

The Vokes family of Limerick City and County

Chapter 1

The earliest Vokes to be found in Limerick's records is an Edward Vokes, Clothier, who was first mentioned in 1703 as residing in Thomondgate on the west bank of the Shannon very close to Thomond bridge. He was elected Sheriff of the City in June 1714 to serve from October 1714 to October 1715. As Sheriff¹ he co-signed a petition to England which was also co-signed by a Joseph Vokes who must have been an adult contemporary, perhaps even a brother. Sheriff Edward Vokes is mentioned in a Ballad called "The Battle of the Mayor's Stone" commemorating a clash between the Guild of Clothiers and other Guilds in 1714/5.² After serving as Sheriff, Edward was appointed to the Common Council and would have been known as Edward Vokes, Burgess, thereafter. One would expect to see Edward elected Mayor of Limerick some 10 years later but for some unknown reason he was never chosen for the Office even though he didn't die until 1749. His son William was Sheriff in 1741 so we know that the family remained involved in the City's political life. William unfortunately died in 1750 so we will never know if he could have become Mayor of Limerick. An abstract from a will, written in 1738, by his brother-in-law, the Rev. William Campbell, supplies us with the names of some of Edward's children and other family connections. Campbell's will abstract lists his nieces and nephews in the following order: -

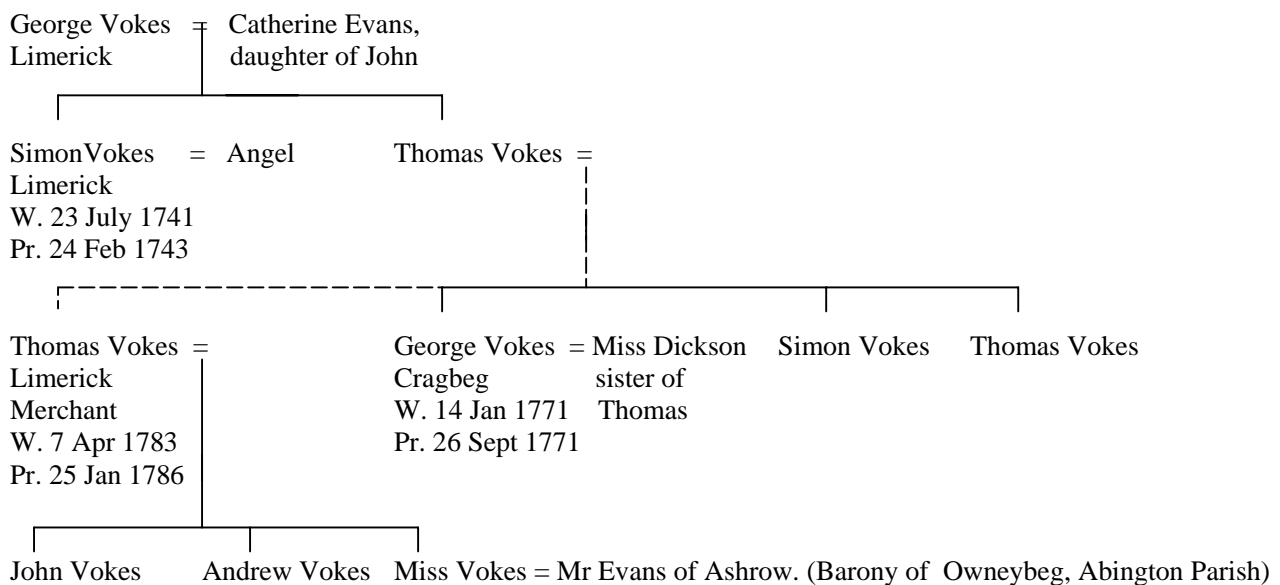
- Niece, Elizabeth Vokes now Dixon, wife of Basset Dixon. (Also spelt Dickson)
- Mary Vokes, now wife of Henry Long.
- Nephew Thomas Vokes, Counsellor, now in London. (*Son of William and Martha of London.*)
- Niece Angel Vokes.
- The children of Edward Vokes of the City of Limerick, Burgess, by my sister Catherine, deceased.
- Nephews William and Thomas Vokes,
- Nieces Martha Wrightson, widow and Angel Vokes. (*A Martha Wrightson married a John FitzGerald on the 17th of Sept. 1739, in St. Munchin's church in Limerick.*)

Nick Reddan's Registry of Deeds Index Project,

has now brought to light another member of the family called George Vokes who had an address in Ballyglosky i.e. Ballylusky Townland in Coshma Barony, partially located in Croom Parish and the rest in Kilonahan Parish in the year 1709, when - being an adult - he witnessed a deed.

Betham's Will Abstracts. G O 251. p 164.

In this Abstract Betham uses a dotted line to link three groups of Vokes together, thus: -



¹ Lenihan. History of Limerick

² Ferrar's History of Limerick.

Ashroe House was built in 1770 for £850 and was the home of the Evans family who held it from the Barrington family.

A bit more clarity can now be seen in the early Vokes family grouping. George and his wife Catherine Evans with their children can now be separated from Edward Vokes and his family. Although it must be said that since The Rev. Campbell referred to Simon and Angle as his nephew and niece it seems very certain that George, the father was a brother of Edwards. We also know now that George of Cragbeg married into the Dickson or Dixon family and that the brothers Simon and Thomas were his siblings. What we also know now, thanks to T. P. Vokes 1817 election speech, is that John and Andrew's father although called Thomas was in fact Thomas the Attorney who was born in London in 1707 and who died in 1765. Thomas, the Merchant who died in Dec. 1785 with his age given as 75 did indeed have an heir called John. The same Christian names were used generation after generation which only leads to much confusion.

Betham's Will Abstracts. G O 232. p 99.

Simon Evans = Elinor Fanningstown W. 4 Apr 1722	Catherine Evans = Mr Vokes W. 4 July 1725 Pr. 1726	Elinor Evans = Mr Taylor
---	--	--------------------------

From this Abstract it seems clear that Catherine Evans was already married to Mr [George] Vokes before 1722.

Edward Vokes ³ Clothier, of Thomondgate, Fl. 1703. Sheriff, 1714 D. 1749.	= Catherine Campbell. Rev. William. ⁴ D. by 1738	William = Martha. London M. 1704	Joseph. George	Thomas The Elder B.c. 1710 D. 1785 aged 75.
Thomas. William = Elizabeth. B. 1710. B. 1710+ Sh. 1741 D. 1750	Mary = Henry Long.	Elizabeth = Basset Dixon.	Thomas = E. Barker B. 1707 Sh. 1760 D. 1765	D. 1780

Freemans Journal of the 30 March 1765.

William Waller married Arabella Vokes the daughter of the late William, Burgess of Limerick.
(This clearly indicates that Arabella was the daughter of the 1741 Sheriff and his wife Elizabeth.)

“**Alumni Dublinenses**”, has a Thomas Vokes, son of Edward Vokes, Merchant, entering Trinity College, Dublin on the 21 June, 1728, aged 18. Thomas was born in Limerick in 1710 and he was called to the Irish Bar in 1742. Thomas, on entering the Middle Temple on the 29 Oct. 1731, is given as the son and heir of Edward Voekes [sic] of Limerick.

“**The Baronetage of England**” has another Thomas Vokes, born 1707 in London to William and Martha, he also became an Attorney and practised in England before coming to Limerick where he served as Sheriff of the City in 1760 and eventually died in 1765 at his home near Milltown. He married Elizabeth Barker, who died in 1780, the daughter of Sir William Barker who owned some 2000 acres in Pubblebrian Barony since Cromwellian times. The Vokes family lived at Cragbeg, Kilcolman, Ballycurrane and Cloonanna Townlands, down through the following centuries, all of which were part of the Barker Estate. This Thomas (B. 1707 in London) is the man the Rev. Campbell refers to as his nephew, the Counsellor, now in

³ North Munster Antiquarian Journal. 1998-9. The Limerick Corporation Index of 1843, by Brian Hodkinson. P 91.
Edward's address, occupation and Land Grant are given.

⁴ The Irish Genealogist, Vol. 2. No. 2. Oct. 1944. p.52. An Abstract of Rev. William Campbell's Will.

London. The Campbell Will was written in 1738 and the Limerick Thomas (B. 1710) had not been called to the Bar yet and he therefore can not be styled as “Attorney or Counsellor” so he is the Thomas named with his brother William above. Since Campbell names both Thomas’s as his nephews it follows that their fathers, Edward and William, are brothers. The question now arises, was Joseph who co-signed the 1715 letter to London with Sheriff Edward Vokes, another brother?

Elizabeth, Mary and Angel could be children of Edward or Joseph or indeed any other Vokes, but since the male lines only are being traced this does not become an issue here. With Angel being named twice, did Edward and Joseph each have a daughter called Angel or is Campbell perhaps referring to an in-law. St. Mary’s Archive Records in Limerick have a Simon Vokes and his wife Angel burying their infant son Edward in 1739 and the records also have a Simon Vokes dying in 1741 shortly before Angel Vokes, widow, who also died later in 1741, surely Simon’s wife.

The List of Freemen⁵ gives a George Vokes, son of Simon, claiming admittance as a Freeman of Limerick in 1758. (If he was aged 21, then he was born in 1737). There was a George Vokes who was packed off to Dublin⁶ to serve an apprenticeship as a Book seller in 1751. (If aged 14, the normal age of apprenticeship, then he was born in 1737). There are only 6 George Vokes on record and the chances of 2 of them being born in 1737 are very slim. Unfortunately, for dating purposes, the corrupt Corporation were at this time bending the “Freeman” rules and instead of admitting 21 year old, first born sons,- the legal requirement,- they were now allowing their friends and supporters to admit all their sons from a very young age, some as young as 1 year old. They were also blocking the admission of anyone who was not of their political party.

The Freeman List also gives a Thomas, son of Simon being admitted in 1760, if he was 21 year old then he could be a brother of George and a son of the Simon and Angel Vokes who both died in 1741.

“Alumni Dublinenses” has a Simon Vokes entering Trinity College, Dublin, on June 11, 1754, aged 17, born in Co. Limerick but no fathers name was given. This Simon was therefore born in 1737. Of the 4 Vokes who went to University, Simon was the only Vokes from County Limerick. The other 3 were from Limerick City. So is he from Cragbeg?

- Given the name “Martha”, is Mrs Wrightson, the widow, a daughter of William Vokes and Martha of London? Could Angel whose name follows, be her sister? St. Mary’s Cathedral Archives have a Martha Wrightson who married in Limerick on the 17 of Sept. 1739 in St. Munchin’s church to a John Fitzgerald, was she a daughter of the above or did the widow remarry?
- Thomas, Edward’s eldest son, was born in 1710 and became an Attorney. He cannot be Thomas, the Merchant, who flourished at the same time. He must be Thomas, the Counsellor-at-law, who was admitted a Freeman of Limerick on the 20/2/1747. When did Thomas, the Merchant, become a Freeman? He was also born circa 1710, providing his age at his death is accurate, add 21 years to 1710 bring us to 1731 and that is the year Thomas, the elder, Merchant, should have been admitted a Freeman.
- Thomas, “the younger” was born circa 1746, since he married in January 1767, unless of course Susanna Phillips was his second wife. Thomas and Susanna were the parents of the famous Thomas Philips Vokes who claimed that the Thomas Vokes, the English Attorney and 1760 Sheriff of Limerick City, was his grandfather.
- Elizabeth and Basset Dixon had a son born in 1732 also called Basset Dixon. He died on the 22nd of February 1813 aged 81, followed a fortnight later by his son John Dickson of Janesborough, on the 6th of March 1813. John was a Barrister at law, who had suffered through a long illness. (Limerick Chronicle, 1813).
- Mary Vokes and Henry Long married in St. Munchin’s church on 23 Feb. 1736. St. Munchin’s was therefore Mary’s home Parish. Henry Long and his wife Mary baptised their son John on the 29 Oct 1740 in St Mary’s Cathedral, Limerick. A Henry Long was sheriff of Limerick City in 1736 and Mayor in 1744.

⁵ Freemen of Limerick. L/OC/1. 1719 – 1817. Limerick Archives.

⁶ “A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade. 1550 – 1800”. Google.

Alderman Henry Long was still attending Council meetings in 1789. Alderman Henry Long had a son William who was admitted a freeman on the 6th March 1746. William was only 9 years old or younger.

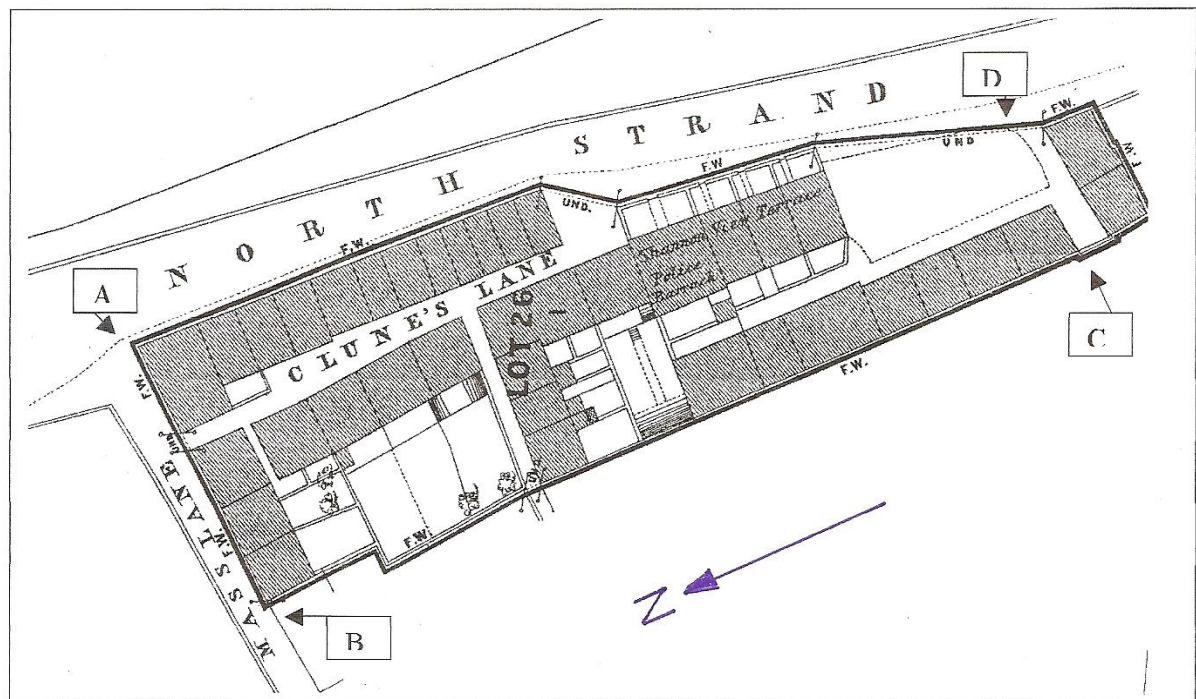
- We now know that Thomas Vokes and his wife Elizabeth Barker were the parents of Thomas Vokes “the younger” who married Susanna Phillips in January 1767. Because of the Barker connection they are the most likely couple to have settled at Cragbeg, which had an imposing four storied mansion built on the land there. (See Taylor and Skinners 1777 Map). Cragbeg was the address of a George Vokes when he died in 1771, he was succeeded by a Thomas Vokes, who died in 1800. The Christian name of the heir is a strong hint that George’s father’s name was also Thomas. Thomas, who died in 1800 was succeeded by his son George. This George lost Cragbeg in the Court of Chancery in 1816. The Estate was encumbered with unpayable debts which could only be paid off by selling the lands or the lease on the lands.
- William, 2nd son of Edward, and his wife Elizabeth had four children baptised in St. Munchin’s church, they were, Robert, Margaret, Abigail and Mary, in 1744, 1746, 1747 and 1749. They also had a son Edward whose birth or baptism was not recorded but who is listed applying for admittance as a Freeman, as son of William, Burgess, in 1747. (A Burgess was, nearly always, an ex- Sheriff). Edward was the eldest son and therefore born before 1744, he could be the Edward who married Arabella Gubbins in 1764. Again it looks like William named his first son after his father, a very common practise. William was Sheriff of Limerick City in 1741 but William, a Burgess from 1742, died as was reported in the Munster Journal, on the 7th of June 1750. William, the burgess and Elizabeth had another child who’s baptism was not recorded and that was Arabella who married William Waller in March 1765. There was an Edward Vokes mentioned in September 1769 when his house in Bow Lane was offered to let. The house had been lately much improved by the addition of a vault, Brew-house and Granary. Ferrar’s 1769 Trade Directory listed an Edward Vokes as a Warden of one of the Freemason Lodges.
- St. Mary’s records have a Richard Vokes marrying a Mary Shaw on the 30th of July 1730 in St. John’s church. There is no known information with which to link Richard to the other Vokes. St John’s would have been Mary Shaw’s home Parish.
- The same source also gives a Stephan Vokes and his wife Margaret who had three children baptised in St. Munchin’s church. They were Joseph, Thomas and Philip who were baptised on the 14/1/1750, 16/2/1752 and 11/2/1753. The first son may have been named after his grandfather Joseph perhaps, indicating that Stephen was a son of the Joseph who signed the letter to London with Sheriff Edward in 1715.
- The General Advertiser of Tuesday July 27th 1813 has a death notice for a Joseph Vokes of Thomondgate, “an eminent Clothier of this City” who died aged 91 and who was buried in St. Munchins churchyard. If his age is correct, then he was born in 1722 and he could be a brother of Stephen and a son of the first Joseph. Very old people’s ages were generally exaggerated and therefore unreliable and this must be borne in mind at all times.
- A Joseph and his wife Elinor baptised a son Edward in St. Munchin’s on the 17/7/1757.
A Joseph and his wife Catherine buried a son Edward in St. Munchin’s on the 19/8/1759.
Are Joseph and his son Edward the same persons ? Did Elinor die shortly after the birth of Edward and did Joseph remarry Catherine before the untimely death of the baby Edward? Could this Joseph possibly be the “eminent Clothier” who was born circa 1722 and who died in 1813?
- There was a Thomas Vokes who was sheriff of Limerick City from Oct. 1760 to Oct.1761. Immediately after his term as Sheriff, Thomas would have been elected and appointed a Burgess of the City. “The Corporation Paying Book” records his wife being paid a, £5 per year, pension as a Burgess’s widow. On the 2nd of Dec. 1777, Mrs Elizabeth Vokes received £55 pounds sterling, being 11 years pension in one lump sum. This points to her being the wife of Thomas Vokes the ex-Sheriff and Burgess. On the 4th June 1779 Elizabeth was paid £10 being two years pension. On the 16th Feb.1781, Elizabeth Vokes heirs were paid £3-15 shillings the amount due to her up to the 24th March 1780 on which day she died. Her final payment equals $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year’s payment and thus identifies June as the month her husband died and since these pensions were paid from the date of the husband’s death, Thomas must, by calculation, have died on

the 2nd of June 1765.⁷ The only Thomas Vokes on record as dying in 1765 is Thomas the Attorney who died at his house near Milltown on the 16 March 1765.

The early Vokes are associated with St. Munchin's Parish, being Baptised, Married and Buried there. The first Edward's home was outside the city walls but still in St. Munchin's Parish. The site would have been in the vicinity of the present day St. Munchin's Catholic church. Some of the next generation expanded into St. John's Parish which meant that they now had a foothold inside the city walls albeit only in Irishtown. Andrews's marriage with Elizabeth Wilson took them into Ballinacurra Hart and St. Michael's Parish, in the new town area which was just coming into existence in the healthier environments outside of the unhealthy confines of the old walled city. Andrew's children appear in New Town Pery as Boot and Shoe makers and Tailors.

In May 1765 Thomas Vokes, a Counsellor-at-law, married a Miss [Mary] Parker. Since we know of only two Thomas Vokes who were Attorneys this must be the Thomas who was born in Limerick in 1710, marrying at the age of 55, for a second or third time, perhaps?

In 1709 Edward Vokes, Clothier, was granted a plot of ground for 51 years at a rent of £2-10-0. The grant was until 1760. In 1769 this same plot was granted to Francis Sargent who had married a Miss Ellinor Vokes in May 1761. (Betham's Will Abstracts names her as Ellinor.)



The Plot leased to Edward Vokes by the Corporation in 1709 and to Francis Sargent in 1769.

The houses marked as Shannon View Terrace are still standing, as are the two houses now combined as the Couragower Pub to the right of points C and D. The Shannon River is at the top of the plan. Mass Lane adjoins St. Munchin's Catholic Church grounds, at the West end of Thomond Bridge.

Limerick Archives, L/FR/PM/1/1/1. The 1744/45 Rent Roll of the Corporation of Limerick lists Simon Vokes paying £5-10-0 for a Plot by Thomond Gate. William Vokes (The 1741 Sheriff) was paying £14-10-0 for a number of houses outside Thomond Gate as well as paying £5-0-0 for the Curragower Mill. Simon, or his heirs, paid their rent each year but William owed 16 years rent on his two holdings according to the 1755/6 Rent Roll. Simon's plot was leased to Edward, the Clothier in 1734 but by 1744 it was in Simon's hands suggesting Simon was one of Edward's heirs, perhaps even a son. Since Edward did have a son called Simon are we reading about the Simon who died in 1741 and the rent was being paid by the guardians of his young orphaned children?

⁷ Limerick City Archives. L/OC/5. The Corporation Paying Book. Oct. 1777 – July 1801.

Chapter 2

To sort out the next group of members of the Vokes family we must take note of the following pieces of information from different sources.

1 Source: - St. Mary's Archives.

Thomas Vokes with unknown wife, unknown address had two sons baptised in St. Johns church, Irishtown. They were named, John, christened on the 14th Aug. 1749 and Andrew, christened on the 4th March 1752. (In actual fact if his children were baptised in St. John's Parish then that was because Thomas lived there. John was his older son and Andrew was the man who married Elizabeth Wilson and took the Vokes family into Ballinacurra Hart. Andrew was eventually buried in St. John's graveyard, his home Parish. We now know that this Thomas was the English Attorney and his wife was Elizabeth Barker and that Thomas died in 1765.

2 Source: - Limerick Chronicle 17th Nov. 1785.

Married this morning Mr. Andrew Vokes to Miss Wilson, daughter of Mr.[Richard] Wilson of Ballinacurra,
An agreeable young lady with a large fortune. Richard Wilson was a Surveyor and a descendant from a very wealthy family.

3 Source: - O'Keif Cosh Mang. Vol. 6. p. 1221. p. 2109. Newspaper Abstracts.

Died, Paper dated, 25th Oct. 1837 Andrew Vokes Esq. uncle of Thomas Philips Vokes of Limerick. Died. 17th April 1830, Rebecca Woodburn, widow of Henry Woodburn and sister of Thomas Philips Vokes.

4 Source: - St. Mary's Archives.

Andrew Vokes, Gent, was buried in St. John's churchyard on the 24/10/1837. He was living in Ballinacurra, in St. Michaels Parish and he was 90 [sic] years of age. (He was laid to rest with his immediate ancestors in St. John's). There are no traces of any Vokes inscriptions in St. John's churchyard today.

5 Source: - Limerick Chronicle of 25th October 1837.

Died on Monday last, Andrew Vokes Esq. of Ballinacurra, aged 99 [sic]. "This venerable gentleman was able to walk in his garden until a few days before his death and retained full possession of his mental faculties".

The Clare Journal gave a repeat of the first sentence above including the age of 99. (His true age was 85.) (See age given as 90 by St. Mary's above).

6 Source: - Court of Claims, October 1823. Limerick Archives.

Thomas Philips Vokes swore that Henry Woodburn was married to Rebecca Vokes in 1818, the legitimate daughter of Thomas Vokes and that Thomas Vokes was a Freeman of the City of Limerick. Therefore Henry was entitled to be admitted a Freeman by right of Marriage.

7 Source: - Limerick Chronicle of Monday 26 December 1785.

Died last Thursday, Mr. Thomas Vokes, the elder, formerly an eminent merchant of this City.

The Cork Evening Post added his age as 75. (Therefore he was born circa 1710). (Elderly people's age at death as given are always suspect).

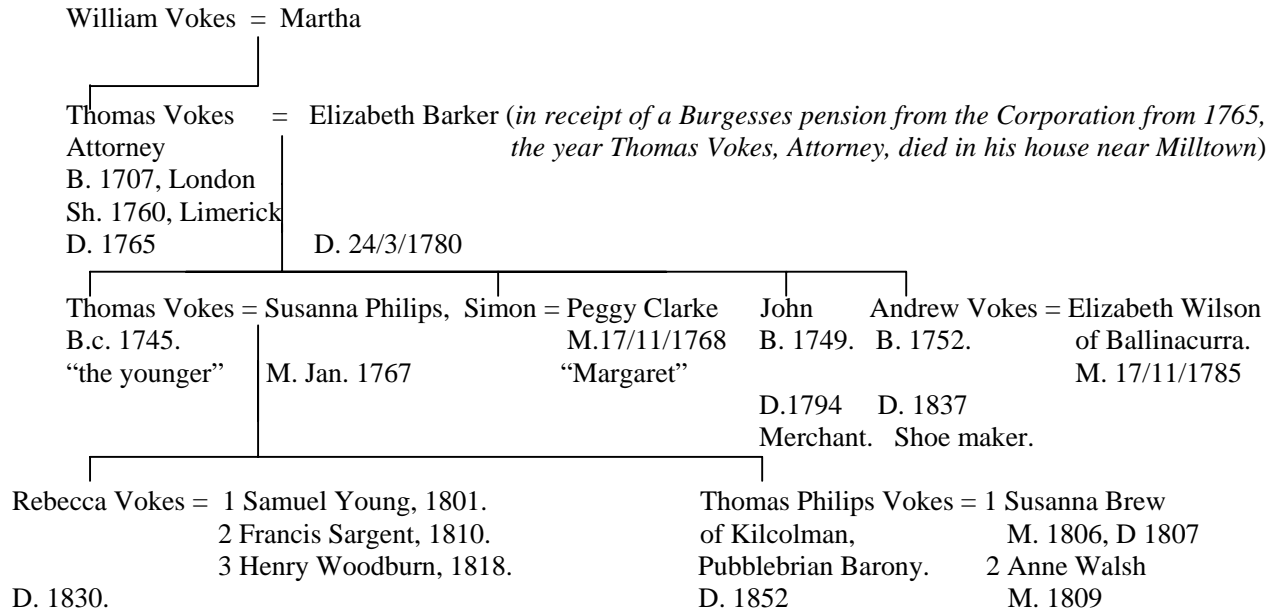
8 Source : - The Irish Genealogist, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1986, p. 16.

Thomas Vokes "the younger" married Susanna Phillips the daughter of William Phillips of Mount Phillips, Co. Tipperary, in January 1767. (Mount Phillips is near Newport and is not too far from Limerick City.)

9 Source: - Limerick Election 1817. LC 324/2. Found in the City Library, Limerick.

After casting his vote for Tuthill, the reform candidate, Thomas Philips Vokes made a speech complaining about his exclusion from the Freeman Roll by the corrupt Corporation. " In 1714 his ancestor Edmond Vokes as Sheriff proclaimed King George the first. In 1741 another member of his family was Sheriff and

in 1760 it fell to the lot of his grandfather to proclaim King George the third. His father was also a Freeman and from him who was the immediate representative of that family the Freedom of his native city was withheld while it was bestowed upon persons who had no interest whatever in the City of Limerick". It would now appear that Thomas "the elder" and Thomas "the younger" were not father and son. Taking the 9 sources above, the following authentic Family tree can now be constructed: -



Catherine Vokes who married Francis Russell may explain why Simon Vokes, participated with the three Russell brothers who initially developed Charlotte's Quay by building new houses there as well as the new Assembly House.

Thomas Philips Vokes was born circa 1785, his father would have been born circa 1745 and his grandfather was born in 1707. T.P.Vokes' first marriage was to Susanna Brew in 1806. Susanna died of T.B. on the 19th Jan. 1807. The marriage only lasted a few months. T.P.Vokes remarried on the 7th June 1809 to Anne Walsh. Why did a young man, only about 21 years of age, marry a girl who was in the last stages of dying from T.B.? The answer must lie in the habits of the Gentry of the day, of the parents arranging marriages to strengthen their family fortunes with either cash or lands. Did Thomas agree to the wedding knowing that a large sum of money, as dowry, would be his reward for enduring the presence of a dying girl in his home? Did anybody seriously think and hope that Susanna Brew would really get better?

The Munster Journal of Monday, 2 October 1749 gave the following, "To Let, Thomas Vokes' Dwelling house in Irishtown, Limerick, with Stables, Brew house, Storehouse and other out-offices, with a good pump plus two large yards, where upon may be built any out-offices thought necessary by the tenant". This must mark the time of Thomas's move out to Rathbane to the property he owned when he died in Dec. of 1785.

The Munster Journal of Monday 26 November 1750, carried an advertisement saying Thomas Vokes of Irishtown, Limerick, was selling Toasting cheese @ 1 Guinea per Hundred (Cwt.) or 2 ½ pence per Lb. for any quantity under ½ a Hundred.

Thomas senior and Thomas junior [they are not father and son] are both listed in Ferrar's Trade Directory of 1769 along with John, a Tanner in Irishtown and Simon, a merchant at Quay Lane in St Mary's Parish, Englishtown. After Thomas senior died in December 1785 it was his son John who placed an advertisement in the Limerick Chronicle of 19/3/1789, "to be let from the 25th March, the dwelling house, office, stores and garden now occupied by John Vokes. Fit for Merchant, import and export, which the late Mr. Thomas Vokes carried on extensively. 2 acres of garden well stocked with fruit and vegetables. Within 5 minutes walk of the city. Near Fort, Limerick." (I believe that Fort means Fort Prospect in the Rathbane area). The previous year, 1788, Thomas Vokes, "the younger", sued John Vokes, as the executor of Thomas Vokes, the elder. The sheriff seized and sold off the household goods and furniture plus one

cow to pay Thomas whatever monies were due to him, if this is the Thomas Vokes who was declared bankrupt with his co-partner Simon Vokes in 1773, then it's easy to understand his eagerness to get his share of the estate which John as executor may have been too slow in dealing with. Probate was granted in 1794 and the will was written in 1785 shortly before Thomas, the elder, died on the 22nd of December of that year.

The Hibernian Journal of 24 February 1773, carried the news that Simon and Thomas Vokes, merchants of Limerick were now bankrupt. These two have to be the merchants in the 1769 Directory.
www. Irishgenealogy.com, has a notice of the burial of a Thomas Vokes of the Four Courts Marshalsea on the 10 Jan. 1797. (Is this Thomas, the bankrupt, dying in the debtors prison or was this a Thomas who was an officer of the Marshalsea???)

Chapter 3

Thomas Philips Vokes referred to his home in Kilcolman, as "his paternal estate" suggesting his parents had live there before him. Kilcolman may have been part of the larger Crag Beg Estate.

Thomas Vokes, the younger and his wife Susanna Phillips are the next pair of Vokes to be followed in order to fill up the Vokes Family Tree. Thomas and Susanna married in January 1767. We know they had a daughter called Rebecca who was older than Thomas Philips although from the speech he made at the 1817 election, Thomas was claiming to be the eldest son. Rebecca married Samuel Young in 1801 but he died soon afterwards. Then Rebecca married, in 1810, Francis Sargent, an Excise Officer and when he died in 1813 leaving Rebecca with his 2 infant daughters she remarried for a third time in 1818, Henry Woodburn, from Liverpool, who was employed as a jailor in William Street Police Station by the police and who eventually became Governor of Limerick County Jail. Rebecca died in 1830, having had a son, Henry Woodburn, who like his father served as Governor of Limerick County Jail. Henry Woodburn Jnr. died on the 4th May 1862, at the early age of approximately 43. His effects were valued at £200. He married, at the very young age of 17, in 1835, Jane Amelia, the daughter of Surgeon Richard Franklin. Amelia died 27th January 1852. Surgeon Richard Franklin was Mayor of Limerick in 1839 and was knighted soon after. This connection no doubt helped secure the post of Prison Governor for young Henry who was also the nephew of Thomas Philips Vokes, the infamous Chief Magistrate of Police for Limerick City and County.

Thomas Philips Vokes was the subject of a book written about him and his career as a Police Magistrate. The book – "Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate" - was written by his son-in-law Henry Addison, who was married to T.P's daughter Mary. One of the chapters mentions that Thomas Philips had a married sister who was living in Dublin. I believe this sister was Mary Vokes who married an Edward Mackey in 1812 in St. John's Parish church. They moved to Dublin and were the parents of James Vokes Mackey who was born in Limerick but who was a politician for all of his adult life in Dublin. James Vokes Mackey is listed as owning lands in Limerick in 1870.

Andrew Vokes, the son of Thomas, the London born Attorney, married well when he chose Elizabeth Wilson as his bride. She had a large dowry and Andrew also seems to have come into possession of lands in Ballinacurra Hart, where the Wilson family lived.

Griffith's Valuation shows the Vokes holdings in Ballinacurra Hart in 1850.
 The 1919 Map of the Misses Vokes Estate shows the same area but with greater detail.

Limerick Chronicle, 28 June 1904.

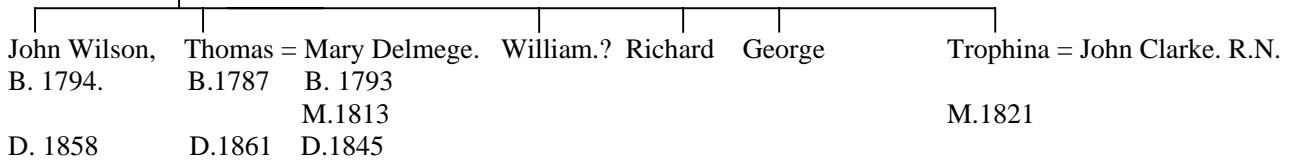
On the 7th inst. At Barrington's Hospital, Susan Mary Vokes of Vokes Villas, Ballinacurra, eldest daughter of the late William Wilson Vokes of this City.
 From this it is clear that Vokes Villas were in existence by June 1904. Vokes Villas did not exist in 1901 when the Census was taken.

Andrew Vokes = Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Wilson of Ballinacurra, Surveyor.

B. 1752

M. 1785

D. 1837



Andrew Vokes, senior, was a Shoemaker and John Wilson Vokes, his son, most likely served his time as a Shoemaker to Samuel Wilson who had a Shoemaking business, first at 4 Merchants Quay and later at 93 George Street, now 122 O'Connell St: When Samuel died he left his business to John Wilson Vokes. John likewise passed on the business to his nephew William Wilson Vokes. Therefore we can assume that John had no children of his own to succeed him. There is a record of a John Vokes marrying a Catherine Flinn in St. Mary's Cathedral on the 6th May 1816 but the records hold no births or baptisms to John and Catherine Vokes. Samuel Wilson was dead by 1840 because John Wilson Vokes appears, for the first time, as the occupant of 93 George St. in the Rates Book for that year.

The Limerick Chronicle of Sat. Sept. 18, 1813.

Married on Tuesday last, near Adare, Mr. Thomas Vokes and Miss Delmege.

The words "near Adare" used in the newspaper suggest that the marriage took place in Miss Delmege's home and not in a church. According to the Tithes Applotment Book, there was a Delmege family living at Ballycurrane, near Adare as well as a Vokes family headed by Simon Vokes. Weddings usually, if not always, took place in the bride's Parish church or in her home. Thomas and Mary came back to Adare Parish church to baptise their son Thomas in 1832 indicating a strong link with the area. It could also be possible that it was only Mary Delmege, who had the strong link with Ballycurrane.

The only link which connects Thomas Vokes and his Wife Mary Delmege to Andrew Vokes and his wife, Elizabeth Wilson comes from the Australian descendants of Thomas and Mary's three youngest daughters, Caroline, Trophina and Rosina, who sailed to Australia in 1853. All the information the Australians have quoted has proven to be very accurate and reliable. There is no link between Thomas and Andrew to be found here in Limerick so I have to accept the Australian claim that Thomas was a son of Andrew of Ballinacurra. Thomas was often referred to as a Cordwainer, i.e. one who worked leather in the style used in Cordoba in Spain.

Chapter 4

Thomas Vokes = Mary Delmege.

B. 1787.

B. 1793

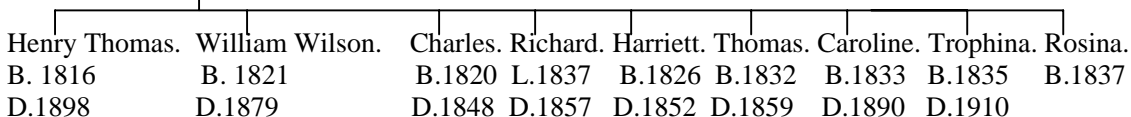
M. 1813

D. 1861.

D. 1845, both buried in Mungret church graveyard in the Vokes Vault.

Aged 74.

Aged 52.



Caroline, Trophina and Rosina emigrated to Australia in 1853. They sailed on a ship called "The Blue Jacket". Caroline died on the 8 June 1890.

Henry Thomas was also known as Henry Wilson Vokes. He and his 2nd wife used different versions of their names and Henry used many different occupations to describe himself down through the years. A full list of their children from both St. Mary's Records and The Civil records from St. Camillus's Hospital

helps to identify this couple despite the changes in names, addresses and occupations. Henry seems to have been a well-off owner of House Properties in his early days but returned to Shoe making in his later years. All indications suggest that his wife who outlived him died in reduced circumstances.

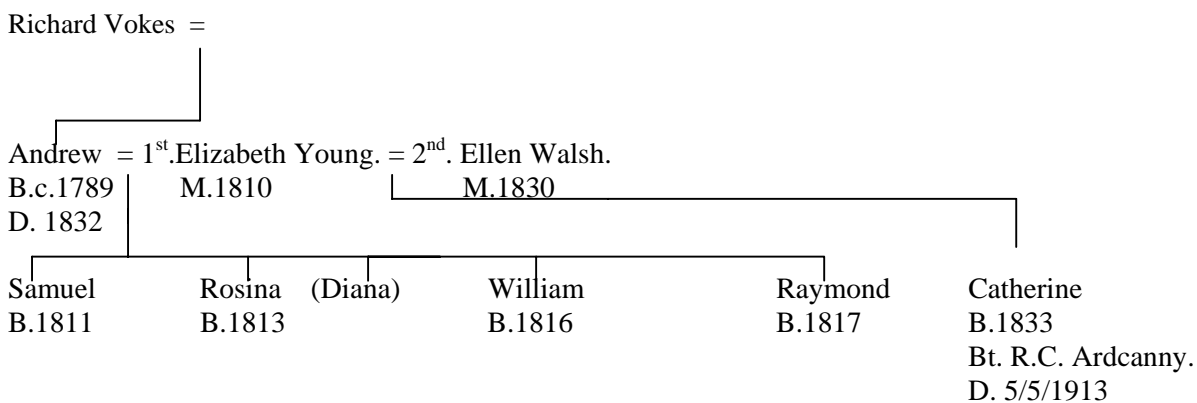
Limerick Chronicle of 29/5/1866. The Death of Henry's first wife.

On the 25th May at Ballinacurra Cottage after a long and painful illness, Caroline, wife of Mr Henry Vokes and only sister of Mr. Sterling, Watchmaker and Jeweller, 115 George Street.

It was his brother William Wilson Vokes who inherited the large Boot and Shoe making business based at 122 George's St., from his uncle, John Wilson Vokes when the latter died in 1858.

Thomas Vokes, the Cordwainer, of 5 or 10 Roches St. Limerick,(5 counting down from Catherine St. or 10 counting up from O'Connell St) built a vault for his wife Mary (Delmege),in Mungret Cemetery, when she died in 1845, at the age of 52 and she was the first person to be interred there. Their son Charles died next, aged 29, and was buried there in 1848. Thomas's daughter Harriett, aged 25, the wife of Eyre Heaphy, was buried there in 1852. The next internment was of Richard Vokes aged 44, since this means Richard was born in 1813, the year Thomas and Mary married he is hardly a son of theirs. There was a boy called Richard Vokes who was born in 1813 to another Richard Vokes and his wife Mary Christie. Obviously they are related but in what degree I can't say. Mary Eliza aged 4 and a grandchild of Thomas and Mary was laid to rest next. John Wilson Vokes, aged 64, Thomas's brother, was next in 1858 and Thomas junior followed in 1859 aged 27. Thomas himself died in 1861 aged 74 and his son, William Wilson Vokes, died in 1879 aged 57, followed by his three daughters, Susan Mary, in 1904, aged 42, Elizabeth Corneille, in 1930, aged 63 and finally, Caroline Vokes in 1944, aged 76.

Andrew Vokes, the eldest son of Richard became a Tailor and married Elizabeth Young on the 28th of November 1810 at Nantenant Parish Church. They lived in Ballinacurra but Andrew's business was conducted from rooms in Mary's St: Andrew married for the second time, Ellen Walsh, a Catholic girl from Ardcanny Parish in Co. Limerick on the 19th May 1830. Andrew died in October 1832 and was buried in St. John's Churchyard. After her husband's death Ellen gave birth to a daughter Catherine but had her daughter baptised in the Catholic church of Ardcanny on the 27th February 1833.



- There is a record of a Rosina Vokes of Ballinacurra, daughter of Andrew Vokes, who married John Sheehan, a Pensioner, of Mungret St., Limerick, on the 30th August 1848, at St. Michael's church.
- A Diana Vokes of Ballinacurra, daughter of Andrew Vokes, married William Moore, a Pensioner from the County Limerick Constabulary, on the 2nd of August, 1849. Neither Diana's birth or baptism were recorded.
- A Raymond Vokes died in 1848.
- An unnamed Mrs. Vokes was buried in St. John's churchyard on the 28th August 1822. (Elizabeth Vokes, nee Young?) There are no Vokes Tombstones existing in St. John's cemetery today. Did the daughter's family's take over the sites?

- Catherine Vokes, B. 1833, appears in the 1911 Census. There are only two clues to help identify her. First, her year of birth and second, her Roman Catholic religion.
- Catherine was buried in Mount St. Lawrence cemetery on the 5th May 1913. Her age was given as 90 years old but she was really only 80 years of age. Her address was given as 8 Catherine Place but in the 1911 Census her address was 8 Phair's Lane which was off Catherine Place. Number 8 was a large house and must have stood out from the rest of the mews houses which were normally quite small (converted stables). Phair's lane was originally a stable lane and every block of houses in Newtown Pery, had a stable lane to give access to the stables at the rear of every house.

Chapter 5

When William Wilson Vokes died in 1879 his daughters, Susan Mary (May), Elizabeth (Nannie) and Caroline, inherited his business at 122 George's Street. They also became the owners of an estate in Ballinacurra Hart, which they divided into house sites and leased out. They also built three houses for themselves and called them "Vokes Villas". These three houses still exist today (2010). A new cul de sac runs across the site of the original Vokes residence on the East side of Vokes Villas. According to the 1901 Census, two distinctive, 5 roomed, thatched cottages stood here. These were the only thatched cottages in Ballinacurra Hart in the census. The Vokes family lived in the left hand cottage and the Holland family lived in the other. In the 1912 Postal Directory for Limerick City and Suburbs, a Hetherington family moved into the Vokes home whilst the Holland family continued to occupy the other cottage. An undated map of the Estate of the Misses Vokes shows the three new houses belonging to the three sisters (Vokes Villas) and shows the two thatched cottages to the right hand side of Vokes Villas.

The detached house on the left has May Villa etched into the front gate pillars and this would have been the home of Susan Mary Vokes who was known as May. The larger of the two semi detached houses next door was the home of Nannie Elizabeth Corneille, nee Vokes and the smaller detached house must therefore have been built for Caroline Vokes

William Vokes had employed a young man called Christopher Corneille who went on to marry the eldest daughter, Nannie Elizabeth Vokes. Christopher opened his own shop at 53 Thomas St. The daughters were however too young to run the business and a George Thomas Vokes, a shoemaker, was appointed manager. George was a relative but to what degree is not yet known. George married Charlotte Bartlett of Wexford and moved to Waterford immediately after the wedding, they lived at the Quay, Waterford. Their first four children were born there and their little girl Emely died while on a visit to Tramore in 1870. George obviously returned to Limerick before William Wilson Vokes died and was available to manage the Boot and Shoemaking business. He and his wife had a further four children in Limerick. Here is a full list of their family: -

Emily,	B. 17 Oct. 1869 at Waterford. Died Tramore 17 July 1870 aged 9 months.
Frederick	B. 21 Oct. 1871 (Frederick Patrick)
Jane Mabel	B. 07 May 1873
Charlotte Florence	B. 05 May 1875
Elizabeth	B. 30 Sept. 1877 at Limerick.
William Wilson	B. 27 Nov. 1880
Maude	B. 16 Oct. 1882
Charles	B. 7. Oct. 1885.

The lease on 122 George's St. was surrendered in 1886 and George's family are found in the Shankill area of Belfast in the 1901 Census. The Address was 9 Edlingham St. Duncairn Ward, Shanklin Parish, Belfast, Co. Antrim. George Thomas Vokes died prior to 1901. The Census gives: -

Charlotte Vokes, aged 50, widow, born in Wexford. Head of Family.
 William Vokes, aged 19, apprentice Engineer, born in Co. Limerick.
 Maud Vokes, aged 17, Machinist, born in Co. Limerick.
 Charles Vokes, aged 14, Scholar, born in Co. Limerick.
 All members of the Church of Ireland.

The 1911 Census has a William Vokes, aged 30, An Engineer, born in Co Limerick.
 Agnes Vokes, aged 21, housewife
 Lily Vokes, aged 1, daughter.

These three were down as visitors with William McLaughlin's family at house 9, Carnamuck, Castlereagh, Co. Down. All Church of Ireland. Agnes and Lily were born in Co Antrim as were 5 of the McLoughlin family. Mrs McLoughlin was born in Co. Armagh. Most likely Agnes was the youngest daughter of the McLoughlin family when William Vokes married her.

Richard Vokes, a Whitesmith, married Eliza[beth] Vokes in 1844. They were living in St. Munchins Parish where the Vokes had first settled when they first came to Limerick. Richard and Eliza had a son, George Thomas, born on the 9/7/1845 and baptised in St. Munchins church on the 3/8/1845. George Thomas married Charlotte Bartlett who was born in Co. Wexford and Familysearch Records Search has George, son of Richard marrying Charlotte, daughter of Samuel on the 22 Oct 1868 at Killesk, Co. Wexford. Richard set up his Shoe making business on the Quay in Waterford and four children were born to them in Waterford. Their next four children were born in Limerick where George was employed by his relatives the underaged Vokes sisters, as the manager of the large Boot and shoe making business in George's Street, Limerick City. The lease ran out on the business in 1886 and George's family next appear living in the Shankill area of Belfast. where they were included in the 1901 and 1911 census. Frederick Patrick joined the British Army as an officer and ended up in Canada. After his first wife died he married again in Kingston. As follows, Frederick Patrick Vokes, Major, aged 53, Widower, to Bessie Euphemia Murphy, nee West, Widow aged 37. Dated 3 Oct. 1927.

He was the father by his first wife, of Major General Christopher Vokes commander of the 1st Canadian Division in Europe during W.W.2. Christopher was born in Armagh on April 13th 1904 he died in Ontario on March 28th 1985.

There is a very strong possibility that George Thomas was the brother of Simon and William Vokes who ended up in Two Wells, North of Adelaide, South Australia.

Walkers Hibernian Magazine. 1786,

Note: - Thomas and his brother William Vokes were executed in Cork for breaking into a home in Sundays Well in 1786 and wounding and robbing the owner. The only Vokes known to have resided in Cork is Simon Vokes who married the sister of a Court Official, Sargeant Woods.

The Limerick Chronicle of Thursday 27 April 1786,

Executed last Saturday in Cork, Thomas and William Nokes. Which paper has the correct surname?

Bethams Will Abstracts 32/152.

Russell Woods = Anne, daughter of William Pope of Cork, Brewer
 of Cork.
 Will. 31 May 1743
 Pr. 31 Dec. 1748

Attiwell. Russell. Ann. Mary. Elizabeth = Simon Vokes Hannah

It would appear that Simon and Elizabeth Woods were already married by 1743 or Russell Woods would not have mentioned them in his will which he wrote that year. Did Simon return to Limerick with his young wife. It would have been quite normal for Simon to marry in Cork as that was his brides home Parish. If Elizabeth is the Mrs Simon Vokes who died in 1805 in Mary's St. Limerick Then she married quite young and Simon must have been born circa early 1720's. Is he therefore the Simon named in Ferrar's 1769 Trade Directory who went bankrupt in 1773?

C. J. of Monday 13 May 1805,

Died on Wednesday evening in Mary's Street, Mrs Vokes widow of the late Simon Vokes and sister of the late Sargent Wood[s].