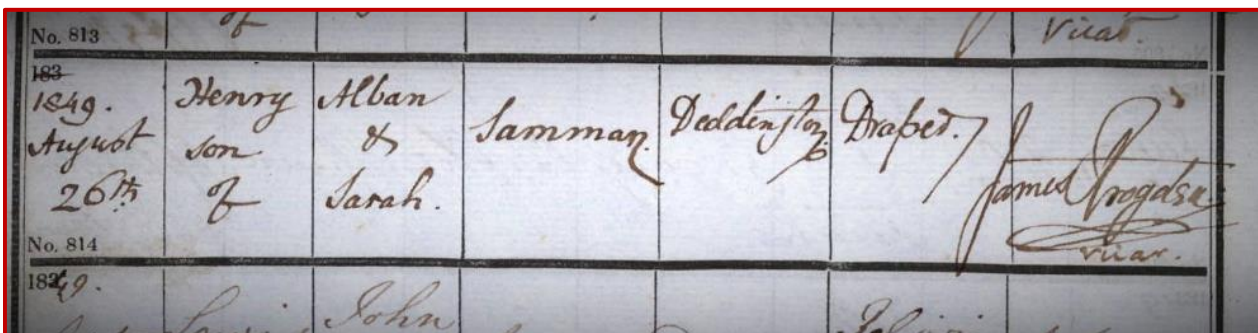


Our story is about this man, Captain Sir Henry Samman, Baronet. From 1912 until his death in 1928, he lived at Willerby Manor by which time he was a man of great wealth. He lived the high-life, frequently got into disputes but he was also a man of great generosity, especially in his later life. However, he was born plain Henry Samman and this is the story of his life. It will tell us how he acquired his great wealth and those impressive titles. So, it is time to delve into past and discover the life story of this remarkable man.

The story begins in 1849 in the small village of Deddington, a few miles south of Banbury in Oxfordshire. Alban Samman owned a draper's business in the centre of the village and he and his wife, Sarah, were married in 1844. By 1849 they were already parents to three children, two boys, Frederick and Alban, and a girl, Emily, and on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1849, Sarah was delivered of a son who they named Henry.



Deddington c1849



Henry Samman – baptism 26<sup>th</sup> August 1849

Henry was baptised just over a month later at the nearby church of St. Peter and St Paul Church in the village. This copy of the entry of his baptism in the parish register confirms his parents as Alban and Sarah Samman and further confirms that his father was a Draper. From later records it is known that his mother died

in 1855 when Henry was 6 years old, by which time he had 6 siblings. His father remarried and by this second marriage Henry acquired three more step-siblings.



Deddington c1860

On the left is a very early photograph of the village of Deddington around 1860. Not only does it show the church of St. Peter and St Paul where Henry was baptised, it also shows the draper's shop of his father Alban Samman (the light- coloured building to the right of the church). It is just possible that one of the people in the picture is a 10 or 11-year-old Henry.

By the time he was 11 years old, Henry Samman was at boarding school in Essex. An 1861 census entry for the village of Kelvedon, near Colchester, shows he was a 'scholar' at Brunswick House School under the tutelage of the Principal, Richard Read Willis. Henry was at the school, along with two of his brothers, Alban, aged 14, and William, aged 10. There was also another pupil from Deddington, John Franklin, who was the same age as Henry's older brother, with whom the family was no doubt friendly. What took him to the school in Kelvedon is not known.



Kelvedon village (date unknown but possibly 1860s). Brunswick House School was housed in the building behind and slightly hidden by the obelisk. The exceptionally large "School" sign in the foreground, largely obscuring that for Brunswick House, is for Kelvedon School, next door, run by William Wiseman.

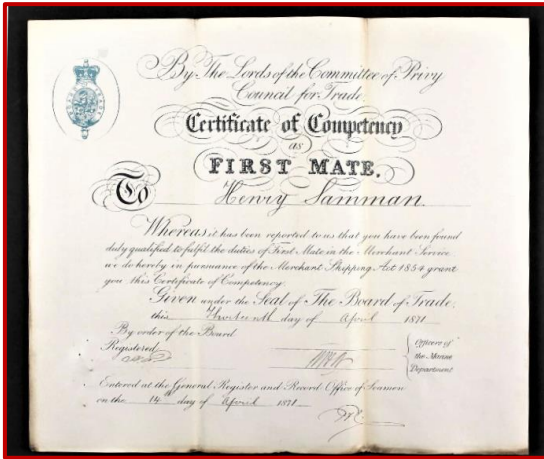
*Photo courtesy of Feering & Kelvedon Local History Museum*

The quiet village of Deddington where Henry was brought up was about as far from the sea as one can get in this country, but Essex was a little nearer and it could have been trips to the Essex coast near the Thames estuary that gave the young Henry a yearning to go to sea. There were also a couple of lads from Australia in the school at Kelvedon and possibly stories of an exciting voyage all the way from Australia to England gave Henry the urge.



Anyway, around the age of 14, Henry decided that life on the ocean wave was for him and he signed up as a cabin boy on a tea clipper that was sailing for India. This was an exciting time to be at sea especially on board one of the famous tea clippers which had a degree of romance about them. However, being the cabin boy meant Henry was the most junior member of the crew.

In addition to the hard discipline at a Victorian boarding school, life at sea under a voyage hardened captain would have been character forming, to say the least, and we shall see later how this perhaps shaped Henry Samman's rather robust persona.



Henry Samman – Certificate of Competency

Life at sea certainly suited the young Henry and he adapted to it well. He rose through the ranks and, in 1871, at the age of 21, he was awarded a Certificate of Competency as First Mate. It read as follows:

*Whereas it has been reported to us that you have been found duly qualified to fulfil the duties of First Mate in the Merchant Service we do hereby in the pursuance of the Merchant Shipping Act 1854 grant you this Certificate of Competency. Given under the Seal of the Board of Trade this thirteenth day of April 1871.*

Not long after this that he graduated to the position of Captain, or Commander, and was in the employ of the Wilson Shipping Company, which was headed by Arthur Wilson of Tranby Croft, near Hull, and his brother, Charles. This is probably what brought Henry Samman to Hull and from the mid-1870s, he made East Yorkshire his home.

By 1877, at the age of 28, when he married Elizabeth Sanders in the Parish Church of Islington,

1877. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Islington in the County of Middlesex								
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.
28	10 <sup>th</sup> July 1877	Henry Samman	28	Bachelor	Commander Merchant Service	Thornhill Square Islington	Alban Samman	Valuer
		Elizabeth Sanders	28	Spinster		Kiddington Oxon	John Sanders	Farmer
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Licence or after								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,			Henry Samman			Elizabeth Sanders		
			John Sanders			Pastor		

Marriage of Henry Samman, Bachelor, Commander Merchant Service, Thornhill Square, Islington, to Elizabeth Sanders, Spinster, Kiddington, Oxon. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1877

(above is a copy of the entry in the parish register) he had become a "Commander Merchant Service" and from now on he would be known as Captain Henry

Samman. Elizabeth was a farmer's daughter from Kiddington, a neighbouring village to Deddington. Henry's address at the time of his marriage was Thornhill Square in Islington, although by this time it is almost certain that he also had a base in Hull.

This was Henry's first marriage of three, as we shall see. However, it does seem that, at the time of his marriage to Elizabeth, Henry was already father to a girl following a dalliance with a housekeeper at one of his former residences, although it is uncertain whether Elizabeth knew of this. More on that later!

The next time we catch up with Henry and his new wife is in the 1881 census and by then he was living in East Yorkshire at Seaton, near Hornsea, with Elizabeth and two daughters, Lucy and Mary, both born in Hornsea, and three servants. By



Seaton Manor 2020

now, his occupation is given as a steam-ship owner. It was here that his son, Henry, was born in 1881.

They were living at the Manor House in Seaton and, perhaps inspired by the success of the two Wilson brothers, Henry Samman was beginning to build up his own shipping line. He purchased his first vessel in 1876 and named it

the 'Bonny Kate', a small steam ship of 827 tons, which had been built in 1870. In 1878, Captain Samman was commanding the "Bonny Kate", and in one instance was engaged by the Admiralty to carry explosives to the Mediterranean.

Once Henry Samman had settled in Hornsea he joined the country set and took up fox hunting. This was to be a passion throughout the remainder of his life. It is a controversial subject these days but Henry Samman took up the sport with great enthusiasm, perhaps over-enthusiasm, as the following story from a report in the *Hull Packet* on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1885 illustrates. This is the first time we get an insight into his fiery temperament.

At the Hull County Court yesterday an extraordinary case was heard in which Mr. George Cooper, of Hornsea, sought to recover the sum of £50 from Captain Samman, also of Hornsea, for an assault in the hunting field on December 8th. On this date Mr. Cooper and Mr. Samman were out with the Holderness hounds. Between two and

three o'clock Mr. Cooper was riding along with two gentlemen named Dixon, who were farmers in the district. They had got separated from the body of the hounds by a large drain, when suddenly there started from the bottom of the drain a fresh fox. They were riding away when Samman came up and said to Cooper, "Did you see the fox run down the drain, and two hounds, going like the devil after him?" Cooper replied "No; he has doubled back and just crossed the field in front of us." Samman said "Do you mean to call me a liar?" Cooper said "No, certainly not; I would not be so un-gentlemanly." Samman repeated what he said about the fox running down the drain and again called Cooper a liar. Mr. Cooper thereupon turned to Messrs. Dixon and appealed to them for a confirmation of what he had stated and then demanded an apology from Samman for calling him a liar. Upon this Captain Samman turned around in a violent passion, and struck Cooper violently with his horse whip on his head and back, and wherever he could get at him, at the same time saying, "You little —, I have owed you a grudge for some time, and I will take it out of you." Mr. Cooper then rode away, saying to Samman "I will make you pay for this." The bile of Mr. Samman seemed to rise still higher by this remark, and he flew at Cooper again and administered a second thrashing, and, not being content with the two attacks, he was about to administer a third, when Cooper galloped away. Samman caught Cooper at the gate, and seized the bridle of his horse. Cooper thereupon jumped off, leaving the horse with Samman, who tied it to the gate-post. Cooper made across the field on foot, and was followed by Samman on horseback. Cooper jumped a fence to get out of the way, and, as Samman followed, he jumped back again into a drain which ran along the lane. Cooper, who was much exhausted by running, managed to get back to his horse again, being followed by Samman, to whom he said he had had enough of this, and told him to drop it. Some conversation took place and Samman threatened Cooper that if he went to law, he would give him another thrashing, mentioning that he had nearly killed a man 17 stones in weight. Cooper demanded an apology by letter, but to this application he received no reply, and hence the court action. Cooper, having given evidence, the jury, after a short consultation, gave a verdict for the full amount claimed, with costs on the higher scale.

In 1891, the census of that year informs us that Henry Samman and his wife were living in Anlaby Road, Hull, at Victoria Terrace. This was a large town house and is no longer in existence, although one house in the terrace remains. It is now owned by the National Health Service and stands opposite the present site of Hull Royal Infirmary.

By this time, Henry Samman owned around 10 ships and was beginning to amass considerable wealth.

The next story is about one of his ships from this era, a ship called the S.S. Somerton. On one voyage in the early 1890s, the Somerton was en-route from the Mediterranean to Leith in Scotland. In addition to the official cargo, it would seem the captain, the ship's mate and steward had brought on board 200 turkeys, 108 of which had been purchased by the captain himself, a man named W.H. Coysh. By coincidence, they had picked up the turkeys in Izmir in Turkey! This, apparently, was common practice for Hull captains to import poultry, without having to pay freight. However, having got wind of this, Henry Samman sued Coysh for the cost of freight for the whole 200 turkeys. The court found in Samman's favour, although Coysh was only held liable for his portion of the poultry and had to stump up 54 shillings!



Ship's Bell: S.S. SOMERTON. Built 1889; Lost 1896

Well, what about the bell? On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1896, the Somerton was en-route from New Orleans to Rouen in France with a cargo of grain when, nearing its destination, it foundered during a storm in the estuary of the River Seine near Le Havre and sank. The ship was lost but the bell was somehow retrieved from the wreck and now hangs outside a private residence nearby.



Walkergate House, Beverley: Home of Henry Samman, 1892-1912

Moving on to 1901, Henry Samman was living in Walkergate, Beverley, where he had been resident at Walkergate House since 1892. However, by 1901, he was a widower. His wife, Elizabeth, had died after a long illness in December 1893 at the age of 44.

The census was taken in March 1901 but by September of that year we find Henry, at the age of 52, marrying for the second time. His second wife was Kate Southall, a 28-year-old spinster of 9 Hanover Terrace, London. The marriage took place at St. John's Church, Notting Hill, although Kate's father was an estate agent in Scarborough.

He brought his young bride back to Beverley to live at Walkergate House, where they both lived until 1912. During his time in Beverley, Henry Samman became a well-known figure in the town and became Mayor of Beverley in 1911. Although,



he lived in Beverley, his offices, known as Deddington Chambers, were in Hull in Bowlalley Lane.

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1901. Marriage solemnized at the District Parish Church in the Parish of St John & St Mary Hill in the County of London

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.
88	Sep 19 <sup>th</sup> 1901	Henry Samman	52	Widower	Ship Owner	Beverley Yorkshire	Alban Samman	Gentleman (deceased)
		Kate Southall	28	Spinster	—	9 Hanover Terrace	William Southall	Estate Agent

Married in the District Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by License or otherwise by me,  
*Henry Samman* in the Presence of us, *W. Southall*  
*Kate Southall* *Frank Williams*  
 This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Henry Samman* *Kate Southall* *W. Southall* *Frank Williams*

Marriage of Henry Samman, Widower, Ship Owner of Beverley, to Elizabeth Sanders, Spinster, 9 Hanover Terrace, London, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1901.

It was during Henry Samman's sojourn in Beverley that, in 1907, he bought the whole estate at the village of Routh, just east of Beverley from the Earl of Londesborough. The map below shows the acreage of the estate as 2,438.



Map of Routh c 1900

This purchase of the estate in Routh included the patronage of All Saints' Church in the village. This gave Henry Samman the privilege of appointing the vicar of the parish and, in 1908, he duly appointed his nephew, Rev. Arthur Samman, to the post. Arthur Samman had previously been the vicar of Cherry Hinton in Cambridgeshire.



The Edwardian period marked the start of the era of the great ocean liners and Henry Samman was in the vanguard of those who embraced this new mode of travel. In 1909, he and his wife, Kate, were embarking on the *S.S. Tagus*, on their homeward journey, after spending a holiday in Jamaica. This perhaps was not the first, and it certainly was not the last, of Henry Samman's long overseas voyages on luxury liners.



SS Tagus

In 1911, at the age of 62, and during Henry Samman's time as mayor of Beverley, he was called as a witness in the case of a Mrs. Ellen Ford, who was seeking a judicial separation from her husband on the grounds of cruelty. In his testimony, Henry said that, on one occasion, while at Mr. Ford's house he heard him using

"filthy language" to his wife. He told Mr. Ford that he was not a man that would stand by a let a lady be insulted. "Then we had a scrap in the dining room", which involved them both ending up on the floor! Afterwards, Mr. Ford had apologised.



Willerby Manor c1920 – home of Henry Samman 1912-1928

Having lived in Beverley for 20 years, in 1912, Henry Samman left the town and moved to Willerby, where he purchased Willerby Manor. Along with the house came the gardener's and coachman's cottages on Main Street, Willerby, together with grounds and paddock. As the caption tells us, he lived at Willerby Manor until his death in 1928, but a lot of water was to flow under the bridge before then.

The portrait on the right by Fred Elwell, the accomplished Beverley artist, shows Henry Samman in full hunting regalia in 1912 - the year he moved to



Portrait of Henry Samman by Fred Elwell, 1912

Willerby. As we have already seen, he was an extremely enthusiastic huntsman and for some years was Master of the Holderness Hunt. After his death, this portrait was donated to Hull Trinity House where Henry Samman was an honorary Elder Brother and there it still hangs today.

Whether he eventually did give up riding is not known but Henry Samman certainly embraced the age of the motor car with great enthusiasm and in 1923 he acquired a Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost. The 100-year-old car has now been lovingly restored and was recently sold at auction for £180,000!



Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost  
formerly owned by Henry Samman

The auction catalogue described the car as follows: “The fascinating Silver Ghost now offered was built to the order of the Hull-based shipping magnate Sir Henry Samman, who had it clothed from new in a Limousine body by Barkers, from whom it came off test on November 14, 1923. The accompanying chassis record suggests that Samman retained the Ghost until his death in March 1928.”

The First World War marked a turning point in the life of Henry Samman. By this time, much of his trade was with Russia and in early 1917 as Russia was heading towards revolution, trade began to decline. Foreseeing a general slump in shipping at the end of the war Henry sold up and, in his own words, “made a substantial profit.” Later he proudly claimed that “I got rid of ship after ship at nearly the top of the market. It was plain as daylight to me that it must come, with seamen’s wages four times what they used to be, and all other costs mounting.” Henry Samman was thus sitting on a large fortune and from this point onwards, he devoted himself to charitable activities.

He divested himself of the offices on his company in Bowlalley Lane, Hull, which he donated to the Hull Chamber of Commerce and Shipping for them to use as their headquarters. The building



Samman House, Bowlalley Lane, Hull

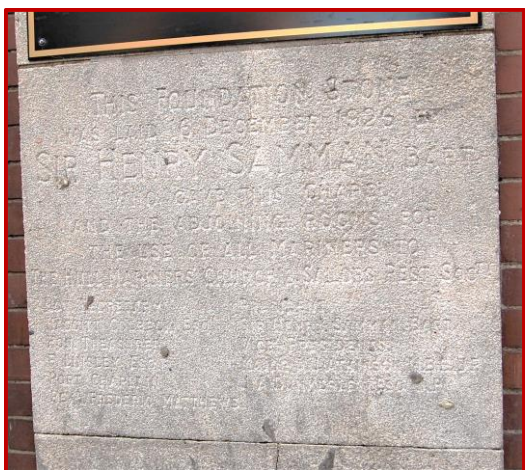


subsequently became known as Samman House in his honour. A large council chamber was erected at the rear of the building complete with an impressive stained-glass window depicting shipping through the ages and incorporating the Chamber's crest and the coat of arms of Hull Trinity House. The building served the Chamber of Commerce for many years but has now been converted into a number of flats, each named after one of ships that had been owned by Henry Samman. So, his legacy lives on.

Not far from his offices in Hull, on Posterngate in the shadow of Trinity House, he later donated £10,000 for the building of the Mariners Church of the Good Shepherd. This was subsequently built in 1927 as an extension to the already existing Mariners Institute. The church has now closed and has been converted into The Mission Public House. "This well-established venue transforms every Friday and Saturday into one of Hull's busiest nightspots," says the current publicity. A far cry from its original purpose!

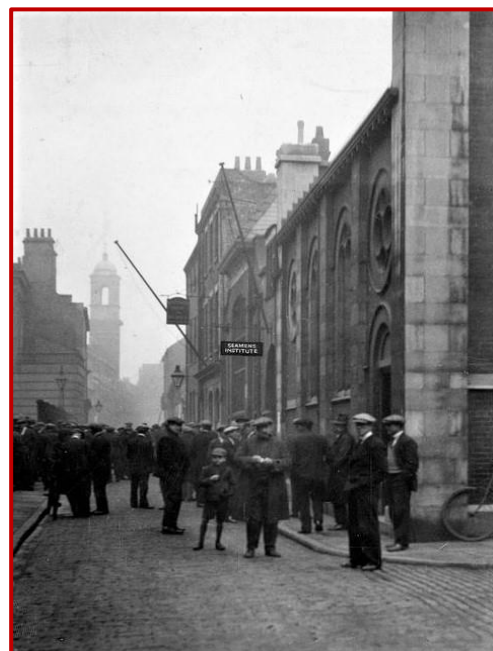
However, the foundation stone is still in place. It reads:

THIS FOUNDATION STONE WAS LAID 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 1926 BY **SIR HENRY SAMMAN BART.** WHO GAVE THIS CHAPEL AND THE ADJOINING ROOMS FOR THE USE OF ALL MARINERS TO HULL MARINERS CHURCH & REST SOC<sup>T</sup>.



Foundation stone of Church of the Good Shepherd, Posterngate, Hull.

In 1917, he endowed what became known as 'Henry Samman's Hull Chamber of Commerce Endowment Fund' with £10,000. This was given in order to aid the study of business and languages to assist with overseas trade. The fund still exists today and grants are given by the trustees to young people to help them learn a foreign language in the relevant country or for business studies.



Hull Mariners' Church and Institute, Posterngate, Hull, 1930s. (Church in right foreground)



In July 1917, he bought a house on Main Street in Willerby and three years later gifted it to the community of Willerby and Kirk Ella for social, educational and leisure pursuits. Henry Samman is said to have been at the house one day soon after the end of the First World War and saw unemployed ex-servicemen standing in the street outside. He invited them in and allowed them to use the front room to play cards and other games.



House on Main Street, Willerby, purchased by Henry Samman in 1917. The photograph shows an earlier resident, Samuel Binnington, with members of his family outside the house around 1905.

This is perhaps what gave him the idea, in 1920, of gifting the house, as he did, to the people of his local community.

After extensive renovation, taking two years, the Willerby and Kirk Ella Institute was opened to the people of those two villages at a public gathering, the proceedings of which were reported in the Hull Daily Mail of 10<sup>th</sup> October 1922.

### **Willerby and Kirk Ella Institute Sir Henry Samman's Splendid Gift**

Due to the generosity of Sir Henry Samman, Bart., Willerby Manor, in particular, and residents of Willerby, Kirkella and West Ella in general, who have subscribed handsomely, the little wooden hut at Willerby, which for many years has served a useful purpose as a reading and recreation room, has been replaced by one of the largest Parish Institutes in the district.



A celebration was held in October 2022 to mark the centenary of Sir Henry's gift to the community and a commemorative blue plaque unveiled on the building on Main Street.

Also on Main Street, Willerby, he helped Charlie Harrison, a First World War veteran who had lost an arm in the conflict, set up his general store, which became a very successful business. Offices of the local Conservative Party now occupy the site.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1920, the war memorial at St. Andrew's Church, Kirk Ella, was unveiled by none other than Henry Samman. It is likely that he made a substantial

contribution towards its cost. The Hull Daily Mail reported - "In pouring rain, Henry Samman removed a large Union Jack from the cross and the Bishop of Hull pronounced the dedication and read out all the names on the plinth."

In late 1920, Henry Samman embarked on a trip to Australia and New Zealand but not before leaving his business affairs in the hands of a partner named Robert James Watkin, giving him instructions to pass certain monies to various individuals and to manage the affairs of his various estates in his absence. This included £35,000 to the Lloyd George political fund and £1,000 each to a certain mother and daughter known to Henry. These donations would become something of an embarrassment to him in years to come – more of that and of Robert James Watkin later.



War Memorial, St. Andrew's Church, Kirk Ella

Henry Samman set off for Australia in December 1920 with his two daughters, his second wife, Kate, having died in London a few years earlier in 1916. Her father had been an East Yorkshire estate agent, and she was laid to rest in a family grave in Driffield.

It has been said that "as befits a sea-captain, Henry Samman was pugnacious, argumentative, outspoken, and impatient."

On his arrival in Sydney towards the end February 1921, he proved this to be true with a few trenchant comments! He clearly had not been happy with his reception as he disembarked from the ship and was quoted in the Sydney Telegraph as saying, "All those white men on the wharf could be gentlemen if this country was run right."



Sydney, Australia, 1920s

"Instead of that, I see them doing black mans' work and doing it darned badly," "This," he added emphatically, "is a black man's country. It has enormous resources and could be developed tremendously with black labour- but, as it is" -

and, with a dynamic gesture he signified his utter impatience with things as they were in Australia.

“Why, in Adelaide” he continued “as an instance, I had to practically go down on my knees in a hotel for a meal because it was a few minutes after six o’clock. Some people who came from a boat a few minutes later had to go without.”

Then, as if relenting the vitriol, conceded that Australia was truly called “God’s own country.” It was a short-lived tribute, however, because the candid critic from Hull added that “God wouldn’t be able to live here now.”

Not exactly the correct way to win friends and influence people!

Later, covering his visit, the Australian newspapers described him as “a picturesque character,” “larger than life” and “aggressive and mentally vigorous even at the age of seventy-two.” Quite a restrained response under the circumstances!

Australia must have breathed a sigh of relief when Henry Samman left for New Zealand, where he arrived with his daughters on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1921. Arriving in Auckland, he then went on to see the geothermal hot springs and mud pools at Rotorua. The following news from England may have reached him by this time:

Whitehall, March 11, 1921.

Letters Patent have passed the Great Seal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland conferring the dignity of a Baronet of the said United Kingdom upon the undermentioned gentlemen and the heirs male of their respective bodies lawfully begotten :—

Henry Samman, of Routh, in the East Riding of the county of York, Esquire.

And so, he became Sir Henry Samman, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet of Routh. His son Henry, “lawfully begotten” from his first marriage, would succeed him as 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet.

The reason given for the bestowal of this honour on, the now, Sir Henry Samman was for his contributions to public services. However, we must remember that donation of £35,000 to Prime Minister Lloyd George’s political fund. There was nothing new in rewarding a party benefactor with an honour or two for charity work. Lloyd George, however, appears to have taken things to a whole new level, dispensing titles from a permanent office in Parliament Square.

It was said that a knighthood could be purchased for a knockdown price of £10,000, whilst a much-coveted hereditary peerage, such as a baronetcy, was



worth a considerable amount more at £40,000 – £50,000. Business boomed! In just four years, 1,500 knighthoods were awarded and twice as many peerages created than had been in the previous twenty years. By 1922, it is said that Lloyd George's till had rung up more than £2,000,000.

So, we must make our own minds up about the reasons for Sir Henry Samman's elevation to the peerage!

Despite his outburst on arrival in Australia, back home in 1922 Sir Henry Samman (as he now was) was host to the Premier of South Australia, Sir Henry Barwell, during that gentleman's visit to Hull in late March of that year. Sir Henry Samman, as President of the Hull Chamber of Commerce, presided at a reception for the Premier at the Guildhall on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March. Other worthies present were the Mayor, the Sheriff, Thomas Ferens and Major Cyril Entwistle, who was, then, Liberal MP for Hull South West.



The picture above shows a group, possibly outside the Guildhall, including Sir Henry Samman (circled in red) and the South Australian Premier (circled in yellow).

On the return of Sir Henry Samman from his earlier trip to Australia and New Zealand, the partnership between Samman and Robert Watkin was dissolved in January 1922 by mutual consent and the story now moves on five years to 1927. Enter, once again, Robert James Watkin, Sir Henry's former business partner. The two men were in court on opposite sides of a dispute. The proceedings of the case were reported in full in *The Times* in May 1927 but here we must cut a long story short.

The upshot was that Watkin was suing Sir Henry for money, £1,350, he considered due to him for services rendered to Sir Henry five years previously whilst Sir Henry was away on his long trip to Australia and New Zealand with his two daughters. Watkin claimed that he had had to manage Sir Henry's private estates and control his investments during his extensive world trip in 1921. He considered that he had not received adequate remuneration for this.

It seems clear that Robert Watkin bore a grudge against Sir Henry. Evidence for this was that the £35,000 he transferred to the Lloyd George political fund, Watkin claimed, was clearly a bribe to buy his Baronetcy. He also brought up the payment of £1,000 to the two women, one of whom was mother to an illegitimate child of Sir Henry's.

Sir Henry's lawyer in cross examining Watkin about this questioned him: "Is it that you knew that a sum of money had been transferred for the benefit of two women and that one was a lady by whom the defendant (Sir Henry) had had a child and that the other was that child? Did you say that because you thought that Sir Henry Samman would be content to buy your silence at a price? You know that this is not pleasant for a man to have all things that may have happened before his marriage raked up and ventilated in a court of law." In other words, were you trying to blackmail Sir Henry?!

And again, Watkin was challenged on his allegation that Sir Henry had, in effect, bought his Baronetcy for £35,000. "Did you think Sir Henry would be willing to pay [what you claim he owed you] instead of having the matter ventilated in court?"

Another claim of Watkins, that Sir Henry had not paid all his dues to the Inland Revenue was also seen as a threat to leverage his claim for compensation.

Although, Watkins' claims were possibly all true, the jury returned a verdict in favour of Sir Henry and Watkin ordered to pay costs.

As we have already heard, Sir Henry Samman died in 1928 at the age of 79. However, a year earlier it seems that he was far from finished. His second wife, Kate, had died in July 1916, and in 1927 he married for a third time, an event much heralded in the press:

#### **HULL BENEFACTOR'S COMING WEDDING**

The marriage of Sir Henry Samman, Bart., widower, aged 78, shipowner, of Willerby Manor, near Hull, with Mrs. Maud Evelyn Orenge, widow, aged 45, of Hasker Street, Chelsea, will take place very shortly. They first met during Sir Henry's recent travels abroad, she being sister of the British Consul at Ajaccio. She was at Willerby Manor this week, where Sir Henry entertained some of his friends. The date of the wedding has not been made known, except to intimate friends of the parties.

*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, Saturday 27 August 1927*

And indeed, the wedding took place just over a month later:

**SIR HENRY SAMMAN MARRIED** Sir Henry Samman, the noted Hull shipowner, was married in Chelsea, on Saturday, to Mrs. Maude Evelyn Orenge, the 45-years-old widow of a French army officer.  
*Hull Daily Mail, 29 September 1927*

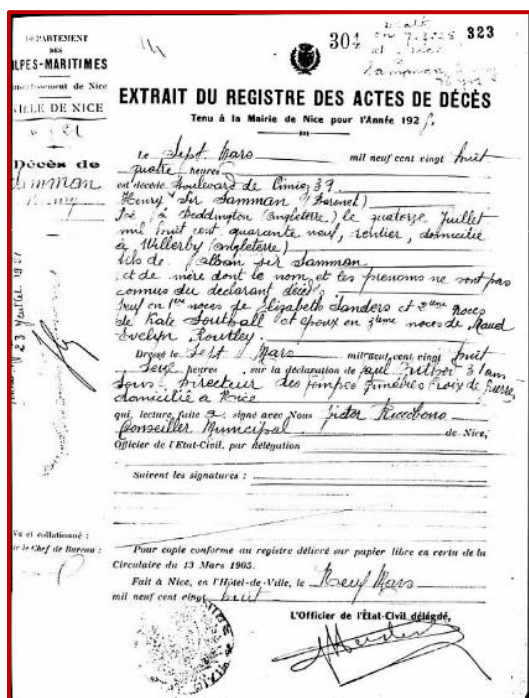
150/1025-(4916/1927) 1302/10948 W.L. & R.M. Ltd. 130										P.M. 21			
Name of Ship "NARKUNDA"		5.		Date of Departure 16th December 1927									
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NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF LONDON.													
(1) Contract Ticket No.	(2) NAMES OF PASSENGERS	(3) Last address in the United Kingdom	(4) CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd, or 3rd)	(5) Port at which Passengers have contracted to land	(6) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers	(7) AGES OF PASSENGERS							(8) Country of Intended Future Permanent Residence*
						Adults of 15 years and upwards	Children 14 & 13	12 & 11	10 & 9	8 & 7	6 & 5	4 & 3	
	REID Hope	26 Linden Gdns.	1	ADELAIDE	Buyer								Adelaide
	MONTGOMERY Annie Gordon	10/2 Union St. of Nottingham Gate	1	LITTLETON	married woman								New Zealand
	RICH Isabel	Australia,	1	"	"								"
	MONTGOMERY John	7, Cornhill. G.C. B.	1	"	"								"
	Mona	"	1	"	"								"
	Hugh Alexander	- do -	1	"	"								"
	BSAN Langham	"	1	"	Nurse								"
	RITCHIE Francis	Iqmore, Henthais Rd.	1	SYDNEY	Shipowner								England
	Catherine Isabel	Woking	1	"	"								"
	Kenneth Hamilton	"	1	"	"								"
	ROBERTS Sidney	Leighton Buzzard	1	MARSHILL	Doctor of Med.								"
	Louisa Kate	"	1	"	married woman								"
	SAMMAN Henry	Willerby Manor	1	COLOMBO	Sh. Shipowner								"
	Maude Evelyn	near Hull	1	"	married woman								"
	SCOVELL George Francis	17a Cleveland Sq.	1	"	Tea Planter								India
	Barbara Winifred	Lancaster Gate.	1	"	married woman								"
	SAMMAN Percival Bernard	Barnes Hotel	1	SYDNEY	Importer								Australia
	Florence Sophia	W.I.	1	"	married woman								"
	SINCLAIR Edward	158 Portdown Rd.	1	"	Salesman								"

Passenger manifest for SS Narkunda, departing London 16<sup>th</sup> December 1927

Less than 3 months after their marriage, the couple were on their way to Colombo in Ceylon as the above passenger manifest reveals. Interestingly, Sir Henry Samman had given his age as 70, eight years short of his actual age!

Whether the couple arrived in Ceylon is not known, but four months later they were to be found in Nice in the south of France staying at a luxury hotel.

Alas, Sir Henry failed to make it back to Willerby for it was in Nice he died on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1928 at 4 a.m. On the left is a copy of his death certificate. An English translation provides the salient information:



Death Certificate of Sir Henry Samman 7<sup>th</sup> March 1928



7<sup>th</sup> March 1928 at 4 a.m. at Boulevard de Cimiez 39

Henry Sir Samman (Baronet)

Born at Deddington (England) 14<sup>th</sup> July 1849 lately living at Willerby (England)

Son of Alban Samman

The name of his mother is not declared

Married firstly to Elizabeth Sanders and secondly to Kate Southall and thirdly to Maud Evelyn Routley

Drawn up 7<sup>th</sup> March 1928 at 4 p.m.

The certificate names his wife by her maiden name, Routley, prior to her first marriage. No cause of death is recorded, although elsewhere it was reported that his end followed two strokes in quick succession.

Sir Henry Samman, Baronet of Routh was laid to rest in the churchyard at All Saints Church, Routh. His grave is simple, without ostentation, his two daughters, eventually, laid beside him.



All Saints' Church, Routh

A memorial service for Sir Henry was held at Holy Trinity Church, Hull, on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March attended by many hundreds and at which many

tributes were paid to Sir Henry. Later, a stained-glass window in the Mariners' Church of the Good Shepherd was dedicated to Sir Henry. In October of that year, the Hull Daily Mail reported: "The beautiful interior of the Mariners' Church has an atmosphere not felt in many larger churches. It stands as a memorial to that distinguished son of the sea, the late Sir Henry Samman Bart., who knew the work of the Missions to Seamen, not only in Hull, but in other parts of the world. "

**SAMMAN** sir Henry (baronet) of The Manor House Willerby Yorkshire died 7 March 1928 at Nice France Probate London 10 July to William Cooper Burkinshaw chartered accountant and Harry Leicester Saxelbye solicitor. Effects £428575 is. 9d.

The entry in the Probate register indicates that he died an extremely wealthy man, with effects to the tune of £428,000,

roughly equivalent to £25m in today's money.

Before we end this story, there are one or two footnotes to add. At the end of June 1928, Sir Henry's home for the past 20 years, Willerby Manor, together with all its contents, was put on sale, the house eventually being purchased by Francis Marris Hamilton, an oil and tar manufacturer of Hull.



Aerial view of Willerby Manor, c1940

Sir Henry's son from his first marriage, also Henry Samman, inherited his father's title and became 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet of Routh. He lived out his life at a house named Browsholme in Cottingham. Although he had married a widow with several children, he never had children of his own and his title died out with him in 1960.

Maud Evelyn Samman, Sir Henry's third wife, died in Eastbourne on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1954 leaving an estate worth just over £70,000.

Sir Henry's daughters, Lucy and Mary, never married and lived out their lives in North Ferriby, eight miles west of Hull. Lucy died in 1966 and Mary in 1972. Both are buried beside their father in the churchyard at Routh.

Nothing further is known about Henry's former housekeeper and her daughter or whether either of them were eventually married. We do not even know their names. If the daughter never married nor had any children, then, today, there are no living descendants of Sir Henry Samman. Nevertheless, after hearing his story, we must agree that Sir Henry Samman was a man that left his own unique mark on the world.

Sir Henry Samman is commemorated in several locations in and around Hull:



Samman Road, Beverley



Samman Close, Anlaby



Samman Hall, Routh



Samman House, Bowlalley Lane, Hull.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks is due to many people who have contributed towards this article. Margaret McGlashan has carried out extensive research on Willerby Manor and this has been a valuable source of information. As always, the staff at Willerby Library have been helpful in providing resources, particularly in enabling access to the Ancestry© website from where much of the Samman family history has been drawn. The encouragement of the Anlaby, Willerby and Kirk Ella (AWAKE) u3a Local History Group has also been a source of inspiration. Both Kevin Cooke and Anne Townley of the Feering and Kelvedon Local History Museum have been most helpful in providing the information about Brunswick House School in Kelvedon and the photographs on page 3 and in the Appendix on page 22.

More information about the Local History Group of AWAKE u3a can be found at <https://u3asites.org.uk/awake/page/22001>



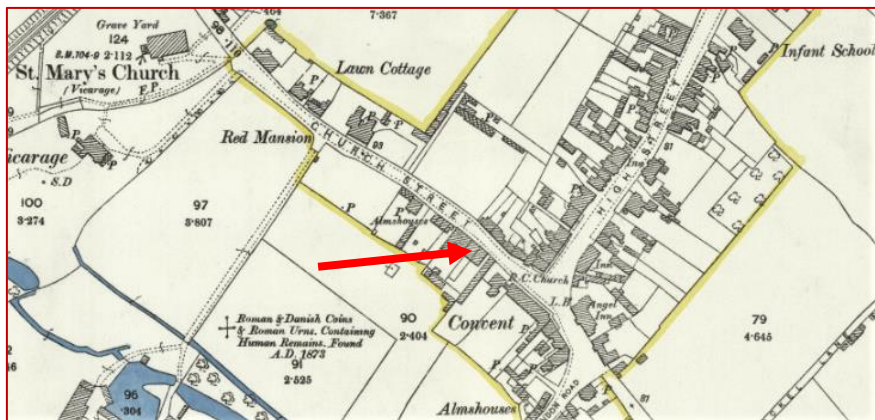
# Appendix

## Brunswick House School, Kelvedon

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										
Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Manor or Tything etc. of	Ecclesiastical District of	57		[Page 33]	
No. of Schedule	Road, Street, &c. and No. or Name of House	HOUSES No. of Houses	Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf, and Deaf
						Male	Female			
			Charles Parby	Boarder		48		Scholar	Essex; Bentley	
			William A. Samman	Do		40		Do	Essex; Beddingt	
			Samuel Southey	Do		48		Do	Australia; Helong	
146			George Cross	Do		41		Do	Wuffell; Wiston	
			Mark B.	Do		46?		Do	Do	
			William Callisher	Do		47		Do	Widdlow; London	
			Philip Gould	Do		42		Do	Do	
			Henry Samman	Do		41		Do	Essex; Beddingt	
			Robert A. Barton	Do		41		Do	Widdlow; London	
			Wesley J. Samman	Do		41		Do	Do	
			Alfred V. Samman	Do		44		Do	Essex; Widdlow	
			William Abbott	Do		43		Do	Essex; Salcot	
			William Richard	Do		41		Do	Widdlow; London	
			George J. Barker	Do		40		Do	Do	
			Henry Abbott	Do		41		Do	Essex; Salcot	
			George H. Sedley	Do		43		Do	Essex; Widdlow	
			John F. Sizable	Do		44		Do	Essex; Widdlow	
			Frederick W. Read	Do		42		Do	Essex; Romford	
			George S. Southey	Do		44		Do	Australia; Helong	
			Joseph A. Southey	Do		44		Do	Widdlow; London	
147	Church Street	1	Erasmus Crossman	Head	Widow	57		Houseman (old lady)	Essex; Widdlow	
			Walter	Do	Head	48		Scholar	Do	
148	Do	1	John Harrell	Head	Widow	44		Ag; Lat	Do	
			Anna	Do	Wife	44		Housewife	Ireland	

United Kingdom Census 1861, RG9 1106, Page 33, 57, Brunswick House School, Kelvedon  
 Entry for Henry Samman, 8<sup>th</sup> row from top of page; also, William A. Samman, his brother, 2<sup>nd</sup> row. Another brother, Alban Samman, is recorded on an earlier page, as is Richard Read Willis, his wife, Harriet, and three children, Ellen, Louise and George.

The Principal of Brunswick House School in Kelvedon was Richard Read Willis. He purchased the building that housed the school in 1844 from the Heard family for



Map of Kelvedon 1905. The arrow indicates the location of Brunswick House on Church Street. The Convent stands on the former site of William Wiseman's school.

£1,000 and proceeded to enlarge the premises to the rear. Willis had previously been employed as a teacher at the nearby Kelvedon School run by William Wiseman and, by 1851, at the age of 29, was well-established in his own school. The census of that year records that he had 40 pupils and that he and his wife, Harriet were living on

the premises with their two children. By 1861, the school roll had increased to 55 but, by this time, Willis was running into financial difficulties. He had overstretched himself and had mortgaged various properties that he could ill afford to take on. In 1864, he was declared bankrupt and the school was eventually forced to close. It is likely that Henry Samman would have left the school by then.



Brunswick Terrace, the site of Richard Willis's school is on the far left past the Convent (left foreground) which was built on the site of Wiseman's School after a fire.

*Photo courtesy of Feering and Kelvedon Local History Museum.*