

Fanny Thomasine Bishop

Fanny Thomasine Bishop was my great grandmother on my paternal grandfather's side. I feel like I 'know' my maternal great grandmothers; there are photographs and my mother shared memories of these two women. There are no such memories of my great grandmothers on my father's side. In the early 1990s, I was in contact with one of Fanny's granddaughters but their lives didn't overlap and she could not contribute anything. Fanny lived until 1921 and even though the family were very much working class, it seems unusual that not a single photograph has survived, or at least not one that I have been able to locate. Everything that I know about Fanny has had to come from documentary research. She does flit in and out of the records, largely through the lives of her children but to me, she remains a shadowy figure. Yet she intrigues me and I would love to know her better. This then, is an attempt to understand and appreciate the life of a woman who experienced many tragedies, a woman who struggled with poverty, a woman who must have possessed incredible resilience and whose legacy is her descendants.

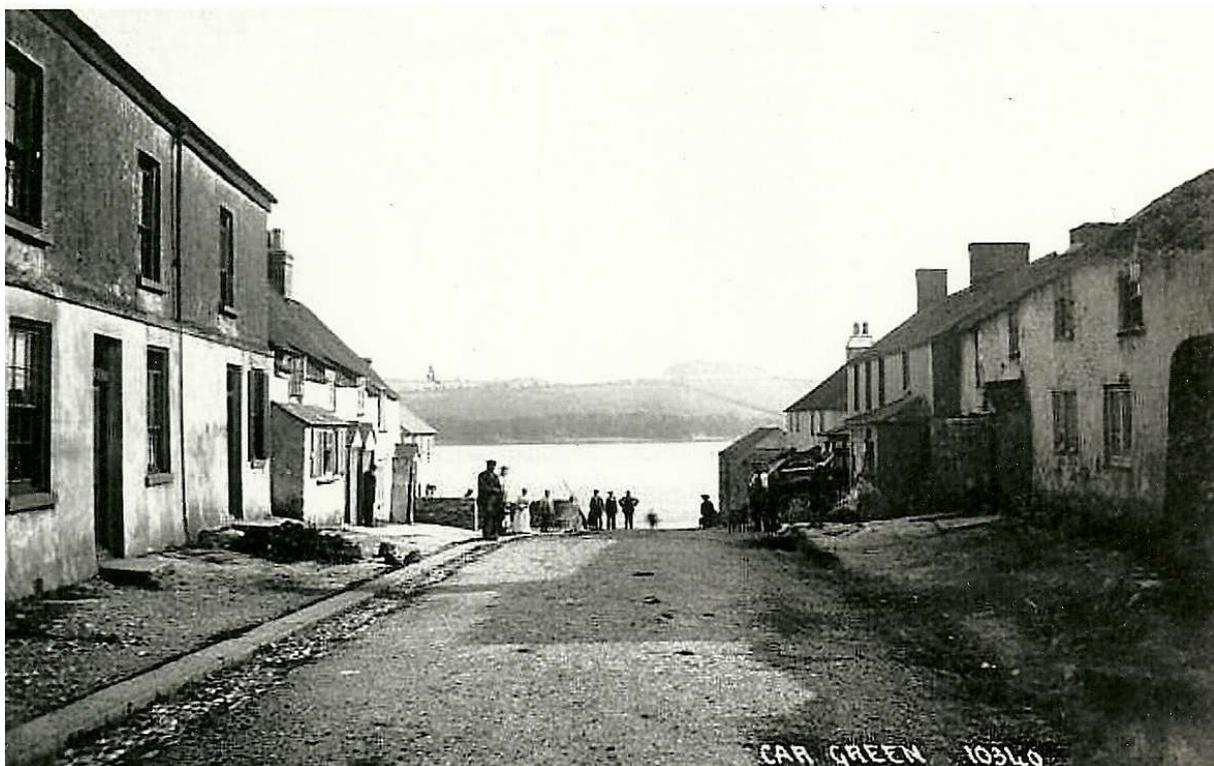
On a summer day in 1869, a woman, gave birth in a small cottage in Cargreen, almost certainly aided by her widowed mother.¹ Let us meet, this new mother, Elizabeth Bound Bishop née Buckingham. She was thirty-six and the baby was a girl that she would call Fanny Thomasine, after her husband's two sisters. What would the woman, Elizabeth, have thought as she cradled her fourth child in her arms? Was the additional mouth to feed a concern? Her husband, Richard Bishop, was a miner and things had not gone well for Cornish mining since they married in 1864.² It is not known where Richard would have worked but Tamar Valley mines were producing copper, tin and arsenic in the 1860s and there were other

¹ Birth certificate of Fanny Thomasine Bishop 1869 from the Local Registrar. 1871 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG10 2231 folio 35.

² Marriage certificate of Richard Laundry Bishop and Elizabeth Bound Buckingham 1864 from the General Register Office.

mines in the Calstock area, as well as Kit Hill, ten miles away near Callington. The Cornish mining boom ended in 1866, when the market crashed and the east Cornish mines, where lodes were becoming smaller and less accessible, could not compete with the larger, more profitable mines further west. By the time Fanny was two, her father had left mining to work as an agricultural labourer.

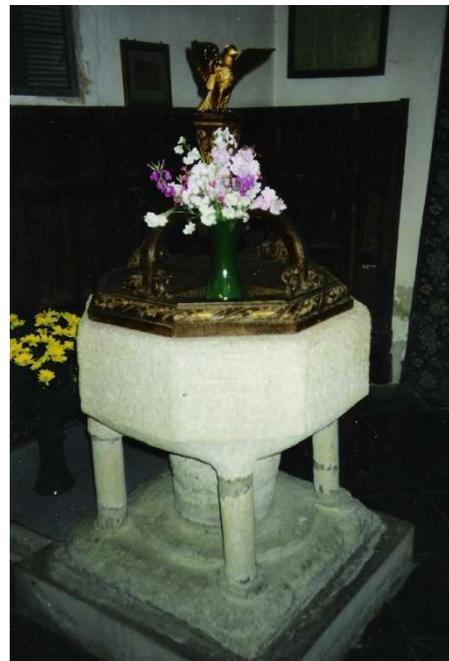
Cargreen was a bustling fishing village in the Cornish parish of Landulph, on the banks of the River Tamar. From here, a ferry operated to Bere Ferrers, which would be, from 1890, connected by rail to Plymouth. Much of the local farming land was owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and the Tamar Valley was particularly known for its market gardening and soft fruit growing. Barges bringing human excrement from Plymouth landed at Cargreen, enabling this manure to be used on the nearby rural land.



Cargreen

The first family event, when Fanny was six months old, was the death of her great grandfather, Richard Laundry, at the age of ninety-two.³ Richard was living across the river, at Lopwell in Bere Ferrers and it seems unlikely that the two ever met. Younger brothers joined the family, the oddly named Silvey Philip, when Fanny was two and Archibald John two years later. Fanny's maternal grandmother lived with the family from 1871, if not before, until her death.⁴ Fanny's half-sister, Bessie Lucas Buckingham, born five years before Fanny's parents married⁵ and ten years Fanny's senior, was brought up as part of the family, although she retained the surname Buckingham.⁶

Fanny and her four full siblings were all baptised together, at St. Leonard and St. Dilph, Landulph, on Christmas Day in 1875. The delayed baptism might be because the family attended Cargreen Baptist Chapel, as later generations were known to do. The baptism date coincides with the arrival of a temporary priest in charge, whilst the rector, Samuel Smith, was suspended. Perhaps there had been a campaign to baptise as yet unbaptised children in the parish; there were two other baptisms on the same day.⁷



The Font at St. Leonard and St. Dilph, Landulph

Reverend Samuel Smith, rector of Landulph from 1871, was clearly an eccentric character. A former prize-fighter, he was accused of tampering

³ Death certificate (pdf) of Richard Laundry 1870 from the General Register Office.

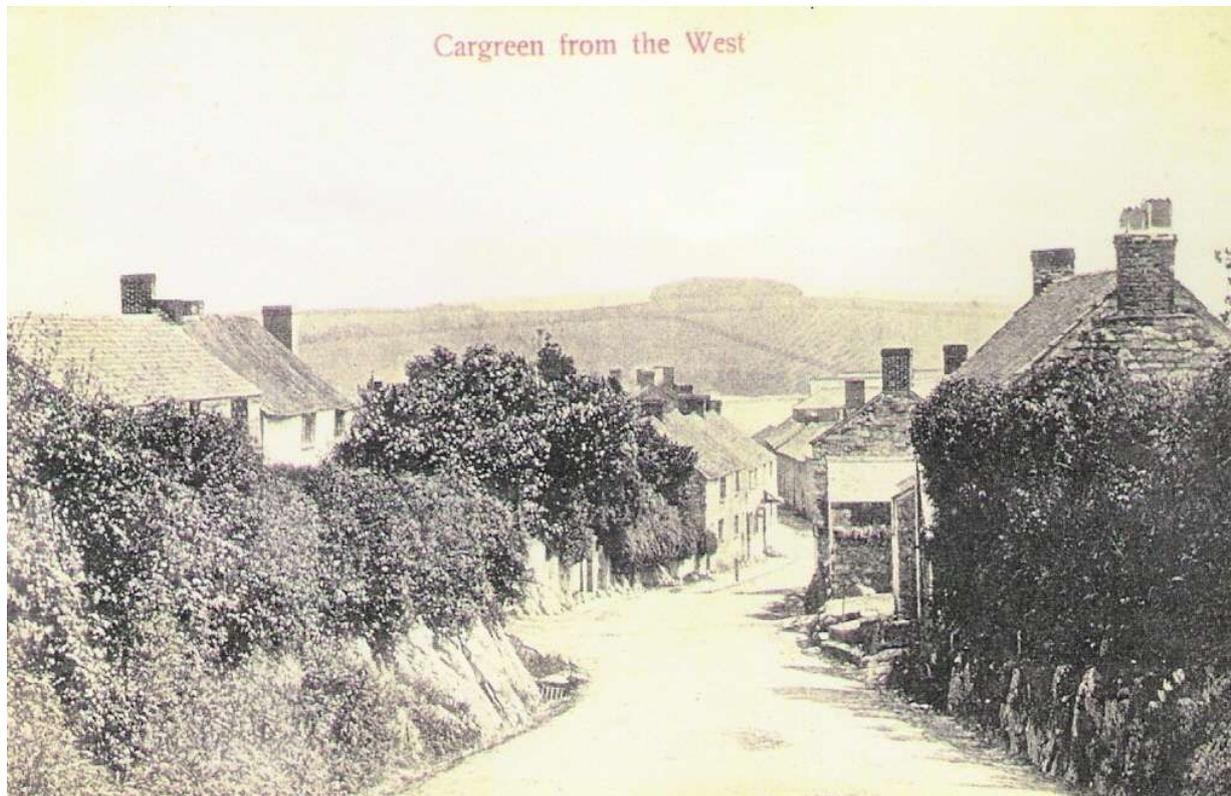
⁴ 1871 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG10 2231 folio 35. 1881 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG11 2282 folio 37.

⁵ Birth certificate of Bessie Lucas Buckingham 1859 from the General Register Office.

⁶ 1871 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG10 2231 folio 35.

⁷ Baptism register of St. Leonard & St. Dilpe, Landulph, held at Cornwall Record Office and via www.findmypast.co.uk.

with parish council elections.⁸ In 1875, there was an unsuccessful attempt to get him permanently removed for assaulting a parishioner and writing insulting letters to others.⁹



Cargreen

Fanny's mother had been the mistress of a dame school in Cargreen before her marriage and before the era of compulsory education. Dame schools were often more akin to childminding, rather than providers of a formal education. There was a church-run school in the parish in the mid-nineteenth century and by the time Fanny and her siblings reached school age, education was compulsory. Samuel Hore was the schoolmaster for several decades. He lived in the village at Ham Cottage, close to the Bible Christian Chapel and his children were contemporaries of the Bishop

⁸ Barrett, Andrew Mark *A History of the Ancient Parish Church of St. Leonard and St. Dilph, Landulph* Privately Published (2000).

⁹ *Western Morning News* 5 June 1875 p.3 col. c.

children.¹⁰ Frederick Skelton was the young pupil teacher when Fanny first started school.¹¹ By 1881, Archibald Hore, son of the headmaster, had taken over the role;¹² it is likely that there was another pupil teacher in between Frederick and Archibald.



**Landulph School
undated but likely to be c.1880**

This photograph of Landulph School pupils is undated and no names are known. It is thought to include Rhoda Braund, who would later become Fanny's sister-in-law. Rhoda was two years younger than Fanny and would have been at the school between about 1876 and 1884. Is Fanny in this photograph? I will probably never know but I do know which of the girls I would be betting on if I had to identify one as being her. I have photos of other family members, her father, grandfather, great

¹⁰ 1871 census for Ham Cottage, Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG10 2231 folio 38.

¹¹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette* 19 February 1876 p. 7 col. e.

¹² 1881 census for Ham Cottage, Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG11 2282 folio 34.

grandfather, as well as her aunts and uncles. AI created an image using these facial features. I won't share it, not even clearly watermarked, as it would all too soon become 'fact' but I do see a resemblance, despite the fact that, physically, I always feel that I take after my mother.

The 1870s brought the deaths of Fanny's Bishop paternal grandparents, across the river in Lopwell.¹³ Despite the regular ferry, she probably didn't know them very well. In the final months of 1876, Fanny's seventeen-year-old half-sister, Bessie, became pregnant.¹⁴ Given that Bessie herself had been born out of wedlock, it is likely that the family took this in their stride. Unlike her mother, in Bessie's case, she did marry before her baby was born.¹⁵ Her husband was Albert Francis Richards, whose family ran the barge service on the river.¹⁶ Bessie and her mother were pregnant at the same time and shortly after the birth of William, Bessie's son, Kate, the last of Fanny's siblings, was born. The two children were baptised on the same day in July 1877.¹⁷ Bessie had another son, Percival James, in 1880.¹⁸

Earlier in 1877, Fanny's aunt Thomasine, together with her husband and baby, had emigrated to Australia. By the time they left, they were no longer living in the area, so it is unlikely that Fanny and her family went to wave them off.¹⁹

¹³ Death certificate (pdf) of John Bishop 1874 from the General Register Office. Death certificate (pdf) of Tamsin (Thomasine) Bishop née Laundry 1876 from the General Register Office.

¹⁴ Birth indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁵ Marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

¹⁶ 1871 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG10 2231 folio 35.

¹⁷ Baptism register of St. Leonard & St. Dilpe, Landulph, held at Cornwall Record Office and via www.findmypast.co.uk.

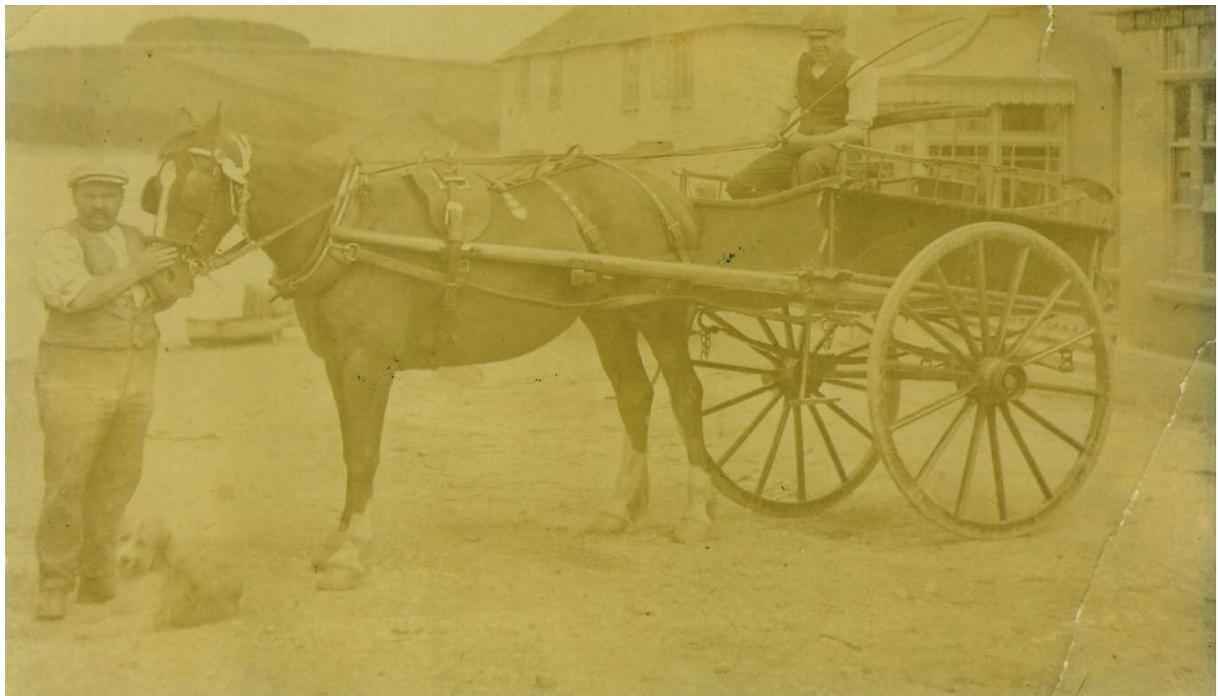
¹⁸ Birth indexes of the General Registrar. 1939 Register for Ivydene, Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG101/6731J/008/8 letter code WBLQ.

¹⁹ Passenger list for the *Corona* State Records Authority of New South Wales, Australia Persons on bounty ships (Agent's Immigrant Lists) series 5316, reel 2140 via www.ancestry.co.uk.

A tragedy in Cargreen must have impacted on the whole village. In 1884, Braund's baker's cart was doing its rounds, driven by the owner's nephew, who was almost certainly William James Braund, then aged nineteen, who would later catch Fanny's eye. The young driver took the opportunity to give his younger brother, Albert and step sisters a lift to school. Albert pestered his brother to let him take the reins and in his excitement, Albert fell forward between the shafts of the cart. William was unable to take control in time and the cart ran over Albert, causing fatal injuries. How awful not just for Albert but also for William, who had to live with this on his conscience.²⁰



**Fanny's Aunt
Thomasine Finnemore
née Bishop**



Braund's Baker's Cart

²⁰ Death certificate of Albert Braund 1885 from the local registrar. *The Cornish Times* 18 October 1884.

Earlier that year, Fanny's older brother, Joseph, had married a woman nearly twenty years his senior.²¹ Joseph worked on the railways and had moved to Plymouth,²² so Fanny may never have seen his short-lived daughter, her niece.²³ Joseph was to have a second daughter in 1890 but she too died young, so Joseph has no living descendants.²⁴ Another niece arrived for Fanny, when Bessie Richards gave birth to a daughter, Laura Winifred, known as Winnie, in October 1885.²⁵ On the 15th of May 1885, Fanny's maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Buckingham died from senile decay. We don't know what sort of relationship Fanny had with her grandmother but as she'd lived with the family for many years, Fanny would have felt her loss.²⁶

The winter of 1885 brought gales, violent storms and dangerous seas. It is likely that the Cargreen cottages would have been cold and damp. Fanny's younger sister, eight-year-old Kate, became sick and died of bronchitis and convulsions in the January of 1886.²⁷ Fanny, who almost certainly would have shared a room with Kate, would no doubt have been distressed to witness her sister's deterioration. Later that year, there was more sadness for the family when Fanny's nephew William, son of her half-sister Bessie Lucas Richards, died at the age of nine. He was suffering from amyloid disease of the kidneys and caries of the hip joint. This would be consistent with tuberculosis as an underlying cause.²⁸

²¹ Marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

²² 1891 census for 34 Hanwell Street, Plymouth, Devon RG12 1732 folio 43.

²³ Birth and death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁴ Birth and death indexes of the General Registrar.

²⁵ Birth indexes of the General Registrar. 1939 Register for Fernleigh, Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG101/6731J/008/11 letter code WBLQ.

²⁶ Death certificate (digital image) of Elizabeth Buckingham née Bound 1885 from the General Register Office.

²⁷ Death certificate (digital image) of Kate Bishop 1886 the General Registrar. Burial register for St. Leonard and St. Dilpe, Landulph, Cornwall, accessed via www.familysearch.org.

²⁸ Death certificate (digital image) of William Albert Richards. Burial register for St. Leonard and St. Dilpe, Landulph, Cornwall, accessed via www.familysearch.org.

Better news was to follow, as Bessie Richards gave birth to another son, Cyril Arthur, the following January.²⁹

By the spring of 1888, eighteen-year-old Fanny had begun a relationship with William James Braund. She gave birth to a son, Albany, on the 5th of December in that year.³⁰ It is not known where she got this unusual christian name from. On the 10th of January 1889, Fanny married great grandfather William James Braund, at the register office, across the river in Stoke Damerel, Devon. Although he had grown up in a Cargreen cottage close to Fanny's own,³¹ William was working as a baker and living in Fore Street, Devonport at the time.³² Both William James and Fanny Thomasine had benefitted from compulsory education and were able to sign the register. The marriage was witnessed by Fanny's brother-in-law, Albert Richards and Thomas Boulden.³³

It seems, from a marginal note on Albany's birth certificate, that Fanny went to register Albany's birth without William being present. Under the terms of the 1874 Births and Deaths Registration Act, father's names could only be included on the certificates of illegitimate children if they were present when the birth was registered. Although William and Fanny were married by this time, they had not been when Albany was born, so the father's name remains blank. There is however a marginal correction, done on the 12th of August 1889, to indicate that William was the father.³⁴ DNA confirms that Albany was a genetic Braund.

²⁹ Birth indexes of the General Registrar. 1939 Register for Ham Cottage, Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG101/6731J/009/10 letter code WBLQ.

³⁰ Birth certificate of Albany Braund 1888 from the General Register Office, issued 1940, in family possession.

³¹ 1881 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG11 2282 folio 37.

³² Marriage certificate of William James Braund and Fanny Thomasine Bishop 1889 from the General Register Office.

³³ Marriage certificate of William James Braund and Fanny Thomasine Bishop 1889 from the General Register Office.

³⁴ Birth certificate of Albany Braund 1888 from the General Register Office, issued 1940, in family possession.

When Albany was just fourteen months old, on the 6th of February 1890, Fanny gave birth to another son in Cargreen, who she named William; the child was known as Willie.³⁵ Did Fanny go back to her mother to give birth, or did William and Fanny never live in Devonport as a family? The following year, William James was back working for the Braund baker's business and the family were living in a three-roomed cottage, close to the river, in Cargreen.³⁶

1891 was to be an appalling year for Fanny. On the 15th of March, after a week's illness, her son, Willie, died from what was diagnosed as bronchitis; he was thirteen months old.³⁷ Fanny was heavily pregnant as she nursed Willie through his final illness and on the 28th of April, six weeks after the death of her son, Fanny gave birth again, naming her third son William James Braund.³⁸ On the 10th of July 1891, her husband, William James, died of tuberculosis and exhaustion, from which he had been suffering all their married life.³⁹ Fanny would have been preoccupied, as apart from having a two-year-old to look after, her ten-week-old baby son was also ill. He died the day after his father of 'debility from birth', perhaps he had been premature.⁴⁰ No burial is recorded for the baby; he would almost certainly have been interred with his father.⁴¹

Within the space of four months, Fanny had lost her husband and two of her three sons but Fanny's annus horribilis did not end there. It is likely that, together with two-year-old Albany, Fanny went to live with her parents after William's death. Ten weeks after the death of her husband

³⁵ Birth certificate of William Braund 1890 from the Local Registrar.

³⁶ 1891 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG12 1808 folio 34.

³⁷ Death certificate of William Braund 1891 from the Local Registrar.

³⁸ Birth certificate of William James Braund 1891 from the Local Registrar.

³⁹ Death certificate of William James Braund 10 July 1891 from the General Register Office.

⁴⁰ Death certificate of William James Braund 11 July 1891 from the General Register Office.

⁴¹ Burial register for St. Leonard and St. Dilpe, Landulph, Cornwall, accessed via www.familysearch.org.

and baby, Fanny was present when her older sister, Amelia Matilda, died of phthisis, or tuberculosis. This 'white man's scourge', as it was called, was to blight Fanny's life.⁴² Amelia had been in service but had been sick for over a year.⁴³

It is important to note that, in the 1890s, tuberculosis in infants might present and be diagnosed as bronchitis, chronic coughing, wheezing and a fever being present in both. Given the infectious nature of tuberculosis and living conditions that would be considered crowded by today's standards, it is highly likely that both thirteen-month-old Willie and Fanny's sister Kate, were not in fact suffering from bronchitis but were yet more victims of this cruel disease. The village bakers, the Braund family, contained several tuberculosis sufferers, as well as Fanny's husband. As there was no health regulation to prevent them from continuing to practice their trade, this probably contributed to the spread of the disease in the community.

It seems likely that Fanny and young Albany remained living in Cargreen for the next few years. A strange incident occurred in 1894. On the 4th of December, the Baptist Minister, A. T. Head, wrote to the local paper. The Anglican rector, the notorious Reverend Samuel Smith, had nominated Mrs Fanny Braund as a candidate for the newly formed Landulph Parish Council, allegedly, according to the letter in the *Westen Morning News*, against Fanny's wishes. The letter went on, to say, "*The Rev, gentleman does occasionally disport himself in strange ways, but is it not going just a little too far to drag a lady's name before the public in this manner?*" Head firmly disassociated the Baptist Church from having any part in this

⁴² Fanny's father, husband, two siblings, a son, a nephew and her father-in-law would all have forms of tuberculosis as their registered cause of death. Two further sons and a sister, whose cause of death was diagnosed as bronchitis, may also have been victims.

⁴³ Death certificate (digital image) of Amelia Matilda Bishop 1891 from the General Register Office. Burial register for St. Leonard and St. Dilpe, Landulph, Cornwall, accessed via www.familysearch.org.

nomination, pointing out that, "*There are two 'hardy sons of toil' connected with our congregation who have been nominated for the honour of parish councillor, viz. Mr A.F. Richards [Fanny's brother-in-law] and Mr T Spry, and for their return we shall use, in conjunction with our fellow electors, every legitimate means.*" We will never know the truth of this matter. Did Fanny really want to be on the council? Was this some kind of joke at her expense? Was there a hefty dose of sexism involved in this whole affair?⁴⁴

By the early months of 1898, Fanny had formed a new connection, with a young plumber from Devonport, Frederick Barrett Hole,⁴⁵ known as Ted,⁴⁶ who was six years Fanny's junior. When they married, on the 25th of June, at Holy Trinity Church in Plymouth, Fanny was three months pregnant.⁴⁷ The witnesses were once again Fanny's brother-in-law Albert Richards and Frederick's father, William Barrett Hole.⁴⁸ Fanny's signature in the register is particularly neat.⁴⁹ How might Fanny and Ted have met? She gave her address on the marriage certificate as Cargreen⁵⁰ but had she perhaps been in service across the Tamar in Plymouth? Although Fanny and Ted's eldest son was born in Cargreen, early in 1899, the family's address was George Street Devonport; Fanny had presumably gone back to her mother to give birth.⁵¹ When Fanny went to live in Devonport, with her

⁴⁴ *Western Morning News* 9 December 1894 p. 3 col. e.

⁴⁵ Marriage certificate of Frederick Barrett Hole and Fanny Thomasine Braund, formerly Bishop 1898 from the Local Registrar. Marriage register of Holy Trinity, Plymouth, Devon via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁴⁶ Oral evidence from Cyril Albany Braund, grandson of Fanny Thomasine, via Gwendoline Catherine Braund née Smith.

⁴⁷ Marriage certificate of Frederick Barrett Hole and Fanny Thomasine Braund, formerly Bishop 1898 from the Local Registrar. Marriage register of Holy Trinity, Plymouth, Devon via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁴⁸ Marriage certificate of Frederick Barrett Hole and Fanny Thomasine Braund, formerly Bishop 1898 from the Local Registrar.

⁴⁹ Marriage register of Holy Trinity, Plymouth, Devon via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁵⁰ Marriage certificate of Frederick Barrett Hole and Fanny Thomasine Braund, formerly Bishop 1898 from the Local Registrar. Marriage register of Holy Trinity, Plymouth, Devon via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁵¹ Birth indexes of the General Registrar. Death certificate (digital image) of Frederick William Hole 1899 from the General Register Office.

husband, her son, Albany, remained behind in Cargreen with his grandmother and later with the Richards family, in Hatt, near Cargreen.⁵²

Fanny's father died a year after her second marriage, at the age of fifty-seven, yet another victim of tuberculosis.⁵³ A month later, Frederick and Fanny's son died of gastroenteritis.⁵⁴ The 1899 Medical Officer of Health's Report for Devonport mentioned a particularly high incidence of infant deaths from gastric problems in that year, notably in August. He blamed the hot weather, with the temperature reaching eighty-three degrees but primarily, he felt, the cause was improper feeding, defective hygiene and "*carelessness in the way of clothing and exposure, resulting in chills of the body surface.*" He deplored the poor housing conditions and the number of windowless cellar dwellings. In 1899, rent for four rooms plus a kitchen, in Devonport was twenty-eight pounds a year.⁵⁵ In 1901, Frederick, Fanny and their son, Francis,⁵⁶ who had been born the previous summer, were living in two rooms that formed part of 72 George Street's total of six rooms; the Hamley family inhabited the remainder of the property.⁵⁷ Many nearby George Street properties were what would now be termed homes of multiple occupancy, frequently with one family in two rooms. Might their share of the property have been the cellar?⁵⁸ In 1901, the census specified that Frederick was working as a lead plumber.⁵⁹

⁵² Oral evidence from Gwendoline Catherine Braund née Smith, Albany's daughter-in-law. 1901 census for Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG13 2189 folio 31. 1911 census for Hatt, Cargreen, Landulph, Cornwall RG14 13605 page 22.

⁵³ Death certificate (pdf) of Richard Laundry Bishop 1899 from the General Register Office.

⁵⁴ Death certificate (digital image) of Frederick William Hole 1899 from the General Register Office.

⁵⁵ The 1899 Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Devonport, accessed via <https://archive.org/details/>.

⁵⁶ Birth certificate of Francis Hole 1900 from the Local Registrar. 1901 census for 72 George Street, Devonport, Devon RG13 2107 folio 124.

⁵⁷ 1901 census for 72 George Street, Devonport, Devon RG13 2107 folio 124.

⁵⁸ The 1899 Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Devonport, accessed via <https://archive.org/details/>.

⁵⁹ 1901 census for 72 George Street, Devonport, Devon RG13 2107 folio 124.

Devonport, together with Stonehouse and Plymouth itself, was one of the 'three towns' that surrounded Plymouth dockyard and living conditions were notoriously poor. The area grew exponentially after 1891, when the dockyard at Keyham was extended. The 1903 Medical Officer of Health's Report for Plymouth provides some insight. In an era when internal plumbing was non-existent for poorer families, there were no public swimming baths or Turkish Baths for the population of over 200,000. Nationally, ten percent of all deaths were due to forms of tuberculosis. Unlike other infectious diseases, it was not compulsory to notify the Medical Office of Health of cases of tuberculosis and the report reads,

*"All cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis notified are visited by the lady health visitor, advice given as to the various precautionary and hygienic measures to be taken. Leaflets are also distributed for the guidance of patients. Disinfection of rooms, bedding and wearing apparel is carried out whenever possible."*⁶⁰

Given the voluntary nature of notification, a state of affairs the Medical Officer deplored, one can't help but wonder how many families reported cases. A reluctance to invoke the involvement of the authorities may well have been a factor.

Fanny's regular child-bearing continued with the birth of another son, Percy, in November 1901.⁶¹ He too died in infancy the following month. The cause of death was given as debility from birth and bronchitis.⁶² Two more sons followed in quick succession, the first was Stanley, in March 1903, by which time the family had moved to 39 Princes Street in Devonport.⁶³ They had moved again, this time five miles further north to 18 Tavistock Street, in the Crownhill area of Plymouth, when Arthur was

⁶⁰ The 1903 Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Plymouth, accessed via <https://wellcomecollection.org>.

⁶¹ Death certificate (digital image) of Percy Hole 1901 from the General Register Office.

⁶² Death certificate (digital image) of Percy Hole 1901 from the General Register Office.

⁶³ Birth certificate of Stanley Hole 1903 from the Local Registrar.

born in April 1904.⁶⁴ This was to become the family's long-term home. Fanny's Devonport homes no longer survive; they probably fell victim to Second World War bombing, which was particularly severe in Plymouth. 18 Tavistock Street was another shared property, with, in 1911, the Holes living in three rooms, the Chaplin family having another three rooms and Alfred Hill one.⁶⁵ The families would almost certainly have shared an outside privy and cooking facilities may also have been communal.

By the spring of 1906, Fanny had given birth five times in the preceding eight years. Three of those five sons had survived and she was heavily pregnant once again. Another son, Fernley, was born in the March of that year.⁶⁶ He was immediately admitted to the Royal Albert Hospital in Devonport, due to an "*imperforate anus*". In other words, the rectum was closed, with no opening. Today, surgery to correct this is normally successful. Fernley was discharged the following day and the record is annotated "*recovery opn*". Presumably he had had a corrective operation and was being sent home to recover.⁶⁷ The recovery was short-lived as, two months later, Fernley died at home as a result of his condition and exhaustion.⁶⁸

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, overcrowding in Plymouth's three towns was one of the highest in the country. The availability of work in the dockyards meant that there was a high demand for accommodation, which pushed up rents. Following the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act, the council did begin to demolish slums and

⁶⁴ Birth certificate of Arthur Hole 1904 from the Local Registrar.

⁶⁵ 1911 census for 18 Tavistock Street, Devonport, Devon RG14 13019 SN 175.

⁶⁶ Birth indexes of the General Registrar. Death certificate (pdf) of Fernley Hole 1906 from the General Register Office.

⁶⁷ Index to the Royal Albert Hospital Devonport Case Register Admissions & Discharge Book 1904 – 1914, held at Plymouth & West Devon Record Office folio 48 via www.findmypast.co.uk.

⁶⁸ Death certificate (pdf) of Fernley Hole 1906 from the General Register Office.

provide council housing but it is unlikely that the Hole family benefitted from this.

Back at Cargreen, Fanny's nephew, Percival James Richards, married Beatrice Mary Eastley⁶⁹ and on the 3rd of January 1907, Fanny's mother, Elizabeth, died of heart disease and dropsy. She was seventy-three and had been ill for a couple of years.⁷⁰ Having given birth to nine sons, in the summer of 1907, Fanny finally gave birth to a daughter; she named her Winifred Elizabeth, perhaps in honour of her niece, [Laura] Winifred Richards.⁷¹

Sadly, three months later, baby Winifred also died, in her case, from general wasting from non-assimilation of food.⁷² At thirty-eight, Fanny might have been expected to have had a few more years of childbearing. She may have had an early menopause, there may have been miscarriages or a period of abstinence. Perhaps, following the grief of so many infant deaths, the thought of one more was too much to contemplate. The state of health of Frederick, or Fanny herself, could have been a factor but whatever the reason, there were no more live births.

As we have seen, by 1911, Fanny and Frederick were living at 18 Tavistock Street and the census enumerates them there with their two younger surviving sons. Frederick was working as a plumber for the dockyard.⁷³ Fanny's oldest son by her first husband, Albany, was living in Wandsworth, working for the railway.⁷⁴ Frederick and Fanny's eldest son,

⁶⁹ Marriage indexes of the General Registrar.

⁷⁰ Death certificate (pdf) of Elizabeth Bishop née Buckingham 1907 from the General Register Office.

⁷¹ Death certificate (digital image) of Winifred Elizabeth Hole 1907 from the General Register.

⁷² Death certificate (digital image) of Winifred Elizabeth Hole 1907 from the General Register.

⁷³ 1911 census for 18 Tavistock Street, Devonport, Devon RG14 13019 SN 175.

⁷⁴ 1911 census for 43 Birdhurst Road, Wandsworth, Surrey RG14 2424 SN 194.

Francis, by then aged ten, was with Fanny's half-sister back in Hatt, Cargreen, perhaps replacing his half-brother in that household, in order to ease the pressure of space at Tavistock Street.

In November 1912, Albany married in Wandsworth. There's no way of knowing whether Fanny attended her son's wedding. It is probably unlikely. The wedding was rather a hurried affair, as Albany's bride was five months pregnant.⁷⁵ The cost of travel might have been prohibitive, even if Albany, who was working for London South West Region of the railways, could have secured tickets at a reduced rate. Fanny also had her younger sons to look after. Would Fanny have seen her three grandsons, who were born in Wandsworth in 1913, 1915 and 1916? It is doubtful, although Albany and his wife and certainly his eldest son, Stanley, visited the Richards relations in Cargreen in the 1940s and 1950s.⁷⁶ Albany's three sons never spoke as if they had met their grandmother.⁷⁷

About 1913, Fanny's younger brother, Archibald, moved to Plymouth and by 1921, Archibald and his family were also living in Crownhill, where they brought up their four daughters, so Fanny did have family members living nearby at that point.⁷⁸

Living in the city gave Fanny access to department stores, trams, trains, the cinema and the Palace Theatre of Varieties; all of which would have been foreign to Cargreen residents. How much use Fanny could make of these facilities, given that she was living in relative poverty, with young children to care for, is unknown.

⁷⁵ Marriage certificate of Albany Braund and Elizabeth Ann Hogg 1912, in family possession.

⁷⁶ Oral evidence from Cyril Albany Braund via Gwendoline Catherine Braund née Smith.

⁷⁷ Oral evidence from Cyril Albany Braund, grandson of Fanny Thomasine, via Gwendoline Catherine Braund née Smith.

⁷⁸ 1921 census for 37 Butt Park Road, Honicknowle, Plymouth, Devon RG15 10575 SN 201.

Plymouth responded to the demands of the First World War with the number of dockyard workers increasing from 10,000 in 1914 to nearly 19,000 by 1918. The workforce now included many women, recruited to replace those who had joined the armed forces. Fanny was fortunate to lack close family members involved in the conflict. Frederick was in his late thirties when war broke out and of her children, only Albany was of combatant age. His work on the railways made him exempt. Her brothers were also too old and neither of them had sons. A Cyril Arthur Richards did serve with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry but he may not have been Fanny's nephew, as he worked in market gardening, so he too may have been exempt.

Tragedy had not finished with Fanny as, on the 14th of June 1919, her eldest Hole son, Francis, died of tuberculosis. According to the death certificate, he had been ill for three and a half months. Francis' occupation was given as a gardener and his address as 18 Tavistock Street. Had he moved back from Cargreen to be with his parents when he became ill, or had he been there longer term? His death took place at Exeter Mental Hospital in Topsham,⁷⁹ prompting questions about why he was there. This was the era of the mis-named 'Spanish' influenza epidemic, which was known to have the greatest impact on of people in Francis' age group. One of the symptoms of this strain of flu was, for some, mental confusion and hallucinations; was this why Francis was in the asylum?

Just three months later, Fanny's husband died in the workhouse infirmary of paraplegia and mental stupor, with Fanny in attendance.⁸⁰ Although paraplegia is most commonly the result of an accident, there was no post mortem and nothing about an accident in the newspapers. Paralysis might be the result of a stroke, or possibly end stage syphilis, which might also

⁷⁹ Death certificate (pdf) of Francis Hole 1919 from the General Register Office.

⁸⁰ Death certificate (digital image) of Frederick Barrett Hole 1919 from the General Register Office.

explain so many infant deaths in the family. There is another plausible explanation and that is what was known at the time as plumbism, or saturnism. Frederick was a plumber; the 1901 census specifies that he was a lead plumber.⁸¹ Prolonged exposure to lead could lead to severe neurological damage, including paralysis and convulsions, which might prove fatal.

By 1921, Fanny herself was ill and the census says that she was unable to work. She was still at 18 Tavistock Street, Devonport, Devon, with her two surviving Hole sons, who worked in the dockyard. The Chaplin family now occupied all four remaining rooms of the house.⁸² Just six days after that census, Fanny died at home from an aneurism and heart disease.⁸³ Stanley and Arthur were just seventeen and eighteen.⁸⁴ Fortunately, their paternal grandparents were still alive and living locally. Would they have kept an eye on their teenaged grandsons?⁸⁵

This then is Fanny's story, once laced with tragedy and hardship but I hope that there were some lighter moments for her too. I wish that I had known her.

⁸¹ 1901 census for 72 George Street, Devonport, Devon RG13 2107 folio 124.

⁸² 1921 census for 18 Tavistock Street, Devonport, Devon RG15 10680 SN 277.

⁸³ Death certificate of Fanny Thomasine Hole née Bishop, lately Braund 1921 from the General Register Office.

⁸⁴ 1921 census for 18 Tavistock Street, Devonport, Devon RG15 10680 SN 277.

⁸⁵ 1921 census for 73 Begelly Road, Plymouth, Devon RG15 10601 SN 134.