

ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4T1
www.hhpl.on.ca/sigs/ehs/home.html

Vol. 26 No. 1

March - April 2001

THEIR STORIES!

The study of the people who lived in a certain area is most often the study of “famous” people simply because these people generated most of the available documentation. As historians we have an obligation to document our own selves, our loved ones and all the other “not-so-famous” lives. These are people who, through their choices, actions and relationships, made history. By studying these lives we restore dignity to individuals who led unheralded lives of quiet accomplishment and then generally passed on to little fanfare, leaving only weathered inscriptions and fading memories as meagre testimony to the fact that they ever were at all!

Last February, the Historical Society was very pleased with the success of our “Herstory” meeting. We repeat the offer this year to share the story of people with local connections with the public. We are broadening the topic to include women, men or families. The subject of your presentation must be deceased and can be relations, former neighbours, or just someone you’re interested in researching. Please compose an essay of one or two pages in length. Pictures are welcome. Please inform any member of the executive that you would like to share your essay.

John Devereaux was a descendant of pioneers. A weather-lined face gave him the etched appearance of a *habitant* carving. His forebears had come from Vermont after the American War of Independence. He was proud of the plaque awarded during Canada’s Centennial year signifying 100 years of tenure by his family.

A shy, quiet bachelor, he lived alone on this 100-acre tract on the outskirts of town. Farms fascinate youngsters. John’s had a particular magnetism for us because he had no sons to help work the land and we high school students could make money in summer, hoeing, stooking, pitching hay and sheaves.

John became a sort of surrogate father to succeeding generations. A younger brother had been killed in an accident on the farm as a child. Two sisters married and left. When his parents

died, John was left alone. There were rumours that he had once been engaged but was jilted at the last minute. John never said. Those who knew him best knew better than to ask....

John subscribed to no daily paper. Nor did he have a radio. Weather bulletins were what he read around him. Sometimes in the field, he would cock his head to one side, listening.

“You hear that?” he’d ask. One hadn’t heard. But John had heard the whistle of a train on the CPR line that ran seven miles to the south. “When you hear the CPR whistle, there’ll be a change in the weather,” John Predicted. Invariable, there would be... James Emmerson, “*Sunset at Century Farm*”, *Toronto Star* 1978.

Timothy Eaton was born the youngest of nine children in County Antrim at Clogher, Ireland, 1834. His father died just two months before his birth.

In 1854, Timothy sailed to Canada on the "Dominion". With a little money, some work experience and a lot of ambition, he followed his brothers' and sisters' footsteps. They had made the trip earlier, escaping Ireland's devastating potato famine just in time. Two brothers, three sisters, an aunt, uncle and cousins all helped Timothy make Canada his new home. For a while he stayed with his sister Margaret in Georgetown, Ontario. He earned his keep by helping out on the farm. Sometime later he moved to Glen Williams and embarked on his first Canadian career as a bookkeeper in a small general store.

Howard Wrigglesworth was born in Hornby on 5 February, 1910 and raised on the family farm which is now Hornby Towers Golf Course. Howard achieved fame as the best 100 yard runner in Halton County. He held the Provincial 100 yard dash record.

He attended Toronto Normal School, graduating in 1929. He taught in Milton and St. Catherines until coming to the Georgetown Public School as principal in 1938. Georgetown only had one elementary school in those days. He married Ruth Giffen in 1937 in Hornby. He was very active in the community. He was a Mason, Sunday School Superintendent for St. John's United Church, and was a director of the Esquesing (Georgetown) Agricultural Society.

The Town of Georgetown was shocked to hear of the sudden death of the Public School Principal in 1950. The Town was growing quickly at this time and in 1952 when a new school was commissioned to be built, Howard Wrigglesworth was honoured.

J.B. Mackenzie & Son were the contractors. The second elementary school in Georgetown

opened on 30 October, 1952 by the Georgetown Board of Education. The first principal was William S. Kinrade, who stayed at the school until his retirement in 1972. His first staff were Miss Cleghorn, Miss Ruddell, Miss Scarlet and Mrs. Henry.

Fern Brown

Acton's genial postmistress, and church organist for 38 years, Fern Emma Brown was born in 1890, coming to Acton as a child. Here she contributed her talents and good nature in many ways. She was the one in the family of eight who looked after her ailing parents until they died. Her father was chief engineer at the tannery.

Her working career was in the post office. When the imposing building at the south-east corner of Mill and Willow was opened in 1916, she became a postal clerk. She was named postmistress during World War II. There was no house-to-house mail delivery then, so before it was torn down, the post office was the town's central meeting place.

She began her career in music in 1910, at the age of 20. It began in the Methodist church, and continued after the change to a United Church came in 1925. For many of these years there were two services every Sunday in the stately old church, since demolished. As well as regular choir practices there were often special musical programs in which she willingly participated. Fern went to Toronto to take lessons when the church purchased a new \$3,000 organ in 1936. She held various offices in church groups, including steward and treasurer of the official board. She was a keen member of Acton Music Club.

After 38 years, she retired as church organist in 1948. She had been encouraging a young man, George Elliott, in his musical talents, and he became assistant organist when Fern retired. She died unexpectedly at her home, at north-west corner of John and Church, in 1957.

- Kay Dills (2000)

Society Notes

EHS EXECUTIVE

Stephen Blake	877-8251	President
Karen Hunter	838-2109	
Dawn Livingstone	877-6506	
Doug Cole	877-3657	
Sherry Westfahl	873-7145	
J. Mark Rowe	877-9510	
Carol Wood	873-0792	

ARCHIVAL NEWS

The annual Archives Report appears in this issue in its entirety. Dawn Livingstone, Karen Hunter, and Mark Rowe donated time on a Saturday in January to access several donations to the Archives. They made a good dent in the outstanding work to be completed. The photo collection has been updated over the last few months. This includes sorting out wrongly numbered photos and improving photo descriptions.

INTERNET CONNECTIONS

The Esquesing Historical Society has an official web site on the World Wide Web. You can visit us at
<www.hhpl.on.ca/sigs/ehs/home.html>

Send your e-mail to rowem@aztec-net.com or dlvngstn@stn.net

EHS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter was prepared by John Mark Rowe with assistance from Karen Hunter, Sherry Westfahl and Dawn Livingstone.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees for 2000 are valid until February, 2001. The individual rate is \$10. The family or institution rate is \$12. Cheques payable to the Society can be mailed to our post box.

Our 2000 membership reached 117! Marj Allen has accepted the post of membership secretary

and will gladly accept your fees at the next meeting. This will be the final newsletter for those who forget to renew for 2001.

E.H.S. ELECTION

The Annual General Meeting of the Esquesing Historical Society was held in February, 2001. The out-going executive of your Society was acclaimed. The only change was the promotion of vice-president Stephen Blake to the office of President. Sherry Westfahl, a new mother, felt her energies might be in demand elsewhere in the coming year. Congratulations to Stephen and on behalf of the executive we offer him the same support we gave to Sherry.

DIARY DONATION

The millennium project of the Georgetown University Women's Club was to create an attractive and original keepsake with photographs of every school in our town. They sold close to 3000 books with a net profit of about \$7600. This money was returned to the schools as their "sales commissions".

The Diary was enhanced by the inclusion of historic photographs and stories from our community. By way of saying thank you to the Esquesing Historical Society and to support our research, the University Women's Club has donated the balance remaining in the Diary account to the Society. A cheque for \$360 was announced at the Annual General Meeting.

The Club will also donate a copy of the keepsake calendar to the EHS Archives.

RESEARCH REQUESTS

We are a small group of volunteers, and we do have difficulty getting the time and people to do much research. We charge \$5.00 for the initial fee, and \$1.00 per photocopied page. The request can be made by e-mail or regular mail, but we cannot guarantee a delivery time.

NORTH HALTON SCOUTING BOOK

The Scouting Spirit by John Mark Rowe was published in February. The book is illustrated with several photographs. It sells for \$5 a copy and will be available at Society meetings or by phoning the author. After outlining the founding of Scouting in 1910, it explains the organization of the sections and groups. A chapter follows the history of North Halton District and then a short history of each section is given.

BRAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEETINGS 2001

On March 3, they are holding an "Antiques Road Show" from noon to 4:00 pm, a joint venture of the Brampton Historical Society and Historic Bovaird House, at the HBH. Appraisals by Ward Brownridge, for \$5.00 per item.

SCOUTING HERITAGE DISPLAY

The display case the Acton branch of the Halton Hills Public Libraries features Scouting memorabilia for the month of February. Archivist and Scouter John Mark Rowe mounted the display from his personal collection.



It features catalogues dating from 1937 to the present.

February also marks the birth date of Lord Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the

founder of the Scouting movement. He was born on 22 February, 1857. Baden-Powell was also known to history as the hero of Mafeking during the Boer War. This is where he first used boys as military assistants.

HERITAGE FOUNDATION AWARDS

Heritage Halton Hills nominated heritage property owner Douglas and Mary Lou Brock for a built Heritage Foundation award for their work in saving and restoring the Williams Mill and reviving the economy of Glen Williams.

Heritage Halton Hills also nominated a cultural heritage candidate, the late Jean Ruddell. She was recognized and her award was forwarded to Ken Kirkwood.

EHS FINANCIAL REPORT

Annual Financial Statement for the year ending 31 January, 2001

Balance on hand 1 February 2000 \$1935.73

INCOME \$4711.34

EXPENSE \$5833.84

Balance on hand 31 January, 2001 \$813.23

Douglas N. Cole, Treasurer

A full statement is available upon request from the Esquesing Historical Society.

ACTON PLAQUE WORDING DECIDED

After discussing the wording of the new Heritage Foundation plaque in Acton for several months, the following wording has been sent for circulation.

Methodist preachers Ezra and Zenas Adams and their brother Rufus settled on the West branch of the Credit River in the 1820's. A community of pioneer families grew around the Adams family farms. Nicklin's saw and grist mill and Nelles' tannery, both operating here by the early 1840's, formed the nucleus of a hamlet first named Danville, then Adamsville (after its first settlers), and finally, by 1844, Acton. In 1856 the Grand Trunk Railway arrived, stimulating growth eastward along Mill street from the river to the railway station. By 1869 Acton had some 700 inhabitants and boasted woodworking mills, tanneries, glove makers and a carriage works. It was incorporated as a village on January 6, 1874.

**ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

- Wed. 14 Mar. 2001 **Their Stories!** - Sharpen those pencils for a chance to share the history of local pioneers and memorable people. Write up the history of locals to share at our March meeting.
- Wed. 11 Apr. 2001 **John Newton** - Join Jean Somerville as she recounts the interesting life of her ancestor John Newton, long-time postmaster and chief entrepreneur of 19th century Limehouse. Newton, an Irish immigrant, left detailed diaries of his life.
- Wed. 9 May, 2001 **Young's Drug Store** - Stuart and Neil Young will recall the long history of Georgetown's Main Street pharmacy. Hear tales from behind the druggist's counter from the sources themselves!
- Wed. June, 2001 The annual potluck dinner for the EHS has had a last-minute cancellation. Watch the next newsletter for information on the last meeting before summer.

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO CHARGE!

Please bring your own cup for refreshments to help protect our environment.

HHH SIGNAGE PROGRAMME

As many are aware Heritage Halton Hills, on which the Esquesing Historical Society is represented, has begun a signage programme for homes older than 1939. This is simply an attempt to identify older buildings. It does not imply Heritage designation. Brochures to apply for a sign are available at the Acton and Georgetown Libraries, Glen Williams Town Hall and the Civic Centre. The cost is \$100 and research usually takes 2 to 4 months.

HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL

Explore the highways and by-ways of Esquesing township by reading our series of short informative pamphlets about settlements in our township. STEWARTTOWN is the latest pamphlet to join our collection. Read a synopsis of the history of Georgetown, Acton, Limehouse, BALLINAFAD, Glen Lawson, Glen Williams, Norval, Speyside, Ashgrove, Each pamphlet available for only 25 cents! Complete your collection at the next meeting!

Esquesing Historical Society

2000 ARCHIVES REPORT

by John Mark Rowe, Archivist

SUMMER STUDENT: Once again last summer the EHS was fortunate to secure an excellent student employee. Emily Thompson of Georgetown had completed her first year at Queen's in a BA program in English and Psychology. She previously worked at the Georgetown Independent / Free Press offices as a Co-op student.

Emily spent the greater part of the ten weeks scanning *The Acton Free Press / Georgetown Independent* negatives to add to our photo collection. She completed 4000 images. She helped Karen Hunter mount a July photo show on summer bands, at the Georgetown Cultural Centre. Emily also assisted Mark Rowe in adding accessions to the Archives and in sorting out some photos in the collection. We were certainly pleased with Emily's achievements this summer and her contributions to the EHS Archives.

2000 ACCESSIONS

There were 22 accessions in 2000. The donors were *The Independent & Free Press*; Mr. and Mrs. Jim Ruddell, Osgoode, ON; Natalie Brooks, Georgetown; Garfield McGilvray, Ridgetown, ON; Lynda Strathdee, Georgetown; Pat McBride, Kitchener, ON; Heritage Halton Hills; Florence Eason, Georgetown; John Mark Rowe, Glen Williams; Prince Edward County Archives, Picton, ON; Art Dayfoot, Toronto; Stewarttown Public School Library; Betty Hunter, Norval; Josie Sargent, Georgetown; Russell Miller, Georgetown; Karen Hunter, Cheltenham; Arthur McAllister, Limehouse.

NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS: 11 970

ARCHIVES MATERIALS

General Collection: 34 linear metres

Audio-Visual Collection: 1 linear metres

Photograph Collection: 5 linear metres +3m

Negative Collection: 23 linear metres

Restricted Collection: 0.64 linear metres

Bound Newspapers Collection: 14 linear metres

Total Materials: 80.64 [56] linear metres

The Archives also holds four drawers of maps.

Web Site Activity Report

01/01/00 00:00:00 - 12/31/00 23:59:59

2000 figures [1999 figures] (1998 figures)

Number of Successful Hits for Entire Site 48,600 [26,486] (22,602)

User Sessions of Unknown Origin 100% [69.08%] (13.8%)

Average Number of Hits per Day 132 [72] (61)

Average User Session Length 00:13:21 [00:13:15] (00:09:34)

Top Referring Sites

No referrer: 10,125

Halton Hills Public Libraries (hhpl.on.ca): 2,816

www.genealogylinks.net: 1,202

www.goggle.com: 790

www.altavista.com: 692

www.familysearch.org: 543

...Town of Halton Hills (www.town.halton-hills.on.ca): 164

Summary of Activity for Report Period

Average Number of Users per day on Weekdays	63 [57]
Average Number of Hits per day on Weekdays	141 [129]
Average Number of Users for the entire Weekend	106 [107]
Average Number of Hits for the entire Weekend	220 [240]
Most Active Day of the Week	Tues. [Wed]
Least Active Day of the Week	Sun. [Thu]
Most Active Day Ever	May 17, 2000; [Sept. 01, 1999]
Number of Hits on Most Active Day	467 [391]
Least Active Day Ever	May 13, 2000; [Sept. 30, 1999]
Number of Hits on Least Active Day	27 [1]
Most Active Hour of the Day	11:00-11:59 [19:00-19:59]
Least Active Hour of the Day	05:00-05:59 [04:00-04:59]

Top Search Keywords

Georgetown, newspaper, Acton, Ontario, trunk, grand, historical, railway.

These are the same words as last year, only the order has changed.

Most Requested Pages

Home page ; Halton newspaper database ; Local Community histories ; Historic newspaper articles ; Acton pamphlet ; Acton Free Press 1888 ; search the census database ; 1913 Georgetown Herald ; Georgetown pamphlet

The above report was prepared by John Mark Rowe, Archivist of the Esquesing Historical Society for February, 2001. Web information was provided by Geoff Cannon, Information Technology Librarian, Halton Hills Public Libraries.

JOHN NEWTON

Entrepreneur, Postmaster, Justice of the Peace

His life story to be told by his descendant Mrs. Jean Somerville

Join the Esquesing Historical Society to hear the amazing story of John Newton of Limehouse. Find within this newsletter several tidbits of information on his life which come from his personal diaries which were donated to the University of Western Ontario by James F. and John Newton. He personifies the early pioneer spirit and his life reflects the harsh realities of life in Esquesing Township in the 19th century.



Quite an event came off at Limehouse on the 26th. Our old postmaster, Mr. J. Newton, had all his family along to help celebrate his seventy fifth birthday, he having been born at Long, Bradford, Yorkshire on 12th day December, 1812. Also his golden wedding day the prime incident in the latter being the presentation to his faithful wife of a pair of gold rimmed spectacles. - *Acton Free Press*, 5 January, 1888

In Feb. 1836 he left wool combing to teach school at Holme Lane.

In March 1836 left school mastering to return to wool combing.

In March 1837 begins teaching at a salary of £1/10 per annum

June 1837 Returns to wool combing by day and teaching by night.

Dec 1838 takes job supervising wool combers at Mount Melick, County Queens, Ireland.

1842: Sept. 5 Newton leaves Ireland on "The Nottingham"

Oct. 14 Newton arrives New York

Oct. 25 Newton arrives Niagara

Oct. 28, 1842 ... Mr. Gamble can do nothing for him, other than suggesting that he see Barber Bros. Of Georgetown about a wool combing position. He also suggested a Mr. Montgomery, who might know of a school vacancy for Newton.. He finds Montgomery but is disappointed and so travels on toward Georgetown. He reaches Norval at nightfall on 29 October.

A kind, poor old Irish lady in Norval asks him to share breakfast with her. That evening (Sunday) he reaches the Barber home to find no work is available but they send him to Mr. Burns, a magistrate and school commissioner. Newton rushes off but is forced to spend the night with an Irish farmer named Nিকেle.

Newton finds Burns absent on school business and waits until evening of October 31st. However Mr. Burns gives permission for him to call a meeting of the neighbours the following day.

"Not many attended the meeting, having other business to attend to, but most promising to give the school all the encouragement in their power. Well, it was finally agreed that I should have the school... A mutual agreement was come to... that I should teach a certain school... and that in return I should receive Bed and Board, fuel for the school, and one dollar per quarter for each scholar until the money should be received from the public fund, and if such public fund should equal or more than equal one dollar per quarter for each scholar I to receive it and to refund any I might have received from them, and if not equal they to make up the deficiency... I stayed with John Scott until morning."

Nov 4 1842 "took up my quarters with Mr. Burns, and yesterday swept out the school and got in wood ready to begin tomorrow;"

Dec. 18, 1842 "I appear to give more general satisfaction now than at first. I use the rod a little



sometimes and this gives extreme satisfaction to some of my patrons." I have 21 scholars.
Dec. 25, 1842 - he helped plaster inside the school, made several benches and a double desk.

Attends New Years Eve balls at Lawsons' and Scotts'.

Feb. 7, 1843 "I have managed to ingratiate myself into the good graces of these people marvellously, considering the bad beginning I made... I have been here a quarter now but not yet heard of the main thing - money."

20 Feb, 1843 - loss of scholars at school due to sugar-making.

March receives quarterly stipend amounting to \$26 - total of \$40 or £8.

June 8, 1843 - pupils have declined from 30 to 15.

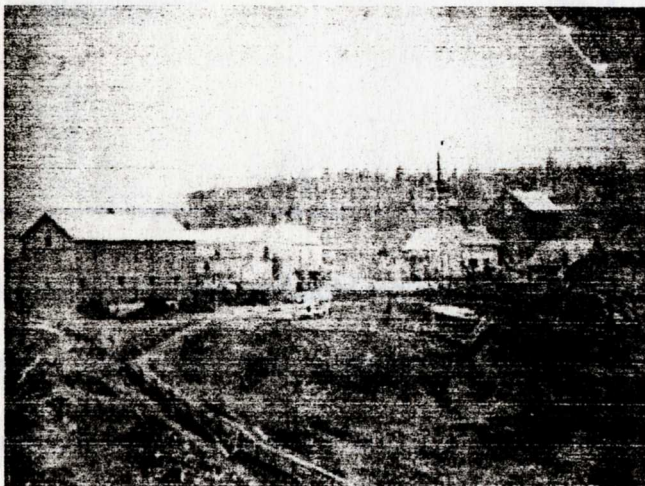
Remaining ones are quarrelling, especially enmity between Burns and Lawson families.

Nov. 12, 1843 Newton has quit the school and has taken a farm in Erin Township. Because of the winter he fears he cannot survive yet on the farm so he takes another school. In the new year he begins Common School No. 10, Esquesing at Georgetown. It has more scholars than any other in the township except Norval. Newton starts his school on Jan 15, 1844 with 30 pupils. He likes the school.

March 22, 1844 They have moved from Mr. Scott's place to the home of Mr. Morris Kennedy at Georgetown, the location of his new school. The Newton family is living there in one room, furnished with some new purchases, 6 chairs from Mr. Travers and a bed from Mr. Kennedy - chairs valued at £1/6/3 for which he gives a promissory note. The bed is to be paid for in terms of schooling for the children. Georgetown trustees are Mr. Morris Kennedy, Mr. Dolson and Mr. Aren.

EMPIRE BLANKET MILLS

While its limekilns are in a comparative state of masterly inactivity for the time being, there is one industry in



EHS p10375 - Limehouse blanket factory, saw mill and paint factory. Destroyed by fire in 1893.

JOHN NEWTON, Esq. PM, J.P.

He died last Wednesday at Limehouse at age 76. He was born in Yorkshire, England in 1812. He had a good common school education. At the age of 24 he went to Ireland and engaged in woollen manufactory as a sorter. He met and married Mrs. Newton there. The firm failed. He went first to France, then America, arriving in Toronto in 1842. He came to Limehouse in 1846 where he built a woollen and blanket mill. He became postmaster in 1854 and was a Justice of the Peace. His children are James, John, Isaac, William, Hannah, Mrs. Nickell and Mrs. James Brown of Acton.

-*Acton Free Press*, 17 January, 1889

Limehouse worthy of special commendation. Allusion is made to the Empire Blanket Mills, which were established by the late Mr. John Newton in 1868. Mr. Newton served his time as a woollen manufacturer in Bradford, Yorkshire, Eng., and settling in Limehouse, Ont., in 1854, brought up his three sons, James, John M. and Isaac to the business which they now control. ... The woollen mill is under the immediate supervision of Mr. Isaac Newton, the paint mill is under the management of Mr. James Newton while the office and warehouse are presided over by Mr. John M. Newton.

- *The Toronto Daily Mail*, 24 June, 1893

The Death registration for John Newton appears to the right.

Newspaper Notes

ACTON FREE PRESS: 1923

March Mrs. E.J. Gamble, sec.-treas., attended the regular session of the council and on behalf of the Women's Institute officially presented to the town the fountain for watering horses that had been donated by the Institute at the corner of Main & Mill last Fall.

Two Chinamen from Guelph have leased new store in the Starkman Block corner Mill & Main for restaurant.

The roads have been impassable. (AFP 1 March, 1923)

Acton's excellent waterworks system...

OBIT - Mrs. Ninian F. Lindsay - bride from Ashgrove... died of pneumonia.

Dublin School - C. F. Acheson, teacher.

Dr. Nelson had his motor car out Tuesday for the first time in weeks. (AFP 8 Mch)

50th anniversary of Acton Citizens' Band - name changed about 20 years from Acton Brass Band. (15 Mch)

Two provincial constables in town... visited pool room... found bottle of moonshine.

Amos Mason has bought the residence of the late Hon. David Henderson, Bower Ave. Confectioners of Toronto were notified on Saturday they must discontinue selling ice cream on the Lords' Day. (22 Mch, 1923)

Robert J. McPherson appointed Municipal Officer and Chief of Police with a salary fixed at \$100 per month.

D. H. Lindsay is about to install machinery for a flour mill of 100 barrels capacity. (29 March, 1923)

Apr New beginners' room of the Public School opened in Council Chamber Monday - Mrs. Wm. Munroe, teacher - 34 children under age 7.

Well report - 107 wells tested in Acton - 85 gross pollution; 20 pollution, only 2 fit to drink - town tap water is excellent. (12 April)

OBIT - C.C. Speight, born Acton 1857 - in hardware business - became expert in the photographing of wild birds.

Epworth League - annual oratorical contest... Acton Flower Show to be held in Drill Shed on 15 August. (19 Apr, 1923)

No. 5.

John Newton
9th January 1889
M 006401
No pro & 28 days
Manufacturer
Yorkshire England
Inflammation Lung
One week
Dr. Webster
89th James Newton
Hawthorn
England
14 February 1889
Church of England
Hawthorn